

**CHARLOTTE SELECTBOARD SPECIAL MEETING**  
**Monday, January 3, 2021**  
**Charlotte Town Hall 159 Ferry Road and via teleconference**

**APPROVED**

**SELECTBOARD MEMBERS:** *In person:* James Faulkner, Chair, Frank Tenney, Vice Chair, Matthew Krasnow, (remote), Lewis Mudge, Louise McCarren.

**ADMINISTRATION:** Dean Bloch, Town Administrator (*in person*)

**OTHERS:**

*In person:* John Kerr, Jules Polk, Patrice Machavern, Fritz Tegatz

*Remote:* Scooter MacMillan, Robert Bloch, Nicole Conley, Bill Fraser-Harris, Dick St George, Rebecca Foster, Juliann Phelps, Chea Evans, Wolfger Schneider, Carrie Spear

**AGENDA ITEMS:**

6:00 PM        Adjustments to the agenda  
6:01 PM        Errors and omissions for 2021 Grand List  
6:10 PM        Update on Town Garage 6:15 PM Town Report, 2021  
6:20 PM        Personnel issue [possible executive session; 1 VSA §313(a)(1)(A)]  
6:25 PM        Personnel issue [possible executive session; 1 VSA §313(a)(3)]  
6:30 PM        Budget for FY23  
8:30 PM        CVFRS grievance [possible executive session; 1 VSA §313(a)(1)(D)]

**CALL TO ORDER**

**James Faulkner called the meeting into session at 6:00p.m.**

**Adjustments to the agenda**

None.

**Errors and omissions for 2021 Grand List**

- John Kerr presented, sharing that this Grand List was published in August so that the tax bills could be generated. Any changes from then until the end of December is in this report. It is a requirement by statute that the Selectboard make a motion and accept this report. There is no decision to be made but it does need to be accepted. There are three brackets of value on the first page of the document. The 411 is the standard report that they use. The Real Value is the Real Estate Value across the town and the Current Use Value is the value of the properties in that. The first number on top is the starting point of the year and the second number on the bottom is the finishing point of the year.
  - Real Value Changes, these changes were made after the initial submittal of the billable Grand List based on the review provided by the State of Vermont Tax Department.
  - Current Use changes, these changes were made based on their exchanges with the Current Use program office at the State of Vermont - Tax Department.

- James Faulkner made a comment that the two numbers in the summary are very close.

**MOTION by Louise McCarren, seconded by Matthew Krasnow that the Errors and Omissions for 2021 Grand List Report be accepted as presented by John Kerr. VOTE 5 ayes 0 nays; Motion Carried.**

#### **Update on Town Garage**

- James Faulkner gave an update that there are several different lots as options for building a new town garage on. Some of the owners of the lots would like to be anonymous at this time. He and Junior Lewis have spoken with a builder and Civil Engineering Associates is doing some work for the town to start planning.
- Five or six different people with experience of building town garages in Chittenden County have reached out expressing that they have the experience and would like to help as far as input of what worked for them and what didn't work. James Faulkner also reported that he has received a big outpouring of emails from people wanting and willing to help.
- The process involves getting an engineer, finding a site, wetland studies and other variables. They are trying to find a site that an engineer has a file on. James Faulkner said that they have a builder that is willing to do the work.
- Lewis Mudge asked about cost. James Faulkner shared that VT League of Cities and Towns thinks that ARPA funds are not available. He said that he is looking into it. They are also looking into potential grants also.
- Dean Bloch shared that you are allowed to fill gaps in the budget with ARPA but only if it's a result of COVID-19.
- Louise McCarren said that one of the Selectboard's priorities as a town is that essential services have to be delivered. James Faulkner agreed with her. He stated that a bond is a possibility.
- Lewis Mudge stated the bond would have to be voted on with the town and James Faulkner reported that that was correct and it would likely be voted on in July since it won't be ready for Town Meeting Day.

#### **Town Report, 2021**

- Dean asked if the Selectboard wants to dedicate this year's report to anyone or anything. Last year the report was dedicated to Charlotte's essential workers, to those we lost, and those who suffered loss due to Covid-19. The report is not dedicated every year.
- Plan is to check in with the family before going any further with the dedication decision.
- Selectboard report will be completed by Matthew Krasnow and submitted to James Faulkner for changes.

