

1 **CHARLOTTE SELECTBOARD MEETING**  
2 **Monday, January 22, 2024**  
3 **Charlotte Town Hall 159 Ferry Road and via teleconference**  
4 **DRAFT**

5 *Draft minutes are subject to correction by the Charlotte Selectboard.*  
6

7 **SELECTBOARD MEMBERS:** *In person:* James Faulkner, Chair; Frank Tenney, Vice Chair;  
8 Kelly Devine; Lewis Mudge, (remote); Louise McCarren  
9

10 **ADMINISTRATION:** Nathaniel Bareham Town Administrator  
11

12 **OTHERS:**

13 **In person:** Lori York, Beth Merrit, Polly Price, Natalie Kanner, Lane Morrison, Janet Morrison,  
14 Carl Herzog, Walter Gates, Jim Hyde, Susan Hyde, Margaret Woodruff, Anne Marie Andriola,  
15 Maura Wygman, Jack Pilla, Brandon Teiso ?  
16

17 **Remote:** Moe Harvey, Alexa Lewis, Bill Regan, Brett Yates, Carrie Spear, Cheryl Mintzer,  
18 Doug Paton, Elisa Miller, Isreal Phelps, John Snow, Kim Findlay, Kyra Wegman, Larry  
19 Sommers, Liberty Darr, Peggy Sharpe, Robert Smith, Tanna Kelton  
20

21 **AGENDA ITEMS:**

22 **6:30 PM** Adjustments to the Agenda  
23 **6:31 PM** Approve Warrants to Pay Bills  
24 **6:35 PM** Public Comment  
25 **6:40 PM** Approve Thompson's Point Wastewater Advisory Committee Minutes  
26 **6:50 PM** Discussion and Approval of Thompson's Point Wastewater Contract –  
27 Possible Executive Session 1 V.S.A. § 313(a)(1)(A)  
28 **6:55 PM** Discussion on Personnel (Town Planner) – Possible Executive Session 1  
29 V.S.A. § 313(a)(3)  
30 **7:10 PM** Selectboard Discussion on Updates to the FY-2025 Budget  
31 **7:45 PM** Discussion of Town Meeting Schedule and Articles  
32 **8:10 PM** Review and Approval of Town Meeting Articles and Warning  
33 **8:20 PM** Review and Approval of Certificate of Highway Mileage  
34 **8:25 PM** Potential Scheduling of a Special Meeting to Finalize the FY-2025 Budget  
35 **8:30 PM** Approve Selectboard Meeting Minutes for January 8, 2024 & January 16,  
36 2024  
37 **8:35 PM** Selectboard Updates  
38 **8:40 PM** Adjournment  
39

40 **Call to Order**

41 James Faulkner called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.  
42

43 **Adjustments to the Agenda**

44 James Faulkner stated that the Trails Committee requested that an Article requesting \$50,000 to  
45 replenish their Capital Reserve Fund be added to the agenda. It will be added to the agenda at  
46 6:55 p.m.

47

48 **Approve Warrants to Pay Bills**

49 Warrants were signed.

50

51 **Public Comment**

52 James Faulkner stated that the FY25 budget has been smoother this year and he accredited Mary  
53 Mead for this. All members of the Selectboard concurred and expressed their gratitude for Mary  
54 Mead's efforts in the budget work as well as Nathaniel Bareham.

55

56 **Approve Thompson's Point Wastewater Advisory Committee Minutes**

57 Nathaniel Bareham stated that the Selectboard doesn't need to approve these minutes as he had  
58 originally thought but the minutes will be useful information for the discussion and potential  
59 approval of the Thompson's Point Wastewater Contract which is next on the agenda.

60

61 **Discussion and Approval of Thompson's Point Wastewater Contract – Possible Executive  
62 Session 1 V.S.A. § 313(a)(1)(A)**

63

64 Louise McCarren joined the meeting in person.

65

66 Kelly Devine stated that it appears that the total expenses are the same as last year but it's  
67 actually an increase since last year \$39,000-\$44,000 was spent on repairs. It's fortunate  
68 that the revenue is covering this. She went on to state that she questions if there should be an  
69 increase to the rate since there are ongoing expenses.

70

71 Mary Mead stated that the budget for the operation's system is done with the committee every  
72 fall and is based on repairs needed and meters that have been read. The \$850 is a base amount  
73 that is put in the budget annually to put towards their Capital Fund.

74 Kelly Devine confirmed that the Capital fund is currently \$120,898.

75

76 **MOTION by Kelly Devine, seconded by Frank Tenney, to accept the contract for services  
77 by the Systems Operator for Thompson's Point Wastewater System effective through  
78 December 31, 2024. VOTE: 5 ayes, 0 nays; Motion Carried.**

79

80 **Trails Committee Request For Article (\$50,000 request for the Trails Committee Capital  
81 Reserve Fund)**

82 James Faulkner stated that he has no further information other than the Trails Committee  
83 requested this past Friday that Selectboard approve an Article to be added to the Australian ballot  
84 for \$50,000 for the Trails Committee Capital Reserve Fund.

85

86 James Faulkner stated that there are two options for the Selectboard which are either to accept  
87 the request and put together an article for the town residents to vote on or to decline the  
88 Article request and the Trails Committee would have to submit a petition.

89

90 Lewis Mudge stated that more details from any members that may be present on Zoom or in  
91 person from the Trails Committee would be appropriate at this time.

