

**CHARLOTTE SELECTBOARD  
TOWN HALL  
MINUTES OF MEETING  
DECEMBER 17, 2012**

**APPROVED**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Charles Russell, Chair; John Owen, Ed Stone, Winslow Ladue, Dennis Delaney.

**ADMINISTRATION:** Dean Bloch, Selectboard Assistant.

**OTHERS:** Ed Sulva, Peter Trono, Mike Cook, David McNally, John Snow, Meg Modley, David Stewart, Chris Davis, Elizabeth Bassett, Peter Walker Meg Walker, Claudia Macklow, Ellie Russell, Stephen Brooks, Deb Stone, Louise McCarren, Robert Mack, Jenny Cole, Sue Smith, Chris Boffa, John Hammer, Charlotte News; Carol Casey, Charlotte Citizen, and others.

**CALL TO ORDER**

Mr. Russell called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

**ADJUSTMENTS TO AGENDA**

None.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

None.

**CHARLOTTE VOLUNTEER FIRE & RESCUE, INC – BUDGET REVIEW**

Mr. McNally and Ms. Modley, CVFRS representatives, reviewed a proposed FY 2013-2014 budget that included increases for outside audit support, support for administration and accounting, fire equipment replacements and membership incentives. Volunteer numbers were decreasing for both the Fire and Rescue departments. One full time Fire/EMT position was requested to cover on-call days at \$60,000 gross. Rescue was required by law to have two certified EMTs for 24/7 coverage minimum and \$16,600 was included in the \$42,000 EMT Payroll line item. A goal was to provide equal levels of coverage for both Fire and Rescue to avoid situations where there were simultaneous call outs for Fire and Rescue to two different situations/locations.

Mr. Stewart said that the state EMT office tracks time an ambulance was out of service. Charlotte's service was affected by lack of volunteers and coverage, stated Mr. Stewart.

Mr. Ladue asked if the EMT's were available to go out on a fire call, and how frequently were the ambulance and fire trucks called out at the same time to different locations. Mr. Stewart said that situation just happened on Thursday. Mr. Ladue asked if the frequency was once a month, once a year, or how often. Mr. Davis explained that six days a week none of the six officers were in Charlotte during the day. We work, but automatically respond as soon as possible from wherever we are working. This problem has been

developing over the years and has become acute this fall. Towns around Charlotte have moved to multiple paid staff, noted Mr. Davis.

Mr. Snow said they were working through the department protocols. The department was trying to have a trained certified person at the station that can get an ambulance in service to respond to calls in Charlotte, explained Mr. Snow. Mr. Davis said that the full time person's primary duty was a fire fighter and second was ambulance service. Hinesburg's Fire Department has put in a request for a 20-hour chief. Shelburne's department is working on getting three paid fire fighters over two years. We have been talking about the EMT needs since the 1990s. Mr. Davis explained the skill set level needed for an officer.

Mr. Ladue asked if someone could be hired for the amount requested in the budget. Mr. Davis replied yes. It was for a certified trained person for 40 hours per week, said Mr. Davis. Mr. Ladue asked how many hours/week the fire truck went out on calls. Mr. Davis replied there have been 120-135 calls per year. Mr. Ladue asked if it was possible that person could provide other service when not out on a call, for example; administration or accounting. Mr. Davis replied that person would do other tasks that needed to be done when not on call, such as wash the truck, clean equipment, fill fluids, etc.

Mr. Delaney asked if someone new, or experienced, would be on a different pay scale. Mr. Davis said the \$60,000 is the going rate county wide, and would be for an experienced person who could bring real skill sets with as many qualifications and training as possible. Hopefully that someone would be an officer from an area department, said Mr. Davis.

Mr. Brooks asked several questions:

- If there were 120-135 events per year that was 2- 3 hours per event per week average amount of time.
- Would \$60,000 incentive a shift from a volunteer position to a paid position, and if so, what does it mean.
- Consider taking the \$60,000 and looking at membership incentive programs so present volunteers are incentivized to be more available.
- Is there some tipping point to incentive volunteers if is equal and broad based.
- How are special funds budgeted and how does it fit here.

Mr. McNally said the department tried to look at it as a planning exercise versus getting volunteers. Levels of service were identified as a starting point. There was no one person in mind for a transition from volunteer to paid staff. Levels of service have a cost. Revenue and expenses are not articulated in the budget, said Mr. McNally. Mr. Sulva said they were looking at a minimum level of service for calls, for example; we don't know when an accident will happen that would require an ambulance. The \$60,000 person, whether for a fire or rescue call, would cover other tasks. Special Funds for the last 4-5 years have been used for unplanned for items. For example; radio replacement used \$4-5,000 from Special Funds this year, said Mr. Sulva.

