

**Town of Charleston
Selectboard Meeting 6/22/2023**

MINUTES

THESE MINUTES ARE UNOFFICIAL UNTIL APPROVED AT THE NEXT MEETING.

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 pm by Chair Pat Austin.

Attending: Selectpersons Pat Austin, Tim Jenness, and Peter Moskovites; Town Clerk & Treasurer Teri Gray; Duane Moulton and Robert Devaney of Charleston Volunteer Fire Department; Raymond Rodrigue of Orleans Snowstormers; Matthew Wilson of the Chronicle; and Selectboard Clerk Colleen Kellogg.

Under Changes or Additions to the minutes, Colleen Kellogg said there was a Better Roads grant agreement needing the Chair's signature, and this was added under Old Business.

Tim Jenness moved to approve the minutes of the June 8, 2023, meeting as written, seconded by Peter Moskovites and approved without discussion.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Raymond Rodrigue represents Orleans Snowstormers, which maintains some snowmobile trails in Charleston. They request permission to smooth out and grade a rough section of the town legal trail between Crawford Hill Rd and Wheeler Rd. The trail is rough with debris and washouts. They are applying to VAST for funding and would do just enough to get it ready for the season—safer for trail users and easier on their equipment. After discussion to orient board members to the location, Tim Jenness made a motion to grant permission to Orleans Snowstormers to perform the work, seconded by Peter Moskovites and approved.

With no objection, the Chair moved up the Charleston Volunteer Fire Department's request for an ARPA funds grant and invited Chief Duane Moulton to provide details about the request.

Duane Moulton said a spring that fed several properties in East Charleston Village failed around the end of last year, and the Fire Department had no water—no bathroom, etc. The department took action to install a well because it's the only building in town that has emergency command center and shelter qualifications—a backup generator, kitchen, washroom, and communications. It ended up costing nearly \$22,000 for well drilling, pump, and electrical work, and this has cut down the budget to almost nothing for the year. With ARPA funds sitting out there, he hopes they can receive a little to build up budget funds. They investigated grant sources, and ARPA was suggested by other agencies. The Chair asked why CVFD did not make a direct request to voters at Town Meeting, and Chief Moulton said the department did not want to raise people's taxes. He said CVFD did not get other grants during COVID.

Asked by the Chair to describe the Department's organizational structure, Chief Moulton said CVFD is a private nonprofit org. The Town doesn't own it. They have a Board of Directors and seven officers that run the business side together in consultation with regular members. In addition to firefighting, they also provide emergency services. Many of their calls now are medical response. CVFD runs with the ambulance, which generally only sends two people. They

also provide rescue services, like working the ski-do trails. Bob Devaney said they do traffic control for VSP. They are not compensated by ambulance or police, and medical training comes out of their pocket. The town appropriation amounts to half of what the department needs.

Peter Moskovites asked if the Department has the means to function assuming nothing extraordinary comes up; and the Chief said they did. Board members stated they have until the end of 2024 to decide how to allocate ARPA funds, and they will keep in touch with CVFD about how they are being spent. In the meantime, Board members asked that CVFD get back in touch with the Selectboard if any financial troubles arise.

Bob Devaney invited those present and everyone in the community to the annual barbeque fundraiser for CVFD to be held at Devaney Farmstand on Saturday, August 5th. The barbeque is from 12:00-4:00 pm for all ages. There will be an adult comedy show from 7:00-9:00 pm.

