

Town of Charleston
Selectboard Meeting 11/12/2020

MINUTES

Attending: Selectpersons Peter Moskovites, Patrick Austin, and Larry Young; Road Foreman Bernie Pepin; and Selectboard Clerk Colleen Kellogg.

THESE MINUTES ARE UNOFFICIAL UNTIL APPROVED AT THE NEXT MEETING

The meeting was called to order at 6:02 pm by Peter Moskovites, Chair. Motion by Pat Austin to approve the minutes of the October 22, 2020 meeting as written, seconded by Larry Young and unanimously approved. There was no public comment.

ROAD REPORT

Bernie Pepin reports that brush cutting on Town Farm Rd is complete and well done. The grader has been out, trying to keep up with the high-traffic roads like Dane Hill, Hudson, Westmore, and Echo Lake before they freeze up. They're not bad. Trucks are undercoated, and winter tires are on.

OLD BUSINESS

- Constable Office discussion was skipped since the person interested did not attend.
- An update of the Hazard Mitigation Plan has started, and the planning team has been established and approved. The next steps are: (1) Updating profiled hazards for the town based on best available data and feasibility of mitigation actions. Of note, pandemic planning in an unprecedented way. The plan will focus on this issue in addition to the common natural hazards affecting municipalities in the NEK (e.g. flooding, severe snow/ice storms and extreme cold); and (2) Updating the plan to reflect 2018 State Hazard Mitigation plan and disaster events affecting the county and town since last approval.
- On the subject of Maple Ridge Rd, the board is considering the possibility of granting permission to install an unlocked gate on this class 4 road as a pent road, but no decision is needed since problems don't occur during winter. The matter was tabled until spring. Mr. Moskovites will call Mr. Laliberte to update him.
- Mr. Austin is waiting to hear from Ruggles Engineering to schedule a meet at the Barton gravel pit. He will reach out again and place an item on the agenda when there is more to discuss.
- Ted Aldrich has finished summer work for the town. The board and foreman discussed the desirability of having a winter spare, which the town hasn't had but needs in order to cover scheduled time off and illness/emergency. Work is not guaranteed. The board authorized a \$20 per hour rate for winter plowing. Mr. Pepin will finalize an arrangement with Mr. Aldrich.
- Mr. Pepin raised the concept of a standard raise framework/schedule that had been discussed at an earlier meeting. Mr. Austin agreed with the idea, and Mr. Moskovites said the economy and current town budget circumstances should always be considered. The matter will be discussed as the budget develops.

NEW BUSINESS

- MRGP Amendment form certifying completion of the town's Road Erosion Inventory was reviewed and signed.
- A project to install ditching and replace culverts on Mad Brook Rd will be submitted to Better Roads for a FY2022 grant. Application was approved and signed by the chair.
- Newport Ambulance sent Charleston a copy of their 2021 budget. Charleston's appropriation will be \$42,056—up from \$40,430. The board will let Ms. Kellogg know if they would like Director Jeff Johansen to attend an upcoming meeting to answer questions.
- The Town received \$23,649 additional general highway aid from VTrans. This was shared among towns in lieu of awarding Roadway Grants in 2020.
- Reports on the year-to-date budget status and some preliminary numbers for the proposed 2021 budget were reviewed. Mr. Moskovites favors keeping the budget conservative and the tax rate in the same range. Board members asked for reports showing percentage of budget spent to date and percentage comparison between 2020 and 2021 budget numbers, as well as Road Equipment fund balance and payment on the new loader loan. They would like to know how a \$10,000 budget increase affects an individual property owner.
- Board members would like to dedicate the Town Report to Wayne Bowen, who passed away in 2020. Mr. Austin will reach out to the family for a photo.
- Requests to place appropriations on the Town Meeting warning were approved for: Northeast Kingdom Human Services (\$1074) and VSO Symphony Kids (\$100).

Twelve Highway and Selectboard orders totaling \$942,532.35, were approved unanimously and signed by all board members.

A property tax appeal to the state appraiser by Bill Heanue and Robin Cote was rescheduled to January 4th. This is for board information only, and the listers will represent the town.

The Chair called for Executive Session at 7:45 pm to discuss communication with the town attorney and complete personnel evaluations. Session ended at 8:35 pm with the following action: Written employee evaluations are complete and will be shared with employees. Performance will be considered for raises during budget talks.

Seeing no other business, the Chair adjourned the meeting at 8:37 pm. The next meeting will be held Thursday, December 10, 2020 at 6:00 pm.

Approved this 10th day of December, 2020:

Selectboard, Town of Charleston