

**CHARLEMONT SELECTBOARD**  
**MEETING MINUTES**  
**Monday, September 23, 2024, 6:30 pm**  
**Via Conference call and in person, Town Hall Meeting Room**

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

Others in attendance: Sarah Reynolds, Star Atkeson

Valentine Reid called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

**Appointments:**

6:30 PM- Bill Coli RE: 180 Route 8A Cars and Site Plan

Bill Coli did not come to the appointment

**Administrator reports:**

1) Bissell Bridge quotes from Fire Alarm Company and Electrician.

The Palmieri quote came in \$1,083 cheaper than the alarm company's quote. The quote to wire the system into control is still being prepared.

**Valentine Reid made a motion to authorize Sarah Reynolds to use the bridge infrastructure account to pay for the wiring work using Palmieri Electric, at a cost of \$5,818. Kim Blakeslee seconded the motion. All in favor.**

2) Town Hall Flooring Project Quotes.

The wood flooring quote hasn't come in yet. Kim will check out the material at Booska in Turner's Falls in the meantime.

3) McCloud Property on Avery Brook Road DEP follow up.

There is a contract between the three towns that prohibits drilling or any use that would further contaminate the water, like animals. It doesn't mention prohibiting water being hauled in.

The Board wants to explore uses for the land that are not residential. Val would like the Town to keep it so that the requirement for water testing is not forgotten. There are 15 acres altogether.

The ideas are: as protected land, composting, selective logging, pasture rotating, Christmas tree farming, community garden.

Jared will look into whether the town can harvest their own land with a Forestry Plan, or sell standing timber. The State does it with their land. They could also harvest for the wood bank.

Val would like Sarah to explore with the Ag commission— a \$1 lease, the town would make money on the revenue of a business.

4) Recreation Economy Grant opportunity.

Sarah provided the board with the information she would fill out the application with. It is due the First week of October. Val suggested to add Master Plan to the *Plans and Programs* section, and *Demographics*, there may be opportunity around median age and housing. **Valentine Reid motioned**

**to authorize Sarah Reynolds to apply for the Recreation Economy Grant Opportunity with our written verbal comments. Kim Blakeslee seconded the motion. All in favor.**

5) East Coast Renewable Energy EV Charger program.

Val wonders if the Town is in good position to own EV chargers, it comes with costs and responsibilities. He'd like to see the terms and conditions. Val will take the meeting with the company. If they go with this company for a charger, they can save the \$25-30,000. infrastructure money they had planned to use for EV chargers at the school and use it for something else. If the company owns it, the town gets %50 of the profit, and company maintains them, if Town owns it, gets 100% of profits, but do maintenance. Kim suggested adding signage to make it easily accessible to people passing through. Town Hall and the transfer station are EV charger location options.

On the topic of Town Hall, buying the parking lot has been put on hold until the accompanying building is sold. Sarah has been in touch and the buyer who seems willing to sell the parking lot.

6) Colonial Insurance Program for accidents and illness.

Sarah is going to meet with Colonial and Aflac. Currently there is no accident or disability insurance. When town employees pay into retirement they don't get social security disability. If an employee gets hurt, there is currently no coverage. She will get the Board the Aflac and Colonial information ahead of the October 7<sup>th</sup> meeting.

Liaison reports and actions:

1) Transfer station Bottle and Can Shed, reach out to Shelburne Selectboard.

The Shelburne Administrator said Shelburne Select Board are in favor of the proposal to allow any school program to benefit from returning the cans in the bottle and can shed, she will know for sure and get the sign off by the middle of the week.

2) Meeting with Heath for National Grid Pole Project.

The meeting with Heath re: the pole project will be on October 8<sup>th</sup> at 6 PM. Sarah will reach out to Bob Handsaker to invite Broadband to the meeting. Heath is in a similar situation with Broadband and may have financial concerns regarding attaching to new poles.

3) Council on Aging Check in

Kim Blakeslee has checked in with Lyda and will go to the council on aging meeting on October 2<sup>nd</sup> at 10:15 AM. Sarah would appreciate getting information on who she should work with on the budgeting, as well as who is in charge of posting the minutes and agendas. Val would like to know when and where the meetings are on Main Street, as he sometimes gets that question from residents.

Agenda items:

1) Discuss and Nominate Animal Inspector.

Rob Lingle is interested in the position. The stipend is \$1,173 per year. There is a \$400. / year expense line. Mass DAR is in charge and does trainings, as well as providing the animal inspector book and paperwork.

**Valentine Reid motioned to Appoint Rob Lingle to be animal inspector contingent on the receipt of the email that he was asked to send. Jared Bellows seconded the motion. All in favor.**

The email was received later in the meeting and read aloud by Val. The Board remarked that Rob's qualifications were impressive.

2) Town Telephone System

Northeast IT are the only company that answered their calls. Val will look this week at the details ahead on the call with the company.

3) Ambulance Agreement with Berkshire East.

The Attorney found the agreement, as it was written, opened the Town up to liability and recommended that the Berkshire East Employees who will work on the Ambulance join the Ambulance Department through the Town so they will be covered by the Town's insurance. If they run a call, they will be paid as the Town Ambulance employees. There are some training requirements.

4) Request for Proposals for Fairgrounds Bathrooms, Parking and Exhibit Hall upgrades.

Mike Hayden, the Park and Rec Chair, shared input on the RFPs. He suggested they use the term TRG, rather than trap rock, and added the driveway behind the grandstand. The detailed Conway School map of the parking lot will be included with that RFP. Mike specified raising the footings to 2 ft off the ground on the stand-alone bathroom to avoid damp problems. He recommended the contractors address the various gaps in each layer of the wall and ceiling assemblies, individually, for the weatherization portion of the RFP on the exhibit hall. Mike suggested the payments be in increments. There will be an onsite meeting with contractors who answer the RFP.