92 James Faulkner stated that there isn't anyone present at this time that can provide further  
93 information.

94

95 Mary Mead stated that on average the Trails Committee has asked for Capital Reserve money to  
96 be in the budget as a transfer to the Trails Committee and this separate Article is a different  
97 method of getting that done. When it's in the budget as a transfer the Selectboard would have  
98 the authority to decide how much could be transferred to the Trails Capital Reserve Fund.

99

100 Kelly Devine stated that she's not inclined to vote for this without having further information  
101 from the Trails Committee nor the time to investigate their typical requests from prior years,  
102 what the balance is of their Capital Reserve Fund currently and what Capital projects they have  
103 planned for FY25.

104

105 All members of the Selectboard concurred.

106

107 There was no motion in favor of this requested article so no action taken.

108

109 **Discussion on Personnel (Town Planner) – Possible Executive Session 1 V.S.A. § 313(a)(3)**

110

111 **MOTION by Frank Tenney, seconded by Kelly Devine, to enter into Executive Session**  
112 **under 1 V.S.A. § 313(a)(3), discussion on personnel (Town Planner) with an invitation to**  
113 **Nathaniel Bareham, Town Administrator to attend. VOTE 5 ayes, 0 nays; Motion Carried**

114

115 Following the Executive Session discussions Louise McCarren left the meeting.

116

117 **MOTION by Frank Tenney, seconded by Kelly Devine, to exit out of executive session.**  
118 **VOTE 4 ayes, 0 nays, 1 absent (McCarren); Motion Carried**

119

120 **MOTION by Kelly Devine, seconded by James Faulkner, to accept a revised work**  
121 **agreement with Larry Lewack, Town Planner, to reduce his hours to 32 hours/week which**  
122 **will include one remote work day which is already existing in his current work plan and**  
123 **the contract will have a trial period of 90 days from execution. At which point there will be**  
124 **a review presented to the Selectboard by the Town Administrator as to how it is operating.**  
125 **The contract will terminate June 30, 2024, with an opportunity for a one year renewal at**  
126 **the vote of Selectboard and attached to the work plan agreement will be a specific work**  
127 **plan on the tasks assigned to the Town Planner. VOTE: 4 ayes, 0 nays, 1 absent**  
128 **(McCarren); Motion Carried.**

129

130 **Selectboard Discussion on Updates to the FY-2025 Budget**

131 Nathaniel Bareham stated that one update is the reduction in the Town Planner's salary to reflect  
132 the reduction in hours from 40 hours to 32 hours.

133

134 Mary Mead stated that she suggested that under the Conservation Commission category, the  
135 Education & Outreach line item could be removed since the Conservation Commission has a  
136 Special Fund already with a balance of roughly \$2,500. This would be a reduction of \$600.  
137 James Faulkner concurred with the removal of this line item.

138  
139 Lewis Mudge joined the meeting in person.

140  
141 Nathaniel Bareham said following these two reduction updates the total expenditures comes to  
142 \$4,246,533.60 which is a 4.3% increase from last year. The dollars to raise with taxes  
143 2,534,766.60 which is a 1.52% increase over last year.

144  
145 Mary Mead stated that the revenues are higher than last year, which is contributing to the lower  
146 percentage as well as line item reductions. The biggest revenue increases are seen in the FY25  
147 budget under the Thompson's Point category and interest.

148  
149 Nathaniel Bareham stated that the largest areas of reduction in the FY25 budget are as follows:  
150 the Planning and Zoning category, Town Planner's salary line item reduction of \$13,192.40,  
151 Employee Benefits category, Health Insurance line item reduction of \$30,000, Highway  
152 category, Retreatment-Highway line item reduction of \$90,325 which will be taken out of the  
153 Reserve Fund if needed, under the Annual Requests category all line items have been zeroed out  
154 except for the Food Shelf line item which is \$1,000 and under the Town Hall category,  
155 Equipment-Town Hall line item reduction of \$11,000.

156  
157 Kelly Devine stated that the Selectboard category's main reduction was the Town  
158 Administrator's salary line item reduction of \$14,252.00. She received confirmation that this  
159 reduction is due to the longevity of Dean Bloch's career as Town Administrator in comparison to  
160 a new hire's rate of pay. She also received confirmation of the Human Resources Consultant  
161 line item reduction of \$2,500.

162  
163 Kelly Devine stated that the Town Clerk category has a .31% increase which is small but it's  
164 important to recognize that there is no increase in salaries this year because of the budget  
165 reductions last year and in the interest of fiscal year responsibility.

166  
167 Kelly Devine received confirmation that the Treasurer category shows a 13.7% increase but this  
168 is due to the increased audit expense.

169  
170 Kelly Devine stated that Elections and Town Meetings category shows a 77.35% decrease.  
171 Mary Mead stated that this is due to the Town Report line item reduction due to a decrease in  
172 printing and the Town Meeting line item reduction due to the sound system cost reduction.

173  
174 Kelly Devine stated that the Planning and Zoning category shows a 16% decrease due to the  
175 decision of turning the Septic Review over to the state and the reduction in the Town Planner's  
176 hours/salary.

177  
178 Kelly Devine stated that there is a 0% change with the Constable category with the Halloween  
179 Lights line item expense unchanged.

