

**CHARLESTOWN SELECTBOARD WORKSHOP**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**October 13, 2021 @4:30 p.m.**  
**Community Room and by Zoom**

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

**Others Present:** Alissa Bascom, Julio Jaramillo from Twin Valley Estates, Robert Hayden from Standard Power and others by Zoom not identified

**Staff Present:** Diane Dezan (Human Resources)  
Patricia Chaffee (Town Clerk/Tax Collector via Zoom)  
Millie Barry (Recording Secretary via Zoom)

**Non-Public with legal counsel -**

At 4:34 p.m. Mr. Rescsanski made a motion to go into non-public RSA 91-A:3 II (I) Consideration of legal advice; Mr. Wood seconded the motion. Motion passed

Meeting reconvened at 4:59 p.m.

Mr. Rescsanski motioned to seal the non-public meeting minutes for two years, Ms. Houghton seconded, and motion carried 4-0

**2021 Tax Deeding list**

Ms. Chaffee reviewed properties on tax deeding list including those which need signatures of the Board to waive the deeding process. Properties to waive are owned by Beaunam, a small chunk of land by Cushman Lumber, 140 Morways Park, the board will discuss the mobile home debt with the owners of the park later in the meeting. Also, 1300 Old Claremont Road and 124 Morways Park for waivers, these are mortgaged by company (Ditech) in bankruptcy. Advice by legal counsel is the Town should not take property until the company's financial status is resolved. Also, a waiver for 32 Hammond Road submitting a payment agreement. This property has sold with a closing date of early November. Another waiver is for 4 Windy Acres. The owner has entered into a payment arrangement, has been very diligent, communicates well and the owner will catch up and get ahead in the near future. Ms. Chaffee asked the Board to accept the payment agreement for 4 Windy Acres. The Board may want to talk about and meet with Kate Baldwin regarding a debt and payment agreement. Mr. Wood confirmed Ms. Chaffee would like the tax meeting to be held next Wednesday, October 20, 2021 at 5:30 p.m. Ms. Chaffee believes the Board may want to review some properties on the list as the Board does not have to take properties that are not a benefit or be an asset to the Town.

**Robert Hayden from Standard Power - Community Power Presentation**

Mr. Hayden said the first Community Power program was based on laws passed in NH (New Hampshire) in 2019 allowing communities to form a committee to develop a plan to provide lower cost and possibly greener power to community residents. Net metering or renewal energy projects could provide a further discount. The Board confirmed the Town had Liberty,

Eversource and New Hampshire Electrical Cooperative (NHEC) companies as electric providers. Mr. Hayden continued, benefits are competitive rates, believing electricity rates, in the near future, would increase \$.07 to \$.10 per kilowatt hour. The program would give local control and price stability programs for a fixed price for two years. Consumer protection and adding renewals are two other benefits. The company also provides community awareness and education to residents.

If a town chooses to participate in the program, everyone is in the plan unless they opt out. Residents choose different options or to stay with their current utility. Education is provided to residents and if the Town chooses to participate, surveys are mailed to indicate community wants contributing to composing a plan.

Community Power is an electricity broker in NH currently providing electricity for 65 schools and Towns in NH. They work with renewable energy and aggregate local hydro facilities to distribute the value of power to schools and Towns they currently work for. Community Power works with GoodEnergy Company who has been involved in projects for ten years throughout the United States. Mr. Hayden said GoodEnergy had saved people in New England 80 million dollars and had more experience than Community Power. The program, in general, purchases power for the community from third party suppliers which saves entities hundreds of thousands of dollars. Hydro programs provide reimbursement to Towns (like Swanzey) from smaller hydro plants in individual neighborhoods. Big hydro plants as Bellows Falls and White River Junction are grid scale and do not really benefit the community.

To start there is two-page memorandum of understanding (at no charge) realizing some Towns will not choose to remain in the program. If they do not connect the power from the program, they do not get paid. By law, it is required to have a secondary entity, like a committee appointed by the Selectboard to begin the process and help develop a plan. Mr. Hayden believes having a goal of 100% renewable power by 2030 may be realistic as the price of carbon-based fuels increase.