Jared is impressed with the State Park bathrooms and suggests they do a similar RFP and get those types of bathrooms. Private stalls are nice, but they also know there will be large numbers of people that need to use the bathroom in a timely manner. Kim would like to be welcoming to non-binary folks and either have gender neutral bathrooms or a gender-neutral option such as a family bathroom.

Val wants to give the Fair Grounds Committee and The Fairgrounds working group 2 weeks for final comment. They okay the Parking lot and exhibit halls RFP to be put out to bid, and to hold off on the bathrooms for further comment.

They talked about which project should be done first. Sarah suggested the bathrooms in the exhibit hall as they would be helpful for events. As well, to start on the exhibit hall would be good timing because it is indoors and would be able to be worked on over the winter. They assume the project they will be able to afford is the parking lot. Val would like cars to stop driving around the track and thinks if the parking lot is worked on they could fence off the track.

5) Sidewalks

Jared walked the sidewalks as well and saw the same problem areas as Val. He is in favor of delegating to the HWY boss to use discretion with communication with the residents, giving the residents two weeks' time to clear vegetation and snow themselves, before coming in and clearing it. **Valentine Reid motioned to adopt the sidewalk clearing policy. Jared Bellows seconded the motion. All in favor.**

- 6) Northern Tier Rail comment period - letter of support.  
Sarah asked whether it was okay to sign on to the group letter that was offered by Natalie Blais' office. In support of the Northern Tier Rail project.  
**Valentine Reid motioned to sign on to the letter as written. Kim Blakeslee seconded the motion. All in favor.**
- 7) Deerfield River Wild and Scenic Study Committee, Appoint a representative.  
Sarah thought Ashley Sparks would be a good candidate as she takes the initiative to clear trash from the river— or to ask Ashley if she knows anyone. They consider giving it to a Hawlemont teacher or a Hawlemont class as a project. Sarah will reach out to Ashley.
- 8) Schaefer Beautification Grant Request for 29 Main Street.  
29 Main Street has put in for the \$2,000. reimbursement amount for the cost of supplies for painting a house on Main Street. **Valentine Reid motioned to approve contingent upon the availability of funds. Jared Bellows seconded the motion. All in favor.**
- 9) Highway Laborer for Fall and Winter.  
Highway needs to hire someone for fall, winter and the foreseeable future. Seasonal hire Brandon is doing a great job. Scott would like to hire Brandon.  
**Jared Bellows motioned to hire Brandon full time contingent on a CORI check and his acceptance of the job. Kim Blakeslee seconded the motion. All in favor.**  
Val will draft a CORI check policy for all new and current employees to be discussed at a future meeting. They will see what other towns have and discuss what would constitute a disqualifier.
- \* 10) Franklin Regional Council of Governments request for support of HUD Housing Grant  
**Valentine Reid motioned to sign on to HUD grant and support the letter from FRCOG as read. Kim Blakeslee 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. Jared Bellows seconded the motion. All in favor.**
- 2) Minutes from September 3, and September 9,2024.  
**Valentine Reid motioned to approve and sign the Minutes from September 3, and September 9,2024. Kim Blakeslee seconded the motion. All in favor.**
- 3) Grant paperwork for Master Plan Upgrade and Budget Program from the Community Compact Grant Program.  
**Valentine Reid motioned to approve the Grant paperwork for Master Plan Upgrade and Budget Program from the Community Compact Grant Program. Jared Bellows seconded the motion. All in favor.**

2) Donation of Security Camera.

Val donated a camera to track the gas use on the Town pump. They would appreciate another for the fire station.

**Jared Bellows motioned to accept Val's gift. Kim Blakeslee seconded the motion. All in favor.**

Not foreseen previous 48 hours: A tree company would like to park their truck at Avery Brook Rd and Rte 2, where the gravel mounds are. Scott, the HWY boss, is fine with it. Val said that if it is behind the tree line it is fine. **Valentine Reid motioned to allow the vehicle to park behind the tree line at their own risk, the town will take no assumption of liability. Jared Bellows seconded the motion. All in favor.**

The next regular (short) meeting will be on October 7<sup>th</sup> at Hawlemont, ahead of the School Sustainability Study Meeting.

Documents viewed at the meetings:

- Minutes of September 3 and 9<sup>th</sup>, 2024
- Agenda for September 23, 2024
- Packet of 3 email correspondences from Kathy Reynolds, Kristie Faufaw and the SelectBoard dated 10/20/2021 re: exterior beautification at 29 Main street, Berkshire East Gift Criteria and procedure list, and account balance in the fund.
- Email from Rob Lingle to SelectBoard dated Sept 23, 2024 re: Animal Inspector Position
- Sidewalk Clearing Policy effective 9/23/24
- Picture of sample vegetation that would be cleared with sidewalk policy
- "We Support Route 2 Rail" letter for Maura Healy and Lieutenant Governor Kim Driscoll, along with Mass DOT official
- Second draft RFPs Stand alone Handicap Accessible Bathrooms; Parking Lot and Driveway Improvements; Weatherization, Window Installation, Electrical Upgrades, and Bathroom Renovation for the Exhibit Hall.
- Draft answers for Recreation Economy for Rural Communities Application Questions
- Letter dated March 8, 2024 from Civil and Environmental Consultants, Inc to Town of Heth, Town of Charlemont, and Town of Hawley re: Change order PFAS Sampling – MassDEP's Jan 25, 2024 "Updated Requirement" Post Closure Monitoring TriTown Landfill DSWM File # 6-130-001 CEC Proposal 172-022
- Quote dated Sept. 23, 2024 from Palmeri Electric for Bissell Bridge
- Copy of recent SelectBoard letter to Brian Dupree