

Town of Charleston
Selectboard Meeting 12/08/2022

MINUTES

Attending: Selectpersons Patrick Austin, Peter Moskovites and Larry Young; Highway Foreman Wendell Hastings; Town Clerk & Treasurer Teri Gray; Animal Control Officer Sarah Jenness; 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 to the agenda: Approve minutes of the November 23rd Emergency meeting and add RCT to the list of appropriation requests. Also under New Business, signature is needed on a Better Roads grant application, and approval is needed for Scampy's Liquor license. Peter Moskovites asked to move Sarah Jenness' business to before the Road Report.

Peter Moskovites moved to approve the minutes of the November 10, 2022 meeting as written, seconded by Patrick Austin and unanimously approved. Peter Moskovites moved to approve the minutes of the November 23, 2022 meeting as written, seconded by Patrick Austin and unanimously approved. There was no Public Comment.

Sarah Jenness said her last call, which turned out to be a "dumped" dog, exemplifies what is happening in the area. There were more adoptions during COVID, and so many dogs are now being surrendered that the shelter has a backlog, and she must hold dumped dogs longer or board them until the shelter has room. Her regular boarding options have been at capacity. The Town will see an increase in boarding costs. The Town's 6x8 pen works in warm weather, but she has no place to keep a dog in winter. She suggests purchasing some sturdy kennels that she could keep under cover or in her garage. Mr. Austin said he's concerned that towns cannot house large numbers of dogs. Board members asked Sarah to research the cost of a kennel product that will work, so she will check with Renee Falconer. She feels it would save money overall by avoiding transport and boarding costs.

ROAD REPORT

Wendell Hastings reported on the Crew's recent work: They checked on bearings for the sand screen which will come January 26th, got the pickup taillight repaired, completed recall work on the International, cleaned out culverts including one on Mill Street, tightened up the truck chains, put on wings, put a new grease block on the L60 loader, put new tires on the grader; took care of a sinkhole on Hudson Rd where a culvert separated, graded the worst parts of Dane Hill Rd and Hudson Rd (Mt. Bess to School Rd) and near the former Maple farm. The L60 loader needs tires so he will look at that in spring—\$2400-2500 per tire.

The Chair said the school asked about maintenance on Chilafoux Rd, a portion of which is in Charleston but maintained by Brownington—including plowing. The town line runs down the center of the road, and Charleston grades and maintains to the corner. No action taken.

The Chair reported that resident Scott Scelza came to garage and was very aggressive toward Wendell Hastings, berating him about school bus routes for nearly two hours. Security camera shows Wendell standing calmly and Scelza acting irate and waving his hands in Wendell's face. The board accepted written statements from Mr. Hastings and Roger Patenaude. Board members agreed that such behavior was not acceptable on town property and instructed the crew to send him to the

Selectboard to discuss any issues. There was discussion of how to prevent harassment of staff and when law enforcement should be notified.

Following up on the board's offer of the Foreman Position to Wendell Hastings, Mr. Austin asked the board to ratify a wage of \$25.00/ hour and \$44/month cell phone reimbursement, and all agreed.

OLD BUSINESS

- Two applications have been received for the open Truck Driver/Laborer position, and the posting will run for another week. The board will continue to accept applications, and the Chair can call an emergency meeting to review applications and hold interviews.
- Wendell reports that Gretchen with United said they can offer John Deere grader rental for \$45,000/year, with a dollar buy out during the final year. The current grader has over 10,000 hours, and the biggest issue is that it weeps oil between the transmission and motor, and fixing this requires splitting the equipment in two. He had a seizing issue with it over the summer but learned that the oil must be checked without the transmission running, otherwise the machine can think it's out of oil and go into "limp" mode. There was discussion of how soon to move on a new grader and what he repair options are. Board interested in getting a price on fixing the current grader for now.
- Pat Austin was not called back by JA McDonald about the crushing job, but he will continue to reach out.
- Board members discussed a Better Roads grant application for a proposed project on East Echo Lake Rd at "Ford Hill." Wendell Hastings agrees that the project will serve the town well because there is frequent erosion; the crew is always dumping gravel back into it. Board members agreed to the put the application forward, and it was signed by the chair.
- A draft RFP for a Garage/Office standby generator was tabled until the next meeting.
- A 2022 budget status report for 2022 was reviewed, along with some proposed numbers for 2023. Repair of the sand screen motor added to 2022 Parts & Repairs costs.
- Ms. Kellogg reviewed a current accounting of ARPA funds and a list of grant matches that had been proposed earlier for ARPA support. Board members will revisit this at the next meeting.
- Minutes of the November 16th Vicious Dog Hearing, which had been reviewed by all members, were finalized and signed.

NEW BUSINESS

- (Animal control needs discussed earlier)
- Ms. Kellogg reports that the Vermont minimum wage will increase each January by 5% or the percentage increase of the Consumer Price Index. Pat Austin made a motion to authorize the Treasurer to review hourly rates at the beginning of each year and increase if needed to equal the new minimum wage, seconded by Peter Moskovites and approved.
- Peggy Stevens is interested in representing Charleston on the NEK Broadband board. Current primary representative John Kellogg recommends that the board appoint her as Primary Representative and John Kellogg as Secondary. Motion by Pat Austin to appoint Peggy Stevens as Primary Rep, with second by Larry Young and unanimously appointed. Motion by Mr. Austin to appoint John Kellogg as Secondary, seconded by Mr. Moskovites and approved.
- Newport Ambulance submitted their 2023 approved budget to the Selectboard. For 2023, Charleston will pay \$51,359 for Ambulance services, which include a new dispatching charge

of \$4,546. Motion by Peter Moskovites to include \$51,359 in the 2023 town budget for ambulance services, seconded by Pat Austin and approved.

- NEKWMD submitted their 2023 proposed budget, which includes a per-capita assessment of \$1.06. This will amount to a \$1082 fee from Charleston.
- The Chair made a motion to place appropriation requests from NEK Council on Again, Pope Memorial Animal Shelter, VSO Symphony Kids, Echo Lake Protective Assoc., Charleston Historical Society, Orleans County Citizens Advocacy, and Rural Community Transportation on the 2023 Town Meeting Warning, with a second by Mr. Young. The motion was approved.
- Charleston's Municipal Roads General Permit renewal form was accepted and signed and will be submitted to the state in January with the required fee.
- Scampy's store has a new business owner, and a new liquor permit has been applied for. The Chair moved to approve the permit, seconded by Mr. Moskovites and approved.

Six Selectboard orders totaling \$45,057.56 and eight Road orders totaling \$32,003.75 were approved unanimously and signed by all members.

ANNOUNCEMENTS & INFORMATION

- A list of Selectboard meeting date for 2022 and 2023 was distributed. The Chair may have a conflict for the August 24 2023 meeting.
- VT Trails & Greenways Council sent information about their program and invitation to join.
- Vermont Local Roads' information about highway employee training and retention from was provided to board members.

Seeing no other business, the chair moved to adjourn, with a second by Peter Moskovites, and he meeting was adjourned at 7:30 pm. The next meeting will be held Thursday, December 22, 2022 at 6:00 pm.

Approved this 22th day of December 2022:

Selectboard, Town of Charleston