CHARLEMONT SELECTBOARD
MEETING MINUTES
Monday, June 8th, 2026, 6:00 pm
in person and via conference call, Town Hall, 157 Main Street, Charlemont MA

Members in attendance: Kim Blakeslee, Wilder Sparks, Jared Bellows
Others in attendance: Sarah Reynolds, Christopher Curtis, Star Atkeson, Jonathan Mirin, Ellen Landauer, Maureen Flaherty, Hailey Klein, Tim Jernigan-Smith, Jay Pelletier, Kyle Sweeney

Appointments:

6:00 pm – Christopher Curtis- new proposal for Deerfield River Designation in Charlemont

- Christopher Curtis presented an updated proposal regarding the Wild & Scenic River designation.
- He noted that Senator Markey's office is drafting federal legislation, with 13 Massachusetts communities and 17 Vermont communities moving forward; Charlemont is currently the only community not included.
- Christopher expressed a preference for unanimous support.
- To address concerns, he proposed drafting legislation that explicitly excludes bridges from the Wild and Scenic designation.
- He noted that Wild & Scenic legislation commonly includes exclusions such as dams, and that this approach would ensure existing and planned infrastructure is not affected.
- He consulted with the National Park Service National Park Service, who indicated the approach is workable.
- Proposed exclusions would include the Zoar Road bridge, Chickley bridge, and Route 8A bridge.
- Wilder Sparks said the proposal made sense as a novel approach to addressing concerns but suggested it needs closer review, particularly regarding long-term (30-year) implications.
- It was noted that the Tower Road bridge should be included; it serves as an emergency route.
- It was agreed to revise the legislation to include the Tower Road bridge and return it for consideration at the next meeting.

6:15 pm- Jonathan Mirin- Smart Meter Roll Out – 15-minute discussion of National grid timeline for smart meter deployment- guidance on who to contact for a delay in deployment.

• Jonathan Mirin and Ellen Landauer raised concerns about National Grid's smart meter rollout, including notification practices, health impacts, and opt-out awareness. They said some residents did not receive the 90-, 60-, and 30-day notices. Kim said she had received mailed notices. The Department of Public Utilities (DPU) requires notification.

• Jonathan Mirin said the BOH previously voted to pursue an investigation, including field measurements of microwave/RF exposure using specialized equipment, Jonathan Mirin offered to engage a qualified individual.

• Wilder Sparks asked what outcomes would be considered meaningful or actionable, including thresholds for acceptable vs. unacceptable exposure, and how specialized equipment differs from a dosimeter.

• Jonathan Mirin referenced FCC standards and noted other international bodies use different biological exposure limits, suggesting FCC standards may not capture all health concerns.

• Ellen Landau shared concerns based on prior research, noting stricter standards in other countries and raising issues about pole-mounted antennas near residences.

• Discussion addressed whether National Grid would pause or adjust rollout in response to concerns. Mirin stated the utility has indicated willingness to work with residents who experience problems, though awareness may be limited.

• Wilder Sparks noted the Select Board lacks authority to stop or alter the rollout, as oversight rests with the DPU.

• Ellen Landauer said a written town statement would be valuable even if symbolic, and requested consideration of a temporary pause to allow further review.

• Discussion followed on whether any pause request should come from the Board of Health rather than the Select Board. Sarah Reynolds noted the Board of Health may have stronger standing.

• Wilder Sparks reiterated the need to define what the Board of Health would measure and what results would trigger action.

• Sarah Reynolds said she could post opt-out information on the town website in the news section.

• Wilder Sparks said he would follow up with the Board of Health regarding communicating their vote.

• Jared Bellows supported the Board of Health issuing communication.

Kim Blakeslee made a motion to not put forward the requested letter to pause the smart meter rollout. Jared Bellows seconded the motion. All in favor.

Administrators Report:

1) Small Bridge Award for Mountain Road Culvert
Sarah received the $150,000. Grant for design work.

2) Gravel Roads Grant Award for West Oxbow
Sarah received the $113,970.85 grant for west Oxbow Road.

3) Grant submittal for Tower Road Intersection with 8A
Sarah submitted for the Tower Road intersection with 8A (Trucks get hung up there.)

4) Street Light Bulb Replacement for all streetlights in town – Do we have bulb wattage that we want to submit?
After Wilder's research he recommended choosing the lower wattage and lumens for the lightbulbs, except for the intersection which has state mandated requirements, they can do 3000 lumens for that one.

