

**Town of Charleston
Selectboard Meeting 3/13/2025**

MINUTES

THESE MINUTES ARE UNOFFICIAL UNTIL APPROVED AT THE NEXT MEETING.

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 pm by Tim Jenness, Vice Chair. Attending: Selectpersons Tim Jenness (TJ), Terry Rollins (TR), and Pat Austin (PA); Road Foreman Wendell Hastings (WH); Town Clerk & Treasurer Teri Gray (TG); Animal Control Officer Sarah Jenness (SJ); Property owners Jennifer and Seth Phair; Ed Barber with Newport Daily Express; and Selectboard Clerk Colleen Kellogg (CK).

The first order of business was to elect a Selectboard Chair. Pat Austin was nominated by TJ, with a second by TR. Seeing no other nominations, Austin was elected Selectboard Chair for the ensuing year. For Vice Chair: Tim Jenness was nominated by TR, with a second by PA. Seeing no other nominations, Jenness was elected Vice Chair for the ensuing year.

CK read a list of the town's notice posting locations: Town Clerk's Office, West Charleston Post Office, East Charleston Post Office, West Charleston Corner Store, and Charleston Elementary. PA asked for a motion to keep posting locations as listed. The motion was made by TJ, seconded by TR, and the motion passed. With the Barton Chronicle currently the town's newspaper of record, PA made a motion the town continue with the Chronicle, with a second by TJ, and the motion passed.

Under additions to the agenda, CK said the Planning Commission recommended that the Selectboard appoint Bill McMaster to the Planning Commission.

PA asked for a motion to approved the February 27th meeting minutes. The motion was made by TJ, seconded by TR. The minutes were approved as written with no discussion.

PUBLIC COMMENT

- As background on her recommendation to adopt a town livestock ordinance, SJ said that relevant statute changed July 1st, and towns have an opportunity to control livestock that is repeatedly loose—such as goats on Crawford Hill Rd—and collect higher fees by issuing tickets enforced by Vermont Judicial Bureau. The ordinance must reflect new language, offering Derby's as an example. SJ said the law and any town action would not harass farms or occasional incidents, would not apply to commercial operations: breeding, doggy daycare, but it could help the town with neglect situations. SJ will do more research into the question of a combined ordinance that applies to all animals or a separate livestock one. The Selectboard agreed to have VLCT involved in advising and reviewing the ordinance.
- Jennifer Phair told the Selectboard she witnessed the highway crew winging snow against her high tensile fence and damaging it when digging out a culvert this week—she believes it was to teach her a lesson. She took issue with Mr. Hastings's behavior and language. She asked the town to pay for the repair. PA welcomed her to send an invoice for the fence repair, and the town will submit it to insurance to determine liability. He explained that she was not targeted. PA looked at the area that morning and saw water backed up from the culvert almost to her driveway. He said the Foreman was dealing with an emergency, his priority was to save the road for the town, and he did a great job saving the road, which in turn saved Phair's field below. PA also cautioned Ms. Phair that the culvert with a fence right off it will probably always have a risk of damage with the high volume of water that comes down the brook. Ms. Phair asked if she could request permission from the state to dredge the brook. WH said he has a site meeting with Eric Pope of VTrans to look at another issue in the area on April 29th, so that would be a time to discuss this.

