

**CHARLOTTE SELECTBOARD
MINUTES OF MEETING
TOWN HALL
NOVEMBER 25, 2013**

APPROVED

SELECTBOARD MEMBERS: Charles Russell, Chair; Lane Morrison, John Owen, Ellie Russell, Winslow Ladue.

ADMINISTRATION: Dean Bloch, Selectboard Assistant.

OTHERS: Robert Mack, Hugh Lewis Jr, Stephen Brooks, Ed Sulva, David McNally, Mary Mead, Sue Smith, Jenny Cole, John Snow, Patrice Machavern, Chris Davis, Joanna Cummings, Catherine Hughes, Marty Illick, Bill Fraser-Harris, John Hammer, Charlotte News; Chris Preston, Charlotte Citizen; and others.

ITEMS TAKEN UP:

- **Budget review CVFRS, Road Commissioner, Energy Committee, Recreation Commission, Recreation Coordinator/Programs, Conservation Commission, Lewis Creek Association – discussion only**
- **Articles for Town Meeting warning – discussion only**
- **Job Description for Town Administrator – action item**
- **Thompson’s Point lease for Lot 11 at 2750 Thompson’s Point Road – action item**

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Russell, Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

ADJUSTMENTS TO AGENDA

Add: Thompson’s Point Road lease for Lot 11- action item, and Executive Session to discuss legal matters.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Brooks explained that at the November 18th meeting, he made comments regarding a Selectboard procedure discussion. He had said that he couldn’t find the Selectboard meeting handout materials/attachments on the Town website. He had only meant to represent what he himself had found on the Town website. What did the Selectboard decide for taking public comment during meetings, asked Mr. Brooks. Mr. Russell replied that during the Public Comment agenda topic the Selectboard would take comments on items not found elsewhere on the agenda. During discussion of other agenda items, the Selectboard would hold a discussion, and then take a limit of one comment per audience member. The Selectboard would take those public comments into consideration. Staff was advised of Mr. Brooks’ concerns regarding difficulty in locating meeting packets, said Mr. Russell.

Mr. Bloch said he would discuss the website agenda and attachments with Mr. Brooks at a later time.

**BUDGET REVIEW - discussion only
CVFRS**

Mr. Sulva, Mr. McNally and Mr. Davis, CVFRS representatives reviewed a draft Unified budget, draft Special funds, and draft Project List spreadsheets. All three spreadsheets tied in with the CVFRS objectives for next one and a half years. Expenses were held as close to flat as possible and included transfers from Special Funds to achieve that goal. For the Special Funds FY2014-2015 the Barrow's fund has a \$30,000 balance, of which \$5,000 would be transferred to support the increased costs. The Tower Fund receives \$2,500+/- per month. The Project List has a place holder in FY2015 for repeaters and tower antennae upgrades, said Mr. Sulva.

Mr. Owen asked what the Fire and Rescue strategy was to drawdown funds. Mr. Sulva explained that they need to address the project list items. It was hoped that \$50,000 would be sufficient for contingencies. Priorities may change depending on needs, said Mr. Sulva.

Regarding a new firefighter/EMT position shown in the Unified budget under payroll, Mr. Davis said it was a place holder. The Corporate Board approved the job description and it was ready for advertising. A hire could be done by January, or early February if there were qualified candidates, said Mr. Davis.

Mr. Ladue asked if the position was reflected in the budget. Mr. Davis replied yes. If no one was hired it would not be spent, stated Mr. Davis.

Mr. Sulva reviewed potential project list items that included air bag and air pack replacements for planning purposes.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Mack asked if the budget included actuals for the last 5 months. Mr. Sulva replied yes. He would forward a copy to Mr. Mack, said Mr. Sulva.

Ms. Mead asked if the patient billing revenue was separated out, or combined in the budget. Mr. Sulva replied it was included in the \$108,000 and was not separated out.

Ms. Mead asked if there had been any discussion between Fire and Rescue and the Town regarding a proposed \$30,000 upgrade to the building. Mr. Sulva explained that the \$30,000 was in the facilities line item and would be funded by the Barrow's fund. The \$100,000 in the project list for station items included the \$30,000 at this point. If the Town put in a wood pellet upgrade then the department wouldn't do anything else, said Mr. Sulva.

There was brief discussion regarding a lease document for the building.

