

**Town of Charleston
Selectboard Meeting 1/25/18**

MINUTES

A meeting of the town Selectboard was held January 25, 2018. Attending: Selectboard members Meghann Carter, Larry Young and Glenn Peterson; Road Foreman Bernie Pepin; Town Clerk & Treasurer Teri Gray; VSP Derby Barracks Commander Lt. Walt Smith; Constable Jonathan Bruce; Fire Chief Duane Moulton; and Selectboard Clerk Colleen Kellogg.

THESE MINUTES ARE UNOFFICIAL UNTIL APPROVED AT THE NEXT MEETING

Meeting called to order at 7:00 pm.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Becky Miller of Derby Line Ambulance was schedule to discuss a proposal for ambulance coverage but did not show.

Lt. Walt Smith is checking in with towns served by the VSP Derby Barracks to see if there are any issues they'd like to bring up. Mr. Young mentioned the town hasn't been able to do much about an ongoing problem with loose cattle. Lt. Smith said a state law provides for a \$10 fine, and there is a process for property owners to recover damages. He said the board might speak to the town attorney about an applicable ordinance, and he will forward the statute reference. Lt. Smith encouraged Charleston to always reach out with any concerns.

Motion by Ms. Carter to approve the January 11, 2018 meeting minutes as written, seconded by Mr. Young and approved.

OLD BUSINESS

Constable Jon Bruce will attend police academy training March 12-23rd in preparation for having police powers. He is on track to have all required paperwork and testing complete by February 16th and will be at Town Meeting to answer questions. Ms. Carter asked Mr. Bruce if, after training, he would be ready for the availability discussed earlier with the board, and Mr. Bruce said he would. It was noted that with the resignation of Second Constable Ed Brown, townspeople might think about who will next fill that position.

Charleston paid \$14,701 to Lyndon Rescue for ambulance service in 2017, and now has quotes for 2018 from Lyndon Rescue (\$54,695.87), Newport Ambulance Service (\$29,462.00), and Derby Line Ambulance (22,325.00), and Ms. Carter said she would like to see the board come to a decision tonight. Fire Chief Duane Moulton was present to offer the department's experience with ambulance services. CVFD has worked and trained with Lyndon Rescue, and he feels that of the three services under consideration, Lyndon would be the best choice—at least for this year while we wait to see what will happen with Derby Line Ambulance. He feels Newport's service area is very large, and said there have been instances where it has taken Newport Ambulance 45-

50 minutes to arrive at a Charleston call. Long term, it might make sense to split the town. Mr. Moulton reports that CVFD now has advanced CPR and first aid training, and they are often called in by Lyndon Rescue to prepare for the ambulance. He recommends that, whatever service the Town goes with, the fire department should be automatically dispatched. With Selectboard members asking for more time to consider the matter in light of public safety and taxpayer cost, Ms. Carter made a motion to table the matter until later in the meeting, seconded by Mr. Peterson, and the board proceeded with new business.

NEW BUSINESS

On January 29th at 6 pm, the Derby Selectboard will host surrounding towns at their regular meeting to discuss the Municipal Roads General Permit (MRGP). State Rep. and Derby Selectman Brian Smith is getting collective input from all towns he represents. Ms. Carter and Mr. Young are planning to attend. Since a quorum of the board will be present, Ms. Kellogg will warn the meeting with public postings.

Returning to the ambulance discussion, Ms. Carter said she views Lyndon favorably and feels that improvements made recently are setting up the agency for longevity. Mr. Peterson said he feels Newport staff is well-trained and high quality, and mutual aid agreements would allow Lyndon or another service to cover if Newport happened to already be called out. At 8:00, Mr. Young motioned for executive session to discuss the proposed contracts, seconded by Ms. Carter. Executive session ended at 8:13 pm. Summing up the conversation, Ms. Carter said that based on cost to taxpayers, and to equally benefit all regions of the town, a majority of board members leaned toward contracting with Newport Ambulance. The board looked favorably on the professional training of Newport's team, and, noting that there was a geographic challenge no matter which agency was hired, they felt that Newport could serve the whole town well. Lyndon Rescue's 2018 price was nearly \$40,000 more than in 2017, and the board did not feel that taxpayers could sustain this. Ms. Carter called for a voice vote, seconded by Mr. Peterson, and all were in favor. Ms. Carter instructed Ms. Kellogg to notify Lyndon Rescue, Newport Ambulance service, Derby Line, VSP dispatch, and Duane Moulton.

