

CHARLESTOWN SELECTBOARD
WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 17, 2021 AT 6:30 P.M.
CHARLESTOWN PUBLIC LIBRARY COMMUNITY ROOM AND VIA
ZOOM CONFERENCING

Selectboard Present: Jeff Lessels, (Chair), Jeremy Wood (Vice Chair), Shelly Blouin-Andrus, Nancy Houghton and William Rescsanski all present in the Community Room

Staff Present: Patricia Chaffee, Town Clerk
Keith Weed, Highway Department
Liz Emerson, Planning Board
Millie Barry, Recording Secretary by Zoom

Others Present: Charles & Joyce Higgins, Alissa Bascom, Joan Ilves, Richard Lincourt, Duane Wetherby, Richard Carter, Gabe Bailey, Shawn O’Hearne, Dick Westney, James Carter and 18 attended via Zoom

Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance: Mr. Lessels called the meeting to order at 6:32 p.m., led the pledge of allegiance and welcomed in-person attendees and those by Zoom.

2022 Winter Sand Bids: Bids were received from St. Pierre, Inc. at \$13.00 per ton delivered and United Construction Corp. \$34,140.00 for 3,000 tons fob (freight on board).

Statement Regarding First Amendment Auditor and YouTube Videos: Mr. Wood read a statement regarding recent events in Charlestown.

“The Board of Selectmen is aware of public interest in a statement from the Board concerning two incidents from October 27 and October 29 when a so-called ‘first amendment auditor’ livestreamed his visits to Charlestown on YouTube.

Public comment is back on the agenda at this meeting, and the Board will hear comments on this issue or any other topic, subject to the Board’s public comment policy with a time limit of two minutes per person. However, this will be the Board’s only public statement on the two incidents.

The October 27 visit resulted in an arrest, and we understand a criminal charge is still pending. Upon advice of counsel, the Board will await the resolution of the criminal charge before considering whether to conduct a further internal review of the matter. Mr. Lessels expressed his regret to the Board for his role in the October 29 incident, and that incident is also in the hands of law enforcement.

The Board believes that the reactions of Police Chief Connors and Mr. Lessels arose from their desire to protect Town employees and the residents of Charlestown. The Board calls upon the residents of Charlestown, the first amendment auditors, and the public at large to respect the rights of all visitors to our Town, to avoid confrontation, and to allow first amendment auditors to go

about their business. The Board has reminded all Town officials and employees under its authority to do the same. We must all treat one another with respect and act in good faith.”

Recognition of Visitor/Public Input:

Joyce Higgins and Duane Wetherby - Heritage Commission - Mr. Wetherby said they were doing a large project to enclose the cannon. Their budget was decreased by \$1,000 and they are short about \$700 to cover an outstanding invoice. The Commission was advised to put the doors on the back to make the structure stable and deeper channels were put in to hold the Plexiglas. Ms. Higgins added the cannon was at Gettysburg, was acquired after the civil war and it was worth a considerable amount of money. Ms. Higgins said the structure itself was permanent and complete but the project was on-going to clean the cannon and the structure. Mr. Rescsanski motioned for the Town to pay the outstanding invoice of approximately \$700. Ms. Blouin-Andrus seconded the motion, the motion carried 5-0 by individual verbal roll call vote

Ex-Officio Committee Reports:

Conservation Committee - Mr. Lessels attended the meeting on November 15th and continues to be impressed with the group. The Committee is in the process of applying for a NRCS (Natural Resources Conservation Service) grant for the land the Town has purchased at 1110 Acworth Road. The group is developing a new trail called the Crown Point Trail. This trail goes along the river roughly following Bull Run to a granite marker where there may be a new kiosk to identify trails.

FM (Fall Mountain) Schoolboard - Mr. Wood noted there were things said at the Board meeting that were false regarding the Town of Charlestown’s approval to incur any additional costs to improve bus route roads. In addition, it was stated at the meeting there had been conversations with the highway superintendents from the Town of Charlestown and Langdon regarding the matter (also incorrect). Mr. Lessels read a letter composed to the Fall Mountain Regional School Board regarding comments made at the school board meeting on November 8th. In part, at a meeting between Mr. Weed (Charlestown Highway Superintendent) members of Selectboard, Ms. Landry and Mr. Lufkin on September 1st, 2021, the Selectboard expressed clear concerns about the use of the Meany Road by school busses as an alternate route for student travel due to the materials and time to maintain the Town road to ensure the safety of students. The letter noted the general lack of communication from the Fall Mountain Transportation Department and Mr. Lufkin to Charlestown’s Highway Superintendent regarding school closings and asked for better communication, to listen to the Town concerns and to abide by the States requests to change the bus routes.

FM School Site Base - Mr. Rescsanski said the next site base meeting will be in person on November 18th, at 6:00 p.m. at the Charlestown Middle School Library. The agenda will include an update on school events, community events, COVID updates, challenges associated with COVID protocols/staffing and budget.

