

CHARLOTTE SELECTBOARD MEETING
Monday, June 23, 2025
Charlotte Town Hall 159 Ferry Road and via teleconference

SELECTBOARD MEMBERS: *In person:* Lee Krohn, Chair; Frank Tenney, Vice Chair; Lewis Mudge; Natalie Kanner; J.D. Herlihy

ADMINISTRATION: Rebecca Kaplan, Planning & Zoning Assistant

OTHERS:

In person: Wolfger Schnieder, Jim Foster, Claudia Mucklow, Jim Hodson, Deirdre Holmes, Sharon Mount, Mike Yantachka, Peter Demick, Charles Russell, Brett Yates

Remote: Alexa Lewis, Tim Post, Rebecca Foster, Jacob Williams, Brett Yates, Barbara Russ, Dean Williams,

AGENDA ITEMS:

- 7:00 PM Approval of Consent Agenda
 - a. Meeting Minutes for June 9th, 2025
- 7:05 PM Adjustments to the Agenda
- 7:10 PM Public Comment for items not on the Agenda
- 7:15 PM Selectboard & Town Administrator's Updates
- 7:20 PM Discussion of request for proposals with the Charlotte Energy and Climate Action Committee
- 7:35 PM Discussion of wildlife mapping quotes with the Charlotte Conservation Commission
- 7:55 PM Establishing employee salaries for FY25
- 8:00 PM Charlotte Board of Sewage Disposal Commissioners:
 - a. Discussion of Annual Sewer Use Rates – Quarterly Administrative & Infrastructure Fee
- 8:20 PM Discussion of Collective Bargaining – Executive session likely per 1 V.S.A. § 313(a)(1)(B)
- 8:30 PM Discussion of Personnel – Executive session likely per 1 V.S.A. § 313(a)(3)
- 8:40 PM Discussion of Town Contracts – Executive session likely per 1 V.S.A. § 313(a)(1)(A)
- 8:50 PM Signing of Warrants
- 9:00 PM Adjournment

Call to Order

Lee Krohn called the meeting to order at 7:27 p.m.

Approval of Consent Agenda: a. Meeting Minutes for June 9th, 2025

MOTION by Lewis Mudge, seconded by Natalie Kanner, to approve the meeting minutes of June 9, 2025, as amended. VOTE: 5 ayes, 0 nays; Motion Carried.

Adjustments to the Agenda

None

Public Comment for items not on the Agenda

Wolfger Schnieder stated that he's speaking for his HOA this evening. He lives at 18 Common Way with Champlain Valley Cohousing and there have been problems with Thorp Brook overrunning the road creating tens of thousands of dollars of expense. All of their utilities go across the main culvert and if that ever gets destroyed it will result in a huge expense. He went on to state that he would like to know if there is anyone in charge of storm water management in the town?

Lee Krohn stated that he isn't aware of anyone in such a role for the town.

Natalie Kanner stated that there is a new storm water permitting process in the last two years.

This Vermont state guideline states that a stormwater assessment must be done by an engineering company and if the stormwater running through the HOA is on the HOA land than the HOA would need to put in the appropriate drainage.

Discussion was had regarding who would be responsible.

All concurred that this topic needs further clarification and will be looked into further and discussed in the near future.

Jim Foster stated that he is a Thompson's Point camp owner that is at tonight's meeting to speak in support of Steven Jake Waynes in the operation of the Thompson's Point Sewar Plant. They have provided 31 years of faithful professional service to the town and the lease holders. It would be a shame if one particular incident with one particular camp owner upset this long standing positive relationship. There are 117 camps on Thompson's Point that really like SJW's operation of the sewer plant.

Claudia Mucklow stated that she is speaking on behalf of the Conservation Commission this evening. The problem is that over the last year and a half the Conservation Commission has lost over half of it's long time members without being able to replace them. The commission is made up of 9 members and needs 5 members to make a quorum. The last meeting the commission voted to request from the Selectboard a reduction of members to 7. The last appointment to the commission brings the Conservation Commission membership to 7. Staying at this number would help the commission to run more smoothly.

Selectboard & Town Administrator's Updates

Natalie Kanner stated that there is a suggestion within town hall of town hall staff, members of the senior center and the library to have a regular staff meetings, the frequency is still to be decided on. She went on to state that she suggested that a member of the Selectboard could attend these meetings at least for the initial stage of it to assist with the actual occurrence of the meetings. This role of the Selectboard could be a shared rotational role. Natalie Kanner stated that the timing of the meeting would be during the workday and that that may limit which

Selectboard members can actually attend but the option was put out there with the intent to allow all Selectboard members the chance to participate if they desire.

Discussion was had regarding the fact that the meetings have already been occurring weekly for 3-4 weeks now, the attendance of a Selectboard member would change the dynamic and pros and cons of a Selectboard member attending were discussed. At the next meeting this this topic will be discussed further.

