

**Town of Charlotte
Board of Selectmen
Minutes**

**Monday, January 3, 2005
7:00 PM, Charlotte Town Hall**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairman Charles Russell
Jennifer Steele Cole
Eleanor Russell
Ed Stone
Francis Thornton

OTHERS: Dean Bloch (Selectboard Assistant)
Davis Charrington
Larry Hamilton
John Hammer
Dale Knowles
Phyl Lary
Robert Mack
Carrie Spear
Jocelyn Bolick (clerk)

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm.

The items on the agenda were as follows:

Adjustment to Agenda / Approve Minutes for December 13 / Public Discussion / Discussion of the agricultural lease at the Charlotte Park and Wildlife Refuge / Dale Knowles—request for raise for Dog Control Officer / Request to put article on Town Meeting ballot regarding the Vermont National Guard deployment in Iraq / Discussion regarding salaries, budget and articles for Town Meeting - (1) budget, (2) articles: ambulance; funding the Improvement and Repair Reserve Fund; funding the Conservation Fund; Burns property; Land Use Regulations; Constables(?); other, (3) salaries (probable executive session) / Selectboard Update: Higbee Road; Sogoloff documents; Selectboard report for the Annual Report / Bills and Warrants / Adjournment

Adjustment to Agenda

None.

Approve Minutes for December 13

Motion made by Ellie Russell, seconded by Jennie Cole:

“To approve the selectboard meeting minutes with corrections for December 13th, 2004”.

Vote: all in favor.

On page 2, under Public Discussion/190 Hinesburg Road, change “Peter Schneider and his ware ...” to “Peter Schneider and his wife ...”.

On page 4, under Budget Presentations/Recreation, change “Ed asked about town neglect” to “Ed asked about town liability”.

Public Discussion

None.

Discussion of the agricultural lease at the Charlotte Park and Wildlife Refuge

Davis Charrington raised a question concerning the responsibility of the Parks Committee. There's been an ongoing debate on how to manage and control vegetation on the trails – chemical or mechanical means? The management plan seemed to indicate that it was named a wildlife park for a reason – there needs to be a policy with respect to controlling vegetation as it pertains to the lease. Davis said one of the reasons for doing a 1200 foot stretch is to get the more difficult parts of the trail up to speed. Robert feels if there is gravel applied to the trail every year along with the mechanical work, a lot of your problems go away.

Jennie said in the management plan, there is talk about not using herbicides. Robert Mack felt it was worded as an “either/or” situation, meaning either herbicides or crop rotation. Robert bid on doing the crop rotation. He used chemicals this past year, but for 2 years prior, he didn't use any chemicals. Davis said the Park Committee's policy is leaning towards low chemical or no chemical input. In practicality, it eliminates the corn/alfalfa rotation. Robert said that means he would go to one year of corn, then alfalfa the following year. The package he bid on did not have that language, however. He bid on a package with a crop rotation base.

Davis said Scott's original recommendation is to have the town invest in a 10 foot wide chain drag. That could be towed by an ATV. Hire a teenager to pull it around every 10 days or so, and it would impact the trail. Scott was recommending screened road gravel. Davis said the main reason for not using the crushed blue stone is the expense; once you start you have 2 different color tones. Dale said the blue stone doesn't pack. Davis said they ruled out trying to mow the weeds. Robert asked about using a product called Wulfsonite. It's a product that packs very hard and would firm up the trail quite a bit.

Charlie said the maintenance of the trail really isn't related to a lease. Robert doesn't feel there's much demand for the property right now. If the town decides to limit the use of chemicals, perhaps he will have a 2 year corn crop. That property has its limitations. The ground dries out in the summertime, which isn't good for a lot of vegetables. It has an access problem – it's tough to use Route 7 to access that property - and the management plan scares everyone away.

Ed asked what happens to the land if no one comes forward to claim the ag lease. What does that park become?

Charlie said he doesn't want to see it brush hogged every year. He would prefer to see it farmed.

Charlie asked Robert about a cash payment - \$20/acre for roughly 95 acres. Robert won't do 1 year of corn, but would do 2 years – with spraying of RoundUp at the start of the 2nd year if it is needed. Jennie said there's been discussion at the Park Committee meetings about doing hay – would that be of any value to Robert? Robert said it is not an option – he already put a bid in for something else.

Dale asked if \$20/acre is going to cover someone brush hogging and putting in gravel, or is it going to come out of the town? Charlie said the original plan calls for \$2500 to maintain the land, so it will be in the ballpark.

Robert wants FSA to do the mapping of all the crop land. He wants to make sure of the size of the land he is paying for. Charlie said the overlook is supposed to be included in the deal. That's around another 26 acres, including woodlands. The agreement will be written up and will be for a length of 5 years.

The selectboard is accepting Robert's bid as modified: a cash payment of \$20 acre as determined by FSA mapping, 2 year corn with RoundUp the 2nd year if needed with an annual payment due on January 15th.

Dale Knowles—request for raise for Dog Control Officer

Dale asked for a raise this year for dog catching. There hasn't been a raise since the position was started. There's a 2nd lock on Margaret's kennel door – people are going in at night and taking their dogs out. Dale said it does take more time. Charlie asked for historical data of time spent throughout the years. Dale said it is low right now, but in April and May they will start coming in. He felt it's been about 65 dogs over the last year. It goes by calendar year, and he doesn't keep any record. Next year Dale will bring the log book so the select board can keep it. He feels he spends 400 to 500 hours per year on the telephone dealing with dog owners and their neighbors. The selectboard will take the request under advisement.

