

**Town of Charleston  
Selectboard Meeting 3/08/18**

MINUTES

A meeting of the town Selectboard was held February 8, 2018. Attending: Selectboard members Meghann Carter, Larry Young and Glenn Peterson; Planning Commission Chair John Kellogg; School Board Member Pat Austin; Principal Chris Lawson; Fire Chief Duane Moulton; Solar Oversight Committee Members Hap Eliason, Tom Jensen, Diana Marckwardt, and Terry Rollins; and Selectboard Clerk Colleen Kellogg.

THESE MINUTES ARE UNOFFICIAL UNTIL APPROVED AT THE NEXT MEETING

Meeting called to order at 7:05 pm.

To accommodate school district schedules, discussion of a solar group net metering agreement was taken up first. Solar Oversight Committee member Diana Marckwardt recalled the main tenet of the project approved by voters was to generate electricity for town facilities at a cost that was equal or less than paying the electric bills, and this remains true, with the term of the construction loan being adjusted to keep annual costs on par with historical electricity costs. The exact loan term will be determined after completion, but at the moment, it looks like 18 years, after which the participating facilities—school, fire station, town office, streetlights and garage—will enjoy free electricity for the life of the panels, expected to be 25 years. She introduced a document for discussion that raised some of the questions and details to consider as participation agreements are drafted, like frequency of town loan payments, frequency of payments from the school and CVFD, whether these payments will be based on a percentage of the loan or actual usage, and, if based on usage, how often to revisit percentages. VEC data from 2016 shows the 5 accounts use \$22,000 worth of electricity in a year—the school using 66% of that and the fire station 2.7%. Ms. Marckwardt suggested the percentage option would be administratively simpler. It was noted that the clerk's office is accustomed to making loan payments annually after the October tax deadline, but monthly payments would pay down interest more quickly.

Pat Austin reiterated school district desire to make the project work and said that payment terms probably did not make much difference to the school, as long as payments are made in the correct fiscal year. Of greater concern are events like changes in legislation or the price paid for electricity, low array production, or other unforeseen problems that could make electricity cost more. With the school the biggest user, he cannot put the school at financial risk, and if something goes awry, the agreement should provide for extra cost to be absorbed by the town. While John Kellogg acknowledged that the political future is unknown, Tom Jensen explained that one provision of the CPG is to lock-in the rate the town will be paid for electricity for 10 years—\$.19/kWh scheduled to reduce to \$.15 after that—and that legislative changes would affect only new projects going forward. VEC estimates that the array will produce \$26,000 worth of electricity per year, which is above the expected usage. Duane Moulton raised the concern that the Fire Department was never explicitly asked for a commitment and worried that some department folks might not see a benefit to pay what they've already been paying for electricity.

Regarding next steps, the town will contact the town attorney and aim to have legal agreements complete by the end of April, with drafts to be distributed by the April school board meeting. It was noted that the project budget includes legal services. School representatives agreed to share the preceding information with the school board and supervisory union at their March 14<sup>th</sup> meeting and get back to the town office with any feedback about what the agreement should include. Duane Moulton will discuss with CVFD on March 27<sup>th</sup>. John Kellogg suggested that the agreement include a mechanism for revisiting payment terms periodically.

Motion by Mr. Peterson to approve the minutes of the February 22, 2018 meeting as written, seconded by Mr. Young and approved.

With no public comment, the board continued OLD BUSINESS and took up the question of connecting the solar array to VEC's pole by underground or overhead service. During the Planning Commission meeting earlier that night, it was reported that the two methods may be roughly comparable cost wise, but that overhead was subject to storm damage and a potential hazard for equipment in the pit. Motion by Mr. Young to install underground, seconded by Mr. Peterson and approved. Mr. Eliason will proceed accordingly with gathering costs and planning the site, and Ms. Kellogg will notify VEC.

#### ROAD REPORT

Eric Pope with VTrans told Ms. Kellogg that grants funds are available to help the town resurface the Durgin Rd bridge and repair a crack. He will talk more at the March 13<sup>th</sup>, 8:00 am financial meeting at the Town Office. The 2018 budget included \$1500 that could be used as matching funds. Mr. Pepin received estimates for fabrication of two pieces of equipment from Awesome Welding, for which he would like to apply for equipment grants. The board authorized Ms. Kellogg to proceed with an application for a retriever tool to be used on road shoulders but not a person lift for the loader. They will discuss safe options with the highway department. Mr. Pepin would like to sign up himself and Remberto Margolla for a grader course at the Career Center; the registration fee was approved. J.P. Sicard has paid for the box culvert to be installed on Hudson Rd and forwarded their invoice for payment. The board is willing to approve payment once the Town has received the executed grant agreement from AOT.

#### NEW BUSINESS

First item of new business was to complete the post-Town Meeting process. Motion made by Larry Young to re-elect Meghann Carter as Selectboard Chair for 2018, second by Mr. Peterson and approved. As state law requires the Selectboard to appoint a tree warden, Mr. Young made a motion to appoint Justin Taft, seconded by Ms. Carter—approved and will be notified. The Town Clerk has heard that Crystal Langmaid may be interested in the Second Constable position. Ms. Kellogg will ask her to come to the next board meeting if she is indeed interested. On a related note, Jon Bruce is scheduled for June police academy training instead of March due to a having to get approval of VT Emergency Management.

Bills and orders were approved for payment.

#### ANNOUNCEMENTS

Dept. of Public Safety is holding a northeast regional meeting at the Newport City Fire Department March 14th at 6:30 pm for emergency response personnel to discuss plans for a broadband network for emergency communications.

Seeing no other business or discussion, the meeting adjourned at 8:26 pm. The next meeting is March 22<sup>nd</sup> at 7:00 pm.

Approved this 22nd day of March 2018:

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Selectboard, Town of Charleston