

**Charlestown Board of Selectmen
Meeting Minutes
August 4, 2021 @ 5:00pm
Community Room and Zoom**

Selectboard present in community room: Chairman, Jeff Lessels, William Rescsanski, Jeremy Wood, Shelly Blouin-Andrus and Nancy Houghton – all present in the Community Room

Staff Present: Jessica Dennis- Administrative Assistant (via zoom)
Patricia Chaffee- Tax Collector/Town Clerk (via zoom)
Keith Weed – Highway Department
Mark Laflam – Fire Department
Patrick Connors – Police Department

Public Present: Joseph Cobb, Thomas Cobb, James Fowler, Aare Ilves, Mark LaFlam, James Carter, Paul Frederic, Philip Turner, Charles Baraly, Sharon Francis attended in person and nine (?) attended via zoom

Mr. Rescsanski called the meeting to order at 5:00 pm. The pledge of allegiance was recited.

Minutes:

Mr. Lessels made a motion to accept the following meeting minutes,

July 20, 2021 - Workshop
July 20, 2021 – Non-Public Reputations
July 21, 2021 – Non-public #1 Reputations
July 21, 2021 – Regular Meeting
July 21, 2021 – Non-public #2 Reputations
July 21, 2021 – Non-public #3 Hiring
July 21, 2021 – Non-Public #4 Reputations
July 28, 2021 – Workshop
July 28, 2021 – Non-Public #1 Reputations
July 28, 2021 – Non-Public #2 Reputations

Ms. Blouin-Andrus seconded the motion and motion passed.

Consent Agenda:

Mr. Wood made a motion to accept the consent agenda. Ms. Blouin-Andrus seconded the motion and motion passed.

Beautification Coalition:

Sharon Francis and Aare Ilves were present to discuss plans for the sidewalk and green space on the east side of Main Street. The plan included stamped concrete and planters. Mr. Wood noted concerns with stamped concrete and the damage salt can do to its expected life. He also noted this would create a worse situation for backing out into Route 12. Ms. Blouin-Andrus questioned that the plans for this project seems to jump back and forth. In one plan there is curbing, and it was noted that Mr. Weed, Highway Superintendent was not in favor of curbing. Then the next plan omits curbing and now it is back in this plan. She also noted that previous Boards had remained with the plan that sidewalks be done in asphalt, which according to the numbers in the plan is significantly cheaper to do. Mr. Thomas Cobb, former Selectboard member, noted that previous Boards spent a lot time on projects, the Beautification Coalition, and it was already voted to do asphalt though the town. He also noted that creation of the Coalition was to cover the gap

left by the Women's Club and Garden Club in regards to the maintenance of the flowers on the street lights and wreaths in the winter. Mr. Cobb also noted that there should be more attention spent on what the Town already has and maintain them better, before adding anything further.

Ms. Houghton asked why would this Board go against what other Boards decided.

Mr. Ilves noted that the Board had worked with them in the past. The plan was to improve the attractiveness of the downtown. Ms. Francis asked that the Board to at least consider the green space, as was agreed to in September of 2020. Ms. Blouin-Andrus noted that if a past Board had in fact agreed to something, she felt this Board should honor that decision. Mr. Rescsanski asked to end this discussion.

Mr. James Fowler, Tree Committee member, noted that work is being done to the trees on Main Street. Trimming has been done. He did note that there was a tree in front of 318 Main Street that is dying and needs to be removed. Mr. Weed will note this when tree removal company comes to do work later in the year.

Ms. Houghton made a motion to recess. Ms. Blouin-Andrus seconded the motion; motion passed.

Meeting reconvened at 6:10pm. Mr. Rescsanski open it up to public comment.

Public Comment:

There was a discussion regarding the new situation from storm damage to Route 12 resulting in the closure from Almar St to Route 12A. Chief Connors and Acting Chief Laflam met to look at how to handle emergency calls and getting to south Charlestown. If needed Interstate 91 could be used and smaller vehicles could utilize Meany Road to Lamb Road in the case of an emergency. Ms. Blouin-Andrus will reach out to Ms. Warmington and Ms. Prentiss and see if there is any help from the State. She noted that Acworth has not had any luck with the State. Possibly speak with Steve Smith, as he is on the Transportation committee at the State.

Transfer Station:

Mr. Weed reported that the roll off truck will be going in for a few repairs next week. The new year has started for transfer station stickers; as of today, stickers are available.