Charleston has been notified by VTrans that the town is eligible for paving grant funds in the amount of \$100,000–\$120,000 with a 20% town match. An application could be made this year (VT FY2019) or next (VT FY2020), and the Town would have two years to do the work. Mr. Pepin said that Hudson Rd and Center School Rd are due for paving but could wait a year, and undersized culverts would need to be replaced first. Mr. Young made a motion to apply for next year (FY2020), so that culverts could be replaced and given a chance to settle, seconded by Ms. Carter and approved. The board authorized Mr. Pepin to get estimates this year to inform the grant application. The highway crew will replace culverts this year if schedule allows. Ms. Kellogg will notify VTrans.

Treasurer Teri Gray presented drafts of the Town Meeting Warning and 2018 Proposed budget with updates from the previous meeting. Board members agreed to take up the Road Report first to settle any questions on the highway budget.

ROAD REPORT

The Selectboard would like roadsides mowed earlier this year. Mr. Pepin reports that Tim Patenaude can be available by the middle or end of June, and his quote for two cuts is within budget. It will take about two weeks. Mr. Young made a motion to hire Patenaude for two cuts, working from one end of town to the other, seconded by Ms. Carter and approved. Mr. Pepin will lock in Patenaude for a June schedule.

Mr. Pepin stated that thawing and freezing has created rough road conditions—with deep, icy ruts throughout town. The school bus had trouble recently, and the highway department will adjust to avoid this in the future. He asked for Selectboard support to assign the grader operator to scrape ruts when the weather allows—even if it means working on a Saturday.

Mr. Pepin would like to start planning for the Town's next equipment needs. The 6-wheel truck and loader are aging and should be replaced in the next couple of years. He recommends replacing the truck with another 6-wheeler—erosion stone can't be dumped into a larger truck. International representatives stop in regularly and have said they would give the Town a good trade-in value for ours. It takes 4-6 months to order and take possession of a truck. There was discussion of trying to pay off the gravel pit loan before making a new equipment purchase—three more payments left. The board asked Ms. Kellogg to research any grants that might help with equipment purchase.

Annual DMV Weight Restriction filing forms were reviewed. The Selectboard instructed Ms. Kellogg to again post the Hudson Rd weight restriction due to the failing bridge near Mt. Bess road, and authorized Mr. Pepin to post roads during mud season as usual. Mr. Pepin asked that no special overweight permission be given to anyone, including residents, during the posted months, and all Selectboard members agreed. Anyone seeking permission from the Road Foreman, Selectboard, or Town Office will be denied.

Returning to the 2018 budget discussion: With unavoidable increases such as ambulance cost and the MRGP, as well as additional revenues such as grant reimbursements and a one-year credit on unemployment insurance, the proposed net assessment to fund the Town budget is \$561,227.30, compared with \$603,256.50 in 2017. Motion by Mr. Peterson to approve the Town Meeting Warning and proposed budget, seconded by Ms. Carter and approved.

Bills and orders were approved for payment.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The state has received Charleston's appeal of the Common Level of Appraisal (CLA). Lister Jean Wilson expects that the appeal will be approved, causing the Town's CLA to increase and the education tax rate to be reduced.

As an update on the Community Solar project, Ms. Carter shared an email from Russ Flanigan, project manager at Building Energy. They have reserved the solar panels and reached out to the Vermont Fire Safety regional team. They plan to order the racking in the next few weeks and

start to coordinate with the Town's engineer contact at VEC. Mr. Pepin will excavate for and bury the conduit, and asked for a month or two lead time to make sure the task doesn't conflict with highway maintenance.

Mr. Young and Mr. Peterson will attend Local Government Day on February 15th—an opportunity to learn about the status of pending legislation that affects local government, attend legislative hearings, and speak with representatives and senators.

Drift Dusters Snowmobile Club will hold their Winter Bash for cooperating landowners on February 17th at Paul's Sugarhouse.

Seeing no other business or discussion, the meeting adjourned at 9:28 pm. The next meeting is February 8th at 7:00 pm.

Approved this 8th day of February 2018:

Selectboard, Town of Charleston