

**CHARLOTTE SELECTBOARD
MINUTES OF MEETING
MEETING CONDUCTED ENTIRELY VIA TELECONFERENCE
APRIL 6, 2020**

APPROVED

SELECTBOARD MEMBERS: Chair Matthew Krasnow, Vice Chair Frank Tenney, Carrie Spear, James Faulkner, Louise McCarren

ADMINISTRATION: Dean Bloch, Town Administrator

OTHERS: Adam Danztscher, Bill-Fraser Harris, Hugh Lewis Jr., Juliann Phelps, Charles Russell, Mark Dillenbeck, Greg Ranallo, Bill Stuono, Peter Joslin, Rebecca Foster, Nicole Conley, Maura Wygmans

AGENDA ITEMS:

6:40 PM Adjustments to the agenda

6:41 PM Public comment

6:45 PM Meeting to validate Article 6 from March 3, 2020 Town Meeting

7:00 PM Selection of contractor for removal of Ash trees

7:15 PM Town Hall staff—update on work location and status

7:20 PM Paying employees during the coronavirus situation

7:30 PM Committees' use of Zoom for meetings; possible removal of meeting suspension

7:40 PM Thompson's Point—update on opening wastewater treatment system

7:45 PM Land Maintenance contracts—possible delay of start due to Executive Order

7:55 PM Tennis courts—whether or not to keep open during Stay Safe, Stay Home

8:00 PM Adjournment

CALL TO ORDER

Selectboard Chair Matt Krasnow called the meeting to order at 6:43 p.m.

Adjustments to the agenda

-Restart Thompson's Point dog waste pickup (one month early)

-Consider temporarily suspending the issuance of zoning permits and pursuing minor violations

-Mount Philo State Park—messaging regarding appropriate behavior

-Charlotte Park & Wildlife Refuge—whether or not to stay open

-Delay of staff performance reviews

-Possible budget reduction for only essential work, to anticipate a possible reduction in tax income due to Covid-19

-Closure of Town owned lands discussion due to Covid-19

Public comment

None

Meeting to validate Article 6 from March 3, 2020 Town Meeting

The Selectboard needs to validate the vote on Article 6, which was approved on March 3, although the article did not get included in the warning published in the Town Report, Dean Bloch said. This is actually a Town Meeting; Charles Russell joined the Zoom meeting to moderate.

MOTION by Matt Krasnow, seconded by Frank Tenney, to suspend as Selectboard and reconvene as Town Meeting. VOTE: 5 ayes; all in favor; motion carried.

MOTION by Matt Krasnow, seconded by Carrie Spear, to reconvene as the Selectboard. VOTE: 5 ayes; all in favor; motion carried.

Selection of contractor for removal of Ash trees

Dean stated a Request for Bids was distributed and published prior to the meeting. The Town received five proposals. The Tree Warden has provided a recommendation, which is included in the packet. The work is included in the FY20 budget (i.e. for the current year, to be completed prior to June 30th). The roads identified for tree removal are Ferry Road and Greenbush Road.

Mark Dillenbeck discussed the three low bids and said he believes any of the three would do the job well. Time is the issue. The work needs to be done before traffic resumes to minimize the blockage of traffic. Teachers or Greg Smith are the two Mark recommended. They have stellar references, he said. They have large crews and are able to do the work quickly. Louise McCarren said Teachers has done work for her but feels she is capable of making a non-biased decision. Mark said in a small Town that is not unusual. Matt said supporting local contractors is important. Adam Dantzcher said timeliness is the most important issue.

James Faulkner suggested going with Chris to save the most money. Adam Dantzcher said the contract specifically indicates a time period that should be honored and that the Selectboard would be setting a precedent that allows vendors to take all the time they want to do a job rather than honor the contract. The vendor should be held accountable, Adam said. The precedent should be set that vendors are expected to do the job in the time the contract indicates, Adam said. James said, the Town will be going through a hard time and money is the most important aspect of this.

Mark said last year Chris went 5 months over the due date of the contract. This project is much more complicated. Mark said he doesn't have confidence this job will be done in a timely manner.

Junior said go with the lowest but wondered why Greg Smith was overlooked. He advised offering Greg the contract if Chris is not being considered.

Louise said going with the Tree Warden's recommendation is her advice.

Matt Krasnow said he would like to award the bid to a different contractor than last year to see if it goes any differently. Between Gregory Smith and Teachers is a \$200 difference and a significant difference in time. A shorter time frame is more valuable.

The ferry is closed and it would be nice to have this work done before it opens. Greg Ranallo of Teachers said he could start on Monday.

