

**Town of Charleston**  
**Selectboard Meeting 12/10/2020**

MINUTES

Attending: Selectpersons Peter Moskovites and Patrick Austin; Town Clerk & Treasurer Teri Gray; and Selectboard Clerk Colleen Kellogg. Charleston Principal Chris Lawson and Justices of the Peace Terry Rollins, Samantha Stevens, and Jean Wilson attended by phone.

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 November 12, 2020 meeting as written, seconded by Mr. Moskovites and approved. There was no public comment. To accommodate other attendees, the Chair began with a discussion of Town & School Meeting Day.

**TOWN & SCHOOL MEETING**

The Chair said the Selectboard is leaning toward voting by Australian ballot with a virtual informational meeting, and they are looking for input from other election officials and the school district. Current indoor capacity restrictions would not allow voter access as required by law, and there is no legal means to hold a remote floor-vote meeting. Mr. Lawson said the School Board doesn't see another option and would support this plan along with a combined school and town informational meeting. Attendees agreed that a combined meeting with a single call-in/join method would be best. All agreed that the Charleston community likes the open form, and this would be a one-time only arrangement necessitated by the pandemic. There was some concern that a budget may be more likely to be voted down by Australian ballot. Mr. Austin made a motion to hold the 2021 Town & School Meeting by Australian Ballot (as scheduled on March 2<sup>nd</sup>) with an informational meeting in conjunction with the School on the evening of March 1<sup>st</sup>., seconded by Mr. Moskovites and approved. Polling hours on the 2<sup>nd</sup> will be 10:00 am to 7:00 pm as always. The informational meeting is tentatively scheduled for 6:00 pm, subject to School Board confirmation. The Town Clerk plans to mail Town Reports to voter households and will work with the School District to include key school information, and to set up the ballot and virtual meeting.

**OLD BUSINESS**

- An updated draft of Sections I and II of Charleston's 2020 Hazard Mitigation Plan update is being reviewed by planning team members, is posted on the website and in the town clerk's office for public review. Based on consultant findings, it was agreed that the 2020 Hazard Mitigation Plan update will include flooding, severe winter storms, extreme cold, and pandemic be included for mitigation efforts justified by past events, climate trends, risk analysis, state risk rankings, and town characteristics. Corresponding actions include improving road infrastructure and resilience to severe winter storms, reducing impact of cold durations, raising awareness of hazards and mitigations, continuing geomorphology assessments with state/regional agencies, and improving resilience to pandemic.
- Mr. Moskovites and Mr. Young visited Maple Ridge Rd to discuss options with the Laliberte's—whether they wanted to formally request reclassification or if a gate would suffice. They were in favor of a gate and have support from the two other landowners.

The location would be on the Class 4 portion beyond their driveway but before it turns to legal trail. This would prevent anyone from driving onto the legal trail, which is already prohibited. Board members reviewed a map of the location. Motion by Mr. Moskovites to give the landowners written permission to install an unlocked gate on Maple Ridge Rd as indicated on the map, seconded by Mr. Austin and approved. Mr. Moskovites will work with town office staff to finalize and record written permission.

- Ms. Gray and Ms. Kellogg presented a year-to-date accounting of 2020 revenue and expenses and an in-progress draft of a 2021 budget, and various line items were discussed. With some unanticipated revenue for the highway department in 2020, board members agreed it would be sensible to purchase a replacement chloride tank this year. The Town Office staff will let the Road Foreman know of this decision.
- The annual officer stipend for the Fire Warded has stayed at \$50 for many years, despite substantial time involved. Motion by Mr. Moskovites to increase the stipend to \$200 in 2021, seconded by Mr. Austin and approved.

#### NEW BUSINESS

- Motion by Mr. Austin to place Appropriation requests for NEK Council on Aging, Pope Memorial Animal Shelter, Umbrella and VT Rural Fire Protection Task Force on the 2021 Town Meeting Warning, seconded by Mr. Moskovites and approved.
- The Town has been awarded a Local Government Expense Reimbursement grant to reimburse the town for special expenses related to COVID measures in town facilities. In addition to sanitation supplies and alterations made to ensure employee and public safety, Board members agreed that current equipment does not meet the town's virtual meeting needs and asked the office staff to work with the IT vendor to purchase and set up equipment for remote meetings and trainings, which will continue for the foreseeable future.
- Several draft pages of the Town Report were reviewed. Recycling information will be updated to include composting and Casella information. Board members will further review Contacts and Highway Policies and notify the office staff of any suggestions. Mr. Austin reached out to Wayne Bowen's daughter and will get a photo for use on the cover.
- Bob Kelley, Town Administrator in Derby, emailed to see if Charleston would consider a Mutual Aid agreement with neighboring towns to support one another in case a crew is hit hard by the pandemic. He sent a sample agreement from VLCT. Board members agreed that towns might need to lean on one another in emergencies but were unsure of how formal an arrangement was needed. Mr. Moskovites will contact Mr. Kelley to discuss it further and report back to the board.

Twelve General and Highway orders totaling \$77,612.28 were approved and signed.

Seeing no other business, the Chair adjourned the meeting at 7:46 pm. The next regular meeting will be held Thursday, January 14, 2021 at 6:00 pm. The Chair and Town Office staff will be in touch if an earlier, special meeting is need to make timely progress on the budget and Town Meeting preparation.

Approved this 14<sup>th</sup> day of January, 2021:

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Selectboard, Town of Charleston