

**TOWN OF CHARLOTTE  
SELECTBOARD  
MINUTES OF MEETING  
MAY 21, 2012**

*APPROVED*

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

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

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Meg Walker, Peter Walker, Jenny Cole, Sue Moraska, Larry Hamilton, Patrice Machavern, Chris Mack, Lynne Jaunich, Ellie Russell, Sherry Applegate, Gerald Bouchard, Stephen Brooks, John Hammer, Charlotte News; Carol Casey, Charlotte Citizen; and others.

NOTE: the agenda was heard out of order, but appears in order for continuity.

**SITE VISIT: Route 7 Overlook**

**CALL TO ORDER**

Mr. Russell, Chairperson, called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

**ADJUSTMENTS TO AGENDA**

None.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Mr. Walker, Hinesburg Road resident, asked what the Selectboard position was regarding the Charlotte Solar Farm project, specifically, the David Raphael testimony. Mr. Russell replied that the Charlotte Solar, LLC project was in litigation. The Selectboard would not comment at this time as per attorney advice, stated Mr. Russell.

Ms. Cole, resident, explained that on Thursday she walked in the West Village along Ferry Road, which was difficult. The Sidewalk Committee put in a lot of work on the sidewalk proposal that was defeated at the May Special Town Meeting. Following her Thursday walk she concluded that safety issues were a continuing concern and that the proposal should move forward in some form, said Ms. Cole.

Ms. Cole said she had three questions: what were next steps regarding safety issues, what was the Sidewalk Committee status, and how she could help.

Mr. Ladue thanked Ms. Cole for her offer of help. The safety issues in the West Village have been evaluated. Several ideas included narrowing the travel lanes with white lines to slow traffic. If the Town was not willing to approve sidewalks then were there alternate ideas that could be recommended, asked Mr. Ladue.

Mr. Russell pointed out that Robin Simpson had suggested alternatives during the Special Town Meeting.

Ms. Cole asked if smaller changes or implementing road maintenance steps through the Highway budget could be done. Mr. Ladue suggested that cross walks could incorporate a raised area, or a speed cart on Ferry Road might bring some attention to the car speeds.

Ms. Machavern, resident, said she served on the committee and speed was a main issue. Two tabled crosswalks could be done at this time – one in front of the Child Care Center and one in the middle. Drivers picked up speed and raced through the crosswalk starting further east, noted Ms. Machavern.

Mr. Russell suggested that staff put cross walk safety zones on a future Selectboard meeting agenda.

There was further discussion regarding the Sidewalk Committee charge, which the Selectboard could extend; how to slow down drivers; a suggestion to change the Sidewalk Committee name to Safety Committee to explore walk-ways/bike ways and safety.

Ms. Applegate, resident, asked if there was a process to lower the speed limit on Hinesburg Road from 50 mph. She had noticed that the road was recently posted at 50 mph. There was no speed sign at the east end of the road. It was hard to make left turns out of her driveway, said Ms. Applegate. Mr. Russell explained that the road has always been 50 mph, but it was now posted.

Mr. Owen said that complaints have been received from Bean Road residents as well.

Mr. Russell said that a petition would be needed from concerned citizens requesting a lower speed limit. A traffic count study would be required to support a petition. The topic could be added to a future Selectboard meeting agenda, suggested Mr. Russell.

Mr. Russell reviewed a State Audit Office letter, dated 05/21/2012, regarding the Charlotte Fire and Rescue department's financial issues. The letter pointed out 'red flags' and recommendations going forward, said Mr. Russell. Ms. Machavern stated that internal controls, #2, 3, 4 and 5 have been done. The 'going forward' items have been started, said Ms. Machavern.

Chris Mack, Charlotte Fire Department representative, said that communication steps have been addressed. Mr. Ladue and Mr. Russell attend the department meetings and have access to the meeting minutes.

Mr. Delaney asked if a forensic audit would happen. Mr. Russell replied that it was not recommended and was an answer to a different question. The Charlotte Fire and Rescue issues would be revisited at the 06/11/2012 Selectboard meeting, said Mr. Russell.

**MINUTES: May 14 and May 16, 2012**

**MOTION by Mr. Ladue, seconded by Mr. Owen, to approve the Selectboard minutes of May 14, 2012 as written, with edits.**

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

**MOTION by Mr. Ladue, seconded by Mr. Owen, to approve the Special Town Meeting minutes of May 16, 2012 as written, with edits.**

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

**ROUTE 7 OVERLOOK – potential steps to improve view – discussion only**

Ms. Cole submitted copies of photographs of the Route 7 viewscape from 1963 for Selectboard review.