MOTION by Matt Krasnow, seconded by Frank Tenney, to select Teachers Tree Service to remove ash trees as indicated in the Request for Bids not to exceed \$19,500, and to be completed in a 5 to 6 day time frame. VOTE: 3 ayes; 1 nay (James Faulkner); 1 abstain (Carrie Spear); motion carried.

Town Hall staff—update on work location and status

Dean gave a summary of how everyone has been working. The Stay Safe/Stay Home order was clear about non-essential employees working from home. They are able to come in on occasion. Louise said the Selectboard should be looking to get key boards and commissions working. House Bill 681 temporarily eliminates the need for a physical location to meet. Peter Joslin said Planner Daryl Arminius does not have access to the internet or email from home. The Town has a few laptops that might be able to be used. There is also money in the Planning and Zoning budget for equipment. Daryl also would need to have email service so being at the office might be the only option. It was agreed that there is a reasonable way to be safe and get work done and solutions can be found. Louise asked about the voicemail system. Dean said having the ability to get messages is currently available and call forwarding isn't necessary, and is an added expense. He said it is important to be responsive and have good customer service, and we are doing that—Daryl and Daniel can check their phone messages several times per day. Dean will get pricing on a mobile hot spot for Daryl. The Zoning Administrator Daniel Morgan is connected.

Paying employees during the coronavirus situation

The Selectboard discussed the manner in which employees will be paid during the period of Stay Safe/Stay Home. Dean said it has been discussed previously in passing that employees might be paid their budgeted pay, regardless of the number of hours actually worked, and without requiring employees to use leave time (e.g. sick, vacation, or personal). This is the way this period's payroll was processed. It would be good for the Selectboard to confirm this is the approved payment plan, or provide other direction.

Matt said he said he spoke with Town Clerk/Treasurer Mary Mead, there are part time staff at the library that are just not calling into work. Everyone else is working. People are doing as much work as they can for the Town and if there is a gap to use it for professional development.

MOTION by Carrie Spear, seconded by James Faulkner, to continue to pay Town employees for their approved hours with any shortfall in workload to be made up with professional development hours. No overtime will be allowed. VOTE: 5 ayes; all in favor; motion carried.

Committees' use of Zoom for meetings; possible removal of meeting suspension

Due to H.681 designated meeting locations are no longer required. No members of boards or committees need to be present at Town Hall. Dean read the open meeting law changes.

Zoom offers the potential for many boards and committees to resume their activities, although the requirements of the Open Meeting Law must continue to be met. These include:

- Providing public notice of the meetings (including a Zoom link) on the Town website and it also seems it would be good to post these on Front Porch Forum during the Stay Safe/Stay Home period
- Keeping minutes of meetings and posting these on the Town website
- Keeping a recording of meetings—Zoom can do this, but there should probably be a standards protocol or convention developed for this—perhaps Daniel Morgan could help with this.

Bill Frasier Harris, Rebecca Foster and Peter Joslin were present and said they are ready to move forward with Zoom meetings. Peter said there is a need to make sure those that want to participate can have access. Matt suggested posting full agendas on Front Porch Forum, in the Charlotte News and The Citizen. Carrie said posting in paper at the usual locations is still important and that there is a safe way to get this done and she will help. Folks who want to participate in the meetings should email their questions to Daryl and Daniel who will then get them to the right board or committee.

Rebecca asked about Zoom accounts. Dean said the options are to have meetings free for 40 minutes or to use the Town account that is through the library and to call him for the username and password if needed.

It was asked how much time is now needed to warn the meeting. Currently it is 48 hours ahead of time but now everyone should aim for a week, Dean said.

All chairs are required to read H681.

MOTION by Matt Krasnow, seconded by Carrie Spear, allow Town boards, committees, and commissions to reconvene regular meetings providing they post an agenda one week before the meeting date on FPF, send it to The Charlotte News and The Citizen with a note requesting that they publish the agenda if their publication date is before the meeting, to contact neighbors impacted by an agenda item, to verify that the chair has read H681, to send agenda to the Selectboard liaison, and to contact Dean for technical assistance with Zoom. VOTE: 5 ayes; all in favor; motion carried.

Louise McCarren added a friendly amendment to change the word “allow” to “encourage” in the above motion. VOTE: 5 ayes; all in favor; motion carried.

Frank Tenney added a friendly amendment to strike “to contact neighbors impacted by an agenda item” from the above motion. VOTE: 5 ayes; all in favor; motion carried.

Matt Krasnow added a friendly amendment to include the Zoom link in the agendas. VOTE: 5 ayes; all in favor; motion carried.

