

Town of Charleston
Selectboard Meeting 10/08/2020

MINUTES

Attending: Selectpersons Peter Moskovites, Larry Young and Patrick Austin; Road Foreman Bernie Pepin; Planning Commission Chair John Kellogg; Residents Mark & Susan Laliberte; and Selectboard Clerk Colleen Kellogg.

THESE MINUTES ARE UNOFFICIAL UNTIL APPROVED AT THE NEXT MEETING

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 pm by Peter Moskovites, Chair. Motion by Pat Austin to approve the minutes of the September 24, 2020 meeting as written, seconded by Larry Young and unanimously approved. To accommodate other attendees, the Chair began with the Planning Commission report and public comment

HAZARD MITIGATION PLAN

As requested by the Selectboard, John Kellogg said the Planning Commission has identified a consultant to update the Town's Hazard Mitigation Plan, which requires specialized expertise. With few qualified individuals statewide, an RFP with a deadline of October 8th was developed and distributed to Paul Luciano of OPH Consulting who developed the last plan, as well as to NVDA, both of which did good work to get the previous plan completed and approved. OPH submitted a proposal for \$6,900. NVDA did not submit a proposal or refer an alternate consultant. Mr. Luciano has the experience and expertise, his proposal is within the grant budget, and Mr. Kellogg recommends that the board hire him. Mr. Kellogg is willing to be the point person, with support from the Town Office, and will brief the Selectboard regularly. The plan must be ready to submit for state approval by February 5th, and the process will involve two public meetings that can be virtual to ease scheduling during the winter. Mr. Austin made a motion to accept the Planning Commission proposal to offer a contract to OPH to complete the town's Hazard Mitigation Plan renewal at a cost not to exceed \$6,900.00, seconded by Mr. Moskovites and approved unanimously. Mr. Kellogg will work with Clerk staff and OPH to complete all needed vendor documentation.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mark & Susan Laliberte live on Maple Ridge Rd, a Class 4 road that ends in an impassable wooded area. They have frequent problems with automobiles and four-wheelers traveling the road and getting stuck—motorists even abandoning stuck vehicles that block the Lalibertes' access to their camp property. They have retrieved vehicles and fixed the road repeatedly. They ask the board to consider reclassifying the portion beyond their driveway from Class 4 to Legal Trail (only adjoining landowners are permitted to use motorized vehicles on a Legal Trail) and give the Lalibertes' permission to install an unlocked gate to deter violators. A 'No Outlet' sign may also help. The Town highway map was reviewed, and the Chair said that a site visit would be needed to help the board better understand the precise location. The board will follow-up to do this. The Lalibertes' delivered letters of support for their request from other abutting landowners.

ROAD REPORT

Bernie Pepin reports the crew finished winter sand and has been ditching. With the project on Bowen Hill Rd he is over budget on erosion stone but needs more to finish other ditches according to state-required standards. A grant for part of the Bowen Hill project will reimburse the town for a large portion of the stone used. Board members agreed that Mr. Pepin will purchase the stone required to complete planned work. Before the next budget, they will do some planning around the Town's Road Erosion Inventory, how road segments will be prioritized for fixing, and what the cost will be. Mr. Pepin also said the Town's dog kennel has been delivered to the Animal Control officer and vandalized road signs have been cleaned.

OLD BUSINESS

- Pat Austin called Ruggles Engineering about the gravel pit but has not yet heard back. Mr. Pepin said he hopes to have everything in place to harvest material from the pit floor next summer.
- Regarding the Grants-in-Aid program, the Town is free to choose any site that is hydrologically-connected and does not meet standards—it need not be a slope over 10%. Mr. Pepin suggests Ten Mile Square Rd and can work with Ms. Kellogg to consult segment maps/data. Mr. Austin moved to authorize Bernie to choose a qualified site and proceed, seconded by Mr. Moskovites and approved unanimously.
- Dennis Fekert, VT ANR, received the board request for a Public Hearing on the Chittenden permit application and will be in touch when the hearing is schedule. Mr. Austin said this was a form reply sent to all interested parties and he will continue to monitor.
- The Selectboard has proposed discontinuing the .15-mile Class 3 town highway (TH51) known as Taylor Farm Rd at the request of the landowner. Motion by Mr. Young to honor the request, seconded by Mr. Moskovites. Mr. Moskovites said that one landowner owns both sides of of the road, which ends at a dilapidated farmhouse, and making the road private would have no impact on its future use. Keeping the road open has been problematic for the town. Mr. Austin said a change from Class 3 to discontinued is more drastic than usual, and suggests that reclassification to a legal trail with permission to gate it would serve the landowner's purpose. Mr. Moskovites said the road was essentially a driveway to a home and goes nowhere. Mr. Young said town maintenance vehicles have had trouble on the road since he's been on the board. Vote: Moscovites and Young voting yes and Austin voting no. The proposal was approved and a draft of the written decision will be prepared for the October 22nd meeting.
- A letter was received from Adler & McCabe, attorneys for the Davises on Route 105, and the board agreed to take it up in Executive Session later in the meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

- The first item of new business—Maple Ridge Rd—was taken up during Public Comment.
- Board members reviewed the upcoming meeting schedule and the deadline to have a completed approved 2021 Budget—January 28th. Ms. Kellogg will work with Teri Gray to see if reasonably accurate budget estimates can be ready for the November 12th meeting.
- Related to the Budget, Mr. Moskovites would like to hear from Constable Jon Bruce about the prospect of more involvement from him on things like recent sign vandalism, or if the town should consider something like a contract with the Sheriff's department. Mr.

Young said the town had looked into the Sheriff's department, but the fee was beyond the town's means. Mr. Young agreed to call Constable Bruce and bring him to an upcoming meeting.

- Board members discussed the usual schedule for employee evaluations and if they were used when deciding on raises. Mr. Austin suggests the board consider a standard metric for deciding on raises—like a percentage or annual wage review. Mr. Pepin said he would prefer if employees didn't have to ask for a raise. Mr. Pepin will complete supervisor evaluations of the highway crew next week, and the board will complete reviews for Mr. Pepin and Ms. Kellogg at the next meeting.

Six Highway and Selectboard orders totaling \$17,369.12 were approved unanimously and signed by all board members.

The Chair called for Executive Session at 7:11 pm to discuss the legal matter raised by Adler's letter. Session ended at 7:22 pm with the following action: the letter will be forwarded to town attorney May & Davies for guidance.

Seeing no other business, the Chair adjourned the meeting at 7:24 pm. The next meeting will be held Thursday, October 22, 2020 at 6:00 pm.

Approved this 22th day of October, 2020:

Selectboard, Town of Charleston