

## Selectboard Items

Items that are being worked on that are of importance and urgent:

### 1. Bridges

- a. The town has more than 20 over 10' ft bridges and several that are under 10' (small bridge). All of these were the same age and in poor condition. Sarah R. has led a multiyear project to work with MassDOT to establish a cadence of grant funding and repair of these bridges. The largest project on the horizon is the replacement of the 8a bridge towards Hawley. Possible next steps here include an Annual Town Meeting warrant to authorize the town to return the 8A bridge to MassDOT's responsibility.

### 2. Roads and "mud roads"

- a. The highway superintendent has been laying out road repairs and priority repairs on the dirt roads that lead to "Mud season" headaches. Funding has been pursued through mass works grants and Chapter 90, the wrap program, and a yearly ask of \$40,000. This is an ongoing item.

### 3. Recreation tax

- a. Annual Town Meeting passed a warrant to request that the Mass Legislature allow the Town of Charlemont establish a Recreation Tax. In the 2022 legislative session this bill made it to a Third Reading. In 2023 this will need to be resubmitted by committee. Sarah R is determining if a new Annual Town Meeting vote will be required to have legislators act on this bill. Possible next steps are to be determined.

### 4. Town Buildings, workspace

- a. Municipal Buildings on the Deerfield River - The town police, fire, and highway department all have buildings and equipment in an established floodplain. The risk has been identified, but the solution has not been. Possible next steps include securing property for a new Municipal complex, researching grant funding for relocating equipment and building new buildings.
- b. Town Hall - Today the town hall faces several challenges. Office space, general condition, unusable second floor, aging HVAC, and concerns with the historical character. The town hall is in need of additional office space. Offices, meeting rooms, and workspaces overlap and reduce privacy and employee effectiveness. In addition, the spaces need refurbishment. There is funded budget for repairing the town hall floors. There has been a completed study for work required to install a new elevator to allow the second floor to be ADA compliant and usable to town hall employees. Possible next steps include identifying and securing grant funding to build the second floor. Other issues include HVAC modernization which Sarah R is working on with green communities.

## 5. Staffing-

- a. Fire Chief - There are ongoing discussions between Rowe and Charlemont with Val R and Sarah R on the Charlemont side discussing the future of the shared Fire Chief/EMD. There is a proposal on the table that this position will be made 20h a week per town to allow the position to be posted as full time with the goal of making the position viable for individuals both in and out of area.
- b. Animal Inspector - The town currently does not have an appointed Animal Inspector. This has caused a gap in capabilities with regards to inspecting barns and animals and performing rabies quarantines. Today Val R is appointed as the animal inspector for the rabies outbreak found in Fall of 2022. This appointment ends at the end of the remaining quarantine. Activities to recruit a new animal inspector include word of mouth and active solicitation at the transfer station. Next steps include reaching out to local vets offices and animal inspectors in other towns.
- c. Job Descriptions - The job descriptions for town roles vary in quality and there is an ongoing effort on the part of all 3 Selectboard members and the town employees to make job descriptions more accurate and measurable. Next steps include reviewing the gap analysis already documented and comments from town employees to merge current job descriptions with new template with updates.
- d. Performance Reviews - After a completion of job descriptions the Selectboard will be in a position to perform performance reviews of Town Employees to both fill the Selectboard's annual duties and to provide the ability to issue performance-based raises, in addition to Cost-of-Living Adjustments (COLA).

Items being worked on that are important but not urgent:

### 1. VEAC transportation

- a. We need to assign a new selectboard member to the VEAC committee, work was being done to see if there are ways to reduce the VEAC bussing as Charlemont is not in the Tech district.

### 2. Rural school funding

- a. A report was published in Summer of 2022 that lays out the challenges and opportunities that exist in rural education in Massachusetts. Prior selectmen have championed this report and have been active at the local, regional, and state level to secure additional funding for Hawlemont and Mohawk Trail school districts. The report can be found here: <https://malegislature.gov/Commissions/Detail/510/Documents> Possible next steps include a joint letter from the Charlemont Finance Committee and Selectboard to send to state representatives to request additional funding.

3. Bylaw project

- a. It's been identified that the town bylaws are in need of grooming. A project proposal was drafted by Val R and a small handful of volunteers identified but the time to perform this project and establish the committee has not occurred due to conflicting priorities.

4. Town IT

- a. Today the town, led by Sarah R., is in progress of modernizing equipment and IT services to improve day to day operations in the town. Today the town struggles with multiple Internet Service Providers where only one is needed, a phone system that's over 15 years past its end of life, an email system that is often blocked by spam filters which causes issues such as grant applications and correspondence to residence to get lost. This project has been both grant and ATM funded. This is projected to be worked on throughout Q1 2023

5. Recreation infrastructure funds - \$500,000

- a. Several public meetings occurred in Summer of 2022 where the Selectboard discussed with the public and the planning board options for uses of the grant. The top recommendation that the selectboard came to at the time was to use the funds to secure property with the goal to create a town beach or similar in the village center. Since this meeting we have not been able to secure the property. Possible next steps for this include identifying alternate properties in the village center for the town to purchase, identify alternative projects that would support recreation in the Town of Charlemont. **The deadline to spend this grant funding is 12/31/2026.**

Items that are being considered:

1. Town water supply - The town has some final steps to perform to commission and turn over the Southern Municipal Septic System to Berkshire east. There is an opportunity for residents to hook into the system. It's been discussed that the relevant town boards could provide residents with material describing how residents can hook into this system. Next steps are to discuss at a joint meeting with Health/Planning/Selectboard
2. EV Charging and metered parking - The town has identified grant funding and a project manager to install EV Charging on School St and at the fairground, in addition Sarah R has done preliminary research to determine a metered parking system the town could choose to install. The charging stations qualify for the rec grant, and the board has voted to go forward with a no obligation design and quote from the contractor
3. Town Vehicle Capital Plan with a revolving fund

Items that come and go:

1. River items

- a. Portapottys at Shunpike
- b. Zoar picnic area littering and safety
- c. General Public Health and Safety Concerns

2. Master plan update

- b. Our current master plan is outdated and has come up in planning exercises and grant applications. This needs an update which will require some work that we have not had staff or time to tackle.

3. Charlemont Inn

- a. Court case started with a Board of Health Case Spring of 2015, complaint started outside of the Inn and resulting property inspection resulted in its condemnation. Board of Health case went on for a few years with no resolution.
- b. On February 2, 2018 the town filed a tax title case. The case was paused in December of 2019 due to a Bankruptcy filing. In January of 2021 the bankruptcy stay was lifted, and the case resumed. There was a Hearing in May of 2022 after all parties with a financial interest were served. This hearing was continued twice while the parties worked out the amount owed to the town. On October 13, 2022 the amount to redeem was set at \$62,445.60 to the town, \$976.46 in legal fees and \$21,962.00 in attorney fees. These amounts to be paid by May 1, 2023 or the tax title taking can proceed.