Highway:

Mr. Weed reported due to the storm damage, there were twenty-nine (29) roads effected. As of today, all roads are open. There are still repairs to be done and that could take the next two (2) months. Costs for the repairs are high, currently over \$23,000 has been spent on Unity Stage Road, due to damage outside help was hired and the repairs have been completed. The department plans to work Friday and Saturday doing some of the edge of the roads where there is wash out. There was only one (1) culvert issue on Pecor Road. This has been a long standing issue when this extreme weather happens.

Mr. Weed also wanted to thank Hank Clark and Lenny Poland Jr. for their help on South Hemlock Road. They helped divert the water and saved the Town thousands of dollars.

Ms. Blouin-Andrus noted extreme thanks to the Highway, Police and Fire Department for all they did during this time.

Due to the closure of Route 12, Meany Road has now become the way for locals to get around the closure, Mr. Weed noted that this road is not meant to have that traffic load. Also Lamb Road will

be closed on the Langdon side for culvert work. Other possible routes could be South Hemlock to Langdon. Chief Connors will talk to the school as there needs to be a plan for the start of school and Interstate 91 might be the best option.

Department Reports:

Town Clerk/ Tax Collector:

Ms. Patricia Chaffee reported that liens are completed and the deeding process will start at the end of August. She also noted that the amount lienied for both taxes and water & sewer were less than the amount lienied in 2020.

Police Department:

Officer Haynes attended the Night Out Event in Claremont, a community event to have Police interact with the community. He asked the Board if they would like to continue receiving the call logs, the Board agreed they want to continue seeing them. Chief Connors noted that they have been busy with the effects of the storm and are working together with other department heads and mutual aid partners to work out how to handle emergencies in South Charlestown.

Mr. Wood asked how the 911 system works in regards to cell phones. Chief Connors noted it depends on where the cell tower is you are hitting. All landlines dial in to the main 911 call center and then are transferred to the Town. There are times when a cell phone will bounce off a tower in Vermont and go to Vermont 911 instead of New Hampshire, but it is transferred over to New Hampshire with very little delay.

Fire Department:

Acting Chief Laflam reported that the department is currently having Bellows Falls and North Walpole assist if a fire were to take place in South Charlestown, giving Charlestown Fire time to get there due to the closure. Possible ideas for some sort of equipment being moved closer for quicker access to equipment if an incident were to occur.

Ms. Blouin-Andrus asked about the status of the truck and was it fixed? Chief Laflam noted that the current issue might be electrical, the truck can operate, but there are still concerns. Ms. Blouin-Andrus commented that the Board was serious when they said that truck needs to be fixed, and suggested that maybe this issue needed to go to legal. It was noted that some of the issues with the truck had been addressed, this seemed to be a new issue. The Board agreed to have the attorneys called. Mr. Rescsanski asked that everything be documented to recorded all issues and when.

Water/Wastewater Department: Ms. Chaffee reported Mr. Vandenburg started Monday, and seems to be settling in. Meter readings are being worked on. Mr. Rescsanski asked when the hydrant flushing will be scheduled? Ms. Chaffee is waiting on the exact dates, it should be in the next couple weeks.

Cemetery Department: Mr. Hassett noted that the cemeteries did not sustain any major damage from the storm. The students are finished painting the fence at Hope Hill and completed more of the fence than was expected. Mr. Hassett will be working with Ms. Dennis and Ms. Houghton this Friday to continue the work of cleaning and reorganizing the former ambulance barn so the Cemetery Department can move in there.

Public Hearing – Right to Know Request Rates

Mr. Rescsanski opened the public hearing. Ms. Dennis explained the rates for different types of reports, etc. that may be requested under the Right to Know law. Copies - \$.10 per page, \$.50 –

color per page, \$.50 per page for redacted copies. This has been reviewed by legal. Ms. Houghton asked if the Town could also charge for the time it takes to gather the information in these requests. It was noted that you can not. Mr. Rescsanski made a motion to accept the Right to Know Fee schedule. Motion was seconded by Mr. Lessels. Mr. Thomas Cobb noted that as a resident he did not feel he should have to pay for the copies. After further discussion the motion did not pass. Vote 2 – yes and 3 – no. It was decided to change it to the first copy was free and repost for another public hearing.

Library Report:

Ms. Haynes reported that they have had a busy summer reading program. They teamed up with the Recreation Department and did a story time at the pool, which was well attended. They also did a movie night. Additional grants have been received to do programs and utilize Zoom programming.

