

Town of Charlemont  
Board of Selectmen Meeting  
Monday, January 6, 2015

Selectmen present: Chairman David Cunningham (arrived at 7:15pm), Vaughn Tower, Beth Bandy.

Also in attendance: Stephen Ferguson, MJ Adams (Director of Community Development, Franklin County Housing and Redevelopment Authority), Sarah Reynolds, Irwin Reynolds.

Mr. Tower called the meeting to order at 7:05pm.

Mr. Tower and Ms. Bandy approved and signed the previous meeting minutes.

On a motion by Mr. Tower, seconded by Ms. Bandy, the Board approved and signed a thank you letter to Larry Mann for his service to the Town.

Mr. Tower made a motion, seconded by Ms. Bandy, to approve and sign a thank you letter in response to correspondence from Officer Clay Herbert.

The Board confirmed that the 250th Committee's raffle permit is available for the year.

The Board agreed to postpone discussion of Agenda Item #7, "Cemetery Committee advisement regarding Zoar plot request" to the January 13, 2014 BoS meeting.

Mr. Cunningham arrived at 7:15pm.

MJ Adams and Stephen Ferguson met with the Board regarding the Town's Community Block Grant (CBG) application, the Town's community development strategy, and a related project priorities list. Ms. Adams indicated that a second activity to be included in the grant application needed to be confirmed, and that this activity ideally would involve social services. One possibility would involve fuel assistance. Ms. Adams distributed the Town of Charlemont 2014 Community Development Strategic Action Plan Prioritized Projects List. The Selectmen need to prioritize the items on this list using a 1-2-3 rating system. Ms. Adams also distributed the Town of Charlemont Community Development Strategy, dated December 2013. The Board then reviewed a document showing Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program information.

Mr. Tower asked about Michael Walsh's interests in emergency sheltering issues. Could this type of work be included in the CBG? Ms. Adams indicated that it could be included. Mr. Tower asked Ms. Adams to email Mr. Walsh to let him know about this possibility. Ms. Adams also will place this item

onto the CBG project list, with a “1” as priority.

Mr. Cunningham asked about the possibility of using CBG money for the Mountain Road bridge.

Ms. Bandy asks about using CBG funds for a new elevator in Town Hall. Ms. Adams and Mr. Ferguson indicated that this type of use would be allowable, and that the Town could begin this option for a future CBG application by completing an ADA "Self Assessment/ Transition Plan."

Mr. Cunningham asked how the Board should start acting upon the items on the project list. Ms. Adams stated that the items on this list are not just for the CBG application but also for the Town's planning purposes. She noted that having a prioritized list like this one allows the HRA to broaden the scope of work it can do on Charlemont's behalf.

There will be a Community Block Grant Hearing on Monday, January 13, 2014 at 6:30 pm.

Ms. Adams stated that the November 18, 2013 BoS minutes seemed to indicate that she had recommended that the Board vote to designate part of the Village Center as a “slum and blight area” in order to qualify for Community Block Grant funds, although such a recommendation was not her intention. On a motion by Ms. Bandy, seconded by Mr. Tower, the board voted to amend Item 31 on the November 18, 2013 minutes to read “MJ Adams suggested one option would be for the Board to vote an area of the Village to be deemed a slum and blight area...”

Ms. Bandy recommended discussing Town Bylaws at a future meeting.

The meeting with members of the Ad Hoc Personnel Handbook Workgroup, scheduled for this evening, did not take place due to personal and professional conflicts by workgroup members. A new date for this appointment will be scheduled during the January 13, 2014 BoS meeting.

Sarah Reynolds arrived to discuss Parks & Recreation issues with the Board. Mr. Tower stated he would like the Town Highway crew to snowplow a double-width path between bathrooms and the exhibition hall at the Fairgrounds, in order to allow emergency crew access to the Exhibition Hall in the winter. He also asked if it would be possible to plow the track for snowshoeing, cross-country skiing, and/ or walking. If so, a parking area would also need to be plowed, in order to allow access to the track. Ms. Reynolds will bring these issues up with Parks & Rec. She will also bring up the possibility of installing an ice rink in the Fairgrounds Pavillion.

Ms. Reynolds informed the Board that Parks & Rec had received an information request. She and the Board reviewed the request, as well as the response (with requested materials) sent by Parks & Rec.

