

CHARLESTOWN SELECTBOARD
WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 29, 2021 AT 5:00 P.M.
CHARLESTOWN PUBLIC LIBRARY COMMUNITY ROOM AND VIA
ZOOM CONFERENCING

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

Staff Present: Jessica Dennis, Administrative Assistant
Jordan Cannon, Recording Secretary (via Zoom)
Patricia Chaffee, Town Clerk/Tax Collector
Diane Dezan, Human Resources
Joe Carter, Fire Department (via Zoom)
Mark LaFlam, Fire Department
Stacey Hassett, Cemetery
Jennifer Haynes, Library
Jim Fowler, Library

Others Present: Gabe St. Pierre (via Zoom)

Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance: Mr. Lessels called the workshop meeting to order at 5:00 p.m., led the pledge of allegiance and welcomed in-person attendees and those by Zoom.

Human Resources: NP Reputations

Mr. Lessels entertained a motion to enter into a non-public meeting. Mr. Wood motioned to go into non-public at 5:00 p.m. RSA 91-A:3 II (c) Reputations, Ms. Houghton seconded the motion. The motion carried 5 - 0 by an affirmative roll call vote.

The meeting reconvened at 5:14 p.m.

Ms. Chaffee presented questions regarding an on-going project. She discussed an assumed a 7-foot trench associated with the paving project. Ms. Chaffee stated that if the entire road is paved it will be an increase to the project cost of about \$500,000. Mr. Lessels discussed how the entire project will not be a simple project. Mr. Wood discussed that the Old Claremont Road was re-paved in 2016. He discussed the process of install the water lint and the need to cut into the roadway and the need to have funding available to repair the cut roadway. Mr. Lessels discussed his expectations of which roads in Town may priority in the coming months and years to have repair. Mr. Lessels presented a question concerning the funding allocation, wherein he indicated that the concerns expressed by a member of staff were well-sensed, but suggested having this issue remain stalled as it would take \$500,000 of the \$900,000 contingency funding. Ms. Chaffee discussed how the funds unused would be placed within the general budget. Ms. Blouin-Andrus stated that she would be comfortable placing \$250,000 into the general budget. Discussion was had over the possible allocations of partial amounts of the overall funding.

Ms. Chaffee discussed how pre-qualification by the Department of Transportation is needed to allow construction work on State roads. She stated how those working on this project may need to explore and complete the qualification process with the State. Ms. Chaffee discussed the de-commissioning of the well in North Charlestown. Ms. Chaffee discussed that there is not a line item mentioning the decommissioning but that it was included in the contingency plan. Ms. Chaffee asked if there needed to be a clause as to what would happen if the work was not completed in the time frame allotted. Mr. Lessels and Mr. Wood answered in the affirmative. Ms. Chaffee asked if specific footage or measurement would need to be included in the bid. She asked the Selectboard if they would consider this; Mr. Wood commented that itemization may be required.

Mr. Lessels motioned to go into non-public at 5:27 p.m. RSA 91-A:3 II (c) Reputation, Ms. Houghton seconded the motion. The motion carried 5 - 0 by an affirmative roll call vote.

The meeting reconvened at 5:37 p.m.

2022 Budgets:

Library Trustees:

Ms. Haynes and Mr. Fowler discussed the budget conversation with the Board. Ms. Haynes discussed how past years' previous directors worked with their budgets, and that there has never been a significant increase in their budgets. Ms. Haynes discussed how the library is given \$700 for adult programs, but \$450 is the average cost of one. She disclosed how the library has had \$900 dollars a year for literacy, and the one event in the summer they had was \$500. Ms. Haynes said the library is pursuing grants for further funding, and discussed how they applied for several grants for literacy and for their technical equipment. Ms. Haynes stated that the salaries are below average. Mr. Fowler discussed how \$45,500 for a library director was asked by the Trustees, in hope that there would be an increase from the previous year. Mr. Lessels clarified that the last year's salary for this position was \$40,000. Ms. Haynes discussed how the assistant library position is vacant, but there is an individual filling in. Ms. Haynes and Mr. Fowler stated that they were hoping to have a full-time assistant librarian. Mr. Fowler stated that the library is leaning towards children programming, but that they also would like to have more adult programming. Ms. Haynes stated that the \$700 they received for adult programming was originally in the recreation department's budget but at a previous Selectboard meeting it was voted to give it to the library because it was not being used. Mr. Lessels discussed the specifications of the library budget with the health insurance and New Hampshire retirement. It was specified that the Town pays 12% of employees' retirement across departments. Ms. Haynes clarified that the Trustees asked for 16% raise for her position. Ms. Dennis clarified when the library intended to advertise for a part-time assistant librarian, and that if there was an interim period for that position, certain Town contributions may be able to be deducted from the proposed budget. Ms. Haynes stated that she found an individual who may work 25 hours a week, while a current employee could cover 10 hours. Mr. Lessels discussed how in the past years' discussions were had concerning the employees at the library potentially being paid below their worth. Ms. Houghton discussed the amount of salary increase for the director. Ms. Haynes discussed how presently there are three part-time library aids with each at 15 hours a week. Ms. Blouin-Andrus questioned the proportionate size of the requested

