

CHARLOTTE SELECTBOARD MEETING
January 23, 2025
Charlotte Town Hall and via teleconference

SELECTBOARD MEMBERS: James Faulkner, Chair; Frank Tenney, Vice Chair; Lewis Mudge; Kelly Devine; Natalie Kanner

ADMINISTRATION: Nathaniel Bareham

OTHERS: Robert Caldwell, John Snow, Jamie Valyou, Ed Sulva, Carrie Spear, Charles Russell, Richard Hendrickson, Maura Wygman, Mary Mead

AGENDA ITEMS

6:30 PM Adjustments to the Agenda

6:31 PM Approval of Warrants to Pay Bills

1 6:35 PM Review & Finalization of the Town's FY26 Proposed Budget, to include:

a. CVFRS Appropriation

b. Trails Committee Article

c. Donation Requests

2 7:30 PM Review of the 2026 Draft Town Meeting Warning and Articles

8:00 PM Adjournment

James Faulkner Called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm.

Adjustments to the Agenda

None.

Approval of Warrants to Pay Bills

Review & Finalization of the Town's FY26 Proposed Budget, to include:

CVFRS Appropriation

Mary Mead gave a summary of previous discussions. Last year the budget was less, James Faulkner said. A \$100,000 increase has been requested. If the Selectboard does try to reduce the proposed budget, it will go to a floor vote at Town Meeting, Kelly Devine said. She called for discussion on regionalization and opportunities for collaboration and to collectively reduce costs. There was a \$15,000 request from capital reserve by John Snow for the equipment they need. This was money that CVFRS took out of the operating budget and put into capital reserve last year upon request by the Selectboard, he said. This budget has been voted on separately in the past, Frank Tenney said. This works by Australian Ballot, but not on the Town Meeting floor, Kelly said. No official action taken.

Trails Committee Article

How Articles were handled in the past for the Trails Committee was discussed. Mary presented a historical record of funding numbers in these Articles. The current Ferry Road section was discussed. Junior Lewis will be contacted for an estimate, James said. Further discussion is needed. Natalie Kanner asked why the Town isn't responsible for the costs of grooming the trails rather than the committee. Lewis Mudge said the committee has the volunteer hours that far surpass doing it through the Town. The Town saves money on trail grooming by having the committee handle this, he said. Charlie Russell spoke about how the reserve fund has been utilized in the past for the recreation and trails committees. Separate maintenance funds for the trails should be added to the budget, Lewis Mudge said. This should be taken from the reserve fund, Frank said.

Donation Requests

The vetting process for the Town's donations was reviewed. Recipients, the services provided, and the benefits to the town were discussed. A straw pole was taken. Lewis Creek Association, UVM Health Network, Agewell, Steps to End Domestic Violence, and Charlotte Food Shelf were approved. Association for the Blind, Vermont Rural Fire Protection, and Vermont Family Network were taken off the list.

Review of the 2026 Draft Town Meeting Warning and Articles

**DRAFT WARNING
TOWN OF CHARLOTTE
ANNUAL TOWN MEETING
2025**

The legal voters of the Town of Charlotte are hereby notified and warned to meet in-person at the Charlotte Central School Multi-Purpose Room, located at 408 Hinesburg Road in said Town, on Saturday, March 1, 2025 at nine o'clock in the forenoon (9:00 A.M.) to act upon the articles set forth below not involving voting by Australian ballot (Articles 9, 10), and to meet at the Charlotte Town Hall, located at 159 Ferry Road in said Town, on the Tuesday, March 4, 2025 to vote by Australian ballot to begin at seven o'clock in the forenoon (7:00 A.M.) and to close at seven o'clock in the afternoon (7:00 P.M.). The legal voters of the Town of Charlotte are further notified and warned that a **public informational hearing to explain and discuss the Australian ballot articles set forth below (Articles 6-9) will be held on Monday, February 24, 2025**, at the Charlotte Town Hall, located at 159 Ferry Road in the Town, beginning at six o'clock in the afternoon (6:00 P.M.). The public may attend the informational hearing in person or on Zoom at the following information:

- **Meeting Link: <https://shorturl.at/GerwD>**
- **Meeting ID: 879 7042 9352**
- **Meeting Passcode: 123456**

ARTICLES TO BE VOTED FROM THE FLOOR

Article 1: To hear the reports of the Town officers and to act upon the same.