180

181 Kelly Devine stated that under Assessor category there is an 8.90% reduction.

182

183 Mary Mead stated that this needs to be changed due to the fact that there is no longer a Town  
184 Assessor as a town employee so the Wages-Assessor line item could be removed. These duties  
185 will now be done by a contracted employee. She went on to state that the Assessor duties will  
186 become something that the already contracted company NEMRC will add to their contracted  
187 responsibilities for the town of Charlotte. The contract amount will be adjusted accordingly once  
188 it's made known, at which time this will be added to the Contract Appraiser line item. Mary

189

190 Mead stated that this is still to be determined and is therefore the one area of the budget that is  
191 not yet known.

192

193 Kelly Devine stated that the Delinquent Tax Collector category is unchanged.

194

195 Kelly Devine stated under the Employee Benefits category the Health Insurance line item is at  
196 \$220,000 and the plan is for her, Lewis Mudge, Nathaniel Bareham, and some outside  
197 contractors to work together along with feedback of town employees to come up with a \$30,000  
198 reduction of that line item. She went on to state that with that \$30,000 decrease, the Employee  
199 Benefits category will be decreased to a 2.28% increase.

200

201 Kelly Devine stated that a goal of \$40,000 reduction was originally set for the Health Insurance  
202 line item but the decision was made to focus on a goal of \$30,000.

203

204 None of the Selectboard members stated opposition to this updated reduction goal.

205

206 Kelly Devine stated that the Highways category is unchanged. She went on to stress the  
207 importance of capital planning.

208

209 Mary Mead confirmed that there are no plans for Bridge Reconstruction for FY25.

210

211 Mary Mead stated that the Transfer Highway Reserve Fund consists of funds that are transferred  
212 at the end of the year from Junior Lewis' budget. Junior Lewis typically underspends.

213

214 Kelly Devine stated that the Stormwater Discharge category is unchanged.

215

216 Kelly Devine stated that the Town Lands category shows a 3% increase.  
217 Discussion was had regarding past discussions of reducing the asked amount from the Parks  
218 Committee category, Park Maintenance line item to \$16,000 from \$19,000 since past years they  
219 have budgeted at \$15,000.

220

221 Lewis Mudge stated that he spoke to the Committee and gave his words that he would stand by  
222 this increased amount. He went on to state that the amount they requested should be honored as  
223 they run things as efficiently as possible.

224

225 The Selectboard decided to move on with the budget review.

226 Discussion was had regarding the Village Wastewater System Maintenance line item amount of  
227 \$8,000 which is a reduction of \$1,900 from last fiscal year's budget.  
228

229 Kelly Devine stated that she would like to make sure that the line item is set high enough to  
230 manage the commercial entities that will be using it in the near future. She went on to state that  
231 it's her understanding that there are two applications that were recently received.  
232

233 Lewis Mudge stated that the only commercial entity he's aware of is Stone Throws Pizza.

234 James Faulkner stated any expenses that come from commercial entities or other that aren't town  
235 buildings will be covered by the revenue and will be of no cost to the town.

236 Mary Mead stated that this line item is for the maintenance for the town buildings which include  
237 the Senior Center, the Town Hall, and the Town Library.  
238

239 Nathaniel Bareham stated that the Air Release Valve was the biggest expense back in October of  
240 2023. The rest of the line item is for the pumping of the septic and maintenance. He went on to  
241 state that the increase in the line item is to prepare for any potential additional issues. There is  
242 currently a D box in need of repair on Greenbush Rd.  
243

244 Kelly Devine stated that the Town Garage category is a new category so there is no comparison  
245 of past fiscal years but there should be a decrease in the long term with the use of the solar  
246 panels. James Faulkner concurred.  
247

248 Kelly Devine stated that the Library category shows a 3% decrease.  
249

250 Kelly Devine stated that she has received some emails regarding the Annual Requests category  
251 and she asked to skip over this category at this time.  
252

253 Kelly Devine stated that the Recreation category shows a .07 increase which is covered by their  
254 revenue.  
255

256 Lewis Mudge received confirmation that the Conservation category Education and Outreach line  
257 item was cut since they have another fund that they can use for this.

258 Nathaniel Bareham stated that he sent an email to the Conservation Commission regarding this  
259 being a topic for this evening and that there is funding elsewhere for education and outreach.  
260

261 Kelly Devine stated that the Town Hall category shows a 10% increase and she received  
262 confirmation that this is due to needing new computer equipment.  
263

264 Kelly Devine stated that the Senior Center category shows a 3.2% increase.  
265

266 Lori York stated that the majority of the 3.2% increase for the Senior Center is from the  
267 Selectboard approved rate increase for the Volunteer Coordinator position of \$18.50/hour for 19  
268 hours/week. Prior to this rate increase there had been no shown interest in the position.

269 Lori York stated that the Senior Center submitted a flat budget as they were asked to do. There  
270 has been exploration of ways to increase revenue which has included grant exploration and  
271 elimination of programs that are not covering expenses. She went on to state that they have

272 started to charge for classes that were originally free and they received a \$3,000 grant from the  
273 town of Shelburne. They will continue to explore other grants and other fundraising  
274 opportunities. Lori York stated that there is a candidate for the Volunteer Coordinator position  
275 that has been brought forward to Nathaniel Bareham and the next step will be for the Selectboard  
276 to conduct an interview of this selected candidate.

277

278 Kelly Devine stated that the Miscellaneous category shows a 2.8% increase.

279

280 Lewis Mudge stated that the \$5,000 for the Land Trust line item appears as an increase but it's  
281 simply due to last year's decision to hold on adding to this line item. FY25 the plan is to get  
282 back on track. Frank Tenney concurred. Kelly Devine received confirmation that the Insurance  
283 line item increase is due to the Town Garage.