Ms. Mead suggested taking \$3,000 out of the Town side to put toward a proposed \$50,000 radio upgrade, which was currently shown under the Tower fund. Mr. Davis

explained that \$3,000 was allocated for general radio repairs. The \$50,000 in the Capital Improvements spreadsheet referred to an upgrade for repeaters and may not be spent in FY2014-2015. Two thousand dollars was earmarked for a study to understand what upgrades were needed. It may require licensing, said Mr. Davis.

Mr. McNally said that the department was exploring possible communication grants. Mr. Sulva clarified that the \$50,000 would not come from Town funds. It was from Special funds, said Mr. Sulva.

Mr. Ladue suggested that Fire and Rescue contact the Energy Committee for assistance in looking at heat plant upgrades. Ms. Hughes said that the Energy Committee contact was Suzie Hodgson.

Mr. Russell suggested that Fire and Rescue come back at the December 9th Selectboard meeting for a discussion on the Capital budget spreadsheet.

Road Commissioner

Mr. Lewis, Charlotte Road Commissioner, passed out copies of a proposed Highway budget.

There was discussion regarding an overage of \$30,000 in the Highway budget due to a 20 percent grant match that was paid out of the Highway budget. Mr. Lewis noted that neither he nor Leslie had signed off on the match invoice. Ms. Mead said it was under the bridge reconstruction line item. It should go under Town Lands, said Ms. Mead. Mr. Russell said that it was highway related and would get partially reimbursed when the grant funds were received.

Mr. Lewis said that other than the bridge expenses the budget would be level funded.

There was discussion regarding a proposal to increase funds for blacktop for paving. Mr. Lewis explained that the asphalt roads were in good shape. The bridges should be done first and then increase the asphalt number, suggested Mr. Lewis.

Mr. Russell suggested putting a match amount for bridge grants in the bridge line item.

Ms. Illick suggested soliciting Brian Davis, CCRPC, for planning and construction money.

Mr. Bloch asked for an update regarding a drainage issue on Ferry Road, and if an engineering study would be needed. Mr. Lewis said that an engineer would need to design a solution. There was a sewer line there and it would be tight to put in a ditch behind the sewer line. Drainage could be addressed if a ditch was done from the Old Brick Store to the Post Office. Any ditch would need to go around the post office, but it was not Town Land, explained Mr. Lewis.

Ms. Cole noted that a flat section on Ferry Road past the rail road tracks was a problem. Mr. Lewis explained that David Marshall was working on a design for that section. He was thinking of raising the depth of the ditch and putting in a shoulder on the side of the road. The money was in the budget, said Mr. Lewis.

Mr. Ladue said he would meet with Junior and Dean in December regarding the bridges.

Energy Committee

Catherine Hughes, Energy Committee representative, said that the committee would seek a level funded \$5,000 budget.

Following discussion regarding expenditures, Mr. Russell suggested rescheduling a budget review at the December 16th Selectboard meeting.

Recreation Commission

Bill Fraser-Harris, Recreation Commission representative, summarized a proposed budget that included \$6,000 for a tennis court maintenance project. A concern was that funds should be allocated for on-going court maintenance, said Mr. Fraser-Harris.

Mr. Russell suggested using Town's Repair and Improvement Reserve fund for the tennis courts. Ms. Russell pointed out that the fund was being spent down versus building it up.

Ms. Mead suggested placing an article in the Town Meeting warning to authorize the Selectboard to take \$6,000 out of the Repair and Improvement fund. That way people would understand what the funds were being used for and why money should be put in. Recreation should have a line item in their budget just for the tennis courts, said Ms. Mead.

Mr. Ladue asked if it was critical to do the maintenance this spring. Mr. Fraser-Harris replied no. It could be done post July 1st, said Mr. Fraser-Harris.

Mr. Ladue asked for an update on the beach playground. Mr. Fraser-Harris said that the commission received a \$1,000 grant. Work was done on the existing playground. It was felt that the level of use didn't warrant a \$78,000 playground, said Mr. Fraser-Harris.

Ms. Hartley, Recreation Coordinator, explained that the insurance company looked at the Town amenities and presented an annual report. The insurance company report said that the playground was OK, said Ms. Hartley.

Mr. Russell said that a decision was needed to identify where the \$6,000 court improvements would come from.

Mr. Fraser-Harris explained that volunteers removed horseshoe pits and grassed over the area for volley ball courts for \$1,000. The expense shows under beach maintenance, said Mr. Fraser-Harris. Ms. Mead suggested putting the expense under Recreation fund.

