

**Town of Charleston**  
**Selectboard Meeting 07/13/17**

MINUTES

A meeting of the town Selectboard was held July 13, 2017. Attending: Selectboard Members Dean Bennett, Meghann Carter and Larry Young; Road Foreman Bernie Pepin; Solar Subcommittee Member Diana Marckwardt; Constables Jon Bruce and Ed Brown; and Selectboard Clerk Colleen Kellogg.

THESE MINUTES ARE UNOFFICIAL UNTIL APPROVED AT THE NEXT MEETING

Meeting called to order at 7:00pm. Motion by Mr. Young to approve the minutes of the June 22, 2017 meeting as written, second by Ms. Carter and approved.

OLD BUSINESS

Diana Marckwardt provided the following update on the Community Solar Project: Charleston is waiting for the PUC (formerly PSB) to respond to the Town's 6/26 response to a request for information and to grant the Certificate of Public Good (CPG). ANR's request to flag wetlands will be addressed, and scrim for safety will be added to the scope of work. Expect to hear within a couple weeks if the pit qualifies as a preferred site (if so, Town receives higher credit per kW) because it was grandfathered under Act 250. Nik with Building Energy (project installer) said they are booked for summer but could do fall or early winter. Their revised estimate is up \$4500 due to the addition of scrim and a more involved application submission. The price of solar panels will increase Aug 1st due to high demand. To hold the contract, Building Energy would need 10% down (\$27,754), and another 50% is due when installation begins.

While the original budget did not account for legal and engineering fees required to clear onerous application hurdles, the project is still \$90,000 under the total approved by voters, and taxpayers will still pay less in municipal electricity costs over the life of the loan. To cover fees and services associated with applications, as well as the down payment, Ms. Marckwardt requests interim project financing so that the town operating fund is not affected until the loan for site work, panels and installation can be finalized. The project was awarded a \$50,000 USDA grant toward purchase of the panels, and Ms. Marckwardt will find out if a portion of these funds would be available for the down payment

Mr. Bennett moved to approve the contract by August 1<sup>st</sup> and to authorize a Selectboard member to contact banks about a short-term loan to keep project costs separate from operating, and to roll in costs already incurred, seconded by Ms. Carter. Ms. Marckwardt will compile a list of costs. Mr. Bennett moved to try to secure loan in time for an August 1<sup>st</sup> down payment, but if it is still in process, the Treasurer would be authorized to use the Town's non-arbitrage loan until the loan is secured, seconded by Ms. Carter and approved.

First Constable Jonathan Bruce will take the police academy course in September; all paperwork and required testing will be complete by the end of this month. Until then, he will be available as

backup Animal Control Officer when Ed is out of town. Ms. Kellogg will update the Town website to indicate that Mr. Bruce can be contacted for animal control issues. General discussion of vicious dog hearings and frequent ATV use seen on state and town highways. Mr. Brown will check to make sure an invisible fence was installed for the Engels' dog.

Margaret Maxwell has made a repeat request to the Selectboard for curb cuts. Attorney Davies has recommended the Town take no action without the involvement of all parties. Mr. Young reports that Mrs. Maxwell is exploring other options and the matter was tabled until further notice.

Mr. Pepin visited the Hudson Rd FEMA project site with VTrans to scope out ditching and 11 culverts. He requests the go-ahead to conduct a pre-bid site visit with at least 3 contractors per VTrans' recommendation. The board suggests including a fall deadline when contacting prospective vendors. The Town would buy culverts and erosion stone, and would mulch, gravel, grade and apply chloride behind the work. Old culverts to be dumped at the Town shop. Mr. Young made a motion to give Mr. Pepin approval to seek contractors; seconded by Ms. Carter and approved. Ms. Kellogg will help with road closure planning.

## ROAD REPORT

Ditching, mulch and seed is complete on a stretch of Hudson Rd toward 5A. Mr. Pepin reports NO washouts there even with recent hard rains, and Ms. Carter commented on the high-quality work. The crew is now working on ditching and culvert replacement on Gratton Hill Rd, and a guardrail on Westmore Rd at Clarke Ln will be shored up. The apron of Dane Hill was paved earlier that day. The board authorized Mr. Pepin to explore crushing vendors and price options and report back. He is not aware of any roadside mowing progress yet. Mr. Pepin gave a positive report on highway personnel. Mr. Pepin raised concerns that highway employees have spent significant time moving landowner fences from the town maintenance right-of-way to complete road work, adding to the length and cost of projects, despite advance requests to landowners to move fencing.

## NEW BUSINESS

The state has notified Charleston of the residential and non-residential Education Rates. The municipal tax rate will be set and bills mailed around the end of July.

Ms. Carter moved to approve updated equipment billing rates to include the Town pickup at \$14.00 per hour, per federal rates, seconded by Mr. Bennett and approved. For transporting employees, the truck would be billed out based on mileage.

Ms. Carter met with USDA this week to sign grant award documents for purchase of a new pickup. There was discussion of when the purchase should occur, including fall incentives and the possibility of waiting until 2018. Ms. Carter informed the board that three quotes are required before purchase, and if the Town will delay purchase until next year, USDA must be notified of the decision. A copy of the minutes would serve as documentation.

Ms. Kellogg presented for review a town information sheet to be included with property tax bills. She will correct culvert policy language and add a reminder that town roads are not open to ATVs.

A new Stormwater Mitigation grant has been announced with an August deadline. Ms. Kellogg will do some more research and report back.

#### ANNOUNCEMENTS & INFORMATION

The Town Clerk is required to conduct a voter checklist purge before September 15<sup>th</sup>. She has tentatively scheduled a BCA meeting for August 24<sup>th</sup> at 6:00pm and will contact all BCA members.

Ms. Carter will be unable to attend Road Commissioner meetings for a few weeks due to work schedule. She will make weekly arrangements with the Clerk to approve orders and attend to needed business.

Bills were approved for payment.

Meeting adjourned at 8:49pm. The next Selectboard meeting is July 27<sup>th</sup>, 2017 at 7:00 pm. Ms. Kellogg will be away July 27<sup>th</sup> and August 10<sup>th</sup> and Ms. Carter agreed to take minutes.

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Selectboard, Town of Charleston