

**TOWN OF CHARLOTTE
SELECTBOARD
MINUTES OF MEETING
JUNE 4, 2012**

APPROVED

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

ADMINISTRATION: Dean Bloch, Selectboard Assistant.

OTHERS PRESENT: Peter Trono, Carrie Spear, Roger Richmond, Robert Marble, Mike Cook, Lindsay Longe, Phil Barone, Mary Mead, Moe Harvey, Chris Mack, Robert Mack, Chris Davis, Carol Casey, Charlotte Citizen; and others.

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Russell, Chairperson, called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

ADJUSTMENTS TO AGENDA

None.

CHARLOTTE RESCUE GOVERNANCE ISSUES

Mr. Russell reported that the Selectboard had met with the Rescue Department on Friday, June 1st regarding a formalization of the EMT governance structure for either a volunteer or paid EMT service. The department requested that the Town document their concerns/issues. Draft notes were done and would be discussed during meetings with the department, said Mr. Russell.

Mr. Owen said it was obvious that the present situation was not working. If Fire and Rescue becomes an independent entity then the person in charge needs business skills to run the organization and a Board to oversee operations, said Mr. Owen.

Mr. Delaney said that if a new governance structure was adopted then Fire and Rescue should determine how it goes. If it was a corporation, or other structure, there was a concern that those changes would have a cost associated. There should be serious discussion, said Mr. Delaney.

Mr. Russell reviewed a draft Notes in Preparation for Discussion Between Charlotte Selectboard and Charlotte Volunteer Fire and Rescue Service, dated June 4, 2012. Low call counts and training issues that resulted in EMT turnover had been discussed. Ian Pomerville, the current Chief, lives out of state. An assistant chief is needed. The next election is scheduled for July 1st, said Mr. Russell.

There was lengthy discussion regarding proposed action items identified at the Friday evening meeting and listed in the Notes document; personnel issues; and the 2012 budget, which was on track. Ms. Mead reported that the Fire and Rescue payroll has been paid to

date. The weekly payroll was around \$10,000, and there was a total of \$30,000 remaining in the budget to spend, said Ms. Mead.

In response to questions by Robert Mack, Ms Mead explained that the fund balance July 1, 2011 was \$146,000. The piece missing when she took over the Fire and Rescue budget was accounting for the \$620,000. The invoices totaled more then that amount. This year's regular end-of-year audit should give us an amount spent on operations, said Ms. Mead. Mr. Ladue clarified that when there were 8 more weeks before the end of the year the CVFRS income seemed to be on track for the end of the year. The Selectboard looked at the remaining funds in the budget - what was expended and weekly expenditures. It appears that the budget has covered the core expenses. As of June 4th, the department has spent \$430,301. There is \$36,000 unspent, but there are two \$9,000 payroll periods left to be paid and some other invoices, said Mr. Ladue.

Mr. Davis asked if there was an amount left in the old TD North bank account. Ms. Mead replied about \$38,000.

Mr. Davis said that last year's audit should have shown a starting carry-over amount. Mr. Ladue replied that there was a budget amount and an amount spent, which was \$36,000 less than what was budgeted.

Mr. Richmond said that if the department was an independent corporation, then it should be self sufficient. Mr. Russell explained that the department was a private corporation that was 98 percent publically funded. Mr. Davis said that Vermont state statutes allows for that structure. The majority of departments in Vermont are private and a minority are municipally run. The Charlotte department is incorporated as a non-profit and does identify where the funding comes from. There is a trade off for Town funding. If the department had to fund raise that would take time away from training. It is up to how the community wants to go forward. If the community wants a town department then that is fine as well. The department intends to work with the Selectboard to figure it out. The Town owns the building and equipment, but not the land the building sits on. If the building is not used for a fire department then the property reverts back to the Williams family, said Mr. Davis.

Mr. Harvey asked if a Rescue CEO would be a business manager. Mr. Ladue replied that ideally that person would have business managerial and fire fighting and rescue skills.

Mr. Barone thanked the Fire and Rescue personnel for their efforts, and asked why not have the administration done by the Town. Mr. Russell explained a brief history of the department, and that an administrative assistant had been hired in the past. The current operation has evolved beyond that. The Town does some of the administration work, such as insurance, which has been contracted out, said Mr. Russell.

Mr. Owen said that further discussion was needed. If the department was a town run department, then items such as benefits would track what a town offered, said Mr. Owen.

Mr. (Chris) Mack pointed out that there were models for either private, or municipal approaches.

Mr. (Robert) Mack asked who the point person was to see that all questions were posed, to keep discussions focused and as a go between for the Town and department. Who was the advocate for the volunteers, asked Mr. Mack. Mr. Ladue said that Chris Mack spoke for the Fire department and volunteers. Mr. (Chris) Mack said that Mr. Russell, Mr. Ladue, Mr. Davis and he have made good progress on issues. Mary Mead took over the bookkeeping in February. The State Auditor Office reviewed the books and there was no fraud found. The bills all get approved, checks required two signatures and Mary and the Selectboard reviewed all invoices. A committee could be appointed to explore a paid department that would work in parallel with the Town/department discussions, suggested Mr. Mack. Mr. Russell said that work would be conducted at public meetings in a public process.

Mr. Delaney said that it was a Selectboard job and shouldn't be passed off to a committee. It is an important issue and everyone should be kept up to speed, said Mr. Delaney. Mr. Ladue said that there have been two meetings to date. There has been discussion regarding creating a Rescue Board with two seats for citizen participation. Citizens are invited to join, said Mr. Ladue.

Mr. Trono asked for clarification regarding the type and scope of audit that would be done. Mr. Ladue explained that the State Auditor's Office has assisted the Town in drafting an RFP. Once a vendor is selected the State Auditor would advise the Town on refining/defining a scope of audit. There may be a cost savings. It would be an asset theft audit versus a financial statement audit. The RFP has already gone out, said Mr. Ladue.

There was further discussion regarding the next Selectboard meeting to continue discussions with Ian Pomerville, and using e-mail to craft a meeting schedule and agenda. Mr. (Chris) Mack asked to be notified of discussion topics in advance of meetings.

Mr. Russell thanked the assemblage for their input.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Mr. Stone, seconded by Mr. Owen, to adjourn the meeting.

VOTE: 5 ayes; motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Kathlyn Furr, Recording Secretary