

Town of Charleston
Selectboard Meeting 03/10/2022

MINUTES

Attending: Selectpersons Patrick Austin, Peter Moskovites and Larry Young; Road Foreman Bernie Pepin; Listers Jean Wilson and John Westinghouse; Residents David Bradshaw and Helene Schnopp; Tyler Billingsley of East Engineering (remote); 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. Ms. Kellogg added the following business to the agenda: Election of a Board Chair and Post-Town Meeting officer appointments.

Peter Moskovites nominated Pat Austin as Selectboard Chair, seconded by Larry Young. With no other nominations, Mr. Austin elected Chair. Mr. Moskovites nominated himself Vice Chair, seconded by Mr. Austin. With no other nominations, Mr. Moskovites elected Vice Chair.

With the agreement of all board members, discussion of the bid process for Ten Mile Square Rd was taken up. Tyler Billingsley said installation of the pipe arch culvert was a short project that would have a contractor onsite a couple of weeks. Permits are submitted, and the job is ready to bid. He's seeing very high prices and many contractors already booked. One option is to wait and see if the economy, fuel prices, and labor shortages come down, and then bid this summer. State structures grants allow 30 months to complete projects. The town has the right to reject any and all bids, but a re-bid is not ideal as contractors have already played their hand. The small size of the project is an advantage; it could be a good filler project to round out someone's schedule. The bid process will begin with a pre-bid meeting, then contractors will have two weeks to submit bids. The pipe requires ~2-week lead time. While July isn't a great time for bids, he's had luck with bidding in August for an October job. Bernie Pepin said the crew will need to haul ditch fill across the area this summer so waiting works for him. By agreement of all board members, the bid process is on hold for now and they will check in with Billingsley in a couple of months. He will be in touch if he sees changes.

Mr. Moskovites moved to approve the minutes of the February 24, 2022 meeting as written, seconded by Mr. Austin and unanimously approved.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Helene Schnopp lives on Rocky Ledge Road and would like to know the process for getting her area of the road plowed again. When the town stopped plowing it, she had a household member undergoing serious medical treatment and access was critical, but the town would not continue plowing. She said she needs to figure out something as the road is not in great shape and she is concerned about continuing to live on it. There was discussion of the road's current classification as a legal trail, which is not eligible for plowing and only adjacent landowners can operate motorized vehicles, and the events that led to the previous board's realization that the road was a legal trail. Mrs. Schnopp asked to know the history of when the road became a legal trail as she purchased the property in 1994 and should have been notified of a change. The board will work with Ms. Kellogg to research the matter and get back to Mrs. Schnopp. As a second issue, Mrs. Schnopp said she is taxed as though she is in the Echo Lake area, but she cannot access the lake since Butch Moulton keeps a wire fence across the road. Mr. Austin said the town would look into the matter since a road or trail can be gated only with Selectboard permission and then must remain unlocked to allow access. The Chair asked Ms. Kellogg to keep the matter on the next meeting agenda to be discussed along with a taxpayer request to reclassify Class 3 roads that serve only one house.

A highway crew job application was received and will be kept on file in case of an opening.

ROAD REPORT

Mr. Pepin said the crew is still clearing trees and brush on Ten Mile Square Rd in preparation for summer ditching and restoration work.