Mr. Russell explained that a site visit was conducted at the Route 7 overlook. Trees on the west side and tree trimming completed north of the Horsford property were observed. There was a question regarding acquiring adjoining property to extend the view, and if more cutting should be done, said Mr. Russell.

Mr. Brooks spoke in support of further tree cutting, and reviewed an understanding of the underlying documents related to the Moore and Rockefeller gifts. The US Government supplied the funds and the “overlook” was titled as a Scenic Outlook. Another key word in the documents was ‘preservation’ to protect the view and use the resource to further open the view and maintain the scenic outlook. There are 300 acres with plenty of trees. Buckthorn should be removed, or valuable trees could be moved elsewhere. Recently efforts to clear below the overlook have happened. More trees could be removed south of the Horsford entrance to open the keyhole view up more. The Selectboard should rent a grinder and chip up the trees, said Mr. Brooks.

Ms. Moraska handed out copies of tree removal and clearing projects undertaken by the Charlotte Park Oversight Committee that included expenditures. More tree cutting could be done, said Ms. Moraska.

Mr. Hamilton noted that the scenic view was only one part of managing the Demeter Park. The scenic view was not necessarily one that was tree-less, said Mr. Hamilton. Ms. Moraska agreed and noted that there was a lot to manage in the Park. The committee would continue to work on the scenic view, opening up the hedgerow, and removing invasive species. However the hedgerow did serve a purpose, said Ms. Moraska.

Mr. Bloch asked if fire wood for personal use could be cut versus for sale. Ms. Cole replied that the committee looked into providing wood for the food shelf, but that didn’t happen. Volunteers cutting trees for wood weren’t paid. The committee tried scheduling work in the fall in order to be sensitive to wildlife and recreational users, said Ms. Cole.

Mr. Delaney suggested that when the park management plan was revised the committee should include a definition of ‘scenic outlook’.

**JOHN HAMMER – alternative scheduling and formats for Town Meeting – discussion only**

John Hammer, resident, reviewed written speaking points related Article 2, Special Town Meeting on May 16, 2012. Social media, face book, twitter, etc., could be utilized to meet requirements for remote participation at Town Meeting as it's currently structured. Six weeks is not enough time to look at options for dissolving Town Meeting. A committee could be formed to research remote participation, draft documents that included mission statement, goals, funding, voting registration issues, a time line and implementation. The committee could bring this information back to the Selectboard on a month, or two, suggested Mr. Hammer.

Mr. Russell said that adoption of remote voting might require a Charter change. A town could only do what was allowed by state statutes, said Mr. Russell. Mr. Hammer said that legal ramifications could be a killer. Remote voter participation occurs in the corporate and educational worlds now, pointed out Mr. Hammer.

Mr. Owen reviewed that there were short term and long term solutions to consider, such as a change in meeting time, or day. He was in favor of forming a committee, said Mr. Owen.

Mr. Hammer said that the Vermont League of Cities and Towns and the state already utilized remote access interaction. He would also contact Frank Bryan for information, said Mr. Hammer.

Ms. Machavern noted that the "Help American Vote Act" and "Secure Electronic Voter" helped to bring technology to the forefront. Breaches are issues. There are two options in Vermont – Town Meeting and Australian ballot. Challenges include the fact that not all people have internet access and there is a planned obsolescence built into software and hardware programs. She has heard that there was resistance in Town in the use of vote tabulators, for example, said Ms. Machavern.

Ms. Jaunich, resident, reviewed a ten year voting history at Town Meeting versus by Australian ballot. There were 450-500 registered voters at the Special Town Meeting, but that was still half of those who vote by Australian ballot. The Selectboard could build a budget over a 90, or 60 day period and warn a public meeting in January to consider that budget. Then warn that budget for a vote at the March Town Meeting. The Town should take small steps. She offered to serve on Mr. Hammer's technology committee, said Ms. Jaunich.

Mr. Ladue spoke in support of a committee concept.

Mr. Hammer suggested that he would like to speak with VLCT, Susan Clark, university professors, Frank Bryan and others prior to starting a committee.

Ms. Machavern suggested live streaming. Mr. Hammer replied that a secondary moderator might be required to monitor a live stream of twitters during the meeting with

a vote taken at the end of discussion along with a voice vote from the floor. Passwords and registering voters for remote voting would need to be set up, suggested Mr. Hammer.