5) Short Term Rental, letters to distribute and timeframe for implementation?
Only 15 of the 32 short term rentals are inspected by FRCOG. With the new bylaw in place, everyone should come into compliance and be inspected. A letter has been drafted for the STR owners. If the board approves, Sarah will send it out. It is recommended that the owners start the process within 60 days.

Jared Bellows made a motion to approve Sarah sending out the letter. Kim Blakeslee seconded the motion. All in favor.

6) Legate Hill Bridge – Closure for 4 weeks while Davenport installs new bridge.

7) Tennis Court procurement has started Parc grant accepted design.
The Tennis Court project has gone out to bid. The State approved the plan. It will be started in July.

Liaison Reports:

1) School assessment error, letters of support and update
Letters of support were obtained from other towns for the reimbursement earmark.

2) Transfer Station Plastics Container issues with trash
Garbage is being put into the hard plastic recycling container. Jan suggested that Melissa and Thorne have a container out front that people put their plastics in, and then they can put them in the larger dumpster at the end of the day.

Agenda items (Discussion/Vote):

1) Police Discussion:
A) Chief Job Description possible changes and addition of patrol hours per Town Meeting discussion.
Kim will bring this home and add to it. Wilder is happy to assist. He noted there could be a mechanism in the job description to process complaints.

B) Hiring process for a new chief.
Kim would like to use the same service that was used to get candidates for the Fire Chief. Sarah will look into it.

C) Acceptance of letter of resignation.
Kim Blakeslee made a motion to accept Chief Pelletier's recommendation for interim Chief during the process (Kyle Sweeney) from July 1st, 2026, until they have hired the permanent Chief. Wilder Sparks seconded the motion. Jared Bellows Abstained.

Kim Blakeslee made a motion to accept the letter of resignation from the current chief of police effective July 1st, 2026. Wilder Sparks seconded the motion. All in favor.

Chief Pelletier offered to work as consultant if need be.

3) C Pace program voted on at Town meeting- next steps
Wilder Sparks made a motion to sign as written as per the vote of the Town. Jared Bellows seconded the motion. All in favor.

Approve and Sign:
1) Minutes of April 27th and May 11th
Jared Bellows made a motion to approve the April 27th Minutes, Wilder Sparks seconded the motion. All in favor.

Kim Blakeslee made a motion to approve the May 11th Minutes as written. Wilder Sparks seconded the motion. Kim and Wilder in favor.

2) Payroll and Vendor Warrants

Jared Bellows made a motion to approve the payroll and vendor warrants. Kim Blakeslee seconded the motion. All in favor.

3) Vacation request from Assessors Clerk

Wilder Sparks made a motion to approve the assessors' clerk's vacation request.
Kim Blakeslee seconded the motion. All in favor.

Jared Bellows made a motion to adjourn at 7:29 PM. Kim Blakeslee seconded the motion. All in favor.

Documents reviewed in the meeting:

- Agenda for June 8, 2026
- Minutes from April 27, May 11, 2026
- Massachusetts Electric Company, Street and are lighting – company owned equipment S-1 Retail Delivery Service. MDPU no. 1613 Canceling MDPU No. 1581 12 pages.
- National Grid smart meter notification
- Email from Wilder Sparks to SB and Administrator dated April 16, 2026, re: Municipal lighting recommendations… w Municipal lighting fact sheet, 4 pages
- Letter from Jonathan Gulliver, MassDOT to Sarah Reynolds dated May 15, 2026, re: Mountain Road over Willis Brook design grant approval
- Letter to Short Term Rental Property owners dated May 20, 2026, re: Short term rental registration and compliance requirements, 2 pages.
- Community Park Improvements Town of Charlemont, engineered construction plans, 10 School Street, Charlemont, MA Bellino Engineering, 4 pages
- Police Chief job description, 6 pages
- PACE Massachusetts Municipal Implementation Questions, 4 pages
- PACE Massachusetts Municipal Assessment and Assignment agreement, 17 pages
- Email from Carlene Hayden to Select Board, dated June 1, 2026, re: Vacation request
- Letter to Sarah Reynolds form Francisca Heming, Mass DOT, re: Project development – Mass DOT highway division project No. 616434 …Bridge Preservation… Project eligibility Notification
- Map of Smart meter antennae layout