

CHARLESTOWN SELECTBOARD
FRIDAY, DECEMBER 31, 2021 AT 10:00 A.M.
CHARLESTOWN PUBLIC LIBRARY COMMUNITY ROOM AND VIA
~~ZOOM~~ ~~CONFERRING~~

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
Patricia Chaffee, Town Clerk/Tax Collector
Joey Carter, Fire Department
Mark LaFlam, Interim Fire Chief

Others Present: Tom Cobb and Joseph Cobb

Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance: Mr. Lessels called the workshop meeting to order at 10:00 a.m., led the pledge of allegiance and welcomed in-person attendees and those by Zoom.

2022 Budgets:

The Selectboard welcomed Ms. Chaffee.

Ms. Blouin-Andrus motioned to go into non-public at 10:03 a.m. RSA 91-A:3 II (a) Personnel, Mr. Rescsanski seconded the motion. The motion carried 5 - 0 by an affirmative roll call vote.

The meeting reconvened at 10:08 am.

Fire Department

The Selectboard welcomed discussion from Mr. LaFlam and Mr. Carter from the Fire Department.

Mr. Rescsanski motioned to go into non-public at 10:09 a.m. RSA 91-A:3 II (c) Reputations, Mr. Wood seconded the motion. The motion carried 5 - 0 by an affirmative roll call vote.

Reconvened at 10:19 a.m.

Mr. Tom Cobb requested a non-public for reputations for next Wednesday's Selectboard Meeting.

Mr. Lessels commenced a discussion concerning the Fire Department's proposed budget. Ms. Blouin-Andrus reviewed the discussion over separate training rates, and whether or not there should be a set standard training fee regardless of position. Mr. Rescsanski asked if a training rate could be set. Mr. LaFlam asked if other employees were paid separate rates from their standard rate for training, to which Ms. Blouin-Andrus

responded that the fire department received more frequent training. Mr. Rescsanski made motion to implement training rate for all Town employees at \$10 an hour. The motion was not seconded. Mr. Lessels invited Mr. LaFlam and Mr. Carter to discuss the impact this change would have on the Fire Department. Mr. Rescsanski made motion to accept fire department budget as proposed. Ms. Houghton stated that if a Town training rate was adopted it would affect all Town employees and budgets. It was discussed how \$1,000-1,500 would be subtracted from the proposed Fire Department budget if the training rates were adjusted. Mr. LaFlam stated that the Selectboard discussed how Fire Department employees would be psychologically impacted with the amount if a rate change adopted. Mr. Carter discussed how the passing of training classes results in a bonus in pay. Mr. Wood stated he saw the bonus component as a means to incentive achievement and the passing of classes.

Ms. Blouin-Andrus asked the Fire Department to describe any plan regarding this year's building maintenance. Mr. LaFlam stated that Mr. Hassett would be speaking about the outside brick façade of the building. Mr. LaFlam stated he would research to see if an entire wall needed replacement or just the bottom portion. It was also discussed that the building's oil tank is 40 years old, and if when the interim between activation reaches a certain point the prime is lost. The check valves and such will be in their possession imminently per Mr. LaFlam. Discussion was held over the history of repairs to the Fire Station. Mr. Carter discussed the issue of the doors not being designed for vehicles larger than a pick-up truck. Ms. Blouin-Andrus stated that the Selectboard is working on the budget to be more organized with what the Town follows up with. She voiced that she would like to see something on paper this year showing what building projects are being addressed. Ms. Blouin-Andrus stated that a plan would be beneficial to have so as to add a layer of transition when new employees come in. Ms. Houghton stated that there's a history of the Fire Department presenting issues they need to be addressed and then not addressing them. Ms. Blouin-Andrus stated that documentation would help with the challenges in building repairs. Ms. Blouin-Andrus compared the Fire Department with other Town department's in developing plans regarding improvements on their buildings. Mr. LaFlam stated that his understanding was that Mr. Hassett would assist when the Fire Department makes a list of building concerns to be addressed. Mr. Wood reviewed the price for Fire Station maintenance, and encouraged them to consider making their requested level funded for 2022.

Mr. Lessels stated that the Fire Department can continue to mow their own lawn this year. Mr. Lessels commended the Fire Department on their work this previous year, but encouraged them to consider Ms. Blouin-Andrus's suggestion of having written plans that are kept and followed-up with. Mr. Wood clarified the difference between projects that would require outside involvement versus those that can be attended to by maintenance employees. Mr. LaFlam that there were upcoming projects that the Town will be paying for the cost of materials. Mr. Lessels stated that the Town is attempting to make something happen because of the needed repairs. Ms. Blouin-Andrus asked if the repairs can be put into a notebook.