Recreation Coordinator/Programs

Kristin Hartley, Recreation Coordinator, reviewed that the coordinator position was approved for 20 hours. She was putting in 20-23 hours per week. She could take comp time to balance out the added hours worked, or take off time and put more programs in. She had 90 hours of comp time built up. Programs would be paid for through fees, said Ms. Hartley.

Following discussion, Mr. Russell said that the Selectboard would need to look at the whole compensation package before approving three additional hours per week. Ms. Mead noted that if three additional hours were approved the salary needed to include insurance and benefits. There was a raise to add in as well, said Ms. Mead.

Mr. Bloch suggested putting aside money in the reserve fund for a playground replacement.

Conservation Commission

Joanna Cummings, Conservation Commission Co-chair, handed out a one-page informational sheet regarding invasive species. The FY2013-2014 budget was \$4,800. The commission would ask for an increase of \$800 for a \$5,600 FY2014-2015 budget to manage invasive species. The commission was working on a plan for a site assessment document and a printed brochure. Grant money would be explored to provide funding for habitat mapping/GIS mapping and data input. An equipment line item was added for a computer purchase for use during meetings and field work, said Ms. Cummings.

Mr. Russell pointed out that in the FY2011-2012 budget \$100 for Greenup Day was not spent. Last year the Selectboard decided to fund a one line item, which the commission decided how to spend. Was the Selectboard in favor of a one line item, asked Mr. Russell. Mr. Owen and Ms. Russell replied yes.

Mr. Ladue expressed concern that three committees were all seeking funding to target invasive species with broad town wide eradication programs versus one large frogbit program. Ms. Cummings said that she would discuss a broad program versus a frogbit only program with the Park Oversight Committee and the Lewis Creek Association.

There was discussion regarding the frogbit control program, landowner buy-in of the program, and a Selectboard request that the commission submit a Town Meeting report that supported the budget item.

Lewis Creek Association

Marty Illick and Sue Smith, Lewis Creek Association representatives, reviewed a request for \$600; a memo, dated 10/31/2013, regarding a proposed invasive species program on Town owned land; a proposal for long term composting of plant material; and an herbicide licensing/permitting process.

Ms. Smith explained a proposal to eradicate a small patch of phragmites, an invasive plant just starting to show up behind the post office. She would work with the Road

Commissioner and landowners, said Ms. Smith. Mr. Ladue asked if a subcommittee could be formed to target wild parsnips versus phragmites. Mr. Russell asked if a committee could look at all invasive species and do a needs list. Ms. Illick replied that was done in several towns already.

Mr. Ladue reiterated that there were three entities seeking funding for invasive species; Lewis Creek Association for \$600, the Conservation Commission for \$2,000 and another request from the Park Oversight Committee. Wouldn't a coordinated effort make more sense, asked Mr. Ladue. Ms. Cummings explained that a several pronged approach made more sense and not necessarily from one committee. The Conservation Commission was asking for frogbit funding along with other programs the commission was working on, said Ms. Cummings. Mr. Owen clarified that the Selectboard was suggesting coordination of all groups so when it came to spending money there was a priority list.

Ms. Cole explained that she and Ms. Smith had attended a workshop in New York. A phragmites inventory was one issue and the small patch could be controlled now. Landowners could be asked for donations, said Ms. Cole.

Mr. Russell suggested re-visiting the issue, or \$1,000 could be added in the budget under Town Lands – Town Management Pilot Program for invasive specie control.

Mr. Ladue asked staff to fill in the comments column with more data in the draft budget.

Articles for Town Meeting warning – discussion only

Suggestions for Articles:

- Mr. Ladue asked if donations could be split in a separate article versus under a single budget. Mr. Russell spoke in support of one budget.
- Mr. Hammer said that he spoke with the Secretary of State office regarding Town Meetings. An idea was discussed to have two Town Meetings. One in late January as a Special Town Meeting to consider changing the Town budget vote by Australian ballot for the March 4th Town Meeting. A question was how the Selectboard could have a draft budget ready by the January deadline for printing in the Town Report. Voters would have an opportunity in December or January to work on a budget to be finalized and ready for the electorate to vote by Australian ballot on March 4th. The Secretary of State said it could work, said Mr. Hammer.

Mr. Russell said that trying Australian balloting could be done for one year. A concern was if Australian ballot voting was approved then the Town couldn't go back to the old format unless there was another vote to do so, said Mr. Russell.

Mr. Hammer clarified that he was proposing to educate everyone this year and do the change in voting method for next year, starting in December for a January budget hearing.