Mr. Brooks suggested creating a Fire and Rescue budget for Town Meeting that made sense, and included revenue and expense streams.

Mr. Davis said that some Fire Department money was moved from equipment to incentives. The department still need to supplement coverage with volunteers, but we need someone there qualified to run a truck and run a site on a call, said Mr. Davis.

Mr. Snow said that the Corporation currently has what Town provides for a budget. It is not easy to move toward a unitary budget that includes all resources and expenses. We are asking the Town to support the proposed budget. Mr. Snow explained that the budget, estimates, planning, and making reasonable judgments requires time. The Corporate Board is a volunteer board, pointed out Mr. Snow.

Mr. Snow explained that he could volunteer on the Corporate Board because he was retired. Volunteer numbers are down, said Mr. Snow.

Mr. Mack asked what was spent last year. Mr. McNally replied \$637,000 last year.

Mr. Snow explained that some budget increases were triggered by increasing costs. An ambulance was costly to run. Part of the increase is what it actually costs to get the ambulance out the door, said Mr. Snow.

Mr. Mack asked if the benefits for the new position would be the same as Town staff. Mr. Sulva replied that Mr. Bloch provided information and the department was looking at what was equitable.

Mr. Mack suggested that the volunteers needed an advocate. Ms. Modley explained she was the volunteer advocate. The commitment of doing a minimum 60 hours per month training, attending business meetings and holding a job on top of family was big. Training takes a year for a new person, and there are different types of membership, said Ms. Modley.

Mr. Davis said that the number of certified volunteers has dropped from 33 to 22. Mr. Stewart said that in 2005 there were 37 active ambulance volunteers and now there were 10.

Mr. Mack said that Kay Gault's salary was paid for by the Town in the past. Mr. Snow said that cost has been shifted to the Fire and Rescue budget.

Mr. Sulva was asked to look at the Town share of \$465,000 and audit shown amount of \$439,000. He would report back to the Selectboard.

Mr. Mack asked when the departments would implement the auditor's recommendations. Mr. Sulva explained that a final draft was due first, and then procedures would be written. Implement would happen pronto. We need to respond to the audit findings and

recommendations with a date to complete management items that are achievable, said Mr. Sulva.

Mr. Sulva clarified that \$99,000 of the EMT payroll, if annualized, comes to \$264,000, and it was proposed to minus out \$110,000 patient billing from \$619,000 total expenses.

Mr. Russell explained that more meetings with the CVFRS will appear on future Selectboard agendas. Changes would happen by July first, said Mr. Russell.

**MINUTES: December 10**

**MOTION by Mr. Ladue, seconded by Mr. Owen, to approve the Selectboard minutes of 12/10/2012, as written, with corrections/additions.**

**VOTE: 5 ayes; motion carried.**

**LOUISE MCCARREN (ON BEHALF OF THE ENERGY GENERATION SITING POLICY COMMISSION) – REQUEST FOR TOWN’S INPUT REGARDING PROCESS – DISCUSSION OF HOW THE TOWN WILL PROVIDE INPUT – discussion only**

Ms. McCarren, Energy Generation Siting Policy Commission representative and Town resident, briefly explained the creation of the commission by the Governor related to energy plants. The commission was seeking Town input on Charlotte’s experience on siting of energy projects - what worked, what didn’t, the process, and how it could be better. A form would be provided. There have been 15-20 towns that have participated. The commission has received input from the Charlotte Planning Commission and want to hear from the Selectboard as well, said Ms. McCarren.

Mr. Delaney asked if there has been a difference between what this town has gone through versus a town that has not. Ms. McCarren replied a question is could the process be better. Public comments were welcomed, but we are interested in the Selectboard comments, said Ms. McCarren.

Mr. Russell pointed out that in Charlotte’s case the Town got out of the siting process early. The original schedule went awry. Input would be discussed at a public meeting, said Mr. Russell.

Mr. Mack said that the subject project seemed like it would just happen and there was no way to stop it.

Mr. Russell said that from the Town’s point of view, the Town didn’t have the language in the Town Plan to support a position.

Mr. Ladue said the process seemed restrictive.

Ms. McCarren said that the commission’s time frame was 6-8 weeks to receive and review information.

**TOWN GREEN COMMITTEE – UPDATE ON DESIGN FOR THE TOWN GREEN AND DISCUSSION OF POSSIBLE FUNDING OPTIONS – discussion only**

Ms. Cole and Ms. Smith, Town Green Committee members, reviewed a report dated 12/17/2012 regarding project costs and estimates from Church Hill Landscapes, dated 12/12/2012. The project could be done in stages and different funding sources. The committee was asking the Town for funding to fill in uneven areas on the Town Green and reseed the lawn for \$3,270, which did not include removal of the septic tanks located by the Town Hall, said Ms. Cole.