Article 2: Shall the voters authorize the payment of property taxes, with the payment due on or before Friday, November 14, 2025, and to have payments made to the Town Treasurer, as provided in 32 VSA § 4773(b)?

Article 3: Shall the voters approve total fund expenditures, as set forth in the Selectboard's budget, of \$ _____ for the fiscal year July 1, 2025 to June 30, 2026, of which an anticipated sum of \$ _____ will be raised by taxes and an anticipated sum of \$ _____ will be raised by non-tax revenues.

Article 4: Shall the voters approve raising a sum of \$62,000 by property taxes, in addition to those monies raised pursuant to Article 3, to be allocated to the Trails Reserve Fund, for the purpose of constructing a new section of the Town Link Trail on Ferry Road?

Article 5: Shall the voters approve raising a sum of \$40,000 by property taxes, in addition to those monies raised pursuant to Article 3, to be allocated to the Recreation Capital Fund, for the purpose of constructing a new bathhouse at the Charlotte Beach?

Article 6: Shall the Town of Charlotte vote on all budget articles by Australian Ballot, as provided in 17 V.S.A. § 2680(c).

Article 7: Shall the Town of Charlotte vote on all public questions by Australian Ballot, as provided in 17 V.S.A. § 2680(d).

Article 8: To transact any other business proper to come before said meeting.

ARTICLES TO BE VOTED BY AUSTRALIAN BALLOT

Article 9: To elect Town Officials.

Article 10: Shall the voters authorize the Town to submit to the General Assembly of the State of Vermont a proposal to adopt a municipal charter which contains the following sections:

Section 1: Corporate Existence

Section 2: General Provisions

Section 3: Routine Adoption of Land Use Bylaws

Section 4: Separability

Section 5: Amendment

Discussion:

The 2026 draft town meeting, warning, and articles were reviewed. Total expenditures for the year were estimated at \$4,259,470, representing a 0.38% increase over the previous year's operating budget. The balance rate of taxes was projected to be negative 0.26, with anticipated revenues of \$1,734,637, a 1.45% increase over the previous year.

The Selectboard discussed setting a public hearing date for Australian ballot arguments, with the inclusion of budget numbers in the warning. Frank said Article 4 funds should be used for the Town Link Trail, rather than specifying Ferry Road. No decision was made.

Funding for a new bathhouse at Charlotte Beach was discussed. A \$40,000 allocation for a scoping study and minor repairs to the existing bathhouse, with the intention of building a new one in the future was agreed upon. Raising more funds in the coming years to apply for a matching grant was mentioned. Kelly Devine said townspeople deserve a better bathhouse and suggested \$75,000 to get the job done. Maura Wygman said as soon as 50% of the money is in the bank, they can apply for the grant. James said staying with \$40,000 for now is prudent. Maura said \$40,000 is enough to get it started. The importance of informing the public about the project was emphasized. Chris Boffa said this is only the start of a bigger project and that should be conveyed to the public.

Removing Town Meeting Day and replacing it with a vote on the budget articles by Australian ballot was discussed. Lewis expressed opposition. Mary suggested this change would allow more people to participate in the voting process. John Snow agreed with Mary and said there is superior voter turnout with Australian ballot. This is an important question for the Town. James agreed. Kelly said positions in the town on this issue are very divided. This would need to be voted on by the voters.

Proposed Article 10 is a small Town Charter change. Kelly said the change conflicts with a recent State law that is unlikely to pass in Montpelier. Lewis agreed and said he did not support the article. For clarification, March 1st is Town Meeting, Australian Ballot voting is on March 4th Kelly said.

Adjournment

MOTION by Kelly Devine, seconded by Natalie Kanner, to adjourn at 9 pm. VOTE: 5 ayes, 0 nays; Motion Carried.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Lynn Monty, Minute Taker.