

## CHARLEMONT SELECTBOARD

### MEETING MINUTES

Monday, September 28th, 2026, 6:00 pm

in person and via conference call, Town Hall, 157 Main Street, Charlemont MA

Members in attendance: Wilder Sparks, Kim Blakeslee, Jared Bellows

Others in attendance: Sarah Reynolds, Sheryl Stanton, Ken Bertsch, Ashley Sparks (?)

On phone: Star Atkeson

#### **Appointments:**

**5:30 PM – Marther Thurber (Mohawk School Committee) and Sheryl Stanton (Superintendent) – to discuss 2D8T updates from the working group.**

Sheryl presented the 2Districts8Towns Steering Committee's update on the potential consolidation of the Mohawk Trail and Hawlemont Regional School Districts into a single PreK–12 campus at Mohawk Trail. A town vote on proceeding with the feasibility study is needed by March 2027, followed by a vote on the regional agreement and capital funding in October 2028. The merged district is projected to launch in July 2030, with the new campus opening in September 2032.

Rowe has paused their participation, waiting to see how it plays out.

Preliminary feasibility costs range from \$630,000 to \$1.2 million, with an estimated town-funded portion of \$440,000 at the upper end. Construction estimates remain preliminary and will be refined during the feasibility process. The committee is updating financial projections to reflect staffing and enrollment changes and continues to pursue state funding and rural school aid. Transportation options, including vans to mitigate lengthy rides for some younger students, were also discussed.

Sheryl spoke to the need for the Towns to discuss reuse of existing elementary school buildings if consolidation proceeds, emphasizing the importance of community input and advance planning. Wilder Sparks asked about possible building configurations and how the type of space, particularly PreK classrooms, would affect costs. Input will be taken into consideration during the feasibility phase.

**6 :00 PM - Pursuant of the provisions of M.G.L c.138, the Charlemont Select Board will hold a public hearing on an application of Berkshire East Ski Resort LLC, to amend the ownership interest and add Officers/Directors /Managers to the current liquor License at 66 Thunder Mountain Road, Charlemont. The hearing will be held on September 28,2026, 6:00 pm, in the Charlemont Town Hall Meeting Room Located at 157 Main Street Charlemont MA 01339.**

Jared Bellows opened the hearing and read the hearing notice, they are asking to amend the current license with the new names. Abutters were notified.

**Jared Bellows made a motion to amend the ownership interest and add Officers/Directors /Managers to the current liquor License at 66 Thunder Mountain Road, Charlemont. Wilder Sparks seconded the motion. All in favor.**

#### **Administrators Report:**

- 1) Tennis Court Construction update. Sarah sent out the planting plan and heard back. The EV chargers are live. She got equipment for three pickle ball courts, tennis and basketball. They are looking at sandblasting the poles.

- 2) Update on shared services meetings for Fire, Ambulance and Police, meetings are occurring with Heath, Rowe, Colrain and Charlemont. Police could use admin help, which came back in a survey, as well as a pool of a few officers to work in multiple towns at certain times. A larger study of all of Franklin County is being started.
- 3) Fire alarm update- The fire alarm in the basement of Town Hall is fixed. A cellular device was put down in the basement. Verizon is ending copper wiring to businesses.

#### **Liaison Reports:**

##### **1) Report from Park and Recreation Meeting September 24, 2026**

Kim attended the Park and Rec meeting. Currently the Fairgrounds is offering winter storage for recreational vehicles, but it is by word of mouth and first come first serve. Kim would like to put the current contract on the Parks and Rec page of the website, as well as adding "first come first serve", to let the public know that it exists. Wilder and Jared are good with that idea. Highway and other Town Equipment can also be kept under the pavilion, out of the weather.

Sarah will scan and put the contract in as a pdf. Kim said that Barbara McKenna is the Parks and Rec secretary and will be the contact for the people inquiring and submitting applications about the winter parking.

Another thing that came up in the Parks and Rec meeting was the stipend question. Sarah said that over the years it has just ended up the way it is, some boards don't want payment, and some boards were voted to be paid. It has been brought back to Finance. It can be brought to Town Meeting again in the budget line. Kim will attend the next Parks and Rec meeting and see if it's something they want to pursue.

Parks and Rec have made an unofficial office in the exhibit hall at the fairgrounds. Sarah had been wanting to send out a communication about procedures and how Boards are supposed to operate. She will put it on the agenda.

#### **Agenda items (Discussion/Vote):**

- 1) Police Chief Candidate discussion: Jared Bellows abstained from the discussion.  
Kim and Wilder both appreciated the presentation from Fred Bezio, the Police Chief from Goshen. He wants to be out in public, with a presence near the school and with children, at the post office, having dialogue with the towns people. He estimates spending 30-40% of his time on admin. He is well loved in Goshen. He had 100s of hours of experience in de-escalation techniques and a complete section on mental health that wasn't present in the other profiles.
- a) vote to hire  
**Kim Blakeslee made a motion to offer Fred Bezio of Shelburne Falls, Mass ,position of the Charlemont Chief of Police. Wilder Sparks seconded the motion. Wilder Sparks and Kim Blakeslee in favor. Jared Bellows abstained.**
- b) vote on contract  
**Kim Blakeslee made a motion to use the contract provided by the agency. Wilder Sparks seconded the motion. Wilder Sparks and Kim Blakeslee in favor. Jared Bellows abstained**

Kim would like to write a formal thank you letter to Kyle Sweeney expressing deep gratitude for his service as interim chief. Sarah will draft and send something.

**Approve and Sign:**

1) Minutes of September 14, 2026

**Jared Bellows made a motion to approve and sign the Minutes of September 14<sup>th</sup> as written. Wilder Sparks seconded the motion. All in favor.**

2) Payroll and Vendor Warrants

**Wilder Sparks made a motion to approve and sign the payroll and vendor warrants. Jared Bellows seconded the motion. All in favor.**

**Jared Bellows made a motion to close the meeting at 6:24. Wilder Sparks seconded the motion. All in favor.**