Frank Tenney added a friendly amendment to use the library Zoom account for easy recording and management. VOTE: 5 ayes; all in favor; motion carried.

Thompson’s Point—update on opening wastewater treatment system

Camp owners cannot occupy Thompson’s Point until the wastewater system is online. There have been a lot of walkers on Thompson’s Point. The Wastewater System Operator has indicated that work has been made more difficult by the large numbers of people using the roads around Thompson’s Point for recreation. He has found people meddling with wastewater treatment equipment, and entering into the gated plant area—so he will now be locking and unlocking this area. Therefore the opening may take longer than predicted.

Land Maintenance contracts—possible delay of start due to Executive Order

Mowing contractors have asked whether they should be operating during Stay Safe/Stay Home. The two have different circumstances, one contractor has employees, and the other operates alone. Matt said property services are not an in-person business. Adam suggested he continue as scheduled as he is not in violation and that poison parsnip and tick control are vital to the area. Matt said he will call Dale from Mow Mow Mow to discuss how he may be able to operate during this period of the Executive Order.

Tennis courts—whether or not to keep open during Stay Safe, Stay Home

The Recreation Commission and Recreation Director have asked whether the courts should be closed. James said tennis can be a source of spreading the virus it has been found. Recreation Director Nicole Conley said there are people not following state guidelines for its use. Matt said taking precautions are paramount right now and that being overly cautious prevents fatalities.

Bill Frasier Harris said many members of the community have strongly requested to keep them open. He said a local physician has written a letter about the mental component and the benefit of physical activity in fighting Covid-19. The Shelburne courts are open. Bill said he posted Covid-19 operation requirements. Personal responsibility and government control is a different discussion, he said.

Maura Wygmans explained as a tennis player she would like to keep it open. A total amount of 12 people could be on the courts. The Shelburne sign said you may only play with your own family members. Taking down the middle court to limit exposure is an option, she said.

Jean Anderson Swayze is a physician and is in support of keeping tennis courts open. She recommends singles tennis only.

Bill said he is happy to monitor on a daily basis and put up more signage.

Frank said the center net could be removed.

Louise doesn't want a police state and James said an expert from John's Hopkins University says no tennis and that the Selectboard should lean on the side of science.

Bill said there is risk going to the grocery store or sitting at a picnic table in the park and it should be left up to personal responsibility. He said the playground is closed with a sign and he orange-taped all of the equipment. It has since vanished.

Nicole said signs were laminated and posted in March and they have been removed. Personal responsibility just isn't there for some members of the community, she said.

Restart Thompson's Point dog waste pickup (one month early)

It is getting bad and barrels would help to avoid at \$27 per month.

MOTION by Matt Krasnow, seconded by Frank Tenney, to restart Thompson's Point dog waste pickup one month early. VOTE: 5 ayes; all in favor; motion carried.

Consider temporarily suspending the issuance of zoning permits and pursuing minor violations

Dean said some of this can be done remotely, but not all. Matt said leave it up to the discretion of the Zoning Administrator. He should be empowered to make the decisions. Everyone agreed.

Mount Philo State Park—messaging regarding appropriate behavior

Dean said he has received some comments that folks are not social distancing and dogs are sometimes out of control. Bill Frasier Harris said the complaints have come in and he has been walking the area every day. Any new signage needs to come from a State level, he said. Bill said he will monitor and post on Front Porch Forum if needed. The Selectboard agreed.

Charlotte Park & Wildlife Refuge—whether or not to stay open

Open for now.

Delay of staff performance reviews

Dean said he wondered whether staff performance reviews should be delayed, as it's hard to conduct reviews when you're not able to be face-to-face. The Selectboard agreed—performance reviews will be delayed.

Possible budget reduction for only essential work, to anticipate a possible reduction in tax income due to Covid-19

Payment timelines and cost savings were discussed. Paving deferment was discussed. James said every department across the board should look at their budgets. Frank mentioned the budget still needs to be approved. Matt said that is a vote on how to spend it but it is up to the Selectboard to spend what voters authorize. A “no” vote would result in the Selectboard reviewing and submitting a revised budget until a new one passes. The Selectboard is authorized to underspend the budget. Matt said 10 out of 11 cents of property tax bills is burdened by the State educational system, so property taxes will not be largely impacted by the Selectboard’s decision not to spend money.

Closure of Town owned lands discussion due to Covid-19

Not at this time.

Approve warrants to pay bills**Adjournment**

MOTION by Frank Tenney, seconded by James Faulkner, to adjourn. VOTE: 5 ayes; all in favor; motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:42 p.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted, Lynn Monty, Recording Secretary.