

Town of Charleston
Selectboard Meeting 7/13/2023

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; Road Foreman Wendell Hastings; Head Lister Jean Wilson; Resident Alden Pellett; and Selectboard Clerk Colleen Kellogg.

Tim Jenness moved to approve the minutes of the June 22, 2023 meeting as written, seconded by Pat Austin, and the minutes were approved without discussion.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Alden Pellett has gathered signatures on a petition to close Sanderson Hill Rd to ATVs. He has seen groups coming up the road from 5A getting lost at the top and asked for dead end signage to stop this from happening. The Chair asked for details about the numbers of riders, if they were residents, and discussed the board's resolutions to open roads to ATVs in response to resident requests. The Chair said he does not favor closing sections of roads. Mr. Pellett objected to a resolution being passed without public discussion and understood from previous talks with the board that his concerns would be heard if he gathered support from neighbors. The Chair agreed that the board will look into 'Dead End Road' or similar signage. Wendell Hastings asked if noise was the main concern, because he has not seen damage from ATVs even with recent rain. Mr. Pellett said noise was the issue.

ROAD REPORT

- Mr. Hastings said the town made out well in the recent storm, although there are problems at the Barton Pit. Beavers continually plug the access culvert, and the fee for trapping is \$100.
- Mt. Bess Rd needs drainage work, including gravel and pulling in shoulders. The ditch is 6-8 feet from the road, and water doesn't reach it, so rain erodes the surface. Because the work would be costly, Mr. Hastings and Ms. Kellogg will investigate grant options.

OLD BUSINESS

- Discussing Class 4 road maintenance, Mr. Hastings and board members agreed that Crawford Hill Rd and Maple Ridge Rd need to be brushed back, and the mowing vendor is instructed to hit these two roads. Also under Class 4, a culvert near the a-frame on Town Farm Rd is rotted and only 12in, but it's taking water and the road is passable.
- Under Equipment Replacement, Mr. Hastings said the town needs a grader and truck; the oldest is pushing 12,000 hours. Mr. Austin said it takes a year and a half to get a truck. Mr. Hastings favors keeping the two Macks and getting rid of the six-wheeler, which doesn't have enough hauling capacity for gravel material or enough winter sand to do an entire route but is new enough to hold value. The chloride tank could go in the 2015 truck. Board members asked Mr. Hastings to gather price and trade-in numbers as time allows, including alternate makes.

With no objection, Reappraisal was taken up next and discussion of applications for the Highway Crew position was moved to the end of the meeting.

- Under Reappraisal, Jean Wilson said a town reappraisal is required by the state once a town's CLA drops below 85%, and Charleston's is 83%. She presented a contract with NEMRC for the work. Because the next reappraisal will be within five years of the 2019 reappraisal, the data is still considered good, and assessors don't have to knock on every door. This is called a statistical update, but it's not just as simple of changes land value or house value. A sales study must be conducted to replace the land schedule and cost tables--using Marshall and Swift accredited tables. In the last reappraisal, a senior NEMRC appraiser did the tables for Charleston, but Listers did the data collection and other work. (Jean is a full-time appraiser for NEMRC). Under the proposed contract, NEMRC employees would put the table together, do a field review, and drive by houses to verify. NEMRC would also get out notices and handle the grievance process. Because values have really changed, and people are passionate about home values, she finds it works better to not have neighbors setting neighbors values and hearing grievances. The NEMRC rate seems reasonable, and the money is already in the towns Reappraisal reserve fund. Jean will be involved as a NEMRC employee to bring local knowledge. Listers will still process transfers and current use. Peter Moskovites moved to accept the contract, seconded by Tim and the contract was approved.
- The owners of Blume Farm LLC informed the state that they have stopped hauling compost to their Crawford Hill Rd property, but the Chair has heard from neighbors that they are still bringing food waste. The state is organizing a site visit to verify that operations have stopped and will keep the town informed of the schedule. The Chair moved to rescind the decision to send a letter to the state regarding enforcement, for now, seconded by Tim Jenness and approved.
- The town will need of gravel. Mr. Austin will contact JA McDonald about excavating and crushing another 9000 yards to complete the job.
- A propane tank was installed to serve the generator and is waiting for final fill-up before putting the generator into service.

NEW BUSINESS

- A petition was received requesting the selectboard to close to ATV traffic the upper part of Gratton Hill Rd from the intersection with Streeter Rd signed by 12 residents including Peter Moskovites. Mr. Moskovites said the support was unanimous among people on that section of road, and there are more signatures coming. Mr. Moskovites moved to accept the petition. There was no second to the motion and no further discussion.
- A tax sale for properties with delinquent 2022 taxes will be held at 9:00 am on August 3rd at the Town Clerk's Office Ms. Gray said a Selectboard member must be present in case there is a property that no one bids on. Pat Austin agreed to represent the Selectboard.
- Planning Commission members have explored local vendors for solar array maintenance and recommend two possible vendors. With board approval, Ms. Kellogg will contact these to learn about their approach and service rates as well as comparison information from the array installer. All members agreed, and Ms. Kellogg will proceed and report back.
- Due to staff absence, the Chair suggested canceling the July 27th meeting, and all members agreed. The board clerk will post cancelation notices. Teri Gray said she may need to call a special Selectboard meeting shortly after so the board can approve the 2023 property tax rate.

Four Selectboard orders totaling \$25,379.29 and four Road orders totaling \$24,438.64 were approved unanimously and signed by all members.

ANNOUNCEMENTS & INFORMATION

- Charleston's Education Property Tax Rates are: 1.5262 Homestead, and 1.6687 Non-homestead, which are higher than last year. Once the Grand List is finalized, Teri Gray will work on figuring the final tax rates for billing.

- Local Water Quality officials can provide a presentation on the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) and River Corridor Protection measure for Selectboard members. Adoption can increase FEMA funding in a disaster.
- Resident David Brashaw plans to present a request to ban wake boats at the next meeting. The board clerk will inform him that the next meeting will be August 10th. Tim Jenness said these boats take in water that is not fully purged and can carry invasives to other lakes.
- A second meeting of the Echo-Seymour Watershed Action Plan will be held July 17th. A timeline of plan activities was provided to board members and the Road Foreman.
- Incident Command System (ICS-100) training is being offered to town officials

Prior to the meeting, all three Selectboard members interviewed three applicants for the highway crew opening. With confirmation from the other two members, the Chair said he had board authorization to offer the job to one of the applicants, whose names are being kept confidential to protect current employment. Mr. Austin will make the offer and will keep the Town Clerk informed so employment and benefits paperwork can be completed.

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 7:15 pm. The next regular meeting will be held Thursday, August 10th, 2023, at 6:00 pm.

Approved this 10th day of August 2023:

Selectboard, Town of Charleston