

CHARLEMONT SELECTBOARD  
MEETING MINUTES  
Monday, August 19, 2024, 6:30 pm  
Via Conference call and in person, Town Hall Meeting Room

Members in attendance: Kim Blakeslee, Jared Bellows, Valentine Reid

Others in Attendance: Sarah Reynolds, Star Atkeson, Phoebe Walker, Doug Telling, Wendell Rheinheimer, Shana Totino and children, Michael Suter, Pam Schneider and child

**Valentine Reid called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM**

**Appointments:**

6:30 PM -Doug Telling and Phoebe Walker from Franklin Regional Council of Governments RE: Opioid Funds

- Phoebe caught the Board up with the opioid settlement status 60% will come in grant form and 40% directly to cities and towns for harm reduction. The money is now in the correct part of towns' budgets, enabling spending. The Towns that FRCOG serve are pooling the money together, to target a few programs. Otherwise, each town got too little. The criteria for receiving was based on whether a town had their own school, which eliminated towns that are part of a regional district. When the grants come out, they will possibly give extra points to regional school towns.
- Phoebe asked whether Charlemont would be willing to sign on to the 15-town project. The Select board can vote it or assign the BOH to make the decision.
- The three organizations are: Recover Project Request for All-Recovery Meetings in West and North County (Recovery meetings would expand their work); Moms do care— support for one pregnant person for one year; Center for human development, peer recovery coach, Request for Support for people in recovery—a small amount of money to help with obtaining necessities for an individual to move forward.
- There will be no impact on the tax rate. It is all sourced from settlement funds. It is not a long-term commitment.

**Kim Blakeslee motioned to approve Charlemont's participation in the project. Jared Bellows seconded the motion. All in favor**

- Also on the agenda was the Naloxone box containing Narcan, obtained through grant money.
- They brought a draft for a host agreement. Included in the box are fentanyl test strips and a mask for rescue breathing.
- The Board agreed that the harm reduction aspects of having an accessible naloxone box far outweigh arguments against it.

**Valentine Reid made a motion to put a Naloxone box somewhere on Town Hall, outside, exact location to be determined. Jared Bellows seconded the motion. All in favor.**

6:45 PM- Avery Brook Road Residents RE: possible future solar field project on town property.

- Shana Totino, Wendell Rheinheimer, Michael Suter and Pam Schneider joined to speak about the McCloud property, abutting the 225 Avery Brook Rd property, which was zoned as a solar district

as part of a green community designation in 2018. There was an RFP out in 2019 which got a response from one company. The Select Board could be overruled by courts if there were a solar proposal because it is by right.

- Shana and Wendell built their home and are preparing a lot division which Michael Suter was set to buy. He is not willing to move forward with the purchase until he knows that there will not be a solar field next door. They are already \$20,000. invested in the project which required significant outlay for permitting from the Con Comm. The news that the abutting property was zoned for a solar project was a surprise to them. They fear a loss in property value if a solar field was installed. They would feel unethical selling with the knowledge that the field is going in. They ask to be kept in the loop if there is any action towards a solar filed installation.
- Currently there is not adequate power infrastructure to have solar there. Val said it would be a multi-year process if there were interest in the spot, including public hearings with abutter input.
- Wendell said that once the powerlines go in, and there is an official RFP, they would feel compelled to sell. They brought a list of concerns aside from property value loss and also have a proposal:
  - Water contamination and disruption. They have a shallow well and a brook on the property line. They are worried about contamination of well and the water table from extra water created by cutting all the trees. There will be run off into the stream and the road.
  - Devastation to bat habitat and other wildlife.
  - Contamination from herbicide use. They currently farm and garden on their land and use organic techniques. Herbicides would be another contaminate into the stream as well.
  - Noise pollution from inverters which create a constant hum and squealing noise.
  - Potential Light pollution / glare / light reflection
  - Fire hazard from lithium batteries
  - Devastating impact on their next-door neighbor Jonathan Mirin whose wife is EMF sensitive and who have also invested heavily into their property.
  - The noise and disruption in the construction phase
  - They propose to allow an easement on their land, to the west of the property, which pushed the well uphill. Offer that the Town can sell the land with the addition of the easement.
- Val is happy to explore the option. Sarah will look through the files, to see if the water was the only problem.
- Ultimately Wendell and Shana seek a statement in writing that the McCloud property will not be a solar farm.
- The suggestion of the sale of the property would have to be researched (either sell without water, or with easement for well) and then go through town meeting.
- Shana asked that they get notified as soon as possible the moment solar is being discussed again. Val and Jared voiced a commitment to keep them informed.

#### **Administrator reports:**

##### 1) Bissell Bridge update from appointment with Fire Alarm Company.

- The fire alarm company came and it alarm is in service again. The batteries are 12 years old. The batteries are sold by the Alarm company. One section of the bridge has linear heat detection wiring, a section needs to be replaced below the deck, as well on the upper structure. Sarah will get a quote from the electrician, as well as a quote for a device to enable wiring into control.

