

**CHARLOTTE SELECTBOARD
MINUTES OF MEETING
TOWN HALL
JANUARY 5, 2015**

APPROVED

SELECTBOARD MEMBERS: Lane Morrison, Chair; Charles Russell, Ellie Russell, Fritz Tegatz, Matthew Krasnow.

ADMINISTRATION: Dean Bloch, Town Administrator.

OTHERS: Moe Harvey, Peter Trono, Alex Bunten, Kate Lampton, Stephen Brooks, Mary Mead, Robert Mack, Larry Hamilton, David Miskell, Michael Russell, Bob Hyams, Betsi Oliver, Margaret Russell, Janet Mornson, John Hammer, Charlotte News; Robin Reid, Charlotte ; and others.

ITEMS TAKEN UP:

- **Burns property – donation of a conservation easement on clayplain forest to Vermont Land Trust. Action under consideration: approve Letter of Agreement and fee of \$10,000 to cover closing costs, baseline document and stewardship endowment.**
- **Employee Wage Classification Plan and Policy. Discussion with possible action to approve.**
- **Budget review. Discussion only.**

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Morrison, Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

ADJUSTMENT TO AGENDA

None,

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Hamilton explained that some communities painted murals on roadways as a traffic calming method to slow down traffic. School art contests were one way to select a mural design, said Mr. Hamilton.

Mr. Morrison suggested consulting the Road Commissioner before proceeding further.

MINUTES: December 11, December 15, December 19

MOTION by Ms. Russell, seconded by Mr. Russell, to approve the Charlotte Selectboard minutes of December 11, 2014 as written.

VOTE: 4 ayes, 1 abstention (Mr. Krasnow); motion carried.

MOTION by Mr. Russell, seconded by Mr. Tegatz, to approve the Charlotte Selectboard minutes of December 15, 2014 as written.

VOTE: 5 ayes; motion carried.

MOTION by Ms. Russell, seconded by Mr. Krasnow, to approve the Charlotte Selectboard minutes of December 19, 2014 as written, with the following edit: Page 3, line 121 – delete the word “hire”.

VOTE: 5 ayes; motion carried.

BURNS PROPERTY – DONATION OF A CONSERVATION EASEMENT ON CLAYPLAIN FOREST TO VERMONT LAND TRUST. *Action under consideration: approve Letter of Agreement and fee of \$10,000 to cover closing costs, baseline document and stewardship endowment*

Ms. Lampton, Burns Property agreement coordinator, summarized an effort to revise an existing Memorandum of Agreement between the Town, Vermont Land Trust and the Preservation Trust of Vermont (PTV) over the last four years. Gil Livingston, Vermont Land Trust (VLT), and Paul Bruhn, Preservation Trust, have reviewed the latest MOA draft and have asked the Charlotte Selectboard for feedback. There were language changes to Section 6 regarding future uses of the Flea Market portion of the property related to development. There were no changes to the accompanying map related to specific uses, explained Ms. Lampton.

Ms. Lampton reviewed the following:

- A proposed conservation easement on 23 acres of Clayplain Forest.
- A draft Letter of Agreement, which was not legally binding, but an outline of the easement process that would track with the revised MOA language, and give the VLT the ‘go-ahead’ to expend staff time on the conservation piece.
- Total cost was \$14,750, of which the Town share was \$10,000.

There was discussion regarding a conservation easement of 23 acres; identification of two mapped ‘islands’ of dry land that could be developable within the 23 acres; and that the Selectboard would sign off on the Notice of Agreement as a first step to completing a separate conservation agreement document.

Mr. (Michael) Russell, resident, read a section from the existing 2000 MOA. The language didn’t express any conservation of the east parcel. The current MOA was the binding document. The original purpose for accepting the Burns property was for public recreation and public purposes. The Clayplain forest designation didn’t exist at that time. It was understood that the Clayplain forest has been recognized since then. However, there was a wetland under the forest area that already limited what the Town could do with that section. The revisions and a Letter of Agreement may not be needed for a conservation easement due to the wetlands, said Mr. Russell. Mr. Morrison explained that the revised documents would encompass the intent to conserve the Clayplain forest.

Mr. (Michael) Russell suggested asking the VLT and PTV to exclude the two ‘islands’ from an easement. The islands may have some value to the Town in the future, said Mr. Russell.

Mr. Hyams, Conservation Commission representative, said that the 23 acres had exceptional values as per a 2010 Town commissioned report by Mark Lapman. The VLT

agreement could provide a detailed management plan for stewardship of those resources. The 23 acres was classified as all Clayplain forest including the two dry islands and it should all be left intact. Canopy openings should be avoided, said Mr. Hyams.

Mr. Harvey pointed out that #5 of the Notice of Agreement was 'unrestricted'. At some later point the sections in yellow on the map were proposed as wastewater system uses. The 2000 MOA specifically says that septic uses were restricted to Town allocations for the Town Hall, Senior Center, the Fire Station and a non-profit village school. That language was removed in the new draft. There was a report that the parcel was an aquifer recharge area for drinking water for properties all the way down to the railroad tracks. He was concerned that unrestricted land language has been changed. There shouldn't be septic in an aquifer recharge area, said Mr. Harvey. Ms. Russell said the MOA, Section 4, said septic should be considered. Those were items reviewed in the 2004-2005 planning study, said Ms. Russell. Mr. (Charles) Russell pointed out that the engineer said that there was 5' of gravel that filtered the ground water before it got to the aquifer area and was fine.

