

**CHARLEMONT SELECTBOARD
MEETING MINUTES
Monday, November 25, 2024, 6:30 pm
in person, Town Hall, 157 Main Street, Charlemont and via phone conference.**

Members in attendance: Jared Bellows, Kim Blakeslee

Members on phone: Valentine Reid

Others in attendance: Sarah Reynolds, Carlene Hayden, Jackie Cashin

Others on Phone: Star Atkeson

Jared Bellows called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM.

Appointments:

6:30 PM – Charlemont Board of Assessors - Annual Tax Rate and Classification Hearing

- Valentine Reid went over requirements for his remote participation at the Assessors Tax rate Hearing. It must be recorded, and he will vote using roll call.
- Carlene Hayden and Jackie Cashin explained to Kim what the Tax rate hearing was all about and how they came to the numbers, they then went over the handout— Town of Charlemont Fiscal Year 2025 Tax Classification options table, 4 pages.
- There was 9 million in growth.
- The assessors want the tax rate to be low. There is an option to do a split tax rate and tax commercial businesses at a higher rate than residential. The Assessors do not recommend a split tax rate. Berkshire East is the only large company; all other commercial businesses are small.
- The assessors recommend the option of levying 3,548,220 as a non-split. It is under the \$780,000 in excess levy capacity.
- Valentine Reid would like to request from the State a more sensible residential abatement rather than the current one that exists, to allow a residential exemption across all residences, regardless of valuation. If not too busy, he will draft something in time for town meeting. It will require discussion.
- The assessors recommend to not split the tax rate with the residential rate in town, and to not use the excess levy capacity as it distorts the cost of government.
- **Valentine Reid motioned to close the Hearing at 6:46. Kim Blakeslee seconded the motion. All in favor, Valentine Reid - Aye.**

Agenda items:

1) Vote on the FY 25 Tax Rate

Val confirmed with Sarah that she had done a reconciliation on the tax rate. (\$18.30)

Carlene suggested adding the disclaimer that the tax rate could change a few cents or so.

Valentine Reid motioned to accept the assessors' recommendations option 1 single tax rate for FY2025 not using the excess levy capacity. Kim Blakeslee seconded the motion, Valentine Reid - Aye; All in favor.

2) Schedule additional pole hearing for Legate Hill National Grid Project

The Legate Hill Pole Hearing is a separate project from the December 9th hearing. Sarah recommends January 6th at 6:00.

3) Request for newsletter article related to the Smithsonian and Mass. Humanities “Museum on Main Street: Voices and Votes “coming to Hawley MA.

April 19-May 31st a travelling exhibit is coming to Hawley. Tinky Weisblat asked to advertise in the newsletter for recipes from Mohawk Trail Students. Usually, the newsletter has been Town and Boards matters so Sarah brought the question to the Board.

The Select Board is fine with including the request in the newsletter as it is educational and non-profit.

4) Ambulance Invoice for new ambulance.

New Stretcher related costs have been added to the invoice. 362,880 up from 350,000. Sarah has talked to Dana. If they cannot use the existing stretcher, they will need to follow up with Fin Comm Meeting. Other ambulance costs have risen, the chassis price increase and the springs have increased. The USDA grant 129,000 will offset the amount, they have 350,000 from Free Cash allocated on Town Meeting Floor.

Jared said that Sarah has the option to use the emergency reserve fund, and then work it out with the grant. They will talk with FinComm on December 16th. Sarah will put the Ambulance and the Town Hall floor on the agenda.

**5) Curb Cut For 225 Avery Brook Road Property.

The curb cut is on the meeting agenda for the 16th. It goes through HWY, Police and Fire. There is no fee on this.

Unforeseen in 24 hours: MVP grant application, Sarah would like to do a joint application with Colrain administrator to share planning and staff. They will do the application by December 4th. Jared Bellows will sign it.

Approve and sign:

1) Payroll and vendor warrants. **Valentine Reid motioned to approve and sign the payroll and vendor warrants. Jared Bellows seconded the motion. All in favor, Valentine Reid - Aye.**

2) Minutes from November 18,2024

Minutes were not ready

3) Paperwork for cybersecurity grant funding share from state.

Valentine Reid motioned to authorize and sign the cybersecurity grant funding share as chair. Kim Blakeslee seconded the motion. Valentine Reid -Aye, All in favor.

Valentine Reid motioned to adjourn at 7:25. Jared Bellows seconded the motion. All in favor.

Valentine Reid – Aye.

Documents viewed at the meeting:

- Agenda for November 25th, 2024

- Vintage bake Sale recipes request from Tinky Weisblat for “Museum on Main Street”
- Change Order Form dated 11/15/2024 from Specialty Vehicle Services to Charlemont Emergency Services Ambulance
- Invoice #11529 From Specialty Vehicles to Charlemont Emergency Services Ambulance dated 11/15/2024
- Town of Charlemont Fiscal Year 2025 Tax Classification options table, 4 pages
- Standard Contract Form and Massachusetts Executive office of Public Safety and Security, Office of Grants and research, Homeland Security Division, Match requirement Details re: FFy23 Municipal Local Cybersecurity Grant Program and signed Match Fund Budget Summary 11/25/2024.