Mr. Wood asked if the Town agreed to the program was Community Power trying to put renewable energy in the community. Mr. Hayden believes in local renewable energy. If the community wants renewable energy, they would help in this endeavor. They are pro-renewables.

Completed surveys returned by residents usually indicate 20% of people want the cheapest price available and 20% want 100% green energy.

Mr. Hayden confirmed current resident electricity bills would be much the same and from the resident current company. One line, supply services, would change if the Board approves the project.

In answer to Mr. Rescsanski's question, Mr. Hayden said the program is sustainable as individual companies do not want to lower their rates. His company profits from the commission of electricity. Companies such as Liberty and Eversource are required to buy electricity two weeks each year at the time they choose, they do not generate their own power. The individual company profit primarily comes from 10% of all costs associated with transmission and distribution.

Mr. Hayden is willing and available to answer any individual question Board members may have.

**Lisa Raymond and Julio Jaramillo from Twin Valley Estates -**

Mr. Jaramillo asked to speak to the Board regarding what the new owners have accomplished since purchasing the property. He said the water at 140 Morways (creating the debt), was not used during the present park ownership. Since they have taken over the park they have worked toward getting good residents, dealt with removing trash, taken care of downed trees and have spent \$200,000 on improving roads. Presently, they are embarking on an upgrade to an electrical pedestal. Properly screening residents and their management has resulted in zero delinquency at the park for three months. When the present home at 140 Morways Park is removed, there will be a new, more responsible resident. He said it was not equitable or fair to charge the new park owners for the water fees and realizes the charges are not the fault of the Selectboard either. He believes they are taking positive steps at the park for the community and providing affordable housing. Ms. Chaffee will research the total for water/sewer and unpaid taxes for the lot and said normally the Town abated sewer, but not water. She added the water goes through the master meter owned by the park (it is the park's water) and is then distributed to each individual resident. The liens follow the property not the owner of the individual lot. The Board agreed Ms. Chaffee will work with Ms. Raymond (from Twin Valley) to access delinquency charges. Mr. Jaramillo requested the Board review the charges from December 10 when the company bought the park to the present and possibly split the costs. Ms. Blouin-Andrus questioned if the Board was discussing debt for water/sewer and taxes. Ms. Chaffee said her understanding was to talk to the park owners about everything owed and come to an understanding regarding payment or non-payment of the debt owed. The Board will decide at the next meeting, on October 20<sup>th</sup>. Ms. Blouin-Andrus confirmed the Town appreciated the very good job the new owners were doing at the park.

The Board recessed at 5:45 p.m. and reconvened at 5:52 p.m.

**Pay Scales - Diane Dezan -**

Ms. Dezan presented information to the Board regarding individual employee job titles and minimum to maximum pay amounts taken from NH Municipal Association and NH statewide data.

After discussing the information, the Board determined there was one position being paid below minimum standard. Ms. Dezan said many of Charlestown's employees had been employed for many years achieving a higher wage. She will develop steps, based on a 20-year cycle from minimum to maximum compensation. Mr. Wood said a good leader and an employee should discuss goals to improve making steps in employee compensation. Cost of living increase, every three years, could change increases noted on the scale.

Mr. Rescsanski said he believed there should be positions and a wage range asking if it was possible to add grades the Town was not currently using or change to and consolidating grades that were almost the same.

Ms. Blouin-Andrus motioned to accept the Recreation Department Background Check Policy, Mr. Rescsanski seconded the motion, motion passed 4-0.

Ms. Blouin-Andrus recommended inviting the recreation committee to interviews of potential recreation department director to give suggestions and provide input. Ms. Blouin-Andrus will email the chair of the recreation committee to expect notification by email when interviews are scheduled. Interviews for the director will be done at October 27, 2021 Selectboard workshop.

In addition, Ms. Blouin-Andrus noted she and Ms. Dezan talked about meeting with department heads to check in about how things were going, problems etc. The Board agreed this was a part of the Ms. Dezan's position.

**Consent Agenda:**

Mr. Rescsanski motioned to accept the Consent Agenda. Ms. Blouin-Andrus seconded, motion carried 4-0

Ms. Houghton motioned to adjourn the meeting at 7:03 p.m., Mr. Rescsanski seconded the motion, motion carried 4-0.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Mildred Barry

Jeffrey 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 on October 20, 2021)