

CHARLOTTE TOWN AUDITORS
Minutes of the Monday, September 16, 2013, Meeting
At the Charlotte Town Hall

Present: Town Auditors Peter Trono, Robert Mack and Nancy Wood, chair
Others: Selectboard Chair Charles Russell, Jenny Cole, Stephen Brooks, Dave Nichols,
Moe Harvey, Mary Mead

The meeting was called to order at 3:00 p.m.

The minutes of the September 3, 2013, meeting were approved on a motion by Peter Trono, seconded by Nancy Wood, passed. Robert Mack arrived.

A draft letter to the Selectboard requesting reconsideration of the board's action taken on August 26 related to the purchases at Rice Lumber by Richard St. George was presented by Peter Trono and reviewed. Wood said she did not support the letter, and that it is not the role of the Town Auditors to tell the Selectboard what to do. We've done our job, which was to review the accounts, notify the Selectboard and public of our concerns and recommend action to be taken. Trono and Mack defended the letter and the need for the Selectboard to reconsider. Jenny Cole spoke to discourage sending the letter, said this is sucking energy out of the town, looks like the negativity about Fire and Rescue that has gone on for years, it's time to move ahead and make things better in the future, take more constructive approach developing policies rather than attacking one individual contractor. Mack said there have been no changes in two years in the improving the process, there are no purchase orders put in place. Wood said it would be better for the auditors to send a letter that addresses the need for a purchasing policy. Wood suggested revisions in the language of the letter that said the Selectboard "must" or "should" do various actions. Russell asked Trono what the "scope of work" was to be performed by St. George, and said that when building contractors were consulted it was important to specifically identify the scope of work. Trono said reviewing invoices gives an idea of the scope of work. Mack said it was clear on work done by others on the Library because of materials returned. He pointed out that there were no returns on the Senior Center and Town Hall jobs. Wood said the Selectboard approved all of the purchases so they are responsible. Mack said he wants to see the Selectboard's decision reconsidered. Russell asked what is new information in the letter? Mack said it quantifies what has been discussed in prior meetings. Russell said there isn't new information; you just want us to change our minds because you don't like our decision. Tron and Mack both questioned the decision as it related to consumables – what is appropriate to be have been bought, how was the determination made and what was the percentage of the total value of the charges? Trono said he can't imagine that 42 drill bits were needed for the jobs. Russell said we wouldn't get our bait back, it would cost more for a lawyer than what would be gotten back. Mack asked how much had been spent on the lawyer. Russell said Joe Steitzel had been called two times. Trono said if St. George agreed to pay the sales tax, why not ask for the \$1400? Russell said Lane Morrison asked and St. George was not willing to pay that.

ACTION: Trono moved to accept the letter with changes on the second page from Selectboard “should” or “must” to “the Town Auditors recommend.” Seconded by Mack. Approved on a vote of 2-1 with Wood opposed.

The date of the next meeting was set for Monday, September 30, 2013, but later changed to Monday, October 7, 2013.

On a motion by Mack, seconded by Trono, the meeting was adjourned at 4:10 pm.

The Monday, September 16, 2013, minutes were approved at the October 7, 2013, meeting.