Administrator's Report:

Ms. Dennis and Mr. Phil Turner covered the contract with Consolidated Communications regarding Broadband. Mr. Turner noted a few final things that needed to be ironed out. Once the bond is finalized, the payment schedule can be determined. Mr. Turner would also like CCI to help handle federal monies and grants to help reduce the cost of service. A few other points were that the rate of cable extension and collaborative damage, this refers to proper clean up.

Ms. Blouin-Andrus made a motion to pass the contract on the attorney for review. Motion was seconded by Mr. Wood; motion passed.

Propane and Fuel bids have gone out. Deadline is August 18, 2021.

There is a letter from the Assessors noting their opinion on the request for Springfield Medical Care Systems to be tax exempt. As noted there were deadlines to meet and SMCS did not meet it, and as such should not be granted the exemption. Mr. Wood made a motion to deny the request for SMCS to be tax exempt. Motion was seconded by Ms. Houghton; motion passed.

Update on the revaluation is that the Assessors are behind and will now have preliminary values to the Board at the end of August and schedule hearings in mid-September with final values by end of September. This could possibly delay getting a tax rate later in the fall.

There are few properties that could be auctioned this fall, if the Board so chose.

The audit should be completed any time. Mr. Rescsanski asked if the Board would allow him to speak to the auditors, he would like to ask about processes and handling of the finances. The Board agreed to allow Mr. Rescsanski to speak to the auditors.

Firework permit is not complete. A copy has been edited and given to Acting Chief Laflam. They will work to finalize.

There was request from the Fire Department to use the hydrant at the pool for a short time to spray the kids at the pool party on August 14. It was noted to be mindful of the water usage and to complete the usage form for the water department. The Board agreed to approve the use.

Public Comment:

Mr. Charles Baraly asked for an update on the drainage project behind the homes on Taylor Hill. The storm created even larger amounts of water. The Highway Department has done a good job

keeping the pump working to get water below what it was. It was noted that the survey should take place soon as it the schedule was three (3) weeks out from July 21, 2021, then it goes to legal for the easements. Mr. Baraly just wanted to keep updated on the situation and wanted it on the record that something is being done.

The meeting was recess at 8:00pm. Meeting reconvened at 8:14pm.

Mr. Rescsanski made a motion to enter non-public at 8:16 pm RSA 91-A:3 II (b-Hiring), Mr. Lessels seconded the motion and motion passed.

The Selectboard reconvened public session at 8:23 pm.

Mr. Wood made a motion to enter non-public at 8:23 pm RSA 91-A:3 II (c-Reputations), Ms. Houghton seconded the motion and motion passed.

The Selectboard reconvened public session at 8:40 pm.

Ms. Blouin-Andrus made a motion to enter non-public at 8:41 pm RSA 91-A:3 II (c-Reputations), Mr. Lessels seconded the motion and motion passed.

The Selectboard reconvened public session at 9:00 pm.

Mr. Rescsanski made a motion to enter non-public at 9:00 pm RSA 91-A:3 II (a-Personnel), Mr. Wood seconded the motion and motion passed.

The Selectboard reconvened public session at 9:05 pm.

Ms. Blouin-Andrus made a motion to enter non-public at 9:05 pm RSA 91-A:3 II (c-Reputations), Mr. Lessels seconded the motion and motion passed.

The Selectboard reconvened public session at 10:02 pm.

Mr. Rescsanski made a motion to enter non-public at 10:10 pm RSA 91-A:3 II (e-Legal), Ms. Blouin-Blouin-Andrus seconded the motion and motion passed.

The Selectboard reconvened public session at 10:12 pm.

Ms. Blouin-Andrus made a motion to enter non-public at 10:12 pm RSA 91-A:3 II (c-Reputations), Mr. Lessels seconded the motion and motion passed.

The Selectboard reconvened public session at 10:15 pm.

Mr. Wood made a motion to adjourn at 10:26 pm; Ms. Blouin-Andrus seconded the motion and motion passed.

Respectfully Submitted,
Patricia Chaffee, Recording Secretary

Jeff Lessels

Jeremy Wood

William Rescsanski

Shelly Blouin-Andrus

Nancy Houghton

(Note: these are unapproved meeting minutes. Any corrections will be made at the next Selectboard meeting on August 18, 2021)

Charlestown Selectboard
Non-Public Meeting Minutes #1
RSA 91-A:3 II (b-Hiring)
August 4, 2021 @ 5:00 pm
Community Room & via Zoom

Selectboard present and location: Chair Jeff Lessels, William Rescsanski, Shelly Blouin-Andrus, Jeremy Wood and Nancy Houghton – all present in the community room.

