**CHARLESTOWN FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING**

**MONDAY, NOVEMBER 14, 2022 AT 6:30 P.M.**

**CHARLESTOWN PUBLIC LIBRARY COMMUNITY ROOM**

Present: Richard Carter, Keith Weed, David Richardson (chair), Steve Neill, Bob Davis, Patricia Chaffee, Trina Royce

Select Board: Nancy Houghton

Public: Sarah Davis

Absent:

Employees Present: Jordan Cannon

Mr. Richardson opened the meeting at 6:32 p.m. and queried the Finance Committee as to who would need meeting minutes to review. Mr. Richardson reflected on the review of the minutes on 10.03.2022 organizational meeting. Mr. Richardson corrected the date of the meeting from 11.03.2022 and changed to 11.07.2022. Ms. Royce made a motion to accept the minutes of 10.03.2022. Mr. Weed seconded the motion. Vote: Carter (yes), Weed (yes), Richardson (yes), Neill (abstain), Davis (yes), Chaffee (yes), Royce (yes). Mr. Richardson then polled the finance committee on the changes to the 11.07.2022 minutes. Mr. Richardson commented on page 2, the speaking to the rental fee for the tower being incorrectly listed as $5,000. Mr. Richardson commented that the rental fee is in fact $2,500, and the 2023 Budget lists a requested amount at $2,500. It was stated that there may have been confusion as to why last year was listed as $5,000. Ms. Chaffee motioned to accept the minutes of 11.07.2022 with the corrections discussed. Mr. Weed seconded the motion. Vote: Carter (yes), Weed (yes), Richardson (yes), Neill (yes), Davis (yes), Chaffee (yes), Royce (yes).

Mr. Richardson reflected on the upcoming Finance Committee meeting schedule, and the departments which will be presenting.

Mr. Weed commenced the review of the 2023 Highway budget. Mr. Weed stated that $149,000 has been reimbursed by FEMA from the 2021 Budget. Mr. Weed stated that the amounts for pay increase are in flux, as the method by which pay raises are set for the 2023 Budget are yet to be finalized. Mr. Weed stated that one culvert project, with two phases, is planned for next year, hence the rationale for the amount listed on the line item “Engineering and Mapping”. Discussion was held briefly on possibly increasing the line item ‘Telephone”. Mr. Weed commented that road signs are missing around town, and the highway department will have to replace these. Under “Reconstruction General” is where the highway department does in-house paving, and certain products have to be purchased for this paving per Mr. Weed. Mr. Weed commented on the increase in price of crack/chip sealing materials. As the fuel costs are in flux, Mr. Weed stated that the line item for fuel is an estimate. Mr. Weed then reflected on the increase of oil prices this calendar year. For the line item “Sand and Gravel”, Mr. Richardson asked Mr. Weed to consider increasing this amount, given the amount required in 2022. Mr. Weed commented on the fluctuation of this line item over the past several years. Mr. Richardson stated he would make a note to discuss this line item further with the Selectboard. Mr. Davis asked if $10,000 would be the amount of increase. Mr. Richardson did not state how much he would suggest increasing this line item. Mr. Weed stated that the highway department has not done any tree work this year. Mr. Weed identified as the line items for paving, chip seal, and gravel had all increased this year.

Mr. Richardson then commenced discussion regarding the transfer station 2023 budget. Ms. Chaffee voiced a question she had regarding the full-time line item, stating that all present employees at the transfer station are part-time. Mr. Weed commented that the line item for “Telephone” has increased. Mr. Weed stated that funds for “facility improvements” have been used, yet these expenditures are not reflected in the present budget. Mr. Richardson commented on the increase on the line item “scale maintenance”. Mr. Weed stated that the scale froze in winter, and a company had to be hired to rectify this issue, which subsequently resulted in a use of town funds. Mr. Weed stated that the line items “Recycling” and “Demo” are not up to date with most recent expenditures. Mr. Weed stated that cardboard is the second largest revenue for the transfer station. Mr. Richardson questioned Mr. Weed on who is allowed to use the Charlestown transfer station. Mr. Weed stated that the transfer station does not take any commercial waste, and that in order to deposit one’s waste one needs a sticker and Charlestown residency. Mr. Neill stated that the transfer station may need two or three more employees to address the issue of illegal dumping. General discussion was held on the costs to deposit waste in Charlestown, compared to other towns in Sullivan County. Mr. Weed stated that under capital outlay he has listed a 1-ton dump truck. Mr. Richardson questioned the Finance Committee if a tour of the highway department would be wanted to view the equipment. Ms. Royce and Mr. Carter answered in the affirmative. Mr. Richardson stated that he would work with Mr. Weed on scheduling a tour for the Finance Committee. Ms. Royce questioned the possibility of increasing rates at the transfer station. Ms. Chaffee reflected a prior warrant article that the town voted upon which, if passed, would have permitted the Selectboard to increase or decrease rates. Mr. Richardson stated he would speak to Ms. Town this week about planning for the upcoming Finance Committee meeting.

Mr. Davis motioned to adjourn the meeting at 7:48 p.m. Ms. Chaffee seconded the motion. All voted yes.

Respectfully Submitted,
Jordan Cannon, Recording Secretary