Finance Committee – Mr. Rescsanski - The next meeting will be November 22nd at the Charlestown Library Community Room from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

Heritage Commission - previously discussed

Planning Committee - Ms. Chaffee said the Planning Board had been revising the Master Plan for two years. The Master Plan draft can be found on the Town of Charlestown, NH website on the Planning Board page. The draft includes actions, (goals and recommendations of the Board) including time-frame, budget and the boards and/or committees/commissions involved to implement proposed projects in the plan. Ms. Emerson highlighted actions in the implementation chapter under Community Facilities, Economic Development, Education, Energy & Utilities, Historic & Cultural Resources, Housing, Natural Resources, Recreation Resources, Regional Concerns and Transportation identifying realistic and achievable actions that may be taken in each category to further the community's plan. Mr. Lincourt noted that previous Master Plans made recommendations regarding issues facing Charlestown but things never happened, this plan includes a schedule/plan. December 7th, 2021 at 7:00 p.m. is the public hearing when the Board hopes to adopt the Master Plan. In answer to Ms. Houghton questioned regarding a water/safety instructor, Ms. Chaffee said this recommendation is someone to teach swimming lessons. Mr. Lessels said the Selectboard planned to work with the Planning Board and Finance Committee to address implementation of the plan. Mr. Lessels said the Recreation department had hired a new director and the department had been tasked with certain goals. The Board would be holding the department accountable for the goals set. Mr. Rescsanski questioned the rationale to allow multi-family dwellings and to allow multi-family dwellings by special exception. He believed multi-family dwellings were relatively low value. Ms. Chaffee said Zone E allowed two family or more units but the wording is not clear. In Zone D there is prime property available for an apartment or senior housing complex. This would not be allowed in the current Zone D wording. Special exceptions would require Town approval and an application would be submitted to the Zoning Board.

Recreation Committee - Shelly Blouin-Andrus - The new director, Kelly Vigneau has been welcomed, there is a basketball commissioner and basketball sign-ups have been extended.

Town Hall - Jessica Dennis - Nothing to report

The meeting recessed at 7:30 p.m. and reconvened at 7:39 p.m.

Administrator's Report and Correspondence:

Mr. Lessels noted December 8th will be the budget workshop with the fire department and Chief Connors of the Police Department reviewing the department's total budget and capital projects.

Mr. Lessels said appointments were needed for the Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Regional Planning Commission as Mr. Lessels and Mr. Rescsanski terms expired in October. Mr. Wood felt the Sugar River Region Destination Development was more geared to Charlestown than the Upper Valley Planning Commission. Ms. Bascom said they were two different things focusing on regional concerns. The Board discussed a member could be a person from another Charlestown

Board or Committee. Ms. Emerson said as a member of the Regional Planning Commission Transportation Advisory and Brownfields Committee, she felt if there was not a representative present advocating for Charlestown, the Town could be bypassed. Ms. Blouin-Andrus motioned to nominate Mr. Wood to the Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Regional Planning Commission committee. Ms. Houghton seconded the motion, the motion carried 4-0 (Mr. Wood abstained) with members voting in the affirmative by roll call vote.

Ms. Chaffee said there was a much slower leak from 24,000 to 8,000 loss regarding a Lower Landing sewer abatement request. She did not support a further abatement as she said the Board had abated two other amounts. Mr. Rescsanski motioned to approve sewer abatement of \$334.62 at Lower Landing Park not allowing for any future abatements for water/sewer. Ms. Houghton seconded the motion, the motion carried 4-1 with four members voting in the affirmative by roll call. Mr. Wood abstained from the vote.

Taylor Hill Drainage Project: Mr. Weed said the residents had been given a copy of the plan. Legal counsel is working with the surveyor as no pins have been found to divide the properties/define the easements. Ms. Blouin-Andrus said there would be a meeting in December to provide as much information as possible to residents.

Tentatively, Mr. Wood and Mr. Lessels will be available as well as Mr. Weed for the FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency) phone call Monday, November 22, 2021 at 1:00 p.m. Participants must be in separate rooms/locations to participate.

Mr. Lessels read a letter from a person billed for costs of a woodland fire. The letter stated the person billed was on disability and was not able to cover the costs of \$785.00. The Board discussed that the fire was caused by people shooting a gun and as the State did not designate the fire as a forest fire, the Town was not reimbursed for costs to extinguish the fire. As three people were involved, the Board discussed dividing the costs between all participants, community service and restitution payment plans. The Board will do more research regarding the fire, report detail and those involved in the incident.

The Board discussed the upcoming January 18, 2022 deadline to hold public budget meetings. The Board will hold a **budget only workshop** meeting December 3, 2021.