Staff Present: Jessica Dennis- Administrator
Patricia Chaffee – Recording Secretary
Mark Laflam – Fire Department

Acting Chief Laflam informed the Board that he received an application for the Fire Department from a previous employee. Due to performance issues before, the Board questioned whether he would be a good fit and a benefit to the department. It was decided that Acting Chief Laflam would have a conversation with the applicant and address concerns and see if still wants to be part of the department.

Mr. Lessels made a motion to reconvene public session at 8:23 pm, Mr. Wood seconded the motion and motion passed.

Respectfully Submitted
Patricia Chaffee, Recording Secretary

Jeff Lessels

William Rescsanski

Shelly Blouin-Andrus

Jeremy Wood

Nancy Houghton

(Note: these are unapproved meeting minutes. Any corrections will be made at the next Selectboard meeting on August 18, 2021)

Charlestown Selectboard
Non-Public Meeting Minutes #2
RSA 91-A:3 II (c-Reputations)
August 4, 2021 @ 5:00 pm
Community Room & via Zoom

Selectboard present and location: Chair Jeff Lessels, William Rescsanski, Shelly Blouin-Andrus, Jeremy Wood and Nancy Houghton – all present in the community room.

Staff Present: Jessica Dennis- Administrator
Patricia Chaffee – Recording Secretary
Mark Laflam – Fire Department

Acting Chief Laflam informed the Board that he received an application for the Fire Department from a previous employee. Due to the way in which this person left the department is an issue for the Board. The Board agreed that should this person want to return to the department they would need to come before the Board themselves. This process eliminates Acting Chief Laflam being in the middle.

Ms. Blouin-Andrus made a motion to reconvene public session at 8:40 pm, Mr. Wood seconded the motion and motion passed.

Respectfully Submitted
Patricia Chaffee, Recording Secretary

Jeff Lessels

William Rescsanski

Shelly Blouin-Andrus

Jeremy Wood

Nancy Houghton

(Note: these are unapproved meeting minutes. Any corrections will be made at the next Selectboard meeting on August 18, 2021)

Charlestown Selectboard
Non-Public Meeting Minutes #3
RSA 91-A:3 II (c-Reputations)
August 4, 2021 @ 5:00 pm
Community Room & via Zoom

Selectboard present and location: Chair Jeff Lessels, William Rescsanski, Shelly Blouin-Andrus, Jeremy Wood and Nancy Houghton – all present in the community room.

Staff Present: Jessica Dennis- Administrator
Patricia Chaffee – Recording Secretary
Patrick Connors – Police Department

Chief Connors discussed personnel reviews and how to handle when an employee has reached the end of the pay scale steps, can he still give them a raise. He requested approval to give the raise at this time. It was decided that Chief Connors would review the duties and see if there was possibly a change in grade.

It was also noted that he has two (2) empty slots on this roster. He will start to work on filling as there have not been qualified applicants.

Mr. Rescsanski made a motion to reconvene public session at 9:00 pm, Mr. Lessels seconded the motion and motion passed.

Respectfully Submitted
Patricia Chaffee, Recording Secretary

Jeff Lessels

William Rescsanski

Shelly Blouin-Andrus

Jeremy Wood

Nancy Houghton

(Note: these are unapproved meeting minutes. Any corrections will be made at the next Selectboard meeting on August 18, 2021)

Charlestown Selectboard
Non-Public Meeting Minutes #4
RSA 91-A:3 II (a-Personnel)
August 4, 2021 @ 5:00 pm
Community Room & via Zoom

Selectboard present and location: Chair Jeff Lessels, William Rescsanski, Shelly Blouin-Andrus, Jeremy Wood and Nancy Houghton – all present in the community room.

Staff Present: Jessica Dennis- Administrator
Patricia Chaffee – Recording Secretary
Patrick Connors – Police Department

Chief Connors informed the Board that Officer Graham is due for a promotion to Lieutenant in October. He has no issues or concerns in his upcoming evaluation. Chief Connors asked if he could make this effective immediately. Ms. Houghton made a motion to authorize the promotion of Officer Graham. Motion was seconded by Mr. Wood; motion passed.