increase in salary for the director comparative to other Town employees. Ms. Blouin-Andrus stated that each employee deserved an increase, but 16% may exceed the average amount of increase. Mr. Fowler discussed how the Library Trustees calculated the percentage for the library director. Mr. Rescsanski questioned the proposed salary for the full-time librarian. Mr. Lessels clarified the specific details of the proposed budget, and asked if the library foresees any benefit long-term in requesting the amounts proposed. Ms. Haynes asked if the amounts were adjusted for the part-time librarian, with a removal of insurance, could the proposed increase in pay be accommodated. Mr. Lessels asked what could be done to the budget to reduce the budget increase by half. Ms. Dennis clarified that if the library took out the insurance and retirement, with salary staying the same, they could be level-funded. The funds for the other positions, with health and insurance taken removed, would take \$24,000 out of the proposed budget. Ms. Haynes stated that the library has level-funded for three years in a row. Mr. Lessels stated that if the assistant librarians are kept to part-time this would level the budget. Mr. Lessels asked if the library representatives would return on Friday with adjusted numbers. Ms. Blouin-Andrus stated that increases between 6% - 7% may be more easily accepted. Ms. Haynes stated that the library department is similar to a recreational department when budget cuts are being considered. Ms. Haynes agreed to return on Friday with adjusted amount.

Cemetery Trustees:

Ms. Lessels discussed how the budget for the cemetery has increased due to health insurance and retirement. Mr. Hassett discussed the monument and road repairs needed for the cemetery. He stated he does not expect any needs in this area for the immediate future. It was discussed how the amount for Mr. Hassett's salary has no increase. Mr. Hassett discussed how the cemetery has to pay for embalming. He discussed winter burials are now a necessity with green burials being allowed, and the need for a gas-powered jackhammer to dig into the ground. The Selectboard discussed Mr. Hassett's salary. Mr. Hassett discussed the role of Sexton as being responsible for the grounds and the equipment. Mr. Hassett disclosed how the cemetery is just himself and another individual at 40 and 32 hours a week respectively. A discussion was held over the adjustment of hours worked to meet proposed budget expectations. Mr. Lessels stated that in years past the Town has had a full-time sexton. Mr. Wood motioned to retain cemetery sexton on cemetery budget for 52 weeks a year, Ms. Houghton seconded and the motion, and it carried 5 - 0 by an affirmative roll call vote. It was discussed how all other aspect of the budget is level-funded apart from repairs. Discussion was had about a possible \$10,000 grant for monument repairs.

Mr. Wood called the meeting to recess at 6:35 p.m.

The meeting reconvened at 6:42 p.m.

Conservation Commission request:

Mr. Lessels commenced a discussion concerning a \$8,500 request, increased in the proposed conservation budget by Mr. Holmes the Chairman of the Conservation Commission. Mr. Rescsanski read a letter written by Mr. Holmes. The letter's introduction discussed a project to support stream wetland crossings and culverts. The

Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Regional Planning Commission disclosed a \$17,000 project they are seeking to have match-funded by the Town. The letter read that they are asking for \$8,500 in funding to match the \$8,500 currently in possession by the commission. This study was proposed to be able to provide information on potentially problematic water-related issues. Mr. Lessels discussed how this request is unique compared to those from previous years. Mr. Lessels discussed how the Conservation Commission has \$8,500 they want to use for this study. The Commission is asking for these funds for two reasons per Mr. Lessels: one is to increase public awareness, the second is that this study would potentially benefit the Town overall with long-term planning and grant access. It was discussed that these funds would be placed on the regular budget. Mr. Wood indicated he would vote in the negative. Mr. Lessels stated he would like the Commission to verify they have the \$8,500 before a decision could be made. Ms. Blouin-Andrus described how timber cuts provide some amount of their funding, and that the Town is responsible for its bills. Mr. Wood and Ms. Blouin-Andrus voiced how they would be inclined to say no for the present year. Mr. Rescsanski stated the Town should potentially consider funding, but only if they committed to significant funding. There was a consensus by the board to say “no” to the proposed \$8,500 in the Commissions budget. Mr. Lessels stated he would email Mr. Holmes and request that the Commission explore options with their current funds. Mr. Wood stated that this Commission recently purchased a piece of property. It was discussed how the land purchased by the Commission is non-taxable.

Ms. Houghton moved to appoint Jessica Dennis as Town Administrator, pro-tem. The motion was seconded by Mr. Lessels. The motion carried 5 - 0 by an affirmative roll call vote. It was discussed how this action more appropriately describes the work performed by Ms. Dennis. It was discussed how pro-tem is Latin for temporary. Mr. Lessels congratulated Ms. Dennis on her new position as Town Administrator, Pro-Tem. A motion was made by Ms. Nancy, seconded by Ms. Blouin-Andrus, to accept the town organizational chart as printed. Ms. Houghton read a letter as to the reasons to have an organizational chart and that it should be published in the annual Report, distributed yearly to all employees, Committee Chairs and volunteers by Human Resources.

Fire Department:

Ms. Dennis discussed the budget presented previously in a Selectboard meeting. Ms. Dennis presented the budget as revised by Mr. LaFlam in trying to compromise with the Selectboard’s comments regarding their proposed budget. Ms. Dennis reflected upon certain assumptions the fire department was under in regards to what was indicative to be approved funding by the Selectboard. Ms. Dennis questioned, and Mr. Wood clarified, that in regards to emergency calls that Delta/Echo would need to be the criteria. Ms. Blouin-Andrus stated that their training rate should not be the same as their normal pay per hour. Ms. Blouin-Andrus stated that in the previous meeting to pay the employees normal hourly rates was stated as impractical because at the training each employee is doing the same training. She stated that she was in favor of some sort of compensation that was equal for all fire department employees. Ms. Houghton clarified if the fire department gets paid at each evening training they attend. It was discussed that an option could be an agreement with how frequent the department would attend trainings per month. Mr. Carter spoke via Zoom and stated he thought this discussion would occur at

this Friday's meeting. He stated the fire department trains twice a month, and each person is paid at regular rates. Mr. Carter stated that he reduced the outside training to ensure that the present salary would be held for each employee at their particular rate of pay. Ms. Blouin-Andrus stated the even though the fire department removed \$20,000 of Emergency Services from the budget, \$9,000 was placed back in with increased salaries. Mr. Lessels stated how the budget was originally \$183,000 in the proposed budget, and was taken down to \$160,000, and presently with recent revisions by Ms. Dennis and Mr. LaFlam it is \$171,000. These revisions included doubling the Fire Department Chief's salary, and adding captain and lieutenant positions as a separate line item. Ms. Dennis clarified that the revised budget was given to the Selectboard this evening to review in preparation for Friday's meeting. Mr. Lessels stated the department must be prepared on Friday to discuss training rates and training frequency. Mr. Lessels discussed Echo/Delta criteria for life-threatening calls. Mr. LaFlam arrived at the closing of the discussion, and vocalized certain challenges that were at a recent medical and fire call.

Minutes of Previous Meetings:

Mr. Wood motioned to accept the minutes of December 22, 2021 – Workshop, December 22, 2021 – Non-Public #1 Acquisitions, December 22, 2021 – Non-Public #2 Compensation, December 22, 2021 – Non-Public #3 Reputations, December 22, 2021 – Non-Public #4 Compensation (SEALED). Ms. Blouin-Andrus seconded the motion, and the motion carried 5 - 0 by an affirmative roll call vote.