Discussion of request for proposals with the Charlotte Energy and Climate Action Committee

Jim Hodson stated that he is representing the Charlotte Energy and Climate Action Committee. There are 12 proposals total. He reviewed the Modernization Project's RFQs Combined pdf document included in tonight's meeting packet. The proposals are separated out by property, power source options and HVAC options. There are research and screen suppliers in the area. He went on to state that CECAC has reached out to CVFRS and it's their hopes to have a contact working group with them. CECAC has launched a website specific for this project so that anyone that wants more information on these proposals can go to charlotteenergy.org/modernization. On this site there is a built in Q&A which is a database loaded with all the project documents. You can ask it a question and it provides an informative answer. Jim Hodson stated that CECAC is also starting a communications campaign that includes live sessions scheduled for this coming week, June 27th and July 1st during the day and in the evening. The committee has back up detail including flyers that will be seen around town. There are also a few articles that will be in the news hopefully in the next month or two. The members of CECAC are going to attend some other town committee meetings to share the word with them. He went on to state that once the proposal responses are gathered from the different vendors the plan is to rerun the financial analysis to provide more detail. He went on to state that it's important to remind all that these incentives are going away in the congressional bill. It's in the Senate hands now. There are four senators on the Republican side that have some issue with it. So far the earliest is 60 days from bill signing to 180 days and then those incentives are gone. That effects about 30% of the upfront costs of this project. Specific questions about the bills can be asked on the website. Jim Hodson stated that if the town doesn't get the project in the ground with those incentives by December of 2025 it would cost the town roughly, an additional \$100,000 up front and 15% on the electrical generation on the backside of the project. Most importantly it would shift the project from being a taxpayer neutral to taxpayer negative for the term of the loan and then the town would get benefits in year 10 to 25.

Jim Hodson stated that CECAC reached out to CVFRS and they said that they would bring the topic up at their meeting on the 18th and said they would try to establish a contact group to work with CECAC but he has not heard back yet.

Jim Hodson stated that the bids will give the town a clear picture of expense comparison for ground solar and roof solar for these sites. The idea isn't to do both.

Discussion was had on practicality of the timeline being December of 2025 and how the bids should be received in order to provide more clarity for the bidders and the Selectboard.

Grouping them by site instead of 12 independent different projects.

Jim Hodson stated that CECAC will collate and summarize all the bids and present them to the Selectboard in order to help the board with comparing and contrasting.

Jim Hodson stated that in regard to the HVAC equipment the financial risk depends on what equipment is being replaced and how much life it has left to it.

Discussion was had regarding the CPG deadline and equipment incentive deadline.

Jim Hodson stated that once the bids are in the project/s can be organized in whatever way that makes the best sense.

Mary Mead stated she would like to know if there is going to be a townwide vote regarding this project and where the money is to come from.

Frank Tenney stated that this isn't in the current budget and therefore if this gets moved forward a townwide bond vote would need to take place.

Lewis Mudge stated that the Selectboard plans to have a townwide vote if this moves forward after the bids come in and Natalie Kanner concurred.

Mary Mead stated that when the town did the town garage solar panels there was to be either an \$80,000 or \$90,000 dollar incentive and that never came to be.

Jim Hodson stated the Green Loan is one of the financing mechanisms that we're looking at and if we did that there's a mechanism of incentive called direct pay which gives 30% back. So, the town would take a loan for that entire amount but with that incentive combined with what the town would have been paying in electric bills pays off the loan. Under this scenario there is no taxpayer impact if we can get that incentive within the same fiscal year. The town vote in this situation is whether or not we're allowed to put a lien on the town. Again, there wouldn't be any additional taxes on the tax payer. He went on to state that in the second scenario if the town doesn't get the incentives there would be expense since the town would have to be paying that loan back. It would be offset with the savings but there would be a slight negative to the taxpayer until the loan was paid off in the 10th year.

Lee Krohn stated that there is no harm in letting the RFPs to go out since it doesn't bind the town to do anything but it would allow for the process to move forward.

All of the Selectboard concurred.

Frank Tenney stated that he hasn't seen all the bids so he won't be able to vote on this.

MOTION by Lee Krohn, seconded by J.D. Herlihy, to authorize the Charlotte Energy and Climate Action Committee to move forward issuing the RFPs with the understanding that it doesn't bind the town of Charlotte to anything. VOTE: 4 ayes, 0 nays, 1 abstention (Tenney); Motion Carried.