Mr. Morrison expressed concern that if a budget was voted on by Australian ballot then there would be no reason to have a Town Meeting. The Town Meeting tradition for

discussion on the floor would be lost. For example, last year there was a Fire and Rescue discussion that was very important, said Mr. Morrison.

Mr. Hammer said that the Town Meeting Committee had a discussion related to two Town Meetings, moving to a Saturday meeting, or a different time and place. The committee had sent out a survey. The survey had 300 responses with most suggesting a Saturday morning meeting, or secondly a Monday night meeting.

Further discussion of the following would be held at the December 16th Selectboard meeting:

- Community Safety Committee.
- Mr. Ladue would present an update report on the bridge projects under Article 1.
- Ask the State of Vermont for the use of voting machines for the November elections.

Ms. Cole asked that the Town Green drainage issue be brought forward as an article. Mr. Ladue explained that David Marshall was conducting a drainage survey that would include the Town Green elevations. A plan would be formulated for free. It would be wiser to do improvements after the Town Party versus in the spring, said Mr. Ladue.

JOB DESCRIPTION FOR TOWN ADMINISTRATOR – action item

MOTION by Mr. Owen, seconded by Mr. Ladue, to approve a proposed Job Description for a Town Administrator with the following correction:

- Page 1, Job Summary, 2nd sentence, change the word “principle” to read “principal”.

VOTE: 5 ayes; motion carried.

The Selectboard Chair would post the job description.

THOMPSON’S POINT LEASE FOR LOT 11 AT 2750 THOMPSON’S POINT ROAD – action item

MOTION by Mr. Owen, seconded by Ms. Russell, to terminate the Thompson’s Point lease for Lot 11, 2750 Thompson’s Road, to Margaret Blatchford, Trustee, and Caroline MacAllister; and approve a 20 year lease of Lot 11 to David Weinstein and Erin Hanley.

VOTE: 5 ayes; motion carried.

MINUTES – November 18

MOTION by Ms. Russell, seconded by Mr. Morrison, to approve the Selectboard minutes of November 18, 2013, with additions/corrections as follows:

- Page 2, last paragraph, 4th sentence, change to read “...the barn needed to be moved 13’ from the...”,
- Page 5, last motion, 2nd bullet, change the word “some” to “come”,
- Page 6, 5th paragraph, 2nd sentence, change “Bridge 28” to read “Bridge 27”; and 3rd sentence, change to read “...could post a request for...”,

- Page 7, 7th paragraph, 2nd sentence, change to read "...Manager, who would have authority...",
- Page 8, add to the bottom of the Selectboard Procedure discussion, "Mr. Morrison would report back after attending an Open Meeting Law work session put on by Stitzel, Page and Fletcher, attorneys."

VOTE: 5 ayes; motion carried.

COMMITTEE UPDATES

Ms. Russell reported on a Library Trustee meeting.

Ms. Russell reported that Fire and Rescue had appointed a new Corporate Board Secretary. Board minutes would be available starting next month. She has requested electronic financial statements that she would distribute to Selectboard members two days after the Corporate Board meeting, said Ms. Russell.

Mr. Bloch said that staff would post the Fire and Rescue financial statements on the Town website when they were electronically received.

Mr. Ladue suggested using Town e-mail accounts to receive reports.

SELECTBOARD UPDATES

Mr. Russell said that Troy, IT consultant, had requested an upgrade to the computer back up system and use of Gmail for Town e-mailing.

Mr. Morrison said that he would ask Advance Music for a quote for use of a recording device for Town meetings.

Mr. Russell explained a proposed Town credit card policy. Ms. Mead would control the use of a credit card, said Mr. Russell. Mr. Bloch pointed out that not all alternatives had been explored. The Selectboard should make sure that a Town credit card was needed. He had discussed the issue with Bonnie Batchelder, who said that the Town must be very restrictive on using and controlling a credit card, said Mr. Bloch.

Mr. Bloch reported that mold was discovered in the Town Hall ceiling and hallway. The repair would need to be budgeted, said Mr. Bloch.

APPROVE WARRANTS TO PAY BILLS

The Selectboard signed warrants to pay bills.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

MOTION by Mr. Ladue, seconded by Ms. Russell, to enter Executive Session for the purposes of discussing legal matters, where premature knowledge might place the Town at a disadvantage, and to invite the Selectboard Assistant to attend.

VOTE: 5 ayes; motion carried.

The Selectboard entered Executive Session at 10:07 p.m.

The Selectboard adjourned Executive Session and reconvened the regular meeting at 10:17 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 10:18 p.m.

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