

**Town of Charleston
Selectboard Meeting 9/24/2026**

MINUTES

THESE MINUTES ARE UNOFFICIAL UNTIL APPROVED AT THE NEXT MEETING.

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Chair Patrick Austin (PA). Also present were Selectpersons Tim Jenness (TJ) and Terry Rollins (TR); Town Clerk & Treasurer Teri Gray (TG); Road Foreman Wendell Hastings (WH); resident Shawn Mead (SM); and Selectboard Clerk Colleen Kellogg (CK).

Changes to the Agenda. The Chair added under New Business an appropriation request from Pope Memorial Frontier Animal Shelter.

Approval of Minutes. TJ moved to approve the September 8, 2026 meeting minutes as written. TR seconded. Approved.

Public Comment. Shawn Mead described NRCS work (with Nick) on a ditch next to the town ditch on lower Fontaine Road: an access road off the town road, culvert to be upgraded to 48 inches. The Board had previously opposed work in the town ROW, which the Town would then have to maintain. Excavation may encroach into the ROW; rock would go on the landowner's side. WH said the finished approach should sit below the ditch line so water from the culvert does not reach the road. SM said it will look as it does now, with a larger culvert. The Board had no objections on that condition.

ROAD REPORT

Westmore Rd culvert. WH is pursuing pricing and permitting to replace an existing 4-foot concrete culvert on Westmore Rd near Bingham Rd for a possible Better Roads Category D grant. CK noted the maximum award is \$60,000 with a 20% match; applications are due October 30. PA asked if the project could be completed without significant additional town match. WH will research excavator costs and work up a budget estimate that incorporates in-kind match such as town trucking and labor. Discussion will continue at the next meeting ahead of the grant deadline.

Class 4 roads. Board members and WH discussed work completed and remaining work on Class 4 roads, including surface material that makes use of gravel-pit byproduct. CK asked for direction on tracking work and material costs for budget purposes. No action was taken.

Highway crew recruitment. The Board discussed highway crew recruitment and whether a sign-on bonus should be considered. The job posting will remain active on Indeed and in the Chronicle.

OLD BUSINESS

Charleston Town Forest acres in Westmore. Ahead of a required County Forester inspection of this Current Use parcel, TR reviewed the Management Plan: a small-group harvest of 32.5 acres is required before 2029. He will meet with the NorthWoods forester later this month. Federal grant funds would likely cover NorthWoods' harvest fee; he will visit the Newport USDA office about grants. The land was bought in 1958 for \$4,500 from a farmer who did not want to improve the road as needed to keep truck access.

UVM gravel extraction agreement. CK reported that UVM officials are drafting an agreement to convey to the Town the right to extract gravel from the Barton land purchased this year. The Town Attorney will advise when the agreement is available for review.

RFP for gravel extraction/crushing. In setting the scope of an RFP, the Board discussed the annual 10,000 yards/year target and considered offering two volume options to see whether a larger quantity yields a better unit price, keeping the contract to one year. WH noted that sloped roads such as Hinton Hill Rd and Dane Hill Rd lose about two inches of gravel per year. PA suggested having an RFP ready in March for April/May bids and a job completion deadline of September.

Hydro-seeder sharing agreement. Charleston must wait for Derby to get the other member towns' agreement before joining the hydro-seeder arrangement; PA does not expect a problem. On East Echo Lake Rd, some hydro-seeded areas look exposed as the mix changes color, prompting another complaint; the Town will add mulch hay. State officials monitoring the work are very pleased with Charleston's grants and best-practice delivery and asked that this be made clear to the crew.

NEW BUSINESS

Pope Memorial Frontier Animal Shelter (added). PA moved to place a \$500 appropriation request by Pope Memorial Frontier Animal Shelter on the 2027 Town Meeting Warning. TR seconded. Approved.

Budget line items and surplus. The Board reviewed line items that are over or under budget and directed the Treasurer to apply 2025 surplus funds toward the recent purchase of land to expand the Barton gravel pit.

VLCT VERB / PACIF. TR moved to abstain from the VERB Board of Directors vote. PA seconded. Approved. TR moved to abstain from the PACIF Board of Directors vote. PA seconded. Approved.

Bills & Orders. Four Selectboard Orders totaling \$14,633.42 and two Road Orders totaling \$86,101.48 were approved and signed by all members.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Town Office & Garage paving: Pike Industries confirmed a price in line with the budget estimate. Top-coating will proceed in October per the Board's earlier decision.
- The Selectboard will hold a public hearing on the proposed 2026 Town Plan at 5:45 p.m. on October 8, 2026, with an adoption vote at the next regular meeting.
- A resident compiled a handout of resources on water quality, stormwater erosion, and driveways; copies are available for town and highway officials to share with residents.

Adjourn. Seeing no other business, TJ moved to adjourn, seconded by PA. The meeting adjourned at 7:01 p.m. The next regular meeting will be held Thursday, October 8, 2026, at 6:00 p.m.

Approved this 8th day of October 2026:

Selectboard, Town of Charleston