Ms. Houghton questioned the amount of time it takes to train one of their staff. Mr. Carter and Mr. LaFlam stated that the trainings would be preferably three times a month in order

to have their employees well-versed in necessary information. Ms. Houghton asked if there can be only one training a month. Mr. Wood stated that the federal government has increased the amount of training and information required to be a certified Firefighter. Mr. LaFlam stated that 90% of Fire service is “muscle memory”, so this is why well-trained Firefighters are required. Mr. Lessels discussed the decrease in maintenance budget and questioned if there is a motion to accept the proposed budget.

Ms. Blouin-Andrus made a motion to accept the Fire Department budget, Mr. Rescsanski seconded the motion, and the motion carried 5 - 0 by an affirmative roll call vote.

Mr. LaFlam discussed meeting with Mr. Hassett on possible methods to address the needed repairs at the fire department building.

Recess was convened at 10:52 a.m. by Mr. Lessels.

The meeting was reconvened at 10:59 a.m.

Overall budget discussion/salary adjustments

Mr. Wood made a motion to accept the 4.5% increase in payroll across the Town for next year's budget. Ms. Houghton seconded the motion. Mr. Lessels identified that when accepting the 4.5%, the budget increases by \$16,000. Ms. Blouin-Andrus inquired if the prepared budgets Ms. Dennis presented were only with the alteration to pay increases. Mr. Rescsanski disclosed his concern with the 4.5 % that certain employees who have already received large raises in 2021 would have double raises with this implementation. Mr. Wood clarified that the 4.5% was to put everyone up to a scale. The initial 2.25% would take place first to place an employee on the pay scale, and the second 2.25% would go into effect on their anniversary. Ms. Blouin-Andrus clarified that the new library budget calculations were part of the budget presented by Ms. Dennis. Mr. Rescsanski discussed the view of having fewer employees and increasing their compensation versus keeping all employees and increasing their pay at the same rate.

Mr. Lessels discussed how the Finance Committee questioned why funds dedicated on the budget previously went unused. Ms. Blouin-Andrus stated that Chief Connors has stated multiple times he has difficulty in finding and keeping officers on because their rate of pay was low on average. Ms. Blouin-Andrus stated that this was done in hopes to not lose employees in key positions. Ms. Dennis discussed encumbrances having yet been added to the \$4,162,000 already calculated from the previous budget of \$4,910,000. She stated that these expenditures will give a truer reflection of the how the Town did with its proposed budget. Discussion was clarified over the line items in the budget sheets that Ms. Dennis distributed. Ms. Blouin-Andrus mentioned how much she is aware of certain departments are encumbering. Mr. Wood stated that the Finance Committee may be unaware of projects that are yet to be completed. Ms. Blouin-Andrus stated that she was unsure of what particular items the Finance Committee wanted removed from the budget. Ms. Dennis stated that effort was made to make the 2021 budget less than 2020. Mr. Lessels reflected previous years' budgets, and how Charlestown may budget less than comparable Towns within the State. Ms. Dennis reflected on inflation impacting the costs of items and services.

Ms. Blouin-Andrus stated a special article for capital outlay may be attended to by citizens yet to have decided. Discussion was held whether or not \$10,000 in capital outlay instead of \$45,000 in a Contingency Fund. Mr. Lessels brought the attention back to the motion on the table. Mr. Rescsanski discussed the possible alteration to accommodate those who have already received a large pay increase in 2021. Mr. Lessels stated that the second 2.25% would be merit-based. Mr. Wood amended his motion to 4.5% overall pay increase, 3% initially to place on the payroll pay-scale, and with a 1.5% merit increase on the employee's anniversary. Ms. Blouin-Andrus seconded. Mr. Wood amended the motion to pay 2.25% this March in the first full paid period, with a merit-based 2.25% in reserve for the employee's anniversary. Ms. Blouin-Andrus seconded. The motion carried 5 - 0 by an affirmative roll call vote. Ms. Dennis stated she has not spoken with department heads about what scale they will place their employees on, and that the board should anticipate this discussion with the Finance Committee. Ms. Dennis stated that this may result in additional funds being placed onto in the budget.