OLD BUSINESS

- David White Trucking has signed and returned contracts for pavement sweeping and roadside mowing, so 2022 work is lined up.
- Lister Jean Wilson said the town's Common Level of Appraisal (CLA) is a state measure of listed values against sale prices, and houses have been selling for more than listed values causing a big drop in the CLA. Only "valid" sales can be used for calculations, and Charleston appealed several of the sales looked, some because they were substantially improved after listing and others had category changes. Interior inspections were not possible during COVID. VT Dept of Taxes denied invalidation of sales but approved category changes, improving the CLA a little to 91.35%. The more sales that are thrown out, the higher the CLA will go, and the listers recommend appealing the tentative redetermination. Board members reviewed the state Notice of Tentative Redetermination, and took no action to accept. The scheduled April 4th appeal hearing will proceed.
- David Bradshaw was present to discuss possible Constable service, and that was taken up during Old Business. This is a 2-year elected office, but the Selectboard could fill the vacant office by appointment until the next town meeting. There was discussion of possible duties, including enforcement of town ordinances. Board members do not currently see a need for a Sheriff's contract, but someone in town who wanted to be constable could be helpful to residents. The Chair asked Ms. Kellogg to send Mr. Bradshaw training and information from the Vermont Criminal Justice Council so that he can find out more about what's involved.
- Jessie Currie provided an estimate of \$3,246 to change out all exterior doors—facing the road, the woodshed, and cold storage—including locksets, deadbolts, and frame-up. He provided a second estimate to recase the overhead doors in the main garage with Versatex (\$945) or pine board (\$705). Casing is rotted, and the work will improve heating. Currie will look next at options and prices for spray foaming the back wall and the wall facing the Clerk's Office, and will investigate roof leaks and possible solutions including taking up the tin, plywooding the roof, and reinstalling the tin. Possible funding sources are the building upkeep budget or ARPA funds. Mr. Young moved to go ahead with both projects (1) replacing three exterior doors and recase all overhead doors with Versatex, seconded by Mr. Austin and unanimously approved.
- There was no action taken on ARPA funds.
- The board received a letter from Margaret Maxwell, notifying the board of her letter to Alan & Judith Davis, which places the Davises on notice that they would be in violation of the law if they cut or damage any trees along town highway 26. No action was taken by the board. Mr. Moskovites said Mrs. Maxwell had also called him about the matter. He is interested in what policies towns have in place to deal with the fact that landowner tree cutting in the ROW can impact road maintenance.

NEW BUSINESS

- Mr. Austin moved to reappoint Justin Taft as Town Tree Warden, seconded by Mr. Young, and unanimously approved.
- Mr. Austin moved to reappoint Blair Moulton and Darald Moulton as Fence Viewers, seconded by Mr. Young, and unanimously approved.
- Mr. Austin moved to reappoint Mike Currie as Surveyor of Wood & Coal, seconded by Mr. Moskovites, and unanimously approved.

- Mr. Austin moved to reappoint Sarah Jenness as Poundkeeper, seconded by Mr. Young and unanimously approved.
- No appointments were made for Constable or Second Constable.
- Mr. Moskovites moved to approve Delinquent Tax Collector Grace Frizzell's proposal to turn over delinquent taxes to the town attorney on June 1st for tax sale proceedings, seconded by Mr. Austin and unanimously approved.
- There was no action taken on a Diesel Emissions Reduction Grant as the town does not currently have an eligible project.
- A sample Foreman's Incident Report form was reviewed as a way to help document issues and back up any action. Board members would like to see a place for both Foreman and employees to write comments. A revised form will be discussed at the next meeting.
- Mr. Moskovites moved to approve and sign the Annual Financial Plan and Certificate of Compliance required for VTrans, seconded by Mr. Austin and unanimously approved. Items the board would like to discuss at next week's annual meeting include paving of 5A, work needed on town bridges, and concerns about ROW encroachment in West Charleston Village.
- Mr. Austin said he was contacted by a resident about Selectboard support of retail cannabis, but he knows now that the matter can only be approved by voters. The resident wants to apply for a retail license, but until a petition is brought forward there is nothing to be done. Mr. Moskovites asked if the board could consider making some statement of support. The matter was placed on the next agenda, and the resident will be notified.
- The board agreed to hear from UVM nutrition students conducting a nutritional assessment of the Charleston community at 6:10 pm at the next meeting.
- Mr. Austin asked board members to consider making masks optional at board meetings. With agreement from all board members, it will be individual choice to wear a mask but not required.

Two Selectboard orders totaling \$8,774.19 and four Road orders totaling \$19,173.23 were approved unanimously and signed by all members.

ANNOUNCEMENTS & INFORMATION

- Charleston's annual meeting with VTrans will be Tuesday, March 15th at 8:30 am at the Town Clerk's Office. Chair Pat Austin said he may have a conflict.
- A Planning Commission is scheduled for March 24th at 5:30 pm.

Seeing no other business, Mr. Moskovites moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Mr. Austin, and the meeting adjourned at 7:59 pm. The next meeting will be held Thursday, March 24, 2022 at 6:00 pm.

Approved this 24th day of March 2022:

Selectboard, Town of Charleston