Mr. Rescsanski made a motion to reconvene public session at 9:05 pm, Mr. Lessels seconded the motion and motion passed.

Respectfully Submitted
Patricia Chaffee, Recording Secretary

Jeff Lessels

William Rescsanski

Shelly Blouin-Andrus

Jeremy Wood

Nancy Houghton

(Note: these are unapproved meeting minutes. Any corrections will be made at the next Selectboard meeting on August 18, 2021)

Charlestown Selectboard
Non-Public Meeting Minutes #5
RSA 91-A:3 II (c-Reputations)
August 4, 2021 @ 5:00 pm
Community Room & via Zoom

Selectboard present and location: Chair Jeff Lessels, William Rescsanski, Shelly Blouin-Andrus, Jeremy Wood and Nancy Houghton – all present in the community room.

Staff Present: Jessica Dennis- Administrator
Patricia Chaffee – Recording Secretary
Patrick Connors – Police Department

The Board spoke with Chief Connors about the way in which some things were handled with the past Ambulance personnel. Based on the information that the Board now has, mistakes were made at the time. This Board would like to move forward with people affected and make whole in some instances. Mr. Rescsanski noted that the Board was not informed and some things were actually not true. There was an incident at the Ambulance building and Chief Connors intimidated Mr. Lessels and Ms. Diane Town and they were not allowed in the building and a no trespassing order was noted regarding personnel. Mr. Lessels noted that he left, but was not happy about the way he was treated and later found out there was no such order in place. There was also a question regarding a reference that may have been done for an employee that included some of this erroneous information. Chief Connors noted that he had spoken with Valley Regional regarding the change in service level and noted it was due to an investigation.

After a discussion the Board noted that everyone needed to work together and accurate communication is important.

Mr. Rescsanski made a motion to reconvene public session at 10:02 pm, Mr. Lessels seconded the motion and motion passed.

Respectfully Submitted
Patricia Chaffee, Recording Secretary

Jeff Lessels

William Rescsanski

Shelly Blouin-Andrus

Jeremy Wood

Nancy Houghton

(Note: these are unapproved meeting minutes. Any corrections will be made at the next Selectboard meeting on August 18, 2021)

Charlestown Selectboard
Non-Public Meeting Minutes #6
RSA 91-A:3 II (i-Legal)
August 4, 2021 @ 5:00 pm
Community Room & via Zoom

Selectboard present and location: Chair Jeff Lessels, William Rescsanski, Shelly Blouin-Andrus, Jeremy Wood and Nancy Houghton – all present in the community room.

Staff Present: Jessica Dennis- Administrator
Patricia Chaffee – Recording Secretary

Ms. Dennis gave an update on the driveway issue on Borough Road. Mr. Weed was going to show them the proper way to install the water bar, however they went ahead and did it without any consultation, and it may need to be fixed as it was not installed properly. Currently it is in the hands of both their attorney and the Town's attorney.

Ms. Blouin-Andrus made a motion to reconvene public session at 10:12 pm, Mr. Lessels seconded the motion and motion passed.

Respectfully Submitted
Patricia Chaffee, Recording Secretary

Jeff Lessels

William Rescsanski

Shelly Blouin-Andrus

Jeremy Wood

Nancy Houghton

(Note: these are unapproved meeting minutes. Any corrections will be made at the next Selectboard meeting on August 18, 2021)

Charlestown Selectboard
Non-Public Meeting Minutes #7
RSA 91-A:3 II (c-Reputations)
August 4, 2021 @ 5:00 pm
Community Room & via Zoom

Selectboard present and location: Chair Jeff Lessels, William Rescsanski, Shelly Blouin-Andrus, Jeremy Wood and Nancy Houghton – all present in the community room.

Staff Present: Jessica Dennis- Administrator
Patricia Chaffee – Recording Secretary

Ms. Dennis received a call from the manager of Morways Park in regards to 140. It seems that the home has been abandoned and they would like to work with the Board before the deeding process starts. It was noted that the Board should consider possibly abating the taxes but water and sewer might have to be handled differently. It was the consensus of the Board to work with the Park.

Ms. Blouin-Andrus made a motion to reconvene public session at 10:15 pm, Mr. Wood seconded the motion and motion passed.

Respectfully Submitted
Patricia Chaffee, Recording Secretary

Jeff Lessels

William Rescsanski

Shelly Blouin-Andrus

Jeremy Wood

Nancy Houghton

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