

CHARLEMONT SELECTBOARD
NOTICE OF MEETING
Monday, November 27th, 2023, 6:00 pm
Via Conference call and in person, Town Hall Meeting Room

Members in attendance: Jared Bellows in person, Valentine Reid on phone

Others in Attendance: Thorne Palmer, Patsy Bergeron, Marguerite Willis, Cheryl Handsaker, Sarah Reynolds, Star Atkeson. Bob Handsaker joined by phone later in the meeting.

Val called the meeting to order at 6:00

Val explained that the meeting was going to be abbreviated because Bill Harker was unable to attend. He read a blurb from the Office of the Massachusetts Attorney General outlining the extended remote meeting policy. Remote meeting is extended until March 31st, 2025. As Val had adequate telephone access there was a quorum.

Appointments:

6:00pm: Job Descriptions – Tax Collector— Sarah had done the small edits and added the information decided at the last meeting. They will defer voting on approving the description until next meeting. Marguerite got confirmation that an accounting certificate would not be required if a future applicant had 5 years accounting experience.

Town Administrator—Sarah compared the sample job descriptions that she brought in from the MMA website and smaller towns with the current job description that she had been hired with. Some of the items that they are asking her to do will be added permanently, including the relevant Executive Secretary position duties. Carlene will continue to help with budget inputting into excel. Sarah would like the Select Board to read the job descriptions and decide what they would like to add.

They discussed whether there was a bylaw allowing the SB to appoint administrators. Marguerite feels the practice of bringing everything to Town meetings would make the meetings unnecessarily long thereby causing a loss of participation. Val read that the towns that do adopt the MGL to appoint administrators, do treat it as employment, and not as elected officials. Sarah will check and see what other towns are doing. Val and Jared agreed that it works the way it is.

Town Clerk hiring committee update. —The committee consists of Rich Filoramo, Ron Smith, Jared Bellows and Sarah Reynolds. Lynne Hathaway and/or Carlene Hayden will act as alternates if someone from the committee is not available.

They spoke about the posting of the job. The main online posting site Sarah used was MassHires. Using Indeed was prohibitively expensive. Locally the job posting can be found at the Transfer Station, Avery's, the Post Office and in the Newsletter. Val suggested reaching out to Leyden to see if they know of any applicants from when they recently hired an administrator.

6:30pm- Thorne Palmer – Appointing registrars, Marguerite Willis, Patsy Bergeron, Cheryl Handsaker—Thorne asked the SelectBoard to appoint Patsy Bergeron, Marguerite Willis, Cheryl Handsaker to be registrars to Town of Charlemont. They represent a mix of political parties.

Val asked whether choosing the registrars followed the policy in the MGL by (A procedure involving the Committees sending their choices to the Town Clerk by certified mail and getting a response by certified mail.) He read a blurb of the MGL Part I title VIII chapter 51 section 15. Jared and Sarah read it carefully and

concluded that the certified mail procedure with the timing was not done but that would not interfere with the Select Board making the appointment.

Jared Bellows made a motion to appoint registrars Marguerite Willis for 3 years, Patsy Bergeron, 2 years, and Cheryl Handsaker for 1 year. Valentine Reid seconded the motion.

Jared Bellows—Aye, Valentine Reid—Aye

Bob Handsaker was on the phone and at Marguerite's request, swore them in. If they find out it must be in person, they will do it over again.

Valentine Reid made a motion to authorize the Moderator to perform the swearing in of registrar. Jared Bellows Seconded the motion.

Valentine Reid —Aye. Jared Bellows—Aye.

All registrars rose, and Bob Handsaker read the oath.

Marguerite Willis —I do, Cheryl Handsaker — I will, Patsy Bergeron—I do.

If they are allowed to swear in remotely, it will stand— if they find out it is not allowed, they will swear in in person later in the week. Bob Handsaker will need to call the Ethics Commission about the possible conflict of interest with being married to Cheryl Handsaker. If so a justice of Peace will need to be found. There is a deadline for December 4th to submit petitions that need to be signed by the registrars.