Minutes of Previous Meetings:

November 10, 2021 - Workshop

November 10, 2021 - Non-public SEALED #1 Reputations

Mr. Rescsanski motioned to accept the minutes of November 10, 2021 workshop and November 10, 2021 non-public SEALED, Mr. Wood seconded the motion, the motion carried 5-0 by an affirmative verbal roll call vote.

Consent Agenda: Mr. Rescsanski motioned to accept the Consent Agenda as printed, Ms. Houghton seconded the motion. The motion carried 5-0 by an affirmative verbal roll call vote.

On-Going Business:

The Board will review the NH RSA 91-A right-to-know procedures to discuss at another time.

Ms. Chaffee requested the Board schedule a water commissioner meeting to review funding sources and a bond application. The Board tentatively scheduled December 1, 2021 beginning at 5:00 p.m. for water commission meeting.

Mr. Rescsanski motioned to move to non-public at 8:28 p.m. RSA 91-A:3 II (a) Compensation. Mr. Wood seconded the motion. The motion carried 5-0 by an affirmative verbal roll call vote.

Meeting reconvened at 8:32 p.m.

Ms. Houghton moved to go into non-public session at 8:33 p.m. RSA 91-A:3 II (a) Compensation. Ms. Blouin-Andrus seconded motion, the motion carried 5-0 by an affirmative verbal roll call vote.

The meeting reconvened at 8:38 p.m.

Ms. Houghton motioned to Seal the non-public minutes #2 (a Compensation) for 2 years, Ms. Blouin-Andrus seconded the motion, the motioned carried 5-0 with an affirmative roll call vote.

Mr. Wood moved to go to an non-public session 8:39 p.m. RSA 91-A:3 II (c) Reputations, Ms. Houghton seconded the motion, the motion carried 5-0 by an affirmative verbal roll call vote.

The meeting reconvened at 8:48 p.m.

Mr. Wood motioned at 8:48 p.m. to adjourn the meeting, Ms. Blouin-Andrus seconded the motion, the motion carried 5-0.

Submitted by:
Mildred Barry

Jeffrey Lessels

Jeremy Wood

William Rescsanski

Nancy Houghton

Shelly Blouin-Andrus

(Note: These are unapproved meeting minutes. All corrections will be made at the next Selectboard meeting December 1, 2021)

**Charlestown Selectboard
Non-Public Meeting Minutes #1
RSA 91-A:3 II (a-Compensation)
November 17, 2021 at 6:30 p.m.
Charlestown, NH Library Community Room**

Selectboard Present: Chair, Jeff Lessels; Vice Chair, Jeremy Wood; Shelly Blouin-Andrus, Nancy Houghton and William Rescsanski all present in the Community Room

Staff Present: Mildred Barry, Recorder by Zoom

Mr. Rescsanski motioned to grant Rodney Rumrill a leave of absence and allow him to continue paying just the employee portion of his health insurance premium until the first pay date in December 2021. Ms. Blouin-Andrus seconded the motion, the motion carried 5-0 with all members voting in the affirmative by roll call vote.

Mr. Wood moved to reconvene to regular meeting at 8:32 p.m., Mr. Rescsanski seconded motion, motion carried 5-0 with all members voting in the affirmative by roll call vote.

Submitted by:
Mildred Barry

Jeffrey Lessels

Jeremy Wood

William Rescsanski

Nancy Houghton

Shelly Blouin-Andrus

(Note: These are unapproved meeting minutes. All corrections will be made at the next Selectboard meeting December 1, 2021)

**Charlestown Selectboard
Non-Public Meeting Minutes #3
RSA 91-A:3 II (c-Reputations)
November 17, 2021 at 6:30 p.m.
Charlestown, NH Library Community Room**

Selectboard Present: Chair, Jeff Lessels, Vice Chair, Jeremy Wood, Shelly Blouin-Andrus, Nancy Houghton and William Rescsanski all present in the Community Room

Staff Present: Mildred Barry, Recorder by Zoom

Mr. Wood said he had received complaints regarding a police department dispatcher and the handling of a gun being fired at a residence multiple times. He added the police department and Fish and Game department responded to the home at the time of the first two incidents. The third incident, when it was reported that shots were fired, the response from the police department dispatcher was not appropriate.

Ms. Houghton talked about knowing information regarding a battered person who sought assistance from the police department. The abused person felt there was little to no support/help given causing the person post-traumatic stress syndrome when visiting Charlestown.

Mr. Rescsanski asked that the two situations be addressed separately to Chief Connors.
Mr. Wood volunteered to have a conversation with Chief Connors.

Ms. Blouin-Andrus motioned to reconvene the regular meeting at 8:47 p.m. Ms. Houghton seconded the motion, the motion carried 5-0 with an affirmative roll call vote.

Submitted by:
Mildred Barry

Jeffrey Lessels

Jeremy Wood

William Rescsanski

Nancy Houghton

Shelly Blouin-Andrus

(Note: These are unapproved meeting minutes. All corrections will be made at the next Selectboard meeting December 1, 2021)