

Town of Charleston
Selectboard Meeting 2/23/2023

MINUTES

Attending: Selectpersons Larry Young, Patrick Austin and Peter Moskovites; Animal Control Officer Sarah Jenness, Town Clerk & Treasurer Teri Gray; Patrick Hurley, Memphremagog Watershed Association; 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.

Larry Young moved to approve the minutes of the February 8, 2023 meeting as written, seconded by Peter Moskovites. There was no discussion and the minutes were approved unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Sarah Jenness provided an update on an animal cruelty investigation at the Plankey residence. A search and seizure warrant was executed, resulting in seizure of one horse and one live dog from the property along with dead animals. The owners will be criminally charged, including (1) a condition that they never again own animals and (2) a request for restitution, however, Sarah and Renee Falconer have covered all costs and services through donations, and the only cost to the town is Sarah's time. She set up a shelter for the horse during sub-zero weather and delivered water daily to keep the horse alive. Animal cruelty situations are now handled by the game warden not state police, and the Game Warden performed with excellence. Support from the community has been overwhelming.

The Chair suggested that the town provide Ms. Jenness with a cell phone and email address to keep her town business separate, and all board members agreed. Town Clerk Teri Gray will proceed with getting the phone set up.

ROAD REPORT

With Foreman Wendell Hastings unable to attend, there was no Road Report. Larry Young said he had spoken to Hastings and learned that next winter's sand has already been put up.

In his work with Memphremagog Watershed Association, Patrick Hurley helps to identify projects to support water quality, improve fishing access. etc. The late Leon Whitcomb and his wife Rhoda Bedell have been looking to donate a small parcel in East Charleston. She cannot donate the land due to financial constraints, but she can sell it. The state has been looking to develop access in the area, since there is already a lot of informal use. The state would pay for survey and legal services and a purchase price of \$10,000 per acreage—the money coming from the Federal Great Lakes Fisheries Association. The state will take care of some invasive knot weed but essentially leave the property as is. They may try to develop a couple of road shoulder parking spaces but would prefer to work with the town to direct people to where they can already park. There was a discussion of an area across VT Route 105 from the property that looks like a town right-of-way on the tax maps. This will be looked into. Mr. Hurley provided a map of the proposed project area, a letter of support from Rhoda Bedell and asked if the Selectboard would support the project with a letter of support. Larry Young moved to approve and send a draft letter of support, seconded by Pat Austin, and approved unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS

- Ms. Kellogg provided a list of vendors who were sent the Generator RFP or have contacted the town about the job. Mr. Austin said there has been a lot of activity, and he has been

contacted with many questions. He confirmed that board members are in agreement that the project involves combining two services into one. There will be a single generator and a single meter that cannot be mounted on the pole but needs its own pedestal. Only conduit will be mounted on the pole. The generator would be mounted near the pole and served by its own propane tank. It doesn't need to run everything. For billing, the Clerk's Office will figure a percentage of Office vs. Garage based on historical bills.

- Regarding the town's unfinished gravel crushing job, board members agreed that Pat Austin will contact JA McDonald to find out what their plans are.
- NEK Waste Management District sent the board a copy of a letter that had been sent to property owners Rodger French and Kathleen Lyford, who are the subject of a complaint about hauling/disposing of compost. Mr. Austin recalled that Senator Bobby Starr was supportive of the Dept of Agriculture. chicken farm exemption and had opposed a provision that would have required haulers to dispose in a certified facility. For this reason, Mr. Austin recommends that anyone with concerns contact Senator Starr to make him aware of the problem.

NEW BUSINESS

- Peter Moskovites moved to approve a liquor license renewal for the West Charleston Corner Store. The motion was seconded by Pat Austin and approved unanimously with no further discussion.
- In a conversation with an electrician about the generator RFP, the Clerk staff learned that fluorescent lamps will soon be unavailable in Vermont, and the rebates to upgrade fixtures to LED are set to end in July. Estimates for upgrading the garage and office fixtures were requested and presented to the board. The Clerk will likely go ahead with replacement of upstairs fixtures since the downstairs has already been done. The Clerk will clarify separate pricing for office and garage. The discussion of how to handle garage lighting was tabled until more information is known about options to use led lamps in existing fixtures.
- As the town's 5-year solar maintenance/monitoring contract with Building Energy will expire this year, Board members reviewed a letter drafted by the Planning Commission to Building Energy to start planning for future maintenance and monitoring. Mr. Austin moved to approve and send the letter, seconded by Mr. Young, and approved unanimously.
- Board members reviewed the Town Meeting Warning and proposed budget in preparation for any discussion that might come up during the meeting.

Four Selectboard order totaling \$14,618.44 and four Road orders totaling \$17,438.22 were approved unanimously and signed by all members.

ANNOUNCEMENTS/INFORMATION

- The Charleston School board discussed their budget at their February 8th meeting. A copy of the minutes was presented for board information and can also be viewed online.
- VLCT will hold an informational session on Town Meeting Floor Voting February 28th.

Seeing no other business, Peter Moskovites made a motion to adjourn the meeting, with a second by Patrick Austin, and the meeting adjourned at 7:16 pm. The next regular meeting will be held Thursday, March 9, 2023 at 6:00 pm.

Approved this 9th day of March 2023:

Selectboard, Town of Charleston