- 2) Meeting for Fairgrounds reviewing Conway School Proposal August 21 6pm  
The meeting will be held at the fairgrounds on Wednesday August 21<sup>st</sup> at 6 PM.
- 3) EV Charger, Level 3 Charger information from East Coast Renewable Company  
Sarah got a call from a company offering incentives for level 3 chargers including an offer to purchase and give the town level 3 fast chargers. Sarah will see if the electric infrastructure could handle one fast charger and the one level 2 charger. Val suggested accepting the level 3 for a different spot in Charlemont. They will talk next meeting.
- 4) Emergency Equity Data project information from Western Region Homeland Security Advisory Council  
Dennis Annear sent some information about disasters and evacuation strategy. There are 22 electrically dependent residents in this document. Charlemont doesn't have 22 on their list (people who reached out.) It is important to have updated information. They will meet with Dennis to talk about next steps.
- 5) Town Hall Flooring Project update  
Booska and Hilltown Flooring will give a quote. Historical Commission will be on board. Jared said to ask for a price if the wood was donated, as well.

#### **Liaison reports and actions:**

- 1) Agricultural Commission, American Farmland Trust Program Information and farmers markets.

The American Farm Trust/ USDA came and took soil samples. The Agricultural Commission voted in favor of having the soil certified. It puts Charlemont on the Federal register. Farmers could get grants to increase soil productivity.

**Valentine Reid made a motion to also support this. Jared Bellows seconded the motion. All in favor.**

Ag Comm is also working on ideas to collaborate with the school.

- \*\* 2) Open space and Master Plan Work

The open Space Plan needs to be updated and improved in order to apply for grants for projects at the fairgrounds. They spoke with Bob Nelson about having 2 Planning Board members per Plan, for Master Plan and Open Space Plan. And one select person to help. Val will help with the master plan. Jared and Kim will take turns with the open space plan. Public meetings will happen. A certain number of people need to be at the meeting for it to count. They will do digital and hard copy surveys for additional public input. The goal is to get it certified by the State by the end of the year. The first meeting is September 23<sup>rd</sup>.

#### **Agenda items:**

- 1) Discuss and Nominate (temporary) Animal Inspector.  
Jared Bellows will be the temporary animal inspector to deal with a rabies animal inspection.  
**Valentine Reid nominated Jared Bellows as animal inspector for the medical event which occurred during the week of August 12. Kim Blakeslee seconded the motion. All in favor.**
- 2) Town Telephone System  
Val did not do an RFP yet. To be continued.
- 3) Update on road safety measures and Mass DOT plan for flashers on main street crosswalks.  
Mass DOT plans to put flashers at the pedestrian crosswalks.

4) Letter to 180 8A North about class II permit.

The letters were drafted, Sarah wrote one which was a little simpler. He needs to set a number of cars in his permit as other class II holders have. A similar letter was written in January. They will edit the letter and give it to the attorney to look over.

**Valentine Reid motioned to authorize Sarah Reynolds to submit the letter to the attorney and to look at it at the next meeting. Jared Bellows seconded the motion. All in Favor.**

Approve/sign/approve and sign:

1) Payroll and vendor warrants

**Valentine Reid motioned to approve and sign the vendor and payroll warrants. Kim Blakeslee seconded the motion. All in favor.**

2) Minutes from July 29

**Valentine Reid motioned to approve the July 27 Minutes as written. Jared Bellows seconded the motion. All in favor.**

3) 2024 State Primary Warrant

**Valentine Reid motioned to approve and sign the State Primary Warrant. Kim Blakeslee seconded the motion. All in favor.**

4) Thank you cards to Board of Health Member and Patrolman.

**Valentine Reid motioned to sign the cards. Jared Bellows seconded the motion. All in favor.**

5) Gift of tablet for speed sign programming

**Valentine Reid motioned to accept the tablet. Jared Bellows seconded the motion. All in favor.**

Val adjourned the meeting at 8:31.

Documents viewed at the meeting:

- Minutes of July 29, 2024
- Agenda for August 19, 2024
- 2 Draft Letters to Brian Dupree from SelectBoard reiterating January 8 2024 letter with conditions for 2025 license
- Bid for line painting from Franklin County Highway collective
- Opioid settlement funds slides 8/15/2024 prepared by Phoebe Walker, Director of Community Health.
- Email dated July 30, 2024, from Jim McGrath to Sarah Reynolds re: Donation of EV charging stations.
- 2-page Flier from Jim McGrath re: EV charging stations
- WRHSAC Equity Data Project —Western Mass 2023 for Berkshire regional Planning Commission, sent by Dennis Annear, 2-page overview with Charlemont specific Data
- USDA 8/13/2024 memo re: Increasing eligibility for farmland preservation by recognizing Farmland of Local Importance
- American Farmland Trust / USDA memo: ACEP-ALE overview for Entities
- Email dated August 16, 2024, to Select Board from Michael Perreault re: FRTA conflict of Interest form and request for advisory Board member.
- Rural Communities Naloxone Cabinet Initiative user agreement and Update for Select Board meeting 8/19/2024