284

285 Kelly Devine stated that the Intergovernmental Taxes & Dues shows a 9% increase but this is  
286 something that the town has no control over.

287 Mary Mead concurred.

288

289 Kelly Devine stated that the Debt Services shows a 49.3% increase but this is due to the Town  
290 Garage.

291

292 Kelly Devine stated that the Transfer to Reserve Fund category, Transfer to Conservation line  
293 item is at \$25,000. James Faulkner confirmed that this amount is to be left in. Kelly Devine  
294 stated that she would like to talk in more detail about the Transfer-Improvement and Repair line  
295 item since there is a substantial increase.

296

297 Mary Mead stated that under the Town Appropriation Fire and Rescue category, the Fire and  
298 Rescue Appropriation line item's additional money of \$22,500 was because the Selectboard  
299 approved the request from the CVFRS to do so in order to reduce their operating budget amount.

300

301 Kelly Devine stated that she would now like to review the list under the Transfer to Reserve  
302 Fund category, Transfer-Improve Repair line item beginning with the Senior Center requests.  
303 Lane Morrison stated that the quote just came in for the oil tank of \$3,200 which will be above  
304 ground and it shouldn't be more than that amount unless they discover contaminants in the soil.  
305 Kelly Devine asked about revenues.

306

307 Lane Morrison stated that their revenues are up \$6,000 from prior years. There is further efforts  
308 being made to increase revenue even further and they will report back in 5 months as they know  
309 more.

310

311 Carl Herzog, treasurer for the Friends of the Senior Center, stated that they spent \$21,300 on the  
312 carpet, \$4,000 on the computer, \$3,700 on drapes, \$2,600 on electrical fixtures and \$4,600 on  
313 painting. There is no specific list or project expense sum that the Friends of the Senior Center  
314 can provide at this time for FY24-25. He went on to state that the Friends of the Senior Center  
315 completes enhancements, they don't cover the property costs.

316

317 Kelly Devine asked if they could assist with the cost of the tank removal since the town is  
318 looking at such a tight budget this year.

319  
320 Carl Herzog stated that perhaps they could but he feels the Friends of the Senior Center have  
321 been generous in helping out and with the revenue the Senior Center is almost exactly as it was  
322 last year with a level budget.

323  
324 Kelly Devine stated that it seems that if the Friends of the Senior Center have \$150,000 and the  
325 town could use the assistance they could help out by making it clear as to what they would be  
326 willing to do to help reduce the costs of the maintenance of the Senior Center building for the  
327 coming year.

328  
329 Carl Herzog stated that the current plan is to remove the tank when needed but it's not necessary  
330 to remove it currently as it's operational.

331  
332 Discussion was had regarding the oil tank removal and replacement and if funding should be left  
333 in place in the FY25 budget in preparation for the need.

334  
335 Carl Herzog confirmed that the \$150,000 that the Friends of the Senior Center has isn't liquid as  
336 it's tied up in stocks.

337  
338 Lewis Mudge stated that the oil tank expense was reduced from \$10,000 to \$5,000 and the roof  
339 was reduced from \$20,000 to \$15,000 and it should remain as is.

340 Frank Tenney and James Faulkner concurred with Lewis Mudge, that the numbers in the budget  
341 under the Transfer to Reserve Fund category Senior Center requests should remain as is.

342  
343 Kelly Devine asked when the Friends of The Senior Center decides what it will spend on the  
344 Senior Center for the year.

345  
346 Lane Morrison stated that it's a 501(c)(3), and it's money that they raise annually. Money is  
347 allocated as needs arise and is based on priority. As for the roof replacement, the Friends of the  
348 Senior Center have agreed to give \$20,000 toward the Senior Center roof. He went on to state  
349 that the Friends of the Senior Center gave \$43,000 last year. The way they operate is by helping  
350 as needs arise, not in budgeting a set amount per year.

351  
352 Maura Wygman stated that in the budget under expense, the Transfer to Reserve Funds category,  
353 Transfer to Recreation Reserve Fund line item shows zero and the Recreation Commission is  
354 requesting that that amount be corrected and set at \$30,000. In 2018 there was an article vote to  
355 fund the Recreation Commission Reserve Fund and it was granted by the tax payer. She went on  
356 to state that the Recreation Commission has documented in their budget that they generated  
357 \$92,850 and after subtracting their expenses they have a surplus of \$31,885 in revenue and  
358 therefore would like that money to go back into the Recreation Reserve Fund. There are many  
359 planned projects coming up that would warrant the use of Capital Reserve Funds such as adding  
360 accessibility to the beach. Maura Wygman stated that there is a need for a ramp that will cost  
361 \$18,000 all on its own. Other upcoming projects include upgrades to the bathhouses,



362 improvements to the tennis courts, little league field improvements, increasing the pickleball  
363 courts and improving the soccer fields as well.

364

365 James Faulkner stated that it is late in the budget season to be asking for this money for the  
366 Recreation Capital Reserve Fund. He stated that he doesn't understand why the Selectboard is  
367 just hearing of this request now.

368

369 Maura Wygman stated that the need for making the beach more accessible has been well known  
370 for a couple years now.