Mr. Brooks suggested to consider repaying the VLT funds back and to have the Town manage the property.

TASKS:

- Ms. Lampton to consult with the VLT and PTV to exclude the two 'islands' from a conservation easement of the 23 acres.
- Notate the Marc Lapin 2006 report in the documents.
- Define the Clayplain forest, what 'restrictions' meant, and what could be done there prior to signing revised agreements.
- Address Trail Committee concerns regarding addition of general language for a 'floating' trail easement and location to be determined by the Town versus VLT, or if not, what a VLT process was to modify a trail.
- Consider a floating trail easement as part of a management plan.
- Consider adding language to the Notice of Agreement that "...nothing could happen in the unrestricted or restricted areas without a Town vote."
- Ms. Russell, Mr. Bloch and Ms. Lampton would meet and sift through suggestions and Town feedback.

WAGE CLASSIFICATION PLAN AND POLICY. *Discussion only*

Mr. Morrison briefly reviewed an on-going process to draft a wage policy and implementation policy for Town employees. A goal was to put the policies into effect by the next Selectboard meeting, January 12, 2015, said Mr. Morrison.

Mr. Harvey expressed concern regarding what he termed as one major mistake in the classification/wage spread sheet that limited the steps at year 15. There was only one Town employee affected by the 15 year maximum that eliminated any future pay raises for that employee. As a business owner he appreciated the efforts and experience of his long term employees and rewarded those employees, stated Mr. Harvey. Mr. Morrison explained that there was a 1 to 1.5 times pay raise at each minimum to maximum step.

An analysis of federal and state step ranges showed that 15-18 years was a normal step spread for a job. Experience beyond that maximum included a cost of living increase each year, said Mr. Morrison.

There was lengthy discussion regarding an analysis of pay grade steps based upon data gathered from surrounding towns, the state, and the federal government; differences of government jobs that provided security and benefit packages versus the public sector; language from the Charlotte Salary Administration Policy, page 1, that assigned every Town employee a step on the grid and identified a pay raise; and a suggestion by Robert Mack to add language that defined the responsibilities of the Selectboard, which assigned work and made decisions, and a Town Administrator who would perform that work in the policies.

Ms. Mead expressed concern that the Selectboard had assigned her to step 21, which did not allow for pay raises. Regarding market adjustments, page 4 of the policy, there were 8 positions that were out of whack and were statistically wrong, stated Ms. Mead.

Following further discussion regarding the spreadsheet grid related to grade steps, Mr. Tegatz explained that if a 25 step grid was implemented that would mean that every Town employee would receive smaller incremental pay raises.

Mr. Brooks suggested that the Selectboard send out a mass mailing to Town residents for extended public review and discussion on the proposed policies and grid. It falls into a category of a larger financial decision. Why not have a Town vote on the matter, asked Mr. Brooks. Mr. Morrison reviewed that there were over 45 warned public meetings, and multiple news articles in the Charlotte News and Charlotte Citizen. It has been three months of hard work and now there was a finished product. He didn't believe that it was a large financial decision. The policy(s) assigns all Town employees on a scale and provides a standard. No employee lost money and some gained salary, stated Mr. Morrison.

Mr. Krasnow asked to have time to review proposed changes noted from the Monday, January 5th morning meeting. He would send his edits to Mr. Bloch, said Mr. Krasnow.

MEETING SCHEDULE:

- Thursday, January 8, 2015 at 2:00 p.m. for Employee Wage Classification Plan and Policy discussion.
- Monday, January 12, 2015 regular meeting agenda for a vote on the draft Employee Wage Classification Plan and Policy.

BUDGET REVIEW. Discussion only

The Selectboard asked staff to add a review and discussion of the draft budget and worksheets to the Thursday, January 8, 2015 meeting.

Mr. Harvey, Community Safety Committee representative, briefly reviewed a recent Community Safety Committee meeting. The CSC should not have a budget. The CSC

mission was to identify and make recommendations to the Selectboard, clarified Mr. Harvey.

Mr. Krasnow, as Selectboard CSC liaison, would contact the CSC members to schedule a CSC meeting, and to encourage the committee to select a CSC chair within a week.

SELECTBOARD UPDATES

Ms. Russell reported that the CVFRS Corporate Board met. The Fire and Rescue audit was completed on December 16, 2014, and it was a clean audit, said Ms. Russell.

Mr. Morrison reported that he had sent an e-mail to CVFRS regarding a proposed CVFRS budget that included a 6.9 percent increase on the income side. The CVFRS members voted not to reconsider the proposed budget as a level funded budget, said Mr. Morrison.

Mr. Mack expressed concern that the proposed CVFRS budget was not a unified budget. He had reservations regarding the CVFRS audit. When would the \$48,000 surplus from CVFRS be discussed, asked Mr. Mack.

Mr. Russell said that Special Fund revenue and expenses weren't presented in the draft CVFRS budget as per the MOA. The term 'enhanced services' needed to be understood and if the term met the MOA language, said Mr. Russell.

Mr. Tegatz reported that the Conservation Commission was working on a multi-tiered map that overlaid all Town parcels.

APPROVE WARRANTS TO PAY BILLS

The Selectboard signed warrants to pay bills.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Mr. Russell, seconded by Mr. Krasnow, to adjourn the meeting.

VOTE: 5 ayes; motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:08 p.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted, Kathlyn L. Furr, Recording Secretary.