Mr. Russell said that the septic tank and pump station were to be filled in with sand, or crushed. Ms. Cole said that she would contact Roger Parker regarding the tanks.

Mr. Brooks stated that he now agreed that the monument should be moved, but placing it by the Town Hall sidewalks and bushes by the entrance doors would work just fine. The monument could be moved at no cost to the Town by a local Town contractor. Regarding the lawn, he thought evening out the ground could be done for \$1,500-2,000 versus \$3,750. He would pay Roger Parker to remove the tanks if the Town would fill in the holes, said Mr. Brooks.

Mr. Russell asked that the Town Green plans should be available for viewing at the March Town Meeting. Was the committee looking for approval, or feedback on proposed options, asked Mr. Russell.

Ms. Cole explained that the monument would be placed where people could spend time quietly and where other monuments could be placed as well. They were trying to utilize the existing flag pole. The monument would be placed in a way that both sides could be viewed. If there were walkways near the Library with a connection to the monuments then that could improve the Green use, suggested Ms. Cole.

Mr. Owen summarized there were two different issues: creating a new space, and where people could see it as proposed by Mr. Brooks.

Ms. Cole noted that the 250<sup>th</sup> Town Celebration Committee voted to use part of the profits for moving the monument, and that could be seed money.

Mr. Ladue asked that if the committee was planning down the road in 50 years, where was a logical place to expand the Town Hall – into the parking lot or out into the Green. Ms. Smith said she understood that the building could not expand out into the parking lot due to the wetlands.

Mr. Delaney spoke in favor of the current plan.

Ms. Cole suggested that the voters could vote on the concept, and then on funding later. There was \$2,000 from the T-shirt sales and some of the committee members have

expressed interest in supporting the project. She has talked to John Hammer regarding possible Rotary funds, said Ms. Cole.

*NEXT STEPS:*

- Advertise the Town Green Plan in local newspapers and seek feedback.
- Revisit the proposal at a future Selectboard meeting prior to the March Town Meeting.
- Consider seeking approval for the Town Green plan via an article at Town Meeting.
- Add \$9,000 for the lawn improvements via the Town Hall Maintenance line item in the Town budget.

**WAITSFIELD CHAMPLAIN VALLEY TELECOM – REQUEST FOR AN LICENSE AGREEMENT TO SITE A TELECOMMUNICATIONS CABINET WITHIN THE RIGHT-OF-WAY OF CHURCH HILL ROAD )TOWN HIGHWAY #7) – action item**

**MOTION** by Mr. Stone, seconded by Mr. Owen, to approve a Waitsfield Champlain Valley Telecom request for a license agreement to site a telecommunications cabinet within the right-of-way on Church Hill Road (Town Highway #7).

**DISCUSSION:**

Ms. Macklow, Waitsfield Champlain Valley Telecom representative, explained a proposal to locate a Telecommunications cabinet on a 3' x 5' cement slab behind an existing ditch along Church Hill Road. The installation would expand telephone and DSL internet service/capacity at increased speeds for 1,200 lines. The cabinet would measure 39" high, 2' wide and 44" long.

Mr. Stone asked what would happen to the improvements when the Route 7 project digs up the road and the lines have to come down. Ms. Macklow replied that it was an aerial distribution line and would not be affected.

Mr. Ladue asked for clarification regarding a maintenance schedule. Ms. Macklow replied none. The box would only be visited for repairs, said Ms. Macklow.

Mr. Ladue asked if there would be plantings to screen the white cabinet. Ms. Macklow said that it would be located in a hedge row. The location has been staked out. It could be painted in a color choice of the Selectboard, suggested Ms. Macklow.

**AMENDMENT** to the motion by Mr. Stone, seconded by Mr. Owen, to condition approval that the cabinet would be painted dark green, and to authorize the Charlotte Selectboard Chair to sign the agreement on behalf of the Town of Charlotte.

**VOTE: 5 ayes; motion carried.**

Ms. Macklow thanked Town staff for their assistance.

**CO-HOUSING TRAIL – PERMIT WORK AND CONSTRUCTION DONE IN 2012 – action item**

**MOTION by Mr. Stone, seconded by Mr. Owen, to approve an expenditure of \$11,682 from the Trail Reserve Fund for permit work and construction of the Co-housing Trail done in 2012.**

**DISCUSSION:**

**Mr. Bloch explained conditions of a grant received to pay for permit work and construction of an 859' segment of the Co-housing Trail in 2012 for a cost of \$25,395. The grant was for \$13,712. It is a re-imbursement grant that can't be amended after work has been done. The Trail Committee was aware of the issue.**

**VOTE: 5 ayes; motion carried.**

**BUDGET REVIEW – discussion only****Land Maintenance**

Mr. Boffa, Charlotte Little League representative, asked the Selectboard to re-instate a \$10,000 line item for ball field maintenance, which was deleted during the 2012 Town Meeting. The school was billed for field time to make up funds. The maintenance could be done more reasonably with Town dollars versus school dollars, suggested Mr. Boffa.