Administrator reports:

1) Grant for police tasers, approve signing contract.

Valentine Reid motioned to approve the police taser paperwork and for Jared to be signatory. Jared Bellows seconded.

Valentine Reid —Aye, Jared Bellows—Aye

2) Budget requests for FY 25— deferred to next meeting

3) Economic Development Incentive Program- tax incentive program from the state, report from meeting with state program representative— deferred to next meeting

4) Report on Administrator meetings with Mohawk Trail Regional Superintendent. — deferred to next meeting

*5) Firewood Bank Grant, approve paperwork.

Valentine Reid made amotion for to approve Woodbank Grant and authorize Sarah Reynolds to complete the electronic signature on behalf of the Board. Jared Bellows seconded.

Valentine Reid —Aye, Jared Bellows—Aye

Liaison reports:

1) Report on Mohawk Trail Regional Meeting with the State Representatives about rural school funding. — deferred to next meeting

Agenda items:

1) Letter to MBI about unserved homes— Bob Handsaker said that there is not a deadline yet for this public comment, he is working with Laura Fulton on it and get input from FRCOG, it will happen in spring.

2) Draft public comment from the town on MBI statewide digital equity plans. —towns should make public comment by December 15th about how they could use some of the 300 million dollars available for digital equity around the State. Bob will draft something up, liaise with Val on it, and bring it back to the SelectBoard meeting on December 11th for final approval. So far:

- ACP (Affordable Connectivity Program) subsidizes 30\$ off monthly internet bills. Bob thinks the State should match that amount for ACP eligible homes in rural towns, doubling the discount to \$60.
- Also— He'd ask the state to grant a first-time installation subsidy of \$1-2,000. for ACP eligible homes. He'd like to do it through Whip City, will discuss and reach out to other towns and FRCOG.

Cheryl Handsaker wants people to know that Households with a current student from Hawlemont are eligible for the ACP subsidy, or 30\$ off the monthly broadband cost. They talked about the ACP program which is based on income.

Bob wanted to let The Board know that Hawley was applying for money to bring Broadband to Hawley. They may come to talk to the Charlemont Select Board. There would be fiber all the way to Plainfield if it works out. (The northern ring would be connected to the middle ring of fiber towns)

3) Gift cards for town employees for Christmas— deferred to next meeting

Approve/sign/approve and sign:

1) Vendor Warrant AP2421 and Payroll Warrant PR2419.

Valentine Reid made a motion to approve signing vendor and payroll warrants. Jared Bellows seconded.

Valentine Reid —Aye, Jared Bellows—Aye

2) Minutes from November 13, 2023— deferred to next meeting

Valentine Reid made a motion to adjourn at 7:04 PM. Jared Bellows seconded it.

Valentine Reid —Aye, Jared Bellows—Aye.

Next regularly scheduled meeting, December 11th, 2023

Respectfully Submitted by Star Atkeson 12/06/2023

Documents reviewed in meeting:

Select Board Agenda for November 27th 2023

Current Charlemont Tax Collector and Administrator job descriptions; Southboro Administrator job descriptions; From MMA: City manager/Town Administrator job description; Town of Blandford Administrator job description.

Email dated Nov 15, 2023, from Bob Handsaker re: Bomb meeting —notes added to the agenda of the BOMB meeting

Email dated Nov 17, 2023, and forwarded by Bob Handsaker from Ted Harvey/ FRCOG re: Seeking Public Comment for the Massachusetts Broadband & Digital Equity Plan

Letter from Governor's office to Jay Pelletier, Charlemont Police Department notification of 8,935.50 award

Letter from Executive office of Public Safety and Security Office of Grants and Research to Jay Pelletier,

Charlemont Police Department notification of 8,935.50 award.