

CHARLOTTE SELECTBOARD MEETING
Monday, January 17, 2022
Charlotte Town Hall 159 Ferry Road and via teleconference

APPROVED

SELECTBOARD MEMBERS:

In person: James Faulkner, Chair; Frank Tenney, Vice Chair;

Remote: Matthew Krasnow; Lewis Mudge;

Absent: Louise McCarren

ADMINISTRATION: *In person:* Dean Bloch, Town Administrator

OTHERS:

In person: Fritz Tegatz, Catherine Hughes

Remote: Mary Mead, Lane Morrison, Nicole Conley, Jules Polk, Tony Kinson, Patrice Machavern

AGENDA ITEMS:

6:30 PM Minutes: December 20, December 23, December 29, January 3, January 10

6:40 PM FY23 Budget—finalize

8:00 PM Approve Town Meeting warning

8:20 PM Town Report, 2021

8:30 PM Adjournment

CALL TO ORDER

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

James Faulkner said he miscommunicated information about CVFRS. He apologized and said he is new in this position as Chair of the Selectboard. He said he would like to keep all budgets as low as possible not just the CVFRS budget. He clarified that CVFRS service is top notch and high quality and didn't mean to indicate otherwise.

Minutes: December 20, December 23, December 29, January 3, January 10

MOTION by James Faulkner, seconded by Frank Tenney, to approve the Selectboard meeting minutes from December 20, 2021, as amended. VOTE: 4 ayes; 1 absent (Louise McCarren); Motion Carried.

MOTION by Frank Tenney, seconded by James Faulkner, to approve the Selectboard meeting minutes from December 23, 2021, as amended. VOTE: 4 ayes; 1 absent (Louise McCarren); Motion Carried.

MOTION by Frank Tenney, seconded by James Faulkner, to approve the Selectboard meeting minutes from December 29, 2021, as amended. VOTE: 3 ayes; 1 absent (Louise McCarren); 1 abstention (Lewis Mudge); Motion Carried.

MOTION by James Faulkner, seconded by Lewis Mudge, to approve the Selectboard meeting minutes from January 3, 2022, as amended. VOTE: 4 ayes; 1 absent (Louise McCarren); Motion Carried.

MOTION by Frank Tenney, seconded by James Faulkner, to approve the Selectboard meeting minutes from January 10, 2022, as amended. VOTE: 4 ayes; 1 absent (Louise McCarren); Motion Carried.

Lewis Mudge joined the meeting in person.

FY23 Budget—finalize

James Faulkner said it has been a challenging year due to the overall raise in salaries and CVFRS is moving to more paid staff. It looks like a scary tax increase. Tax payers are going to be shocked with the increase, he said.

Mary Mead went through the expenses line by line starting with Selectboard salaries. There is no change there. The new item is Human Resources consultant, she advised removing it. Matt Krasnow said he disagreed with this assessment and explained the need to continue to work with Gallagher Flynn. Advertising has been about \$4,000 annually.

Moving to the Town Clerk budget, Mary advised removing milage. She said supplies cannot be reduced. She explained the costs associated with elections.

Planning and Zoning legal fees were discussed, as were seminar expenses. Seminar expenses were reduced to \$600.

Mary went on to describe budgeted items that are rarely used. Donations were discussed and Charlotte News and Front Porch Forum were zeroed out. Recreation expenses regarding CCS were discussed. Facility usage was zeroed out. The Recreation Reserve Fund was reduced to \$15,000 from \$50,000. Matt said this is a huge sacrifice for everyone in Town.

Fritz Tegatz spoke on behalf of CVFRS. He defended this budget. As for its transparency, he said Mary has never asked them any questions about their budget. He offered to go over the budget line by line with the Selectboard. Mary said she has asked for information several times and is always told to go through the Selectboard liaison, which she has done. She has always been denied access to their budget, she said. She explained how budgets work and said the way CVFRS presents their budget is lacking. She gave specific details. She said the information given to the Selectboard is not complete. The CVFRS budget is twice that of Hinesburg and Shelburne's fire and rescue budget. Frank Tenney said it is a long process to compare all three departments and that CVFRS might be offering more than these other departments. Fritz said Hinesburg doesn't offer rescue, and that the majority of CVFRS expenses are salary and benefits.

Tony Kinson said he researched other local towns like Vergennes and Bristol fire and rescue and that the difference is that these other departments are volunteer and CVFRS is mostly paid. He mentioned the American Rescue Plan and urged CVFRS to apply for those funds and offered other resources.

Jules Polk mentioned and James confirmed that this is a work session, not a time for public comment. Mary Mead continued with reviewing the budget. Matt called for level funding the CVFRS budget and submitting their 18% increase as an article for the Town to vote on. Fritz said the market adjustment increase in payroll is wrong and CVFRS shouldn't be penalized this way. Matt said the CVFRS increase was due to a management change, not an increase in payroll. CVFRS is a private nonprofit and these are not Town employees. The Town has a contract with CVFRS and the Selectboard is not in charge of their management structure, Matt said. Fritz offered a \$10,000 reduction in the budget for the new position of CVFRS Manager.

As for the recreation budget taking a hit, Nicole said the Selectboard should be keeping in mind that Town revenues are made through this department and the recreation budget covers almost all of its own expenses. This budget is designed to keep making this money for the Town.

Approve Town Meeting warning

Articles were discussed. Article 7, which asked voters whether they would approve raising \$62,000 for the Trails Reserve Fund, was removed. Lewis Mudge asked for a needs-based budget. Matt said that is subjective and the Town needs to weigh in on these important issues. The Selectboard needs the data, Matt said.

At 10:25 PM Lewis Mudge left the Town Hall and joined the meeting remotely.

MOTION by James Faulkner, to approve the warning for the Town of Charlotte annual Town Meeting 2022, all seven articles, including the following money articles:

Article 3: Will the voters of the Town approve the Selectboard's budget of \$2,616,067 for the fiscal year July 1, 2022 to June 30, 2023 of which an anticipated sum of \$1,104,610 will be raised by property taxes and an anticipated sum of \$1,511,457 will be raised by non-tax revenues?

Article 4: Will the voters of the Town approve an allocation of \$890,526 to Charlotte Volunteer Fire and Rescue Services, Inc. for the fiscal year July 1, 2022 to June 30, 2023, to be raised by property taxes?

Article 5: Will the voters of the Town approve an allocation to the Charlotte Library for the fiscal year July 1, 2022 to June 30, 2023 of \$283,515, to be raised by property taxes?

Article 6: Will the voters of the Town approve raising a sum of \$50,000 by property taxes for the fiscal year July 1, 2022 to June 30, 2023 for the purpose of funding a feasibility study for the Charlotte Community Center project?

Matt Krasnow seconded the motion with a friendly amendment to word Article 6 “...raising up to a sum of \$50,000...”

DISCUSSION: Dean said the Town Attorney indicated the article needs to indicate a specific amount to be raised by taxes.

Matt Krasnow withdrew the amendment, and reiterated the second on the motion.

VOTE: 4 ayes; 1 absent (Louise McCarren); Motion Carried.

Town Report, 2021

This is still being edited.

Adjournment

MOTION by James Faulkner, seconded by Lewis Mudge, to adjourn. VOTE: 4 ayes; 1 absent (Louise McCarren); Motion Carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:30 p.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted, Lynn Monty, Recording Secretary.