371

372 Conversation was had in attempt to clarify if Nicole Conley had requested this \$30,000 during  
373 her presentation to the Selectboard. Discussion continued regarding what has been done at the  
374 beach and what the town has paid toward projects at the beach.

375

376 Lewis Mudge stated that there was discussion regarding the \$20,000 toward the bathhouse  
377 project.

378

379 Maura Wygman stressed the importance of the historic \$30,000 being transferred to the  
380 Recreation Capital Reserve Fund which has taken place every year since the taxpayer vote in  
381 2018 with the exception of last year.

382

383 Kelly Devine stated that although the Recreation Department makes a wonderful revenue there is  
384 no surplus following the expense of the salaries and benefits.

385

386 Maura Wygman stated that she spoke with Nicole Conley during a Recreation Commission  
387 meeting this evening and it's Nicole Conley's hopes that the \$30,000 transfer to the Recreation  
388 Capital Reserve Fund would be reinstated for FY25. She went on to state that at the very least  
389 this \$30,000 Capital Reserve Fund transfer should be added as an Article to vote by Australian  
390 ballot.

391

392 Lewis Mudge stated that just as the Trails Commission request was denied this would be denied  
393 as well since there was no prior request submitted to the Selectboard but there is still time for the  
394 Recreation Commission to submit a petition to get the Article on the ballot.

395

396 Further discussion was had by the Selectboard confirming that the Recreation Department is  
397 doing great with their revenue and covering their operating expenses but this doesn't include the  
398 cost of the Director's salary or the Director's Assistant's salary and benefits which can't be  
399 separated out.

400

401 Mary Mead stated that there is a little under \$41,000 in the Recreation Capital Reserve Fund now  
402 and it seems that the grants could be attained with this amount of money.

403

404 Kelly Devine stated that the process the Selectboard is looking for regarding approving an  
405 Article would be submittance of documented information regarding the Capital projects and  
406 estimated costs weeks in advance to the completion of the town budget so that an appropriate

407 decision could be made by the Selectboard of whether or not to endorse the Article with the  
408 taxpayers best interest in mind.

409  
410 Lewis Mudge concurred and reiterated this also stating that there is still time to follow the  
411 process and submit an appeal prior to the deadline date.

412  
413 Mary Mead confirmed that the deadline for such an appeal would be January 29, 2024.

414  
415 **Discussion of Town Meeting Schedule and Articles**

416 James Faulkner stated after receiving a lot of town resident's feedback it has been decided to  
417 consider conducting Australian ballot for the town budget vote.

418  
419 Kelly Devine stated that many town residents felt that Town Meeting date being on a Saturday  
420 and the last day of the school vacation break would deprive them of the ability to vote on the  
421 town budget.

422  
423 James Faulkner stated that there are others that value the in person Town Meeting and the state  
424 of Vermont is working on figuring out how to potentially make the Charlotte Town Meeting a  
425 hybrid meeting.

426  
427 Kelly Devine stated that it's important to note that Burlington does a wastewater analysis for the  
428 presence of the COVID-19 virus and it's at a level that is almost as high as the peak in April of  
429 2020.

430  
431 James Faulkner stated that the Town Meeting was scheduled to take place in person and Act 1  
432 (H.42) states that this is the last year that municipalities will be allowed to have Town Meeting  
433 voting completed by Australian ballot.

434  
435 Further discussion was had regarding the pros and cons to in person Town Meeting to vote on  
436 the budget vs Australian ballot. Discussion was also had on what could be voted on at Town  
437 Meeting and what could be put on the Australian ballot.

438  
439 Mary Mead stated that 800-900 more votes are obtained on average with Australian ballot vote  
440 in comparison to an in person Town Meeting vote. All members of the Selectboard concurred  
441 that this is a significant number.

442  
443 Frank Tenney stated that with in person Town Meeting there is the ability to adjust the budget  
444 line items and this can't be done with Australian ballot.

445  
446 Lane Morrison stated that he's in favor of in person Town Meeting this year and then possibly  
447 returning to a charter vote where there is an in person Town Meeting followed by an Australian  
448 vote 30-45 days later.

449  
450 Kyra Wegman stated that she's in favor of a return of a charter for a hybrid Town Meeting so  
451 that in person Town Meeting continues to be part of the process.

452 Mary Mead stated that in the past when there was a hybrid Town Meeting it didn't work because  
453 less and less people voted via Australian Ballot in April following the in person Town Meeting  
454 in March. It may be that many thought that the budget past at the in person Town Meeting and  
455 therefore didn't realize that they needed vote later during the Australian ballot vote. She went on  
456 to state that during the five year period that this hybrid model was used, voting reduced to around  
457 200 voters.

458

459 James Faulkner stated that what's important is allowing more taxpayers to vote.

460

461 Anne Marie Andriola stated that she's strongly in favor of Australian ballot as it captures more  
462 of the tax payors votes.

463

464 Kelly Devine stressed that it is important that the tax payer understands that this is the last year  
465 that the state will allow an Australian ballot instead of an in person Town Meeting. Following  
466 the end of the Act 1 (H.42) the town will have to have an in person Town Meeting to discuss the  
467 change to Australian ballot going forward. Mary Mead concurred.

468

469 Brandon Teiso stated that he's in favor of in person Town Meeting day to allow for an engaged  
470 community.

471

472 John Snow stated that the one time that the Charlotte residents got to vote on in person Town  
473 meeting day or Australian ballot the majority vote was in favor of Australian ballot. It did end  
474 up going to a hybrid charter. He went on to state that in person is valuable but what's most  
475 important is that people get the opportunity to vote and that's best done through Australian  
476 ballot.

