

Town of Charleston
Selectboard Meeting 4/27/2023

MINUTES

Attending: Selectpersons Patrick Austin, Tim Jenness, and Peter Moskovites; Road Foreman Wendell Hastings; Town Clerk & Treasurer Teri Gray; Ed Barber of Newport Daily Express; 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.

Under Changes or Additions to the minutes, Colleen Kellogg said she had an update from the constable to share under Old Business. Pat Austin said he would like to discuss the town's ATV Resolution under New Business.

Tim Jenness moved to approve the minutes of the April 13, 2023, meeting as written, seconded by Peter Moskovites. There was no discussion, and the minutes were approved unanimously. There was no Public Comment.

ROAD REPORT

Wendell Hastings said the crew is fighting potholes, but overall, the roads are drying up well. The frost is nearly out, but they are still seeing it in a few spots. Town line and replacement 911 signs were installed this week. He asked if the board was okay with taking down posting signs since roads are holding, and construction jobs are looking to start. Selectboard members agreed that signs can come down if the Foreman feels it is safe to do so. Mr. Hastings asked if the town has a vendor for refacing faded road signs. Ms. Kellogg will check this.

OLD BUSINESS

- Pat Austin said he met with Wendell Hastings to look at a proposed project to provide safe access to tire storage area in the garage without climbing a ladder. It involves extending the upstairs platform in the main garage, so it meets up with the platform in the grader bay and installing a door between them. What remains of the old wood stove chimney should also be removed. He doesn't think it would be costly and can check with Jesse Currie about doing the work if other board members approve. All agreed that he should go ahead with this. Mr. Austin will contact Currie about the work and about resealing a garage door that is not sealed well.
- Mr. Austin said there had been discussion in the past about spray foaming the garage from the outside and asked for board member interest in pursuing this. All agreed he should get a price for this work.
- Regarding the East Echo Lake Rd project discussed at the last meeting, Ms. Kellogg learned from the town attorney that the town bears no liability for any impact on a nearby wastewater system if all work is performed within the maintenance right of way. He recommended reaching out to landowners about potential impact as a courtesy, and Wendell Hastings is setting up a site visit with landowners to discuss the work.
- Ms. Kellogg took a call that day from Constable Mike Tynio. He said he is pretty much set to attend police academy training in June, however, he has learned that he must furnish his own handcuffs, firearm, and bullet-proof vest. He asked about town coverage of these costs, perhaps a grant. Board members discussed the lack of budget for such costs and agreed that this sounds like a higher level of enforcement than the town wants.

Per board instruction, Ms. Kellogg will contact Mr. Tynio and ask him to come to a Selectboard meeting to discuss things further.

- As an update to the Blume Farm composting issue, Tim Jenness said that a follow-up site visit was scheduled for this week, but he had not heard the results. Neighbors reported to him that there is still activity at the property, but it happens at night. Pat Austin said the state's determination that the matter falls under ANR Solid Waste Division and not the Dept. of Agriculture was a good development, but he cannot confirm that compost operations have stopped. Neighbor complaints about noise indicate there are still birds there. Ed Barber asked if the waste district can obtain a list of Blume Farm's business customers for the purpose of issuing a cease-and-desist order or at least warning them where their food waste is going. Mr. Austin said he had suggested this to the district. Peter Moskovites asked about warning businesses that they are violating the law. Mr. Austin said that businesses are complying with laws affecting them by diverting food waste; it is the hauler who is violating the law.

NEW BUSINESS

- Since the last meeting, crewmember Roger Patenaude resigned. Wendell Hastings contacted Jake Ovitt, who applied for a position previously, and he is available to start work on May 1st. Mr. Austin moved to offer the position of Driver/Skilled Laborer to Jake Ovitt at a rate of \$20 hour starting May 1st, seconded by Tim Jenness. Discussion: Board members agreed this was good timing since there is plenty of time for training before winter, and the motion was approved.
- The Charleston School principal contacted the town about the need for truck access to the school's septic. A ditching project a couple of years ago removed the makeshift access used in the past. All board members were in support of the town crew installing a culvert or erosion stone to provide access—whichever the Foreman determines is best to maintain the road and ditch network. Mr. Hastings will meet with the principal to decide location and details.
- An updated version of the town's Local Emergency Management Plan (LEMP) with current contact numbers and information was reviewed. Pat Austin moved to adopt the plan, seconded by Tim Jenness. The motion was approved, and the adoption form signed.
- The Town's list of equipment and materials rates was reviewed for outdated rates. This is used to bill town equipment and town pit gravel and stone to grants. Board members agreed that rates for grader and excavator use, and for crushed gravel, should be increased to keep up with current costs and the rate list was revised. Peter Moskovites moved to approve the new list of rates, seconded by Pat Austin, and the list was approved and signed.
- Pat Austin said that a couple of years ago, the Selectboard issued a resolution to open certain roads to ATV use. He feels it has gone smoothly. He gets complaints about why certain roads are not open. Mr. Austin made a motion that all Charleston roads be opened to ATVs year-around, and the motion was seconded by Tim Jenness. Peter Moskovites and Teri Gray pointed out that the matter was not warned on the meeting agenda. Mr. Moskovites said he would have liked notice of the matter and a longer time for discussion. Teri Gray said she would like to see voters consulted and the matter to be a townwide decision. Mr. Moskovites raised the possibility that some residents would support having their road excluded from ATV use. Mr. Moskovites called for a vote, and the matter was approved with Austin and Jenness in favor and Moskovites opposed. Ms. Kellogg will prepare an amended resolution for signing at the next meeting.

Tim Jenness called for an Executive Session to discuss generator proposals, seconded by Pat Austin. Executive session began at 6:41 and ended at 7:11, with the following action: The matter of awarding a job was tabled until the May 11th meeting.

Two Selectboard orders totaling \$6,075.91 and Five Road orders totaling \$24,223.33 were approved unanimously and signed by all members.

ANNOUNCEMENTS/INFORMATION

- VT Agency will install new weight limit signs for emergency vehicles on some town bridges. This is in response to a trend of trucks getting larger and some exceeding the weight of trucks that were in use when bridges were designed. The bridge on Durgin Rd is the only one affected in Charleston.

Seeing no other business, the Chair adjourned the meeting at 7:14 pm. The next regular meeting will be held Thursday, May 11th, 2023, at 6:00 pm.

Approved this 11th day of May 2023:

Selectboard, Town of Charleston