

Town of Charleston
Selectboard Meeting 2/22/2024

MINUTES

THESE MINUTES ARE UNOFFICIAL UNTIL APPROVED AT THE NEXT MEETING.

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

Attending: Selectpersons Patrick Austin, Peter Moskovites and Tim Jenness; Town Clerk & Treasurer Teri Gray; Road Foreman Wendell Hastings; and Selectboard Clerk Colleen Kellogg.

The Chair accepted the following additions to the agenda: VTrans Annual Meeting and Durgin Rd site meeting under Road Report; James Bronner Public Records Request under Old Business; and under New Business, a Bauer Gravel Farnham proposal to provide tax sale services.

Tim Jenness made a motion to approve the minutes of the February 8, 2024 meeting as written, seconded by Pat Austin, and the minutes were approved as written. There was no public comment.

ROAD REPORT

- Wendell Hastings said the roads are potholed, and the crew has been moving back snow. The grader is back after two weeks and was in use for 8 hours with no heat-up. United said the seal installed was too small. He will check the oil in the morning. Pat Austin said it would be good to send a sample for testing when equipment is serviced, as this can indicate major issues. There was discussion of tools and methods for extracting a useful sample.
- Peter Moskovites said the turnaround on Gratton Hill Rd was torn up by a sap truck. He gave permission to use his land years ago, but the turnaround has widened over time. Wendell Hastings specified that town trucks pull in to the turnout and back out rather than trying to turn a circle, and he feels the driver should fix the damage. Mr. Moskovites will speak to Ernie Wright and let him know to stay on the compacted area. There was discussion of what could be done to reinforce the area to maintain highway access. Pat Austin thanked Mr. Moskovites for allowing the town to use part of his land as a turnaround.
- Ms. Kellogg said the town's Annual Meeting with VTrans will be Tuesday, March 19th at 8am.
- Mr. Hastings will hold a required site meeting for vendors invited to submit a bid for bank armoring and slope stabilization projects on Durgin Road on Tuesday the 27th at 8:00 am.
- Mr. Hastings asked about the board's plan for truck replacement. He sees the trucks 'taking it hard' and needing frequent repairs. Board members commented that plows are worn, but there is no need to replace a truck tomorrow. It makes sense to see how the grader holds up; it is possible this will become more urgent than the next truck. In case of failure, a usable truck could be secured quickly. Mr. Hastings said the 2015 Mack would be the one to replace. While board members did not dismiss the truck purchase, they agreed that a decision would not be made that night. With town meeting coming up, voters will consider the budget, and a new Selectboard term will begin. Equipment will continue to be discussed at future meetings.

OLD BUSINESS

- Board members discussed budget highlights to be shared at Town Meeting, including ARPA funds being taken as budget revenue with corresponding additional expenditures, and they are estimating a five-cent town tax increase. The Clerk will type up the bullet points for board reference. Asked about recent education legislation, North Country board director Peter

Moskovites said it will be a couple of months before the full impact on education funding and tax will be known.

- No concerns have been raised regarding the day of the eclipse. Ms. Kellogg said the state wants any large public events posted on their events site to ensure that emergency response is coordinated. She also said the town is slated to receive viewing glasses for distribution in town. Mr. Moskovites said he believes local schools are planning to dismiss early.
- Pat Austin said the town received a public records request from James Bronner. Mr. Austin consulted the town attorney and is working with the Clerk's Office and Animal Control Officer to assemble requested records. He expects to be able to provide them within the 10-day window.

NEW BUSINESS

- Nick Daley of Bauer Gravel Farnham's Newport office provided an agreement letter to provide tax sale services. Teri Gray said that Delinquent Tax Collector Grace Frizzell has contacted several attorneys and recommends Mr. Daley. The office is local, and their legal assistant served the town in her previous job at Davies Law. Pat Austin moved to hire Nick Daley of Bauer Gravel Farnham to provide tax sale services to the town. The motion was seconded by Tim Jenness and approved. The Town Clerk will ask Mr. Daley to provide an agreement letter for signature by the Selectboard, and she will inform Mrs. Frizzell.
- Peter Moskovites referred to an invoice for catwalk construction at the garage and asked about the outcome. Mr. Hastings said the work took two weeks, and the old chimney was removed. All agreed that the construction is rugged.
- Mr. Hastings said Scott Lalime has looked at the pole outlets in the garage yard and will get those working.

Two Selectboard orders totaling \$9,771.20 and three Road orders totaling \$19,296.39 were approved unanimously and signed by all members.

Wendell Hastings requested Executive Session to discuss a personnel matter. With agreement from the board, Executive Session began at 7:03 pm and ended at 7:11 pm with no action taken.

Seeing no other business, Peter Moskovites made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Tim Jenness, and the meeting adjourned at 7:12 pm. The next regular meeting will be held Thursday, March 14, 2024, at 6:00 pm.

Approved this 14th day of March 2024:

Selectboard, Town of Charleston