

Town of Charleston
Selectboard Meeting 9/8/2026

MINUTES

THESE MINUTES ARE UNOFFICIAL UNTIL APPROVED AT THE NEXT MEETING.

The meeting was called to order at 6:14 pm by Chair Pat Austin (PA). Present: Selectpersons Tim Jenness (TJ) and Terry Rollins (TR); Planning Commission Chair John Kellogg (JK); and Selectboard Clerk Colleen Kellogg (CK).

PA added to the agenda under New Business: a request from NEK Broadband for a right-of-way permit to install new utility poles on Dane Hill Rd.

TJ moved to approve the August 27, 2026 minutes as written; PA seconded; carried.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

ROAD REPORT

CK relayed thanks from MRGP Coordinator Chad McGann for the Town's prompt hydro-seeding on East Echo Lake Rd after ditching. McGann reported no compliance issues.

PA thanked the Town of Derby for lending its hydro-seeder. Derby maintains a shared-use arrangement with other towns, including Westmore, with Coventry also preparing to join. Annual cost was described as about \$600, plus a use or maintenance fee of about \$200. PA moved that Charleston sign on to the shared hydro-seeder agreement maintained by the Town of Derby, at a \$600 annual fee plus a fee for use. TJ seconded; carried. CK will email PA a statement of the approval so he can follow up with Derby. If the terms differ from what was discussed, the matter will return to the Board.

TJ and PA met with adjacent property owners at the Better Roads project on Mill St. The work has been signed off by Better Roads. The board noted that recent work has changed the look of the site. It was agreed that the landowner may address remaining concerns outside the right-of-way, including seeding beyond the ROW and raising a driveway with gravel if desired.

PA reported substantial work on Town Farm Road using limited materials, including salvaged culverts and discard material from screening sand in the pit on Ten Mile Square Road. The crew expects to continue toward the end of the road. At the Board's request, CK will compile history of how and why the Town came to own the Town Farm/Town Forest property, which spans the Charleston-Westmore line.

TR stated that he will thin trees along Class 4 Crawford Hill Rd beginning the first week of November to help the traveled way dry, and that current use approval is in place for thinning. PA and TJ approved of the work.

NEW BUSINESS

Planning Commission Chair John Kellogg presented the draft 2026 Town Plan, approved by the Planning Commission earlier that evening. It has been distributed to neighboring towns, the relevant state agency, and NVDA as required. An outdated sentence about RCT service will be deleted; no other changes have been identified from the hearing or review period to date.

Kellogg reviewed next steps: Selectboard review, Selectboard hearing, decision whether the plan expresses the Town's interests, adoption if so, then referral to the regional planning commission. After that, the new Land Use Review Board (LURB) has jurisdiction.

As background, he noted the first Town Plan was adopted in 2013 and the second in 2018. He described a shift under Act 181 from regional planning commissions as a source of technical help for small towns toward a role of supporting state land-use goals under LURB. He said that change has created friction between towns and RPCs. As the Town's representative on the NVDA board, he will continue to monitor the issue and report to the Selectboard. He noted that Charleston voted against forwarding the regional plan to LURB, and that three other towns present did likewise.

He is waiting for NVDA feedback, including on the energy section, and will keep the board informed. Board members with proposed changes should contact him.

A draft notice of the Selectboard public hearing on the Town Plan was reviewed. The hearing is scheduled for Thursday October 8, 2026 at 5:45 pm, ahead of the regular Board meeting.

CK reported that transfer of Current Use enrollment on the new Barton parcel to Town ownership is essentially complete. The plan and map showing the Town as owner have been approved by the County Forester. A letter from Department of Taxes is expected. For next year, the board may consider enrolling unused forested acres in the former Fauser parcel.

County Forester Jared Nunery must inspect the Town Forest acreage in Westmore that is enrolled in Current Use and invited Town officials to attend. The visit is also a chance to meet NorthWoods' new forester Jenny Newland (Sam Perron is no longer with NorthWoods). TR will review the existing plan and contact Nunery and Newland. The Westmore portion is about 50 acres; Charleston acreage is not in Current Use because tax savings is not needed on Charleston land.

TJ moved to approve the request by NEK Broadband to work in the Dane Hill Road right-of-way to install two utility poles at the locations shown on the project sketch. PA seconded; carried.

OLD BUSINESS

The Town Attorney has contacted UVM about an agreement to extract gravel on the Barton land and is waiting for a response. No board action.

The Board discussed an RFP for crushing at the Barton pit for 2027, to inform a crushing budget figure. The current crushing budget was recalled as about \$60,000 (increase from a prior \$40,000–\$50,000 range). Items still to decide at a coming meeting include bid deadline, work completion deadline, and volume. A multi-year contract was discussed as a possible way to obtain a better unit price, with concern about contractor continuity and fuel-price risk; further discussion was deferred. PA suggested having an RFP ready to advertise in March/April. On 2026 crushing, PA reported the contractor is finishing and leaving the pit.

BILLS & ORDERS

One Selectboard Orders totaling \$15,325.65 and three Road Orders totaling \$20,066.52 were approved and signed by all members.

ANNOUNCEMENTS & INFORMATION

None

TJ moved to adjourn; PA seconded. Meeting adjourned at 6:49 pm. Next regular meeting: 6:00 pm, September 24, 2026.

Approved this 24th day of September 2026:

Selectboard, Town of Charleston