Discussion of wildlife mapping quotes with the Charlotte Conservation Commission

Claudia Mucklow stated that the Charlotte Conservation Commission is in need of funding to complete the wildlife mapping that is required as part of the new Charlotte Town Plan that is due next year. This was initially looked into two years ago when they found out that a specialized biologist is required to complete this type of work. There was discussion with the former Town Planner regarding helping to get the Charlotte Conservation Commission the Municipal Planning Grant of which he did apply for two years in a row and was denied. She went on to state that last year during the budget session the Charlotte Conservation Commission requested \$12,500 for the first phase of this mapping but the commission was denied and was advised by the Selectboard to apply for a grant. Earlier this spring the TA told the commission that he applied for the Municipal Planning Grant but again this application was denied. The commission put out a couple of RFPs in February which came back at the end of May. These were shared with the Selectboard. This was done to give the commission a better idea of what the total expense would be for this project. This project will likely take up to 18 months to two years to complete.

Claudia Mucklow stated that the Conservation Commission has no money in the budget since

they were denied. The commission's plan is to discuss a possible fundraising campaign and they wonder if the town is willing to add something to whatever is raised to help to get to an amount of \$10,000 since that is what is needed to complete the first phase. The maps that were updated by CCRPC weren't adequate to satisfy the town plan requirements because they're too broad. She went on to state that the two vendors that can do this work are Arrowwood Environmental and Native Geographic. Native Geographic did the town of Charlotte's maps in 2008 and the town had grant funds to do this at that time. The third phase that was to be accomplished in 2009 was cancelled. The maps were not entirely completed and now they are outdated. This mapping is done once every twenty years, a requirement for every town. If the commission waits until budget season they won't be able to begin the work on the maps until next year. She went on to state that she would definitely like and expect money put into the next budget for this. In the interim the hopes are to generate enough money to begin the first phase of the mapping which is \$10,000 and \$25,000-\$30,000 is the rough total estimate needed for the entire project. The Conservation Commission has less than \$1,500 in their specialized budget and that is the extent of their available funds.

Claudia Mucklow stated that these maps are important for the town plan and for land use because they provide the information that is needed when planning development of the town. It must be known where the wet lands are, where the forests are, where important types of plants are growing that need preservation.

J.D. Herlihy concurred and stated that the maps are included as part of the town plan and they can be used in land use review. Having the town's maps done by the town gives it clarity and detail. It could also provide information such as how the land use has impacted the ecology, areas of high public value over time.

Discussion was had regarding ways to provide monies to the Conservation Commission for this project now. There was a difference of opinion regarding funds that haven't been used on other budgeted line items whether those funds, if any, could be designated to the mapping project or if the funds need to go back into the town's general fund.

Peter Demick stated that the Conservation Commission has been short funded for years and he offered to donate \$5,000 to this project if the town would match the \$5,000.

Discussion was had regarding the need for having the budget in front of all the Selectboard members in order to make any decisions. All were grateful for Peter Demick's very generous offer. The plan is to discuss this further at the Selectboard Special Meeting next week.

Establishing employee salaries for FY25

Lee Krohn stated that this increase is consistent with everything seen for other municipalities and other public and private entities in the Chittenden county region.

MOTION by Lewis Mudge, seconded by Natalie Kanner, to approve a 3% cost of living adjustment for town employees beginning July 1, 2025, as presented in the town's approved budget. VOTE: 5 ayes, 0 nays; Motion Carried.

Charlotte Board of Sewage Disposal Commissioners: a. Discussion of Annual Sewer Use Rates – Quarterly Administrative & Infrastructure Fee

MOTION by J.D. Herlihy, seconded by Frank Tenney, to recess as the Charlotte Selectboard and convene as the Charlotte Board of Sewage Disposal Commission. VOTE: 5 ayes, 0 nays; Motion Carried.

Lee Krohn stated that the essence of the decision needed to be made is whether to charge the town a portion of the fees needed for the shared septic system or to allocate these fees to the external users who benefit from it and are driving those costs further.

Natalie Kanner stated that not including the municipal buildings in these fees is pushing additional tax burden onto the people that are hooking onto the system by taking the municipalities financial burden of the water usage and redistributing it out but only to those that are hooked onto the system.

Lewis Mudge stated that the system was created and intended for use by the municipal buildings and having those that request to be connected to this system pay for the fees seems fair.

J.D. Herlihy stated that the brunt of the bill is the annual inspection fee, which is \$4,500 of the \$5,000 dollar total. Therefore, it's appropriate to simply count the town as a participant of the system's resources.

Frank Tenney stated that there is the initial hook up fee and the usage fee which is based on what the connection is permitted for per quarter. It would be appropriate to take the administrative fee and build it into the quarterly usage fee. There has to be an amount for a sinking fund as well. He went on to say that figuring out what's fair for dividing the inspection fee is challenging since the connections are different for each user.

Lee Krohn stated that it's clear that one perspective is that this should be equally split between all the users including the town and the other perspective is without granting the use of this system these users couldn't exist and therefore they can absorb this minor fee in order to do something they wouldn't otherwise physically be able to do.