ROAD REPORT

- WH said the town's new 2025 Mack Truck was picked up and looks good. It was assembled with a 12' wing, which will likely be swapped for an 11-foot as ordered. The crew will put on sideboards.
- WH said nearby pit IRD did not make mud/spring stone, and extra trucking from Dupuis's pit will increase the cost. Sicard has offered 3" stone staged in Morgan to get the town through spring for \$4,000, but this must be screened to extract 1.5" material. The Town has about two loads of stone on hand—not enough if mud develops. PA proposed offering \$3000, and if the price is rejected, the town can purchase 1.5" from Dupuis. Other board members were in favor, and authorized the crew to get a few loads now from Dupuis while the purchase is sorted out. WH said he has 40 loads of shim and 25 loads of top gravel on hand.
- VEC request ROW Occupancy permission to provide service to the Hogan home on Morgan-Charleston Rd. WH said he and TJ met with VEC to review the project last year. A related project to serve the Lancaster property is already complete. Gosselin is the excavator, and they buried the conduit 5 feet as required by the town. A motion to approve and sign the ROW Occupancy Request was made by TJ, seconded by TR, and approved.
- PA tabled discussion of a Highway Crew job opening until other business was complete because Executive Session would be needed.
- At the last meeting, TJ and WH agreed to inform Alan Davis that material pushed into the Bly Farm Rd ditch from his property must be cleaned out, but TJ said Davis is no longer farming and has not been around the barn. WH believes Champigny's people pushed the mud, manure, and silage into the ditch to access feed they were buying. PA said the town must let the buyer know he must clean the ditch or the town will do it and bill him. WH said town work poses a problem because they would have to work on Davis's land beyond the ROW, and equipment will need special cleaning. PA asked where the town can even dispose of manure and silage. PA said ditch/waterway contamination is an ANR violation and asked the Clerk to be in touch with the town's ANR enforcement contact.
- Regarding Class 4 maintenance priorities for the year, WH said brush is not an issue, but he has been widening areas of Town Farm Rd with ditch fill to accommodate a 10-wheel truck. Town Farm Rd also needs ditching and two replacement culverts, and Crawford Hill Rd needs a culvert. PA suggests the board revisit the matter in May or June, and in the meantime asked CK to provide all board members a list and map of Class 4 roads for site visits.

Discussion of a proposed livestock ordinance was completed earlier in the meeting. There was no other Old Business.

NEW BUSINESS

- With none elected at Town Meeting to fill two years remaining in a three-year lister term, PA made a motion to appoint Bob Wilson to the office. The motion was seconded by TR, and Bob Wilson was appointed Lister until Town Meeting.
- At Town Meeting, voters approved a measure to appoint rather than elect a Delinquent Tax Collector, and TG said she recommends the role be folded into her town office duties. TJ made a motion to appoint Teri Gray as Delinquent Tax Collector. The motion was seconded by TR, and Teri Gray was appointed.
- Motion by PA to reappoint Justin Taft as Tree Warden. Second by TR. Justin Taft appointed.
- Motion by TJ to reappoint Blair Moulton and Darald Moulton as Fence Viewers. Second by TR. Blair Moulton and Darald Moulton appointed.
- Motion by PA to reappoint Mike Currie as Surveyor of Wood. Second by TR. Mike Currie appointed.

- Motion by TJ to appoint Pat Austin as town Supervisor to the NEKWMD. Second by TR. Pat Austin appointed. PA said he is questioning the benefit of membership. The town pays a tax on trash like other member towns but without a transfer station does not get the same benefit. The school was recently denied disposal of freon. As a member, Charleston does not have to write a solid waste improvement plan (SWIP). If the town were not in the district, PA estimates trash disposal cost would decrease by 25%, and there are options to piggy-back on a neighboring town's SWIP or write our own.
- Motion by TJ to approve renewal of the West Charleston Corner Store's liquor license. Second by PA. The license was approved.
- TG said that former Delinquent Tax Collector Grace Frizzell has turned over all records to the town office, and TG will arrange for town auditors to audit the records as required by state law. She and CK are working to understand new requirements for delinquent tax collection and tax sales, including written policies that must be adopted by the Selectboard, and they aim to have materials ready for the next Selectboard meeting.
- Motion by TJ to appoint Bill McMaster to the Planning Commission. Second by TR. Bill McMaster Appointed.

Two Selectboard Orders totaling \$16,051.78 and two Road Orders totaling \$31,874.27 were approved unanimously and signed by all members.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- WH and CK will attend an MRGP roundtable at the Derby VTrans office. Selectboards are also invited to attend.
- Charleston's annual meeting with VTrans will take place April 29th at 8:00 am at the town office. WH and Eric Pope will look at problem brooks on Hudson Rd beforehand.
- PA asked the clerk to add "next meeting date" to the regular agenda. PA is unable to attend the March 27th meeting due to a work commitment.
- Ed Barber asked the Selectboard to include a Selectboard Report in the town's annual report to sum up what happened last year and what the plan is for the next year.

PA called for Executive Session to discuss a personnel matter. The session began at 7:04 pm and ended at 7:36 pm. PA made a motion to hire Mark Fauteux as full-time Truck Driver & Labor at an hourly rate of \$25.50. The motion was seconded by TJ, and approved unanimously.

Seeing no other business, PA made a motion to adjourn, which was seconded by TJ, and the meeting adjourned at 7:36 pm. The next regular meeting will be held Thursday, March 27, 2025, at 6:00 pm.

Approved this 27th day of March 2025:

Selectboard, Town of Charleston