477

478 Alexa Lewis asked if absentee ballots would make a difference in the numbers of voters with a  
479 hybrid situation of the past and potentially of the future. Mary Mead stated that absentee ballots  
480 were available in the past situation.

481

482 Maura Wygman stated at a minimum she is requesting that the Selectboard put forth an Article  
483 which allows for the town residents to vote on moving Town Meeting day to a weekday evening.

484

485 Another Article could also be put forth on Town Meeting day that allows the town residents to  
486 vote on their choice of an in person Town Meeting or Australian ballot going forward. She went  
487 on to suggest that in the scenario of a hybrid Town Meeting maybe there could be multiple  
488 meetings next January called Town Meeting in January that would allow as many town residents  
489 as possible, to give their input on the budget and an Australian ballot could follow.

490

491 Frank Tenney stated that there have been multiple meetings that have given the town residents  
492 this opportunity this budget planning season.

493

494 Discussion was had regarding how to get town residents input on Australian ballot.

495

496 Mary Mead stated that Act 1 (H.42) doesn't allow for an Article vote on Australian ballot. In  
497 order to vote on Australian ballot, it must be done on the floor/in person.

498 Charles Russell stated that the Selectboard could put forth an Article to have a charter that would  
499 allow an Australian ballot vote. Another possibility would be to have an advisory motion that's  
500 Australian ballot.

501  
502 Discussion was had amongst Selectboard members as to their stance on in person Town Meeting  
503 day or an Australian ballot vote.

504  
505 Frank Tenney and Lewis Mudge concurred that the decision was made by town vote to have  
506 Town Meeting day on a Saturday and the Selectboard set a date for this year and therefore it  
507 should be completed as planned.

508  
509 James Faulkner and Kelly Devine concurred that they're in favor of an Australian ballot because  
510 it allows for more town residents to vote as has been historically proven. In addition, this year's  
511 date for Town Meeting day falls on a Saturday of the town's school vacation which impacts the  
512 number of votes even more.

513  
514 Louise McCarren was unable to state her opinion at this time due to audio issues on Zoom and  
515 her availability.

516  
517 Louise McCarren left the meeting at this time.

518  
519 **MOTION by Kelly Devine, seconded by James Faulkner, in pursuant to Vermont state**  
520 **statute known as Act 1 Clause B, the Selectboard decides to move voting for the upcoming**  
521 **Town Meeting day to Australian Ballot at an election to be held on March 5, 2024, at the**  
522 **Town Hall. VOTE: 2 ayes, 2 nays, 1 absent (McCarren); Motion Failed.**

523  
524 **Review and Approval of Town Meeting Articles and Warning**

525 Kelly Devine stated that she looked at the CVFRS 990 and noted that there is a considerable sum  
526 in the investments and she wonders what the current amount is and what it's allocated for.  
527 John Snow stated that the two things that constitute the net assets of the corporation are the  
528 undepreciated amount of the building, land and vehicles which is a little less than \$2 million  
529 dollars and the corpus of a trust of which CVFRS Inc. is the sole beneficiary. The corpus of that  
530 trust is approximately \$1.7 million dollars. He went on to state that CVFRS has no discretion  
531 over the undepreciated assets and how they get used. There are no plans to sell the building or  
532 the land. John Snow stated that the assets that are the corpus of the trust CVFRS doesn't control,  
533 they're under the discretion of a trustee. CVFRS receives distribution of the trust after the  
534 discretion of the Trustee and that distribution becomes part of Special Funds which covers  
535 expenses that arise within CVFRS which are of capital expenditures. He went on to state that the  
536 use of these funds are done on a project by project basis.

537  
538 Kelly Devine stated that she wonders if an ambulance could be purchased with these funds.  
539 John Snow stated that there is nothing legally precluding the purchase of an ambulance with  
540 those funds but there has historically never been anything purchased with funds distributed by  
541 the trust at the level of expense that an ambulance would be. It would take many years of  
542 distributions from the fund to pay for an ambulance and it's not practical.

543 Kelly Devine questioned whether or not CVFRS could use the distribution of the funds for an  
544 ambulance over a 10 year period.

545  
546 John Snow stated that it is a general principal that the fundamental operations of Fire & Rescue  
547 should be covered by the operating resources, primarily the tax payer's support. The capital  
548 enhancements are covered by Special Funds when they're available.

549  
550 John Snow stated that all assets purchased with tax payer funds are clearly identified as assets of  
551 the town by CVFRS.

552  
553 Kelly Devine asked for the basis of CVFRS' belief of necessary replacement of ambulances  
554 every 10 years.

555  
556 John Snow stated that CVFRS has researched what other departments do and have taken into  
557 account their own experience with maintaining an old piece of equipment. They also follow the  
558 National and Regional guidance for the useful life of an ambulance. He went on to state that the  
559 average urban ambulance lifespan is 4-7 years and rural ambulance is 7-10 years. This will all  
560 be presented at the informational meeting for this Article.

561  
562 John Snow gave clarification that there was no vote by the town to make CVFRS a municipal  
563 department. There was a joint exploration by the Selectboard and CVFRS to see if it could be  
564 achieved and if it was in the best interest of the town and the people served by CVFRS.