#### **Personnel issue [possible executive session; 1 VSA §313(a)(1)(A)]**

**MOTION by Louise McCarren, seconded by Lewis Mudge to enter into executive session; VSA §313(a)(1)(A), to discuss the personnel issue. VOTE: 5 ayes, 0 nays; Motion Carried.**

**MOTION by Frank Tenney, seconded by Lewis Mudge to exit executive session and reconvene as the Selectboard. VOTE: 5 ayes, 0 nays; Motion Carried.**

**MOTION by James Faulkner, seconded by Louise McCarren to grant a severance package for Carolyn Kulick, former Senior Center Director, to receive a lump sum payment of 19,579.02 and an approximate lump sum for Medicaid supplement reimbursement of 2,244.50 which will go from January to May. VOTE: 5 ayes, 0 nays; Motion Carried.**

**Personnel issue [possible executive session; 1 VSA §313(a)(3)]**

**MOTION by James Faulkner, seconded by Louise McCarren to enter into executive session; 1 VSA §313(a)(3) to discuss the personnel issue. VOTE: 5 ayes, 0 nays; Motion Carried.**

**MOTION by Frank Tenney, seconded by James Faulkner to exit executive session and reconvene as the Selectboard. VOTE: 5 ayes, 0 nays; Motion Carried.**

**MOTION by Louise McCarren, seconded by Lewis Mudge to hire Keith Osborne as the town of Charlotte's Zoning Administrator for a three-year term subject to the personal policy beginning January 20, 2022 at a starting pay of 29.50/hr. VOTE: 5 ayes, 0 nays; Motion Carried.**

### **Budget for FY23**

- Fritz Tegatz stated that he felt it important to give the Selectboard a little history on this Capital Reserve Fund. Five to ten years ago the allocation to fund based on dollars was as much as 300k/year and it tapered down due to the strategy to not have things paid for but to be able to bond it instead of having cash. He feels most people on the Selectboard now don't have the advantage of seeing what it was like ten years ago. The town strategy changed from the approval of 2-3 cents on the grand list to keep everything cash. This was changed because interest rates went down significantly and it was also thought that by paying for it as a separate warning and paying for it in the future, so that the people that live here will be paying for what they're using, opposed to having people in the past pay for it when they may no longer be town residents in the future when it's used
- Lewis Mudge asked the board if they wanted to continue to use bonds for this purpose. He feels interest rates will go up but not substantially.
- Dean Bloch stated that the apparatus has been bonded in the past.
- James Faulkner asked what the request from the town is for the Capital Reserve Fund. Dean replied that he created spreadsheets with 140k, 150k and 200k. Frank Tenney feels this should be 160k to keep it going up and prevent it from going into the negative. All agreed on 150k and to annually add as needed.
- James Faulkner asked what the total request for operating funds was from CVFRS. Dean Bloch shared that it is 890,611.
- Patrice Machavern stated that the updated amount is \$940,611 for the CVFRS Appropriation which includes the 50k for the manager position. The difference from last year is a \$158,415 increase. This increase is mostly due to the staffing, wage changes and benefits of the CVFRS. Personnel expenses are going up by \$159k. The additional money will come from the increased patient billing revenue that is anticipated and they will continue to look for grants and donations that will further reduce that amount.

