

Town of Charleston
Selectboard Meeting 10/21/2025

MINUTES

THESE MINUTES ARE UNOFFICIAL UNTIL APPROVED AT THE NEXT MEETING.

Meeting called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Chair Patrick Austin (PA). Present: Selectpersons Tim Jenness (TJ) and Terry Rollins (TR); Resident Lisa Moulton (LM); Fire Warden Blair Moulton (BM); Fire Chief Duane Moulton (DM); and Clerk Colleen Kellogg (CK).

TJ moved to approve the October 9th minutes as written. Seconded by TR. Approved unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENT

LM reported that a West Charleston residence continues outdoor burning despite a statewide ban and CVFD requests to stop. She received help from the Fire Chief, Fire Warden, and contacted the State Fire Marshal, who advised bringing the matter to the Selectboard. LM expressed concern over fire danger due to drought, recalling a 1924 village fire that destroyed 18 buildings.

BM said the original response involved an uncontained bonfire, but current smoke is from a meat smoker, which is allowed. He explained that while he can refuse burn permits and impose a local ban, he cannot ticket violators—only extinguish illegal burns. The town can adopt an ordinance that would allow CVFD to recoup the cost of dousing illegal fires. PA has found that there is not much the Selectboard can do; the state issues the ban and should provide for enforcement. BM said he's spoken with Kathy Decker (VT FPR) and is confident the current activity is compliant.

LM remained concerned about repeated unpermitted fires and smoke affecting quality of life and possible trash burning. BM and DM clarified that untreated lumber can be burned with a permit, but excessive smoke from any fire could be a health issue.

ROAD REPORT

- WH reported the crew has been grading roads.
- PA and WH inspected the Hryckiewicz property gate on Morgan-Charleston Rd. The owner agreed the town could replace the damaged hinge pin and adjust or move the gate if needed. The highway crew will make repairs.
- PA also inspected a drainage site on East Echo Lake Rd where a culvert—part of a Better Roads improvement project—appears deliberately blocked, which could cause erosion and cost the town an estimated 14 loads of gravel. PA noted that such tampering undermines stormwater mitigation and adds taxpayer cost. The Board will send a letter to the Echo Lake Protective Association (ELPA) seeking support and awareness. PA will work with CK to draft.

OLD BUSINESS

- Board reviewed plow turnaround issues at several roads (Bennett Farm, Bingham, Griffin, Pond View, Smith Farm, Willis). Members will meet with landowners in early November to finalize plans. PA emphasized the need for clear access, so trucks aren't delayed on one-house roads. CK will try to set these up on the same day during the first week of November.

- No new applicants for the highway crew position. WH heard from a former employee interested in winter plowing. The previous no-show applicant remains interested. The board discussed continued advertising and possible interviews.
- CK presented the confirmed Local Hazard Mitigation Plan team list and a draft list of hazards (flooding, severe winter storms, extreme cold, pandemic, and possibly extreme drought). CK will confirm dam management near West Village and seek state guidance about drought as a main hazard.
- PA moved to approve revisions to the Delinquent Tax Collection Policy to align with new state tax-sale minimums. TR seconded. Approved unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS

- The Board reviewed and signed a Better Roads grant application for Mill St. (ditching, crowning, culvert).
- Employee evaluations scheduled for Nov. 13; WH will prepare Mark's review.
- CK's written request for upgraded health insurance will be added to the next agenda.
- PA will be away in late December but will be available remotely if needed.

Two Selectboard Orders totaling \$510,965.12 and two Road Orders totaling \$34,969.70 were approved and signed by all members.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Livestock ordinance will take effect October 27th.
- Newport Mayor will attend the November 13th meeting.

Seeing no other business, TJ moved to adjourn, and TR seconded. The meeting adjourned at 6:56 pm. The next regular meeting will be held on November 13, 2025 at 6:00 pm.

Approved this 13th day of November 2025:

Selectboard, Town of Charleston