The Board discussed possible new procedures that would allow the Selectmen to monitor Town operations more effectively. Mr. Cunningham will request a key to the front office, which should be held by the Select Board Chair. He also will contact the Town's technology consultant regarding the

current status of Town computer backups. The Board discussed the possibility of a Town Hall sign-in log and a regular review of Town Hall phone call records. These issues will be discussed further at the January 13, 2014 Board meeting.

The Board discussed the need for new members of Parks & Recreation (two members needed) and the Board of Assessors (one member needed).

Irwin Reynolds, Sr. stopped in to ask about the possibility of using Berkshire East beautification funds for improvements to the Federated Church. Mr. Tower explained the procedure for requesting funds. Ms. Bandy suggested that Mr. Reynolds take these steps soon, in order to lock in funds to cover costs of the improvements.

The Board discussed "Obstruction of Town Layout" letters, which were to be sent to residents regarding possible violations of a Town snow removal bylaw. Mr. Cunningham stated he had spoken with Highway Superintendent Gordon Hathaway about the letters. Mr. Hathaway stated that he had asked the Board to send the letters, per guidance of previous Select Boards. Mr. Cunningham, Mr. Tower, and Ms. Bandy reviewed the letters, the Town bylaw in question, and Massachusetts General Law Chapter 40, Section 21D (cited in the bylaw). They concluded that notification of the bylaw violation is not under the jurisdiction of the Board of Selectmen. Instead, the bylaw and the Massachusetts General Law indicate that monitoring and enforcement should be handled exclusively by the Town Police Department. As a result, the BoS did not take action on the draft letters. Mr. Cunningham will inform Mr. Hathaway of the Board's decision. The Select Board will draft a policy explaining how the bylaw is being interpreted and a procedure indicating how snow bylaw violations should be handled in the future.

The Board reviewed a letter from Hampshire Electric regarding locking in electricity prices. On a motion by Mr. Cunningham, seconded by Mr. Tower, the Board unanimously voted to return to National Grid until April and revisit this issue in the spring.

The Board set the date and location for the next quarterly All Boards Meeting: This meeting will take place on Thursday, January 30, 2014 at 6:30pm at Mohawk Park. A preliminary agenda includes discussion of water hydrants, town signs, and procedures new businesses need to follow (for a "Welcome to Charlemont" packet). Kathy Reynolds will be asked to send out a request for All Board Meeting agenda items. These items should be submitted by January 24th, for review by the BoS at a meeting on January 27. Ms. Bandy will invite the Sewer Board to the All Board Meeting.

Ms. Bandy will speak with Mary Vilbon to learn about potential issues involving the installation of new "Welcome to Charlemont" signs.

Mr. Tower recommended bringing all department heads together for a one-hour, joint meeting on a quarterly basis. The Board agreed to schedule the first of these meetings at their January 13, 2014

meeting.

Mr. Cunningham will speak with Franklin Technical School about the new Town signs.

The Board voted, on a motion by Mr. Tower, seconded by Mr. Cunningham, to ask Ms. Reynolds to draft a letter to the tree warden regarding how the Board can help resolve the issue of trees at the Town Cemetery.

Mr. Tower will write up his notes regarding a discussion about the Fire Department.

Ms. Bandy will be meeting with some town residents interested in creating a bicycle path in Charlemont. This initiative is not a Town project at this time, and the meeting will only be exploratory. She will inform the Board of updates as necessary.

Mr. Cunningham is waiting for update from Town Council regarding the sex offender bylaw.  
Mr. Cunningham noted that the new town website is now live.

On a motion by Mr. Cunningham, seconded by Mr. Tower, the Board voted unanimously to amend the previous BoS meeting minutes to remove the names of residents cited in the snow removal discussion.

The meeting adjourned at 9:00pm.

Respectfully submitted by Beth Bandy.

### **Documents Reviewed**

- Board of Selectment Agenda for Monday, January 6, 2014
- Thank you letter to Larry Mann
- Thank you letter to Officer Clay Herbert
- Town of Charlemont 2014 Community Development Strategic Action Plan Prioritized Projects List.
- Town of Charlemont Community Development Strategy, dated December 2013.
- Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program information
- Hampshire Power fixed price electricity contract