

Town of Charlemont
Joint Finance Committee and Select Board Meeting Minutes
February 11th, 2026, 4:00 p.m.
Town Hall and via Conference Call

Board Members Present: Lynn Hathaway, Amy Wales

Others present: Jason Pelletier, Dennis Annear, Sarah Reynolds, Star Atkeson

Members On phone: Rich Filoramo, Ron Smith

Amy Wales called the meeting to order at 4:02 PM.

Appointments:

4:00 Dennis Annear, Fire Chief to discuss Fire Dept. budget

The committee reviewed the Fire Department budget. Dennis Annear was unable to attend initially and will return for further discussion. The primary change is an increase in the Fire Chief salary due to a proposed shared chief position with Rowe. The salary is set between \$75,000–\$80,000 to attract qualified candidates and reflects expanded administrative, OSHA compliance, and training responsibilities. Charlemont’s share would be \$40,000 (50%). A memorandum of understanding with Rowe has been drafted regarding shared resources, including a vehicle, with plans to transition to a formal fire district once legislation is completed, hopefully by next budget season.

Other fire budget increases include protective gear (which must be replaced on a set schedule), licenses, dues, inspections, and related fees. Amy requested year-to-date figures due to a significant increase in one line item; Sarah will provide the January accounting report.

Dennis Annear later reviewed fire department expenses, including a \$2,600 software license exceeding the budgeted amount. Turnout gear costs approximately \$7,000 per set, with boots and helmets expiring after 10 years. Vehicle numbers have been reduced. The Fire engine reimbursement will be a boon to the Town, and the two towns will be able to set up well for the Fire District.

4:30 Jason Pelletier, Police Chief to discuss Police budget

The Police Chief submitted a budget request including a proposal reflecting a 40-hour full-time chief position. Questions were raised regarding authorization and job description. Jason is a strong chief and had discussed the proposal with the Select Board, currently not present at the meeting. Amy recommended a joint meeting with the Select Board to discuss the matter further. Kim Blakeslee serves as liaison to the Police Department. Discussion to continue.

Police contracted service costs continue to rise, including CJIS/CMI services subcontracted through Central Square, radio usage, Verizon connectivity for cruiser laptops, and centrally billed station phone services. The station landline is not regularly staffed; non-emergency calls should use dispatch. Quotes are being obtained for a new phone system; the current system still supports fax.

Agenda items:

Review/ Approve minutes of January 28, 2026

Ron Smith made a motion to approve the January 8, 2026, minutes as written, seconded by Lynn Hathaway. Rich Filoramo- yes, Ron Smith -yes, Lynn Hathaway-yes, Amy Wales- yes. Motion passed unanimously.

Administrator's Report:

Budget numbers

Sarah reviewed additional budget items, including Franklin Regional Council of Governments assessments, which increased 2% (\$779) due to higher land values. Emergency services radio charges are \$2,367 per service (ambulance, fire, police).

Transfer station costs increased due to health insurance. Hauling costs are estimated based on prior years. Health insurance increased 35% overall (20% midyear and an additional 15%). Property and casualty insurance may increase approximately 5%, pending confirmation. The town was able to absorb the prior increase due to available funds; not all budgeted health insurance funds are used because some employees decline coverage.

The committee discussed the school assessment issue; Charlemont had been overcharged. A five-year average will be applied, and more information will be available at the next meeting.

Letter in support of Recreation tax.

Sarah and Amy revised a letter supporting the recreation tax to better quantify recreation activities' impact on the budget.

Amy Wales moved to approve the letter to members of the House and Senate. Seconded by Lynn Hathaway. Ron Smith - yes, Rich Filoramo - yes, Lynn Hathaway - yes, and Amy Wales - yes

The next meeting is scheduled for February 25 at 4:00 PM.

Amy Wales moved to adjourn at 4:44 PM; seconded by Lynn Hathaway. Ron Smith - yes, Rich Filoramo - yes, Lynn Hathaway - yes, and Amy Wales - yes

Documents viewed at meeting:

Agenda of 2/11/2026

Minutes of 1/28/2026

Police and Fire 2027 Budget Request