There was discussion regarding concerns expressed by Town voters that included fertilizer runoff, types of fertilizers used at the fields (organic), and maintenance bids that Mr. Boffa felt were fair, and the number of kids playing base ball. Mr. Ladue asked if the player numbers were trending upward. Mr. Boffa replied that the Town had several sport choices that included spring and club soccer and lacrosse. Baseball was a family sport, said Mr. Boffa.

Mr. Ladue asked if it was possible to talk about Town parking at the fields. Mr. Boffa said that he was only trying to get the maintenance funded, but could be open to discussion once the line item was in the budget. The field maintenance was a fixed price and Town funding was security. The \$10,000 was one-half the amount that paid for fertilization and mowing, explained Mr. Boffa.

Mr. Russell reviewed that the Article approved at the Town Meeting cut \$3,200 from the ball field maintenance line item for two fertilizations.

The Selectboard was in favor of adding the request to add \$10,000 to the Town budget.

Mr. Ladue reiterated that access to the trail head was a concern. Mr. Boffa replied that he would be happy to continue the conversation.

**Town Beach**

Mr. Stone recused himself due to a possible conflict of interest.

Ms. Stone, Recreation Director, reviewed a proposed brush hogging schedule that added brush hogging at the south and west side of the tennis courts, and two brush hoggings at an upper area between the parking lot and beach house.

Mr. Ladue asked if the wild parsnip could be done as well. Ms. Stone said that she would look at the cost.

Mr. Stone rejoined the Selectboard

### **Thompson's Point**

Mr. Russell briefly reviewed a need to survey the boundaries of the country club.

### **Mowing/Brush hogging**

Mr. Bloch suggested that a regular mowing should be done at the Burns property from the Barber Hill trail, the Flea market area and the parameter of the Burns property for safety reasons. The mowing should go along the east side of the houses. The trails committee was in favor of the mowing, said Mr. Bloch.

### **Bridges 14, 30 and 31**

Mr. Bloch said that the Selectboard has approved a scoping contract for improvements to bridges 14, 30 and 31. The next step was an engineering design that would include the number of bridge lanes, and if the bridges would be covered, or not, said Mr. Bloch.

Mr. Stone asked if the Board would seek input from the residents, or if there was Board consensus for two lanes on the Dorset Street Bridge.

Mr. Owen, Mr. Ladue and Mr. Russell pointed out that the Charlotte Road Commissioner was in favor of two lanes. Mr. Bloch said that it hasn't been discussed by the public yet. Mr. Ladue said that he heard some of the Dorset Street residents were in favor of one lane. He suggested waiting until the scoping report was received to consider what options and costs were. He wanted all the information before making a decision, and once all the information was received then there should be a fair public process, said Mr. Ladue.

Mr. Bloch said that the design phase was scheduled for next year for all three bridges.

Mr. Russell asked if the information should be presented at the March Town Meeting. Mr. Ladue reiterated in favor of waiting for the scoping report information, then having discussions. A question was should a down payment for the cost of construction be added to the FY2014 budget, asked Mr. Ladue.

Mr. Russell suggested adding \$250,000 in surplus funds for a down payment.

Mr. Bloch asked for guidance on what dollar number to use for the draft budget discussion at the January 7, 2013 Selectboard meeting. Mr. Russell suggested bridge reconstruction in the Highway budget for \$78,000. He understood the Selectboard to say "...go to bid this winter construction in the spring for covered bridges."

### **SELECTBOARD UPDATES**

Mr. Owen reviewed a meeting with the Shelburne Police Chief, Jim Warden, regarding placing a speed cart to monitor speeds one-half mile north of the Mt Philo State Park. The road was posted at 45 mph, but 80 percent of motorist traveled 60-65 mph and 27 percent, or 250 cars per day, drove 55 mph. He would talk with Chief Warden tomorrow.

There was discussion regarding the hours of police coverage as per the contract.

Mr. Russell reported that the CVFRS draft forensic audit has been edited. Selectboard comments were needed. Mr. Russell would e-mail a copy of the edited draft to Mr. Delaney.

Mr. Bloch reviewed the proposed January, 2013 Selectboard meeting schedule. The Board would meet January 7 and January 14, 2013.

The Selectboard members signed a covered bridge and signage document.

#### **APPROVE WARRANTS TO PAY BILLS**

The Selectboard members signed bills and warrants.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION by Mr. Ladue, seconded by Mr. Owen, to adjourn the meeting.**

**VOTE: 5 ayes; motion carried.**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Kathlyn Furr, Recording Secretary