565 John Snow stated, in response to Kelly Devine's question, that the donor's intent of the trust fund  
566 is for the trust fund to stay with CVFRS or to the successor organization of CVFRS if that were  
567 to occur in the future.

568  
569 Nathaniel Bareham stated that following tonight's adjustments the overall budget increase is  
570 4.18% and the dollars to raise in taxes is \$2,529,466 which is an increase of 1.31% from last  
571 year.

572  
573 Kelly Devine requested more time to review the budget so that she can have all of the budget  
574 updates clear and in front of her.

575  
576 The Selectboard decided that it's feasible to take more time to review the budget and to meet  
577 next week Monday January 29, 2024, at 7pm, at which time the Selectboard will vote on whether  
578 or not to approve the FY25 town budget to be presented to the public for vote on Town Meeting  
579 day, March 02, 2024.

580  
581 Nathaniel Bareham stated that he can find out the Assessor amount from NMRC by the end of  
582 this week.

583  
584 Frank Tenney stated that the reason the Informational Meeting is scheduled on Monday February  
585 26, 2024, is to allow for those that are completing the absentee ballots to be fully informed and to  
586 have the time to submit their votes prior to the Town Meeting date of Saturday, March 02, 2024.

587  
588 **DRAFT WARNING TOWN OF CHARLOTTE ANNUAL TOWN MEETING 2024**

589

**590 ARTICLES TO BE VOTED FROM THE FLOOR****591 Article 1: To hear the reports of the Town officers and to act upon the same.**

592 Charles Russell stated that this is everything except the budget and includes any reports from the  
593 different committees.

594

**595 Article 2: Shall the voters authorize the payment of property taxes, with the payment due  
596 on or before Friday, November 15, 2024, and to have payments made to the Town  
597 Treasurer as provided in 32 VSA § 4773(b)?**

598 Nathaniel Bareham stated that this date was confirmed by Mary Mead.

599

**600 Article 3: Shall the voters approve total fund expenditures, as set forth in the Selectboard's  
601 budget, of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ for the fiscal year July 1, 2024, to June 30, 2025, of which an  
602 anticipated sum of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ will be raised by taxes and an anticipated sum of  
603 \$ \_\_\_\_\_ will be raised by non-tax revenues.**

604 All concurred that this can't be voted on until the Selectboard votes on the approval of the FY25  
605 town budget.

606

**607 Article 4: Shall the voters of the Town approve raising the sum of \$50,000 by property  
608 taxes, in addition to those monies raised pursuant to Article 3, to be allocated to the Trails  
609 Reserve Fund?**

610 Nathaniel Bareham stated that he had drafted the wording of this Article after hearing of the  
611 request from the Trails Committee late Friday in preparation of potential Selectboard approval  
612 this evening. As it is the Selectboard didn't approve this Article.

613

614 Bill Reagan stated that the Trails Committee has been assessing this Article since last fall at the  
615 start of the budget season.

616

617 James Faulkner as the liaison to the Trails Committee, stated that the Trails Committee asked  
618 when a good time would be to ask for more money this past fall but there was no further  
619 information provided such as how much was to be requested or what it would be used for until  
620 late Friday of last week, when a sum of \$50,000 was requested. There was no explanation on the  
621 plans for the use of the money with this request. He went on to state that he gave advice last  
622 Friday to act quickly with a petition in order to get an Article approved.

623

624 Bill Regan stated that it was just recently that the Trails Committee was informed with complete  
625 clarity that an Article vote was necessary to have the money added to the Trails Capital Reserve  
626 Fund. The amount was then decided upon once this was understood. He went on to state that  
627 the requested \$50,000 is to replenish the Trails Capital Reserve Fund which has roughly \$49,000  
628 in it currently. The last time the Trails Committee asked for money in an Article was in 2020.

629 Bill Regan stated that a past Selectboard member had suggested that it would be most effective  
630 and efficient to have money continually put into an account so that trails could be built as  
631 easements became available and as projects got developed and approved. If this Article was  
632 approved the Trails Committee would continue building the trail that ends on Ferry Rd and  
633 would continue west crossing the railroad tracks as the next big segment on the way to the town

634 beach. He went on to state that the overall picture of this is the trail from Mt Philo to the village  
635 centers to the town beach which was all endorsed by the 2019 Town Plan.

636

637 Kelly Devine stated that it is her goal to come up with a more reliable capital planning process  
638 for the town so that a specific number could be agreed upon to fund over a 5-10 year period for  
639 all the different groups of the town.

640

641 Jack Pilla stated that there have been a total of 3 other Articles in the past put forward by the  
642 Trails Committee that the town residents have voted on and approved for this very specific trail  
643 that goes from Mt Philo to the town beach. This \$50,000 is specifically for completing this trail  
644 to the town beach. This Article would be the way to give the town resident's the choice on  
645 funding and completing this trail.

646

647 Discussion was had by the Selectboard and it was unanimous amongst all to remove the Article  
648 except for James Faulkner who abstained due to being the Liaison to the Trails Committee.