Natalie Kanner stated this may be small but it's one way as a board that it can be expressed that this development is welcome.

Lewis Mudge stated that with deciding that the municipalities are billed the same as all other connections to the system shows that there is no hierarchy in regard to the billing which may set a precedent. It's a right to be hooked up to this septic system but not an assumed privilege.

MOTION by Natalie Kanner, seconded by J.D. Herlihy, to include the town's municipal buildings in the calculation of the quarterly administrative and infrastructure fees to cover pro rata share of overall costs, including annual septic inspections audit billing and the like. VOTE: 2 ayes, 3 nays; Motion Carried.

Lee Krohn stated that the motion failed which means the opposite of the motion is approved.

MOTION by J.D. Herlihy, seconded by Lee Krohn, to adjourn as the Charlotte Board of Sewage Disposal Commissioners and reconvene as the Charlotte Selectboard. VOTE: 5 ayes, 0 nays; Motion Carried.

Discussion of Collective Bargaining – Executive session likely per 1 V.S.A. § 313(a)(1)(B)

MOTION by Natalie Kanner, seconded by Lewis Mudge, to find that premature general public knowledge of these collective bargaining negotiations would clearly place the public body at a substantial disadvantage. VOTE: 5 ayes, 0 nays; Motion Carried.

MOTION by Natalie Kanner, seconded by Lewis Mudge, to enter into executive session for the discussion of collective bargaining negotiations per 1 V.S.A. § 313(a)(1)(B). I further invite Nathaniel Bareham, Town Administrator if he's available into this session. VOTE: 5 ayes, 0 nays; Motion Carried.

MOTION by Frank Tenney, seconded by Natalie Kanner, to exit out of executive session. VOTE: 5 ayes, 0 nays; Motion Carried.

Lee Krohn stated that no Action taken.

Discussion of Personnel – Executive session likely per 1 V.S.A. § 313(a)(3)

MOTION by J.D. Herlihy, seconded by Natalie Kanner, to enter into executive session to discuss the possible appointment of a Town Planner, and a Zoning Administrator, per 1 V.S.A. § 313(a)(3). I further invite Nathaniel Bareham, Town Administrator if he's available into this session. VOTE: 5 ayes, 0 nays; Motion Carried.

MOTION by J.D. Herlihy, seconded by Natalie Kanner, to exit out of executive session. VOTE: 5 ayes, 0 nays; Motion Carried.

Lee Krohn stated that there are town actions to be taken.

MOTION by J.D. Herlihy, seconded by Natalie Kanner, to approve a conditional offer of employment to Lindsey Kahn for the Town Planner position with an effective starting date as soon as possible after July 1, 2025, with a starting wage to be negotiated by Nathaniel Bareham, Town Administrator within the posted wage range. VOTE: 5 ayes, 0 nays; Motion Carried.

MOTION by Lee Krohn, seconded by Natalie Kanner, to accept the resignation of the Town Recreation Director effective July 3, 2025. VOTE: 5 ayes, 0 nays; Motion Carried.

Discussion of Town Contracts – Executive session likely per 1 V.S.A. § 313(a)(1)(A)

MOTION by Natalie Kanner, seconded by Lee Krohn, to find that premature general public knowledge of these discussions of an existing Town contract would clearly place the public body at a substantial disadvantage. VOTE: 5 ayes, 0 nays; Motion Carried.

MOTION by Natalie Kanner, seconded by Lee Krohn, to enter into executive session for the discussion of a Town contract per 1 V.S.A. § 313(a)(1)(A). I further invite Nathaniel Bareham, Town Administrator if he is available into this session. VOTE: 5 ayes, 0 nays; Motion Carried.

MOTION by Frank Tenney, seconded by Natalie Kanner, to exit out of executive session. VOTE: 5 ayes, 0 nays; Motion Carried.

Lee Krohn stated that there are two action to be taken.

MOTION by Lee Krohn, seconded by J.D. Herlihy, to terminate the town's contract with SJW docks which relates to maintenance and operation of the wastewater system at Thompson's Point and the town's attorney is working in a letter of cancellation pursuant to the town's contract with them and they will handle it from there. VOTE: 5 ayes, 0 nays; Motion Carried.

MOTION by Lee Krohn, seconded by Natalie Kanner, that the Selectboard approve the current draft operating agreement for Thompson's Point's maintenance and operations with Simon Operating Systems and with any final negotiated items to be worked out with the town administrator and the town attorney. VOTE: 5 ayes, 0 nays; Motion Carried.

Signing of Warrants

Warrants were signed.

Adjournment

MOTION by Natalie Kanner, seconded by Lee Krohn, to adjourn. VOTE: 5 ayes, 0 nays; Motion Carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:26 p.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Brooke Milo, Minute Taker.
Edits by Nathaniel Bareham.