Consent Agenda:

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

Administrator's Report and Correspondence:

Ms. Dennis discussed how Human Resources provided the Selectboard recently updated Covid protocols. She discussed how the board should decide on if they approve, or they wanted to vocalize any changes to these protocols. As of today, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) recommends a five-day quarantine. Ms. Blouin-Andrus moved to accept as written seconded by Mr. Wood. Mr. Rescsanski voted Nay. Mr. Rescsanski requested a discussion regarding the recommendation of wearing masks. Mr. Rescsanski stated the CDC also required a mask being worn on return to work after the five-day isolation requirement. Mr. Wood and Ms. Blouin-Andrus rescinded their seconding and motion respectively. Mr. Rescsanski made a motion to amend the updated Covid policy that employees be recommended to wear a mask for five days after they return to work after the five-day quarantine from a positive test. Ms. Houghton seconded the motion. Mr. Wood voted nay, while Mr. Lessels, Mr. Rescsanski, Ms. Blouin-Andrus, and Ms. Houghton voted yay. The motion carried 4 to 1 by affirmative roll call vote.

Ms. Dennis presented an issue regarding a rotted ambulance sign that needed to be decided upon. Mr. Rescsanski made a motion to allow Mr. Larry Small to have the sign if he wishes, and if he decides not to, for the sign to be disposed. The motion was seconded by Ms. Houghton and carried 5 - 0 by an affirmative roll call vote. Ms. Dennis then discussed a complaint regarding the placement of a cemetery sign voiced by a member of

the community. The Cemetery sign is in the same location as the previous Ambulance sign, in fact the same posts were used for the new sign.

Ms. Dennis discussed mowing bids for the upcoming year. Ms. Dennis stated the incorrect ad was ran in the *Eagle Times* for two weeks, which was an error by the paper, not the office. Ms. Dennis stated that she emailed and mailed several vendors, but only one bidder attended the mandatory pre-bid meeting. The dates in the Eagle newspaper were incorrect, but the ad was also run the *Keene Sentinel*. She stated she anticipates a higher amount would be requested by potential interested bidders. Ms. Houghton suggested posting in *The Shopper*. Mr. Wood stated he would prefer to not have another active search for bidders. Ms. Dennis stated the bid is sealed and will be opened at the meeting on January 5th. The Selectboard reached a consensus to accept the sealed bid, with rejection still being a possible option.

Ms. Dennis presented a concern by a resident regarding a culvert issue on Wheeler Rand Road. It was disclosed that this is the southernmost end of Wheeler Rand and is not maintained by the Town. Ms. Dennis discussed a complaint the culvert is plugged and backing up and doing damage to an abutter's driveway. Ms. Dennis previously forwarded this email to the Selectboard and asked the Board if they would like to act on this issue, or wait until the individual who made the complaint comes into a Selectboard meeting. Mr. Rescsanski identified the present issue as a civil matter. Mr. Wood stated that it was unreasonable for the Town to insist an individual move their entryway when it is not a Town maintained road.

Ms. Dennis advised the board they would need to decide if they would like to invite Mr. Jim McClammer to a meeting in January to discuss Great River Hydro's relicensing. Mr. Lessels will invite Mr. McClammer.

The meeting was let out for recess at 7:36 p.m.

The meeting reconvened at 7:43 p.m.

Ms. Dennis discussed how she sent the 3% vs 6% possible increase amounts to the Selectboard, which totaled to a \$40,000 difference between the two separate calculations. These amounts would be distributed half this March, and would serve to place employees on the pay scale. The second half of the agreed percentage would be a merit-based increase on the employee's anniversary, so increase would be on the employee's anniversary moving forward. Mr. Rescsanski stated his uncertainty on which percentage should be chosen. He then discussed the significance of the increases requested by the police department. Ms. Blouin-Andrus clarified that they would set a pay scale, and each department that exceeded the 6% raise it would have to adjust down to that amount. Different possible percentages, including 3%, 4%, 5%, 6%, and 4.5% were discussed thoroughly and at length. The percentage of 4.5 was an agreed upon figure to discuss at Friday's meeting. Stipends within the budget were discussed, and Ms. Houghton vocally adjusted the budget amounts for the Ballot Clerks and Supervisors of the Checklist.

On-Going Business:

The Selectboard Workshop this Friday, December 31, 2021 at 10:00 a.m. was discussed. Ms. Dennis put forward the suggestion that the Selectboard consider a lunch break due to the timing of the meeting.

Mr. Wood made a motion at 8:14 p.m. to adjourn the meeting, Ms. Houghton seconded the motion, the motion carried 5 to 0 by an affirmative roll call vote.