649

650 **Article 5: To transact any other business proper to come before said meeting.**

651 Lewis Mudge stated that Charles Russell will be monitoring.

652

653 **ARTICLES TO BE VOTED BY AUSTRALIAN BALLOT**

654 **Article 6: To elect Town Officials:**

655 All concurred.

656

657 **Article 7: To elect Champlain Valley School District Officials:**

658 All concurred.

659

660 **Article 8: Shall the voters authorize the Town to submit to the General Assembly of the**  
661 **State of Vermont a proposal to adopt a municipal charter which contains the following**  
662 **sections:**

663 **Section 1: Corporate Existence**

664 **Section 2: General Provisions**

665 **Section 3: Town Manager/Road Commissioner**

666 **Section 4: Separability**

667 **Section 5: Amendment**

668 **Section 6: Effective Date**

669 **The official copy of the Charter proposal, in its entirety, is on file and available for public**  
670 **inspection at the Charlotte Town Clerk's Office, 159 Ferry Road in said Town, during**  
671 **regular office hours, Monday-Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Copies thereof are available to**  
672 **members of the public upon request.**

673 Lewis Mudge stated that the language of this could be very confusing to the voter.

674

675 Kelly Devine stated that this is to amend a state law and needs to have the language as such.

676 Frank Tenney stated that the way this is written the voter could misunderstand and take this to  
677 mean that the Town Manager is going to take over the Road Commissioners duties which is not  
678 the case.

679

680 Nathaniel Bareham stated that the copy of the Charter will be available in each voting booth.  
681 Charles Russell stated that voters should be informed when voting and if they have read through  
682 the Charter they will know what they're voting on. He went on to state if someone wants the  
683 language changed they'd need to talk to the state legislature but with that being said the  
684 legislature allows for further language to be added to the existing language. If the Selectboard  
685 wants to add additional language that helps to clarify what the vote is for they can do so.  
686 Following further discussion, the Selectboard decided to leave the language to stand alone as is.  
687

688 **Article 9: Shall the voters authorize the Town to issue general obligation bonds or notes in**  
689 **an amount not to exceed Three Hundred Sixty-Five Thousand Dollars and 00/100**  
690 **(\$365,000.00) to purchase a new ambulance to be financed over a period not to exceed 10**  
691 **years?**

692 Kelly Devine stated that she's not in favor of approving this Article. The CVFRS budget isn't  
693 separated out from the rest of the town budget so there's no way for the tax payer to vote in a  
694 manner that will allow for an understanding of their support of the CVFRS budget or not. She  
695 went on to state that it's appropriate to wait until next year in her opinion on this Article for a  
696 new ambulance. The CVFRS is the single largest budget item already without the bond for a  
697 new ambulance.  
698

699 John Snow stated that not allowing this Article to go before the voter is irresponsible. The  
700 ambulance is going to be a 30 month lead time and it's going to be a 13 year old piece of  
701 equipment. It's up to the tax payer to decide if they want the services of CVFRS. The staffing  
702 of CVFRS is at the minimum amount required by law and by their regulators to maintain the  
703 ambulance 24/7 365 days/year. If the Selectboard doesn't want to support that then they're  
704 making the statement that they want CVFRS to provide less services and that should be made  
705 clear.  
706

707 Charles Russell stated that this payment won't take place for 2-3 years and therefore wont be in  
708 this years budget at all.  
709

710 John Snow stated that CVFRS was told by the manufacturer that the ambulance won't be ready  
711 for roughly 30 months. There used to be a different Capital Funding structure. The ambulance  
712 that's being replaced doesn't show an interest bond carrying cost because it was prefunded. He  
713 went on to state that under the new regime of bond funding of Capital Expenditures one item  
714 would be going on while the other item is going off. The ambulance that this will be replacing  
715 was prefunded through a long term Capital Funding plan that the town use to support. John  
716 Snow stated that the first payment for this new ambulance will be roughly 2-3 years from now  
717 and it will be approximately \$40,000-\$45,000 depending on interest rates at the time. It will be  
718 in close proximity to the time when the primary ambulance comes off from bond funding.

719 James Faulkner stated he was in favor of leaving the Article on for the tax payer to decide. He  
720 received confirmation from John Snow that there is no required deposit at this time for the bond  
721 and there will be no cost to the town for a couple years since the terms of the proposal states  
722 payment upon delivery of the ambulance.  
723

724 Kelly Devine stated that this would be a 10 year commitment to the town when the town is not  
725 sure as to where it wants to go with this organization.



726 Lewis Mudge and Frank Tenney both concurred with James Faulkner, that the Article should  
727 stay on to allow the voters to decide.

728

729 **Review and Approval of Certificate of Highway Mileage**

730 Frank Tenney stated that it hasn't changed much.

731

732 **MOTION by Frank Tenney, seconded by Lewis Mudge, to approve the Certificate of**  
733 **Highway Mileage year ending February 22, 2024. VOTE: 3 ayes, 0 nays, 2 absent**  
734 **(McCarren and Devine); Motion Carried.**

735

736 **Potential Scheduling of a Special Meeting to Finalize the FY-2025 Budget**

737 Discussion was had again as discussed earlier in the meeting that there will be a Special  
738 Selectboard meeting next week Monday, January 29, 2024, at 7pm via Zoom to allow for  
739 additional time to review the budget with all the updates as requested by Kelly Devine.

740

741 **Approve Selectboard Meeting Minutes for January 8, 2024 & January 16, 2024**

742 James Faulkner stated that the Minutes will be voted on at a later date due to the late hour of the  
743 meeting.

744

745 **Selectboard Updates**

746 None

747

748 **Adjournment**

749

750 **MOTION by James Faulkner, seconded by Lewis Mudge, to adjourn. VOTE: 4 ayes, 0**  
751 **nays 1 absent (McCarren); Motion Carried.**

752

753 The meeting was adjourned at 10:11 p.m.

754

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