

**Town of Charleston**  
**Selectboard Meeting 01/20/2022**

MINUTES

Attending: Selectpersons Patrick Austin, Peter Moskovites (via Zoom) and Larry Young; Highway Foreman Bernie Pepin; Town Clerk & Treasurer Teri Gray; 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 Patrick Austin, Chair.

Larry Young moved to approve the minutes of the December 30, 2021 meeting as written, seconded by Mr. Austin and unanimously approved. There was no public comment.

#### ROAD REPORT

Bernie Pepin reports that he is having trouble with the pickup ignition—apparently wires are corroded and it's being worked on under warranty. The crew has starting cutting trees and brush along Ten Mile Square Rd in preparation for ditching and shoulder work next year. He asked what to do with the wood if no one picks it up, and suggests putting it in the pit. It'll be a good 10 cords of soft wood. Board members agreed that the town should first contact landowners to see if they want the wood. Colleen Kellogg agreed to draft a letter and make a mailing list of landowners. Mr. Pepin has also looked at places where he thinks trees can be cut on Dane Hill Rd to eliminate shade that keeps the road from thawing.

#### OLD BUSINESS

- East Engineering submitted plans for an arch pipe culvert with concrete headwall to replace a 48" culvert pipe on Ten Mile Square Rd near the Town pit. VTrans engineers said the structure looks good, and they will follow up with the engineer as well as VT stream engineer Pat Ross to fine tune stream channel details. Mr. Austin moved to accept the plans, seconded by Mr. Moskovites and approved.
- Ms. Kellogg reported that an audit of the 2021 books is complete, and the final 2021 budget report has not changed. The road surplus of \$61,596.12 has been confirmed.
- Board members reviewed the 2022 Proposed Budget, which has not changed since the previous meeting, with the exception of an additional few thousand in expected revenue from Town Clerk fees. The line item for Sand, Gravel & Crushing was noted, and board members reiterated the option of financing a portion of this year's JA McDonald bailing and crushing bill to keep the annual number stable. Mr. Moskovites noted that the overall budget increased by about \$28,500—a 3% increase. Mr. Moskovites moved to present the proposed budget to voters at Town Meeting, seconded by Mr. Austin and approved.
- Board members agreed to table any further action to develop or post a Grader Operator job posting until more is known about the current operator's medical leave status or ability to return to work. Mr. Austin has spoken with him and will discuss more in Executive Session at the end of the meeting. Mr. Austin will also contact Ted Aldrich about his potential interest in a full-time position before the board makes any decision about staffing and hiring. Board members agreed on the need to have someone ready to run the grader as soon as roads break up in spring.
- Roof, insulation, and door-seal work at the Highway Garage is complete and paid for. Tardif has agreed to come back soon to combine both heaters on one thermostat located further from the door. Mr. Pepin said the system is working well, but to maximize efficiency and save propane, the town should continue investing in sealing air leaks and poorly insulated areas—like the passage door on the end facing the clerk's office and maybe insulation in the walls. With board member agreement, Mr. Austin will contact Currie Construction to put a price on this work.

#### NEW BUSINESS

- Mr. Austin favors holding Town Meeting in-person at the school as usual. The Town Clerk and Assistant confirmed that they support the usual format as well. The school board has also decided to

go ahead with in person. Masks are mandatory at school-based events, and the Clerk's office has ordered N95s. The mask requirement will be prominently displayed in the town report. A vote is needed only to alter the traditional format, so no action was taken. Town & School Meeting will proceed with all voting from the floor.

- Board members reviewed a draft of the 2022 Town Meeting Warning, including an article to transfer the 2021 Road Surplus of \$61,596.12 to the Road Equipment Fund, and another to extend a tax-exemption to the fire department parcel that must be approved every five years. Mr. Young moved to approve the 2022 Town Meeting Warning as written, seconded by Mr. Moskovites and approved.
- An annual VTrans Town Highway Mileage Certificate was reviewed. All amounts were correct. Mr. Austin moved to approve the mileage certificate with no changes, seconded by Mr. Young and approved.
- Mr. Austin moved to approve and sign a Quit Claim Deed from the town to new property owner Belanger releasing town "lease land" interest, seconded by Mr. Young and approved.
- Board members received a working draft of the 2021 Town Report and agreed to display the Town Meeting mask requirement on the cover. Mr. Moskovites moved to approve the Town Report, seconded by Mr. Austin and approved. Board members are asked to get any edits to the Clerk by Wednesday.
- Board members had no objection to the highway crew using town equipment to help move Charleston Historical Society safes from the town office to the garage for temporary storage. This will happen soon to make way for floor stain.
- A Highway Crew job application received the previous week was tabled until the next meeting as no position is currently being advertised.

Three 2021 orders totaling \$37,500.88 were approved unanimously and signed by board members. Three 2022 Selectboard orders totaling \$12,889.00 and six Highway orders totaling \$20,107.84 were approved unanimously and signed by board members.

#### ANNOUNCEMENTS & INFORMATION

- The U.S. Treasury released the final rule on ARPA spending. Ms. Kellogg will participate in an online information meeting held by VLCT and NVDA on February 2<sup>nd</sup>.
- Ms. Kellogg reports that resident Hap Eliason has been working with Building Energy to troubleshoot solar array equipment, and all equipment is producing power. Remote communications are still impaired so Mr. Eliason is providing on-the-ground assistance when needed.
- The Memphremagog Watershed Association invited the town to participate in a remote meeting regarding stormwater initiatives in neighboring towns. The event was the previous night, but the MWA will keep the board informed of activity.

Mr. Austin moved to enter executive session to discuss a personnel matter, seconded by Mr. Young. Mr. Moskovites ended his remote connection for privacy, and Executive Session began at 7:00 pm with the two board members present. Session ended at 7:05 pm with the following action: Mr. Austin moved to update Bernie Pepin's personnel file with a note stating that when he was hired as Road Foreman, Selectboard/Road Commissioners agreed that he would always be paid \$3.50 more than the next highest-paid employee, seconded by Mr. Young and approved.

Seeing no other business, Mr. Austin adjourned the meeting at 7:10 pm. The next meeting will be held Thursday, January 27, 2022 at 6:00 pm.

Approved this 27<sup>th</sup> day of January 2022:

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Selectboard, Town of Charleston