

**CHARLESTOWN SELECTBOARD MEETING
WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 3, 2021 AT 6:30 P.M.
SILSBY LIBRARY COMMUNITY ROOM AND BY ZOOM**

Selectboard Present: Jeremy Wood (Vice Chair), Nancy Houghton, Shelly Blouin-Andrus and William Rescsanski, Jeff Lessels was absent

Staff Present: Jennifer Haynes, Librarian by Zoom
Mark LaFlam, Acting Fire Department Chief
Keith Weed, Highway Superintendent
Stacy Hassett, Cemetery Sexton by Zoom
Patricia Chaffee, Town Clerk/Tax Collector by Zoom

Others Present: Others by Zoom not identified

Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance: Mr. Wood called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

John Proctor – from Murphy International - Mr. Proctor presented information that solar benefits the entire community. He is looking to present a warrant article on 2022 warrant to make solar panels tax neutral. Utility rates are locked in for businesses for at least 25 years when a solar project is installed and once the equipment pays for itself the business can put money back into their business, their employees and eventually that money filters back into the community. Solar benefits utilities by putting power back on the grid stabilizing the grid throughout the State. Mr. Proctor requested the Selectboard choose to put the warrant article to the voters without having him having to submit a petition. Ms. Blouin-Andrus said there were concerns about the language of the article originally presented to the Board. The article will be reviewed by legal counsel who will work to get the verbiage in a way that works for everyone involved. Mr. Proctor said there were businesses and individuals in Town considering solar proposals as solar would offset values if property taxes increase.

Dave Richardson – A packet of information was presented to the Board and Mr. Stoddard presented information regarding a view of the positives and negatives of moving from a Selectboard with an administrator to a Selectboard with a Town Manager structure. He stated the presentation was not an attack on any individual. The Town Manger would be hired by the Selectboard to uphold the goals and direction of the Town as laid out by the Town and Selectboard. The person would have the authority and responsibility to handle questions and issues during regular work-day hours without having to wait for the bi-weekly public meetings providing a smooth structure for all. Mr. Stoddard requested the article be placed on the warrant for Town Meeting.

Mr. Richardson said this concept was being presented for a group discussion and would not work without the Boards support. A Town Manager would streamline many areas and departments making some funds available, reducing the present Selectboard salaries and using yearly budget surplus were ideas to fund the cost of benefits and salary. The money part was a discussion for the Board and Finance Committee. The Board and Mr. Richardson discussed other NH Towns having

a Town Manager form of government, present problems finding employees, salaries, benefits and problems other towns had incurred. Mr. Richardson said the Town Manager form of government was not new and nothing was guaranteed, it would be a new position, breaking new ground and would cut down the Selectboard workload. They want to make the idea work and are open to suggestions and discussion. There is no intent to take authority away from the Selectboard. He requested the Board discuss and come back with overall thoughts by December 1st.

Ms. Blouin-Andrus said she was open to the idea and would like to see numbers and if the concept benefited the taxpayers and residents of the Town. The present board was relatively new, and she believed had made some good decisions. To add another layer or constant change would not address issues before every single resident today. She suggested, as the Board was currently in the middle of budgets, to slow the process down, take a year to come to a consensus so the residents could take part in public meetings and discussions.

Mr. Wood requested Mr. Richardson come up with what his group felt was the right job description and positions a Town Manager might eliminate. Also, to present a monetary value and to reach out to other Towns for history, problems. The Board may not be 100% on board but they were willing to take a next step.

DEPARTMENT HEAD REPORTS:

Town Clerk – Ms. Chaffee – Nothing to report

Transfer Station – Mr. Weed - Nothing to report

Highway Superintendent – Mr. Weed – Work relating to the storms in July and August is completed on Scenic Hill and South Hemlock. The Town is done and just waiting to hear back from FEMA. Work is being done on culverts, working on potholes in dirt roads with grader, plow frames on trucks, sand and salt is full. Taylor Hill Project preliminary plans have been received by the surveyor. The project will probably take place next spring due to neighbor participation, moving sheds and weather preventing further work.

Fire Department – Mr. LaFlam – Repairs on the new engine has been approved by manufacturer has been done; the remaining issues are computer issues that must occur while he's on site. A quote to replace the pump on tanker will be available in the next couple weeks. All trucks are running, will fight fire and pump water. It is extra things needing attention. Participation is up, there are 12 people on the rescue squad. The non-transport license cannot be renewed without the doctor agreement.

Cemetery Trustees – Mr. Hassett – In the process of cleaning up the cemeteries. The sign was installed in front of the new building November 3rd. Joyce Higgins did a history presentation on the Town of Charlestown at Forest Hills Cemetery.

Recreation Department – Nothing to report

Library – Ms. Haynes – There has been an adult program each month including Simon Brooks came last month. They have applied for a grant from Claremont Savings Bank to upgrade the Wi-

Fi.(wireless network) to improve the quality by years end. All small offices in the library should be able to connect to Wi-Fi without problems.

Administrator's Report and Correspondence: Items have been discussed previously in the meeting

Minutes of Previous Meetings:

Mr. Rescsanski motioned to accept the minutes of previous meetings.

October 27, 2021 – Workshop

October 27, 2021 – Non-Public #1 Reputations

October 27, 2021 – Non-Public #2 Reputations (SEALED)

October 27, 2021 – Non-Public #3 Hiring

October 27, 2021 – Non-Public #4 Hiring

October 27, 2021 – Non-Public #5 Hiring

October 27, 2021 – Non-Public #6 Hiring

October 27, 2021 – Non-Public #7 Hiring

Ms. Houghton seconded the motion, the motion carried 4-0 with all members verbal individual affirmative vote

Consent agenda:

Mr. Rescsanski motioned to accept the consent agenda. Ms. Houghton seconded the motion, the motion carried 4-0 with all members individual verbal affirmative vote.

Ongoing Business:

Mr. Wood read a letter from the Charlestown Middle School Recycling Club requesting donations in their effort to provide food and presents to support a family at Christmas. Their goal is to raise \$1,200.

Ms. Blouin-Andrus motioned to adjourn at 7:32 p.m., Mr. Rescsanski seconded the motion, the motion carried 4-0, the meeting was adjourned.

Submitted by:

Mildred Barry

Jeff Lessels

Jeremy Wood

Shelly Blouin-Andrus

William Rescsanski

Nancy Houghton

(Note: These are unapproved meeting minutes. All corrections will be made at the next Selectboard meeting November 10, 2021)