**PURCHASE OF T-SHIRTS FOR TOWN'S 250<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY**

**MOTION** by Mr. Stone, seconded by Mr. Ladue, to approve an expenditure not to exceed \$1,750 for the purchase of T-shirts for the Town's 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in the current fiscal year from the Town budget, to be repaid in the FY13 budget.

**DISCUSSION:**

Mr. Stone suggested the purchase of 300-400 T-shirts versus 100 in the initial purchase. Mr. Owen pointed out that 250 T-shirts didn't need to be ordered all at once.

There was discussion on a timely re-order of T-shirts if necessary, local companies that could provide the shirts (Better Ink or Ion Design), and how many of the Tractor Parade T-shirts sold.

Mr. Ladue said that if the Senior Center will be selling the shirts then a price and size list should be provided to them.

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

**TOWN WEBSITE**

**MOTION** by Mr. Stone, seconded by Mr. Owen, to purchase an additional 2 GB of storage for an annual fee of \$500.

**DISCUSSION:**

Mr. Bloch explained that it was not a storage issue, but hosting the entire website.

Ms. Cole explained that it was an effort to get more documents on the website. It is at a point where there is limited space, said Ms. Cole.

Mr. Ladue suggested looking into archiving old records. Does the current vendor provide that service, asked Mr. Ladue.

Mr. Ladue asked if the additional storage price was a one time fee, or an annual fee.

Mr. Russell asked if the website could be linked to another low cost, or no cost, site.

Mr. Hammer suggested looking into an incremental increase in space per price.

Mr. Russell suggested postponing a vote on the motion to allow for further research.

**MOTION** by Mr. Stone, seconded by Mr. Owen, to postpone indefinitely the question to purchase an additional 2 GB of storage for the Town Website for an annual fee of \$500 to June 11, 2012.

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

**PLANNING ADVISORY COMMITTEE OF CHITTENDEN COUNTY  
REGAIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION**

Mr. Russell suggested postponing the appointment of a representative to the Planning Advisory Committee to the next Selectboard meeting.

**CHITTENDEN UNIT FOR SPECIAL INVESTIGATIONS**

Mr. Russell asked if the Board was interested in appointing a Town representative to the Chittenden Unit for Special Investigations.

**MOTION by Mr. Stone, seconded by Mr. Owen, to make recommendations for a membership selection process.**

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

**PROCESS FOR APPROVING WARRANTS TO PAY TOWN EXPENSES**

**MOTION by Mr. Owen, seconded by Mr. Ladue, to authorize all five Selectboard members to sign warrants on behalf of the Selectboard to pay invoices issued to the Town and to Charlotte Volunteer Fire and Rescue, Inc, and to pay the Town payroll in accordance with the following protocol:**

- **Warrants may be signed outside of a Selectboard meeting;**
- **The Town Clerk/Treasurer may pay the invoices once three Selectboard members have signed the warrants and 48 hours have passed since the warrants have been made available to the Selectboard;**
- **In reviewing a warrant, Selectboard members may remove one or more invoice from the warrants if they wish to have that invoice discussed at the next Selectboard meeting.**

**DISCUSSION:**

Mr. Russell said that if three Selectboard members sign it and a fourth sees an issue or there is a concern it should be flagged. The 48 hours was to give everyone time to review them.

Mr. Bloch pointed out that warrants normally came out on Mondays. Mr. Russell clarified that it was the warrants, not invoices that we are talking about.

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

**SELECTBOARD UPDATES**

Mr. Stone said that the old blinking traffic light at the Churchill Road/Hinesburg Road intersection would be thrown away once it has been replaced with the new LED traffic light. Mr. Ladue suggested raffling off the old light at the Town Party.

Mr. Stone reported that he, the Charlotte Road Commissioner, Dick Hoskins and Charles Lemieux would meet at the Ferry Road railroad crossing and at the Thompsons Point Road crossing on June 12, 2012 at 9:00 a.m.

**APPROVAL OF BILLS AND WARRANTS**

The Selectboard members signed bills and warrants.

**CHARLOTTE SOLAR, LLC**

**MOTION by Mr. Ladue, seconded by Mr. Owen, to enter Executive Session for the purpose of discussing pending litigation matters related to the proposed Charlotte Solar, LLC project, and to invite the Selectboard Clerk to attend.**

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

The Selectboard entered Executive Session at 8:50 p.m.

**MOTION by , seconded by , to come out of Executive Session.**

**VOTE: .**

The Selectboard came out of Executive Session at p.m.

**ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION by , seconded by , to adjourn the meeting.**

**VOTE: .**

The meeting was adjourned at p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Kathlyn Furr, Recording Secretary