Request to put article on Town Meeting ballot regarding the Vermont National Guard deployment in Iraq

Larry Hamilton said he served in WW II as a volunteer, and has joined the Green Mountain Veterans for Peace organization. They are trying to get a resolution at the town meetings regarding the Vermont National Guard deployment in Iraq. He would like the selectboard to vote to warn this for the town meeting in March. Frank said he's opposed to these open votes at town meetings – he feels it clutters up the town meeting with stuff that is not relevant to town business. People can write directly to their legislator if they feel strongly about this issue. There will be a small number of people voting on this after the meeting is done; it won't be a true representation of the town. Frank said at the end of the meeting, there is an opportunity for people to speak under "other business". Larry could get up and speak at that point.

Frank said it is irrelevant to town business; the town has no way of acting upon this. Ed said there needs to be 2 opposite sides to discuss the issue. John Hammer said if it plays to where the town wants to be, then it is a positive thing for town meeting. A suggestion was made to have a petition at town meeting and have people sign it – a thousand signatures would be much more meaningful than a 70-20 vote.

Discussion regarding salaries, budget and articles for Town Meeting

- **Budget.** The CLA came in at 106.48%. The auditor comes on the 17th, so that's when the budget will be finalized.
- **Articles:**
 - **Ambulance.** Ellie said in their long range planning, the rescue department anticipated a need for a new ambulance. They will give the selectboard data – they anticipate the cost to be around \$150,000. They feel that they will have enough money in their capital reserve fund to pay for it without getting a bond.
 - **Funding the Improvement and Repair Reserve Fund.** Ellie said they approved the fund last year, and it really needs to be funded this year. The board needs to figure out how to put money into the fund. Frank said it needs to be a separate article.
 - **Funding the Conservation Fund.** The Conservation Fund needs to be a separate article also (see 'Funding the Improvement and Repair Reserve Fund').
 - **Burns property.** Dean said the Burns Committee needs to meet.
 - **Land Use Regulations.** Ed and Dean are interested in putting a cap on the number of affordable housing units each year. You don't want 400 houses built in one year! Robert Mack asked who is going to enforce the proposed land use regulations for the town of Charlotte.
 - **Constables.** Does Cowboy Lewis need to run this year; was he appointed last year for a 2 year term? This needs to be figured out.
 - **Other.** Fire and Rescue Reserve Fund needs to be a separate article also (see 'Funding the Improvement and Repair Reserve Fund'). Ed asked about putting signs up – people in town are putting together signs, but the land use regulations say no signs. Who's going to figure this out?
- **Salaries (probable executive session).**

Motion made by Ed Stone, seconded by Ellie Russell:
"To go into executive session to discuss salaries."
Vote: all in favor.

Motion made by Ed Stone, seconded by Ellie Russell:
"To come out of executive session."
Vote: all in favor.

The Selectboard came out of Executive Session at 10:00 PM. No motions were made.

Selectboard Update

- **Higbee Road.** Ed said Clark Hinsdale seems favorable to putting the road in across from the Berry Farm. That is also the first choice for the guy from AOT. Junior will come up with an estimated cost of putting the road where Clark would like to see it go. The neighbors will have to get involved at some point. Charlie would like to make sure the neighbors aren't against the fact that they are lengthening their daily commute. Frank said technically you won't be able to close off the other end. That road is under the control of the court.
- **Sogoloff documents.** Ed said it looks like we got the trail easement and the whole deal. There is a class 4 town highway license agreement and an offer of an irrevocable agreement between the town of Charlotte and Waller, LLC. The trail easement is not set. Frank is concerned that clause 5 says "In the event that the town discontinues the road". He feels the town has already discontinued the road. Ed suggested that Frank and Dean get together with an attorney and get the correct wording.

Motion made by Ellie Russell, seconded by Ed Stone:
"To approve the document subject to the clarification of clause 5 and the offer of irrevocable dedication subject to review by the town attorney."
Vote: all in favor.
- **Selectboard report for the Annual Report.** Ellie handed out a written report that is to be included in the town report. Any comments should be directed to Ellie by the end of the week.

Bills and warrants

Motion made by Ellie Russell, seconded by Ed Stone:

“To approve GMP petitions 107661- Flat Rock Road; and 108358- Lake Rd. and Orchard Rd.”

Vote: all in favor.

Motion made by Ellie Russell, seconded by Ed Stone:

“To approve Thompson’s Point leases:

1. Lots 185, 186 to Deborah Van Heusen Bruett Cook

2. Lots 117, ½ of 116, 118 to John L. Cole, Jr., Elizabeth P. Hardesty for Camp Benediction, LLC”.

Vote: all in favor.

Motion by Ellie Russell, seconded by Frank Thornton:

“To approve Finance and Maintenance Agreement for Seguin Bridge.”

Vote: all in favor.

Adjournment

Next selectboard meeting: Monday, January 10th at 7:00 PM.

Motion made by Ellie Russell, seconded by Francis Thornton:

“To adjourn the selectboard meeting”.

Vote: all in favor. Meeting adjourned at 10:10 PM.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Jocelyn Bolick.