

Minutes of the Charlemont Selectboard

12/19/2022

Town Hall and via telephone

Present: Valentine Reid, Randy Prostack, Brian Mchugh, Ken Bertch, Bob Handsaker, and Sarah Reynolds

Attending Via phone: Dan Girard, Ilyza Earl, Anne Kaplan

6:00pm Appointment- Housing Authority regarding grant participation

Brian Mchugh explained that the town participates in a multi town application. The town of Wendell would be the lead town. There are three qualifications that he brought up

1. Benefit low to moderate income residents'
2. income below 80% median
3. Slum & Blight areas- income surveys would be required
4. Urgent need – This was last used during Irene

The program that Charlemont has been participating in is the housing rehabilitation loan program which aids low to moderate income residents who need to do repairs to their homes for code violations, septic, water wells, and lead paint. The program also does energy efficiency items like air sealing and insulation.

The way the program works is an inspection is completed by a housing rehab specialist from the HRA and a detailed work list is written up this list and a list of contractors are sent to the homeowner. The homeowner can use a different contractor so long as they are licensed and insured. The loan is similar to a mortgage loan. It is at 0% deferred payment and is forgiven at a rate of 1/15 per year. If the homeowner sells before the 15 years is up the proceeds from the house sale are used to pay the portion that has not been forgiven yet. Any funds that are repaid to the program go back into the available funds for Charlemont Residents. When the funding gets below 50,000 the program will hold it back to help if an emergency comes up in the Town for a resident.

The timeline for getting the grant was discussed and Brian Mchugh explained that it would be application on March 3rd, there is a review process of 3-4 months, Charlemont would find out about an award late summer so it would be next Fall at the earliest that the new funding would be available. It was also discussed that maybe it would be beneficial to get more applicants, and also would landlords be able to apply, it was explained that it had to be owner occupied and that it would still have to qualify with income guidelines for low-income housing, the restriction on the low-income use would run with the rental unit property.

On a motion by Dan Girard and second by Valentine Reid it was approved for Brian Mchugh and HRA to pursue funding this grant round on behalf of Charlemont.

6:50pm Appointment Randy Prostack.

Randy Prostack attended the meeting to express his interest in being on the Agricultural Commission. Mr. Prostack has an extensive background in Agriculture and in talking to Valentine Reid about helping in town the Agricultural commission seemed to be the best fit for him. He has worked for UMass for 29

years. On a motion by Dan Girard and second by Valentine Reid Randy Prostack was appointed to the Agricultural Commission.

7pm Broad band Appointment

On a motion by Dan Girard and second by Valentine Reid Laura Fulton was appointed to the broadband committee, Laura had attended the December 5th selectboard meeting, but could not be appointed because it was not on the agenda.

There was discussion about the communication with the MLP manager and broadband committee moving forward items discussed were decreasing the frequency of the broadband appointment with the selectboard and having a selectboard liaison not just the administrator attending the board meetings. This will be further discussed when the selectboard has new members in January.

Progress on network construction was then discussed it is going well, there is still a small number of cold drops outstanding. Some progress was made on 1551 West Hawley Road it needs a weather head installed. The resiliency project is moving along.

The **administrator** did two items from her **report** because it was not quite time for the 7:15 appointment

e) EMPG grant, the fire chief secured \$2,700 in an equipment grant, and an additional grant was received today to be placed on the next agenda.

c) There was a meeting with the green communities' representatives and National Grid about the deep energy retro fit program, this looks at the whole building envelope and assesses new technology to heat, weatherize etc. Things like the new heat pumps, hot water heaters and additional weatherization are looked at, as well as cooling. Administrator Reynolds to keep the board updated

7:15 pm Hawlemont School Committee

There will be a budget meeting on January 9th at 4pm the budget subcommittee meets an hour before the regular school committee meeting.

Solar panels for the school roof were discussed. They are looking into the feasibility and cost, because the Town owns the land and the older building there may be some communication of needs.

It was brought up that they should look at owning vs leasing because of the power purchase agreements.

It was discussed that Robin Pease secured funding for a backup boiler and mini splits. The boiler is an oil boiler. The board expressed that this has been brought up several times, but they feel that oil is a mistake especially with how it has been this winter with pricing.

The school as a new contract with the Superintendent it included an 11% cost of living increase over 3 years

The school as a new agreement for Grant funding with the Mary Lyon program and they also received an anonymous donation for the before and after school program which helps retain students because of parents' schedules.

Hawlemont is working on a strategic plan and has held community meeting. They are also looking at Community Compact grant funding to help with the strategic planning process.

Administrator Reynolds continued her report

- a) Ev Charging on a motion by Dan Girard and Second by Valentine Reid an application for grant funding for EV chargers at the fairgrounds and Hawlemont to be pursued. The administrator is to make sure that the Ev Chargers are labeled as Town property so there is no issue with the school.
- b) Digital equity program was discussed the board decided to see if broadband would be willing to run with it before making any decisions. Also, Administrator Reynolds to send an email to Natalie Blais asking some program and funding questions about how the assistance to the lower income residents would work, and how much time town staff would have to spend on this project.
- f) The cybersecurity awareness grant was discussed because of the length of it, the abbreviated track would be suggested if the town would like to do the exercise. It was discussed to see if the administrator could participate to see what the program was like. Otherwise holding off seemed to make the most sense until another year when it could be pursued.

Liaison Reports:

Valentine Reid reported that He had met with the Highway Superintendent, and it was brought up that the town may do a stabilization fund for the trucks and equipment capital plan. It was also mentioned that the roadside mower currently being shared with Hawley may not be available eventually. Valentine also met with the police chief who brought up the stabilization plan as well and during the discussion it was brought up that there was a time-consuming arrest form process, that the selectboard chair will draft a letter about. Speed signs were also discussed the ones on the end of town only register up top 45 MPH because of the type of sign, the administrator will see about ordering the higher speed feedbacks. The school zone signs were also brought up by the police chief the administrator has already applied for funding for those. Police training and funding were also discussed. Valentine Reid to write a letter to our representatives about funding.

It was also mentioned that the police chief is due for a decision on his appointment in January. Dan Girard said that he recommended that the next agenda had appointing him. He has been doing an outstanding job. The agenda should also include the police chief.

Agenda Items:

The budget worksheet was then reviewed, items increased were the town hall sewer line, the retirement assessment line, town postage, animal inspector expense, transfer station roll off containers and the solid waste assessment. The assessment lines that have not had the new assessments come in yet will be reviewed again later. Two lines were reduced, Town Hall contracted services, transfer station bags. The administrator is to edit the budget sheet and send it out. Also, it

was mentioned that due to the cost of election items like the postage and employee time it would be worth having a breakout of the money Charlemont is spending on elections.

Meet the Candidates night was discussed – it was asked to check the availability of Hawlemont for a night between January 3-5

The FCSWMD request for a special Municipal employee designation was discussed, the selectboard is already a special municipal employee so the board did not feel that needed a vote, the administrator is to check with town council on the alternate designation because it is often an employee, and the board wants to make sure it does not affect the employee's employment in any way.

On a motion by Dan Girard and second by Valentine Reid an anonymous donation of a bulletin board/sign for the transfer station was accepted.

Approve and sign

On a motion by Dan Girard and second by Valentine Reid the Vendor and payroll warrants of 11/21, 11/28,12/06,12/07, and 12/13, the EMPG grant paperwork, Yearly ABCC renewal form and the ABCC population increase form were all approved and signed.

On a motion by Dan Girard and second by Valentine Reid the meeting was adjourned at 9:07 pm