Mr. Lessels discussed the overall budget presented by Ms. Dennis. The discussion began with Executive Government funding. Mr. Wood questioned if the elections portion of the budget reflected the updated pay-scale adjustments previously discussed. General discussion was held concerning the proposed budget for each department. Ms. Dennis stated that Financial Administration budget was increased because of a change in the amount for health insurance. Ms. Dennis clarified that the proposed numbers for pay increase was 4.5% for all employees, and that discussions with other employees and their requested amounts would be discussed in coming weeks.

Ms. Blouin-Andrus motioned to go into non-public at 11:39 a.m. RSA 91-A:3 II (c) Personnel, Ms. Houghton seconded the motion. The motion carried 5 - 0 by an affirmative roll call vote.

The meeting reconvened at 11:45 a.m.

It was stated that Mr. Hassett would not have time for mowing all Town properties when he returns to his cemetery duties. Mr. Lessels reviewed the changes in the budget if the amount set aside for mowing was removed. The Selectboard discussed reasoning for certain line items increasing or decreasing. Ms. Blouin-Andrus discussed decreasing the amount to \$50,000. Ms. Dennis stated that the cost of all items and services is going up. Ms. Dennis stated that she removed funds connected to the Food Shelf and Congregate Meals because previous years budgeted funds were not used. Mr. Lessels clarified that three discussions which would require non-public meetings would be tabled until the next meeting. Mr. Rescsanski recommended eliminating the title for Beautification Coalition. Ms. Dennis suggested Main Street Beautification as an alternative and stated this would be updated. Ms. Blouin-Andrus stated that Mr. Weed should make the decision between a 6-wheeler or 10-wheeler. Ms. Blouin-Andrus discussed the difference in leasing amounts between the two differently-sized trucks as being \$5,000. Ms. Blouin-Andrus commented on the decrease in overall budget if one of the budgeted trucks were removed. It was discussed how the 6-wheeler truck would be removed from the Special Articles, and this would reduce the budget by \$30,000. Discussion of Capital Outlay items

ensured. Mr. Lessels discussed the vehicles listed on this particular budget. Ms. Dennis discussed a new software package listed on the budget. Mr. Wood stated that a software conversion should be postponed for a year. Ms. Dennis stated that if the new software was taken out of the budget, the budget would need to be adjusted for the re-licensing of the present software.

2022 Warrant Articles

Mr. Lessels commenced the discussion of the warrant articles. The removal the 6-wheel truck from the warrant article list was discussed. Ms. Dennis stated that on occasion when there are many warrant articles listed, voters will look at the cost and immediately vote “No.” Mr. Wood stated that proposed Warrant Article #3, Zoning Ordinance, could be removed because it could be accepted by the Planning Board.

Mr. Lessels commenced a discussion. Mr. Rescsanski discussed the rationale of having a Contingency Fund if it was needed for any reason to benefit the Town. Ms. Blouin-Andrus stated that the Town doesn't typically vote down the Town budget, but consideration should be given to the possibility of it does not pass the vote. Mr. Lessels stated that in recent years the Town budget has passed by a slim margin. Mr. Wood stated that the Capital Reserve decision must include whether or not the funds are in effect this year or next. Mr. Wood stated that the 2021 storm damage was an unforeseen event which presented costs that could have been addressed by a Contingency Fund. Concerning the Emergency Communications funding, Ms. Dennis discussed how the Tower on Mt. Ascutney will need a change of equipment. Mr. Lessels discussed the Solar Exemption warrant article. Ms. Blouin-Andrus proposed that article to repurpose the Ambulance Equipment Capital Reserve be removed on this year's warrant article. The Selectboard discussed the article, which proposed funds being put into a capital reserve for fire/rescue equipment. There was agreement to remove this warrant article from proposed 2022 Warrant. Ms. Blouin-Andrus discussed how the \$16,000 from the sale of the ambulance could possibly go into a fund where a discussion could be held on how it would be allocated. The concrete foundation of the Fire Station was mentioned as a possible allocation target for these funds. Ms. Dennis stated she was looking at the RSA related to the establishment of fees and discovered the RSA related to Library Trustees accepting donations. The Library Trustees have previously accepted donations, so this RSA should be adopted. Ms. Dennis questioned if the Selectboard wanted to pursue the putting funds into the Property Revaluation Capital Reserve in 2022. It was decided that this would be postponed until next year. Ms. Dennis stated that in 2021 there was a revaluation which would need to be done again in 2026. It was agreed upon that the Contingency Fund request would be set to \$20,000.

