

**Town of Charleston
Selectboard Meeting 2/8/2023**

MINUTES

Attending: Selectpersons Patrick Austin and Peter Moskovites; Road Foreman Wendell Hastings; resident Samantha Hill; 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 Chair Pat Austin.

Peter Moskovites moved to approve the minutes of the January 26, 2023 meeting as written, seconded by Patrick Austin and approved unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Samantha Hill was referred to the Selectboard by Health Officer Sarah Jenness. She and her fiancé Cameron Norris built a house on his mother's property in secret so it would not be taxed and started living there a year ago. The owner served them an eviction notice. Sam and Cameron paid for heating fuel, but the property owner controls the thermostat and turned off the heat so the house temperature went down to 42F. They have young children and were forced to a hotel. The Health Officer performed a rental inspection at Ms. Hill's request, giving the property owner 48 hours to fix the heat or face fines. She asked the Selectboard to impose the fine. As there is no rental agreement between the involved parties, and the family is no longer living in the home, board members agreed this was a family or civil matter, and no action was taken.

ROAD REPORT

Wendell Hasting said the repaired sand screen ran for 4 hours today with no problems. Roads are decent, but they will be fighting potholes. IRD will sell some or all of the stone they crushed for the town at \$12/yd, and he can pick it up as needed. There was discussion of how best to secure the Barton pit for safety given the pond that is now there, which can be revisited in Spring. Mr. Hastings said the pond is surrounded by a berm and rocks with safety signage. Mr. Austin referred to recent praise of the road crew on Facebook, and Mr. Hastings said he has also received positive comments from the Scelza families on Hinton Hill Rd. The crew did some work there this week to clear snow from ditches and turnouts. High banks were also winged back on that and a few other roads. He had an issue with the Ford pickup freezing up over the weekend and had to use his personal vehicle.

OLD BUSINESS

- An RFP to install a backup generator for the Town Office and Highway Garage was reviewed and edited to include the Selectboard Chair as a contact for questions. Pat Austin moved to distribute the RFP to the same vendors contacted in 2022, with an ad also posted for a week in the Newport Daily Express and Caledonian-Record, and in the Chronicle for two weeks, seconded by Peter Moskovites and approved unanimously.
- A letter was received from Josh Kelly, Solid Waste Program Manager with VT DEC, in response to the board's complaint letter regarding composting activity by Roger French and Kathleen Lyford on Crawford Hill Rd. Mr. Austin commented that the town is now waiting for the state to determine whether the matter is under jurisdiction of the Agency of Natural Resources, in which case there would be a violation, or under the Dept of Agriculture, in which case there is probably no violation. The board will wait for now but discuss further action if the complaint goes nowhere. The board is very concerned about what will happen

when accumulated waste begins to thaw. Meanwhile, affected neighbors should continue voicing and documenting any concerns they have. The matter will be discussed again.

- Mr. Hastings said that someone from JA McDonald has been trying to reach the board. Mr. Austin will call them the first of next week to continue discussion of the incomplete job. In the future, it will be important to have a contract with clear details and deadlines.
- Repairs to the downstairs Town Office entrance was again discussed as a possible ARPA project. Door replacement and handicapped-accessible threshold are a must and regrading is likely needed to prevent future problems. A covered area might also help the surface to last and be a benefit during meetings and elections.

NEW BUSINESS

- Board members asked Ms. Kellogg to schedule the town's annual meeting with VTrans for Tuesday, March 14th at 8:00am.
- Ms. Kellogg said she is in touch with the school about town meeting set-up, and town reports are being mailed to all voter households like last year. The Mustang Community in Action (MCIA) group will provide coffee and breakfast items by donation.

One Selectboard order totaling \$238.05 and four Road orders totaling \$15,051.97 were approved unanimously and signed by all members.

ANNOUNCEMENTS/INFORMATION

- The AOT annual seasonal Weight Limit Letter has been posted in three places as required.
- An Executive Committee Report was received from the board of the Northeast Kingdom Waste Management District (NEKWMD), of which Charleston is a member town. Their board will approve the budget this year without a paper ballot vote by the towns, as permitted by state legislation.
- Vermont Dept. of Taxes notified the town in writing that Charleston's request for CLA redetermination was received. The town will be notified of their decision.

Seeing no other business, Pat Austin moved to adjourn the meeting, with a second by Peter Moskovites, and the meeting adjourned at 7:05 pm. The next regular meeting will be held Thursday, February 23, 2023 at 6:00 pm.

Approved this 23rd day of February 2023:

Selectboard, Town of Charleston