ROAD REPORT

- Wendell Hastings said the crew has been hauling gravel and grading, and roads townwide are pretty decent. They resurfaced all of Fontaine Rd with shim and will top it with gravel. He said the paved apron on Willis Rd is broken up, and material has washed down and covered it. He thinks there is a catch basin at the corner. He asked whether the paved apron on Willis Rd is maintained by the state or town, and the Chair said if it needs paving that would be the town's responsibility. Hastings said Durgin Rd also needs repaving. Peter Moskovites recalled VTrans' statement that early paving funds may be available and suggested the Foreman get a ballpark number to repave. All board members agreed he should proceed, but there is no hurry since the crew is short-staffed right now.
- Pat Austin said the town is still looking to fill a crew position. Board members instructed Ms. Kellogg to run the ad for another week. Wendell Hastings said the crew is holding up well even though they are short staffed. Having Fred Baraw as grader operator and truck driver is a huge help. He said the grader is also holding up, but he did have to change the transmission fluid.
- The Chair called for Executive Session at 6:33 pm to discuss personnel matters. The session ended at 6:47 pm with no action taken.

Seeing no objection from other board members, the Chair moved a Blume Farm update to the bottom of Old Business.

OLD BUSINESS

- CVFD ARPA request and the Crew Opening were discussed earlier in the meeting.
- Pat Austin moved to accept a contract from NEMRC for the town's reappraisal, and the motion was seconded by Tim Jenness. Peter Moskovites had questions about why it was best to hire NEMRC instead of having listers conduct the reappraisal, what was meant by contract language requiring the listers to be available, and how much time will be required of the listers. Board members agreed to table the decision until the listers can be consulted and asked the Clerk to see if listers are available for the next board meeting.
- The Chair reviewed a list of completed ARPA projects including garage roof and town office heating/cooling system and noted there was about \$228,000 remaining. Other possible projects that have come up in public discussion at Selectboard meetings include paving repair at the town office and replacing highway equipment. The board has this year and next to make allocation decisions and until the end of December 2026 to spend the funds.

- Pat Austin said he still gets complaints about improper composting activities at Blume Farm LLC on Crawford Hill Rd, and there is increased animal activity. Their practices do not seem to have changed, and he would like the board to hold state agencies accountable for enforcement. Board members reviewed a letter from VT Dept. of Agriculture notifying property and business owners Kathleen Lyford and Roger French that their operation does not qualify as a farm for the relevant exemption, as well as a follow-up letter from VT ANR/DEC Solid Waste Program instructing the owners to obtain Solid Waste Certification, cease operations, or demonstrate exempt status to before June 26th. Mr. Austin moved to send a letter to ANR and the Solid Waste District, to be drafted by Ms. Kellogg and approved by the Chair, making sure they are enforcing the law as it's written. The motion was seconded by Tim Jenness and approved.
- A Better Roads grant agreement for a project on East Echo Lake Rd was signed by the Chair.

NEW BUSINESS

- Bourne's Energy will meet with the Foreman on Monday the 26th to determine size and location of a propane tank to serve the backup generator. No action is needed from the board.
- An Internal Financial Controls Checklist, required to be submitted to the Selectboard annually, was received from the Treasurer and accepted by the board.
- Peter Moskovites moved to approve a contract with Building Energy to install a cellular communications card with a data plan to continue remote monitoring of the town solar array for the next five years. The motion was seconded by Tim Jenness and approved. Colleen Kellogg confirmed that cellular communications allow the town to make sure the array is operating properly. The original plan was combined with installation costs, so the expense was not on the radar at budget time. The plan expires after 5 years and will be figured into the budget the next time around.

Two Selectboard orders totaling \$18,898.61 and four Road orders totaling \$27,559.03 were approved unanimously and signed by all members.

ANNOUNCEMENTS & INFORMATION

- The board received an announcement about Technical Assistance grants from U.S. Department of Transportation.
- Colleen Kellogg said the Echo-Seymour Watershed Action Plan project will involve risk assessments on roads and culverts. She will keep in touch with the project to share risk information that may impact road maintenance.

Seeing no other business, Tim Jenness made a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Pat Austin, and the meeting adjourned at 7:10 pm. The next regular meeting will be held Thursday, July 13th, 2023, at 6:00 pm.

Approved this 13th day of July 2023:

Selectboard, Town of Charleston