Respectfully Submitted,
Jordan Cannon, Recording Secretary

William Rescsanski

Shelly Blouin-Andrus

Nancy Houghton

Jeff Lessels

Jeremy Wood

(Note: these are unapproved meeting minutes. Any corrections will be made at the next Selectboard meeting on January 5, 2022)

**Charlestown Board of Selectmen
Non-Public Meeting Minutes #1
RSA 91-A:3 II (c-Reputations)
December 29, 2021 @ 5:00 p.m.
Community Room**

Selectboard present in community room: Shelly Blouin-Andrus, Jeff Lessels (Chair), Jeremy Wood (Vice Chair), William Rescsanski, and Nancy Houghton

Staff Present: Jessica Dennis – Administrative Assistant
Jordan Cannon – Recording Secretary (via Zoom)
Patricia Chaffee – Town Clerk/Tax Collector
Diane Dezan – Human Resources

Ms. Chaffee commenced the discussion regarding incidents occurring within the water department. She stated how there appears to be a lack of supervision. Ms. Blouin-Andrus discussed the individual in charge and that he needs to be up to date on the policies. Ms. Houghton discussed an incident regarding a blockage and how there was no action to address it. Ms. Chaffee discussed a conversation which took place recently. Ms. Chaffee discussed this issue as being a maintenance issue to begin with. She stated that a comment was made after the fact, and although she stated she did not agree with the comment that was made, she did not believe the message was communicated fully. Ms. Blouin-Andrus discussed how most of the department heads took additional responsibilities when the situation necessitated it, and stated that water department may encounter a situation which calls for a similar response. Ms. Chaffee discussed the specifications listed on for this position. Ms. Blouin-Andrus discussed how his ninety-day review is in the coming weeks, and that a review of this nature may be called for.

Mr. Lessels made a motion to reconvene public session at 5:14 p.m.; Mr. Wood seconded the motion.

Roll call vote: Rescsanski – aye; Andrus – aye, Houghton – aye, Wood – aye, and Lessels – aye; motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,
Jordan Cannon, Recording Secretary

William Rescsanski

Shelly Blouin-Andrus

Nancy Houghton

Jeff Lessels

Jeremy Wood

(Note: these are unapproved meeting minutes. Any corrections will be made at the next Selectboard meeting on January 05, 2022)

**Charlestown Board of Selectmen
Non-Public Meeting Minutes #2
RSA 91-A:3 II (c-Reputations)
December 29, 2021 @ 5:00 p.m.
Community Room**

Selectboard present in community room: Shelly Blouin-Andrus, Jeff Lessels (Chair), Jeremy Wood (Vice Chair), William Rescsanski, and Nancy Houghton

Staff Present: Jessica Dennis – Administrative Assistant
Jordan Cannon – Recording Secretary (via Zoom)
Patricia Chaffee – Town Clerk/Tax Collector
Diane Dezan – Human Resources

Mr. Lessels discussed a conversation that occurred the previous evening. He discussed the stipulations that Mr. Hemingway requested to be in the bid documents. Mr. Lessels expressed concerns that adding these stipulations may increase the time needed to complete the project and further; it is setting a precedent for future construction projects. Ms. Blouin-Andrus reviewed the discussions that were held with Mr. Hemingway earlier in the year, and the Selectboard's assurance they would work with him. Mr. Wood discussed that if they are not able to meet Mr. Hemingway's requests, they may try to work toward his section from both ends so that he will still be able to be open during the time he wishes to be. Ms. Blouin-Andrus discussed the length of time between the present and the time in which Mr. Hemingway would need to have his entry way completed. Mr. Lessels stated that if Mr. Hemingway is accommodated before agreements were made they may need to make adjustments after an agreement has been reached.

Mr. Lessels made a motion to reconvene public session at 5:37 p.m.; Mr. Wood seconded the motion.

Roll call vote: Rescsanski – aye; Andrus – aye, Houghton – aye, Wood – aye, and Lessels – aye; motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,
Jordan Cannon, Recording Secretary

William Rescsanski

Shelly Blouin-Andrus

Nancy Houghton

Jeff Lessels

Jeremy Wood

(Note: these are unapproved meeting minutes. Any corrections will be made at the next Selectboard meeting on January 5, 2022)