Consent Agenda:

No consent agenda.

Administrators Report:

Ms. Dennis stated she has received several comments concerning non-public minutes. Discussion of sealing of non-public was held by the Selectboard. The Selectboard discussed and defined what would be required when documents are redacted. It was discussed the provision of information to Human Resources concerning non-public

meeting minutes would place the document into the employee's personnel file when appropriate. Discussion was had over employee's employment identification numbers as being identification within non-public meetings. Ms. Blouin-Andrus discussed the importance of the public's ability to access public information. Mr. Lessels voiced that the issue should be considered and addressed in upcoming Selectboard meetings.

Any other business that becomes before the meeting:

Ms. Blouin-Andrus motioned at 1:11 p.m. to adjourn the meeting, Mr. Wood seconded the motion. The motion carried 5 - 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 (a-Personnel)
December 31, 2021 @ 10:00 a.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
Patricia Chaffee – Town Clerk/Tax Collector

It was discussed how recently a Town employee had decided to resign from her position. Ms. Chaffee also discussed a separate employee who may soon take medical time. Ms. Chaffee disclosed to the Selectboard that these staffing changes will not allow her ample time to train a new employee, so therefore she has adjusted the budget to hire someone full-time in June. This was discussed as being in the hope that in June the office will be fully staff. Ms. Chaffee described how she is unable to tend to the window while also training a new employee. Ms. Chaffee described how the former employee disclosed the stressors she encountered in her position in addressing mistakes. Ms. Chaffee stated that she attempted to explain to the employee that the mistakes made are not uncommon, but the employments decision to leave the Town's employ remained unchanged.

Ms. Blouin-Andrus made a motion to reconvene public session at 10:08 a.m.; Ms. Houghton 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)

**Charlestown Board of Selectmen
Non-Public Meeting Minutes #2
RSA 91-A:3 II (c-Reputations)
December 31, 2021 @ 10:00 a.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
Mark LaFlam, Interim Fire Chief
Joey Carter, Fire Department
Tom Cobb
Joseph Cobb

Discussion was held over a situation involving a building in Town having a fire code violation. It was discussed that the individual who operates the deli in Town has not acted to address this matter. It was revealed that this individual is planned to vacate the building on January 31, 2022. Mr. LaFlam described how the individual told him to “get out of his shop” when bringing his attention to this matter. Mr. LaFlam disclosed his consultation with the State Fire Marshal on possible next steps regarding this individual’s resistance to addressing the stated issue. Mr. LaFlam inquired as to next steps in the process, since he has already served the appropriate documentation and left him a copy of the Fire Marshal’s report. Mr. LaFlam stated that a response is forthcoming. Mr. Tom Cobb stated to the Selectboard that the Fire Marshal’s responsibility is to oversee State ran facilities, health care, and schools, and that they are asked to become involved when municipalities ask for assistance. Mr. Tom Cobb stated how he has been asking the Fire Marshal to come out, but that it is decision to be made by the Fire Chief. Mr. Lessels stated that it is a legal matter and it should be tabled for this reason. Mr. Lessels stated to Mr. Tom Cobb that this matter would be followed up at the next meeting. Mr. LaFlam and Mr. Tom Cobb discussed the challenges in speaking with the man who is operating the delicatessen. Mr. Rescsanski inquired as to how it has been in waiting for a response from the Fire Marshal. Mr. LaFlam stated that it has been over a week in waiting, but that the Fire Marshal has been on vacation.

Ms. Houghton made a motion to reconvene public session at 10:18 a.m.; Mr. Rescsanski 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)

**Charlestown Board of Selectmen
Non-Public Meeting Minutes #3
RSA 91-A:3 II (c-Reputations)
December 31, 2021 @ 10:00 a.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

Ms. Blouin-Andrus asked what will become of Mr. Hassett once the Town hires a full-time maintenance employee. It was discussed how by the time this is addressed, Mr. Hassett will have returned to his role at the cemetery. Ms. Dennis put forward she did not anticipate Mr. Weed to contact Mr. Hassett. It was discussed that the amount listed in the budget to pay for a full-time maintenance employee to commence in March, and the following year's budget would cover this position for the entire year. Ms. Dennis stated that the maintenance person also has cleaning responsibilities. Mr. Lessels stated that the changes in budget are to reflect the duties of the future employee who takes over from Mr. Hassett.

Mr. Lessels made a motion to reconvene public session at 11:45 a.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)