

Town of Charleston
Selectboard Meeting 11/10/2022

MINUTES

Attending: Selectpersons Patrick Austin, Peter Moskovites and Larry Young; Highway Foreman Bernie Pepin; Town Clerk & Treasurer Teri Gray; Resident Jake Ovitt; 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 asked to add the following: Jake Ovitt to Public Comment re: a road issue; and under New Business, Green Up Vermont's appropriation request and a dog bite complaint that will require a vicious dog hearing.

Peter Moskovites moved to approve the minutes of the October 27, 2022 meeting as written, seconded by Larry Young and unanimously approved.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Jake Ovitt, property owner on Calhoun Rd, said that NorthWoods Stewardship Center has put up gates on Tripp Hill Rd. He believes the road is or was a town road from the legal trail end of Calhoun Rd to Echo Lake, and if it was thrown up, how was ownership distributed? There was discussion of the gate location; the Foreman believes it's beyond the town's right of way. Mr. Austin said it's the Selectboard's understanding from official town highway maps—dating to 1941—that the area in question is not a town highway. Mr. Ovitt said he believes it was maintained into the 1960s, and will bring the board a copy of a map he has seen—from around 1915. He asked if the town policy permitting only abutting landowners to use motorized vehicles on legal trails would allow a log truck to travel the road. Board members agreed that because NorthWoods is an abutting landowner, they can use the trail for their purposes including logging. The board did not take any action since they don't have jurisdiction over a gate on a private road but will look at the location to be sure they understand the situation. Mr. Ovitt asked if there is a way to have the legal trail 'thrown up'. Board members discussed the process that happens if this is requested including a hearing, notification of all landowners, and a final Selectboard decision.

ROAD REPORT

Bernie Pepin said the crew has cleaned all truck bodies and completed winter sand. He has grader pricing information from Cat and John Deere, which are a couple of thousand dollars apart. He feels both are good machines. The town has been happy with John Deere; some operators like the visibility in a Cat. The board wants to see written proposals from both dealers. Mr. Austin and Mr. Moskovites favor warning the question of grader purchase/lease at Town Meeting. Mr. Young expressed concern about town trucks coming off warranty at the same time. Mr. Pepin agrees that the grader isn't needed tomorrow, so the town could wait but should have a plan in place so the grader and all equipment are replaced regularly. Mr. Pepin and Ms. Kellogg are still working to spec and estimate a proposed project on East Echo Lake Rd and will have a grant application ready for the Dec 10th meeting.

OLD BUSINESS

- Teri Gray said she has started the process with AudioCarve to set up an account and get a cell phone for Mr. Pepin.
- Grader purchase planning was discussed during Road Report.
- Mr. Austin received only one estimate for a generator for the town garage and office. He's concluded the job will not happen this year and suggests taking the winter to get more estimates. Mr. Young asked how to keep the garage water from freezing during a power outage now that the woodstove has been removed. Mr. Austin said the town could have a transfer switch installed and use the donated generator, but the switch would be a waste of money if a standby generator is put

in. Board members agreed to put together an RFP in December with a price by March. Ms. Gray suggested adding Greg Ivers to the list of vendors.

- Mr. Moskovites said he is getting complaints about Bly Farm Rd. No action was taken and no further discussion.
- Board members reviewed an up-to-date report of the 2022 budget vs. actual. They discussed 2023 needs and part-time highway help. Both grader operators are doing great, and Board members are in favor of having part-time operator Fred Barrow back next year if he's willing. Town Clerk and Selectboard will begin the proposed 2023 budget and aim to complete it by January 1st.
- Looking ahead at town needs, the first truck replacement will be the 2015 Mack. Mr. Pepin estimates truck prices around \$250,000 and could work on getting truck prices next.
- Regarding gravel crushing, Mr. Pepin reports that JA McDonald has not returned to the pit to finish the crushing job. Mr. Austin said Eric Boyden told him they would be back to finish the contract at the agreed price. Mr. Austin will contact the vendor.
- There was discussion of ARPA funds. All funds have been received. The only projects allocated so far are the roof garage and Town Office heating/cooling. Both jobs are complete and paid for. Mr. Austin raised the possibility of putting ARPA funds into a high-yield account.

NEW BUSINESS

- David White is interested in again providing pavement sweeping and roadside mowing services to the town in 2023 and submitted proposals for the jobs. Mr. Young moved to hire David White for mowing and sweeping again in 2023 per his submitted proposal, with a second by Peter Moskovites and approved. Mr. Pepin will get in touch.
- Mr. Austin corrected the agenda; the Animal Control complaint was on Crawford Hill Rd rather than Dane Hill Rd. ACO Sarah Jenness responded to a complaint received from a neighboring property owner about unattended animals--chicken left without food, roosters crowing non-stop, and birds being picked off by predators. The Selectboard is aware that the owners of the property where this is taking place have ties to an animal/compost situation in Lyndonville, and the solid waste board is looking into it.
- Mr. Austin moved to include GreenUp Vermont's \$50 appropriation request on the 2023 Town Meeting warning, seconded by Mr. Moskovites and approved.
- The Selectboard received a complaint Fred Latour about a dog bite involving Beth Crowe's dog that took place in the road on Fontaine Rd. ACO/Health Officer Sarah Jenness also responded to the incident. The board must hold a "Vicious Dog" hearing within 7 days, and the hearing was set for 6 pm on Wednesday November 16, 2022.

Two Selectboard orders totaling \$137,973.39 and four Road orders totaling \$39,837.19 were approved unanimously and signed by all members.

ANNOUNCEMENTS & INFORMATION

- No Meeting November 24th – Thanksgiving holiday.

The Chair called for Executive Session at 7:30 pm to complete personnel reviews. Session ended at 7:59 pm. Reviews were completed and will be shared with employees.

Seeing no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:00 pm. The next meeting will be held Thursday, December 8, 2022 at 6:00 pm.

Approved this 8th day of December 2022:

Selectboard, Town of Charleston