- Matthew Krasnow stated that he calculates a 20.3% increase from last year's appropriation.
- James Faulkner asked about ARPA funds. He wondered if it could assist with this funding.
- Dean Bloch said it's largely for COVID-19 related issues.
- Frank Tenney wondered if it could be for supplies since some are related to COVID-19 needs. Lewis Mudge agreed with this as well. Fritz Tegatz added that the health care industry is stressed because of COVID-19 due to supplies needed and overtime of staff.
- Lewis Mudge stated that the Selectboard could call VLCT and inquire. James Faulkner concurred.
- Matthew Krasnow expressed a concern with how to explain this 20% increase to voters when this is a line item that accounts for 1/3 of the town's budget. In the past when there was in person town meetings CVFRS has given a presentation to explain the reason for the significant increases. Fritz Tegatz said that yes, they'd be able to do that.
- Louise McCarren stated that she had heard that the state was going to have the individual towns decide on whether or not they want to have an in-person town meeting.
- Patrice Machavern shared that they could do a video with explanation of the increases to have on the town website. James Faulkner also suggested an article for the voters to vote on.
- Matthew Krasnow stated that CVFRS is a critical town service and we are lucky to have them. He feels that the Selectboard needs to work on the issue of transitioning from mostly volunteer to full time employees with experience and qualifications. He feels it's difficult to have a 20% increase without getting to highlight the why of it with an in-person town meeting. He feels a separate article would be necessary if the town meeting were Australian ballot in order to be more informative for the taxpayers. This would include a separate article for the library as well.
- Patrice Machavern shared that she just got off the phone with Devon St George and if the \$12.5k stays in Reserve Fund budget for FY22 the \$12.5k can be removed from next year and every third year from there.

### **Budget for FY23**

- Dean Bloch stated that there is \$50k proposed for the Recreation Reserve Fund and the balance is around \$94k. Nicole Conley reports that they have \$77k and then they'll be able to add \$4,500 sale of the dock.
- Nicole Conley said that they typically ask for 30k each year to keep the Capital Reserve Fund but they decided to increase to \$50k cover some of the areas needed such as the playground and the docks and ramp. The extra funds would be used for tennis court and capital improvements.
- Louise McCarren asked about increasing the beach attendant wages. Nicole explained that yes that was the plan and they have plans to make the revenue to cover it with increased fees.
- Bill Fraser-Harris stated that their revenue has more than doubled at the beach in the last five years. They have a subcommittee now working on the implementation of the long-range plan. They are spending money to make money. Their activities are either revenue positive or revenue neutral. He wants to be given back what they make so they can reinvest it. He stated the increase has to do directly with the expense of the docks.

- James Faulkner asked what the increase is to the taxpayer. Dean Bloch stated that the tax rate is 6.4 cents per one hundred. James Faulkner wonders about ARPA funds again. He stated that the increase comes from the salary increases overall and the CVFRS.
- Lewis Mudge doesn't believe that ARPA is set up in a way that each town committee should be left to make requests with ARPA individually.
- James Faulkner reported that ARPA is for broad band, waste water/storm water and COVID-19 related.
- Louise McCarren asked about Dean's salary increase if it had gone up due to the adjustments. Dean responded that yes that is the case. He and the town clerk have the same salary based on coincidence. They had the same salary with the adjustment last summer and they're both in the same quadrant so they both get the 2% for the annual increase and 4.5% cola increase. It's possible that the cola increase might be 6%.
- Dean Bloch reported that there is a 29% increase in the budget.
- Lewis Mudge suggested another special meeting because the increase at 29% is extremely high.
- Matthew Krasnow stated that the taxpayer needs to know the increase is wage related and due to CVFRS structural reorganization.
- Dean Bloch shared that the benefits are up about \$28k (SS, health insurance, unemployment)
- Matthew Krasnow shared that the CVFRS went from \$95k to \$150k and \$158k increase due to the structural reorganization. The library is a \$65k increase which is a 30% increase, also wage driven.
- Lewis Mudge stated that it won't change the percentage that much to level fund the budget.
- Frank Tenney asked for a budget comparison for last year's budget and the proposed budget without the fire department and without the library?
- Lewis Mudge stated that the Selectboard needs to prepare for an Australian ballot. The Selectboard has to set up this budget and present it to the voters. The thought is to put in two separate articles. CVFRS and the library would be the two separate articles.
- Matthew Krasnow shared that the municipal budget is 1% of 11 and the school budget is 10% of 11.
- Dean Bloch reiterated that the request of him and plan is to have CVFRS and the library removed from the budget to make it clearer as to where they are at with the budget for next week's meeting.

### Adjournment

**MOTION by Louise McCarren, seconded by Matthew Krasnow to adjourn. VOTE: 5 ayes, 0 nays; Motion Carried.**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Brooke Milo, Minute Taker and edited by Dean Bloch, Town Administrator.