

CHARLOTTE SELECTBOARD MEETING
Monday, July 25, 2022
Charlotte Town Hall 159 Ferry Road and via teleconference

APPROVED

SELECTBOARD MEMBERS: *In person:* James Faulkner, Chair, Frank Tenney, Vice Chair, Lewis Mudge

Remote: Matthew Krasnow (remote; joined in person for the contract executive session), Louise McCarren, (remote initially; joined in person during review of minutes)

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

OTHERS:

In person: Mary Mead, Juliann Phelps, Bill Fraser-Harris, Jim Laberge, Gary Pittman, Donna Pittman, Tony Kinson, Mary Kinson, Rob Mullin

Remote: Nicole Conley, Justin Bliss, Debra Munson, Brett Yates, Claudia Mucklow, Juliann Phelps, Patrice Machavern

AGENDA ITEMS:

6:15 PM Adjustments to the agenda
6:16 PM Offer of employment for Assistant Town Clerk/Treasurer [possible executive session per 1 VSA §313(a)(3)]
6:30 PM Approve warrants to pay bills
6:35 PM Committee requests for unbudgeted expenditures (time allotted if needed)

- Trimming of bank at beach

6:40 PM Beach access ramp and ANR application update
6:50 PM Meet new Fire & Rescue Chief Justin Bliss
7:00 PM Public comment
7:05 PM Lieutenant Debra Munson, Williston Station Commander, Vermont State Police
7:20 PM Cemetery fence repair
7:25 PM Senior Center steps—repair
7:30 PM Registration with Public Utility Commission for Town Garage
7:50 PM Contracts for FY23

- Town Hall Cleaning
- Lewis Excavating

8:00 PM Town Garage

- Placeholder for updates
- Open for public comment

8:10 PM Town employee compensation review—process
8:15 PM Contracts [possible executive session per 1 VSA §313(a)(1)(A)]
8:50 PM Selectboard updates
8:55 PM Minutes: July 11, July 18
9:00 PM Adjournment

James Faulkner called the meeting to order at 6:15 p.m.

Adjustments to the agenda

James Faulkner stated that committee requests for unbudgeted expenditures, trimming of bank at beach was voted on at the last meeting and this item should be removed from the agenda. All agreed.

Offer of employment for Assistant Town Clerk/Treasurer [possible executive session per 1 VSA §313(a)(3)]

MOTION by James Faulkner, seconded by Louise McCarren, to enter into executive session under 1 VSA §313(a)(3) to discuss an offer of employment for Assistant Town Clerk/Treasurer, with an invitation for Dean Bloch and Mary Mead to join. VOTE: 3 ayes, 0 nays, (2 absent); Motion Carried.

Lewis Mudge joined the meeting in person, and Matthew Krasnow joined the meeting remotely.

MOTION by James Faulkner, seconded by Frank Tenney, to exit executive session. VOTE: 5 ayes, 0 nays; Motion Carried.

MOTION by James Faulkner, seconded by Lewis Mudge, to offer Emily Tupper a payrate of \$29/hour as Assistant Town Clerk Treasurer. VOTE: 5 ayes, 0 nays; Motion Carried.

Approve warrants to pay bills

Warrants were signed.

Beach access ramp and ANR application update

Nicole Conley presented; she stated that she and Matthew Krasnow are working on the ramp project. Unfortunately, someone recently fell down the stairs due to a railing being loose. An accessible way is needed. Julie Phelps, part of the Recreation Commission is present at the meeting and she is working on this as well. Pictures were shared with Dean Bloch, and these were shown on the screen at the Town Hall. The planning involves having the ramp come out and down toward the water. The land next to the road is eroding so they are looking at plans to prevent the loss of the road in the covered bridge area. A solution for this could be a cement wall. The ramp would be a removable ramp like the docks are. It would have railings and would allow anyone to walk down. People with boats and kayaks could also access the water here. They are currently working on shoreline permits and getting a grant from VT Trans to possibly get some stabilization of the wall. Matthew Krasnow stated that next steps are to navigate the process with the Agency of Natural Resources and then going forward from there as far as putting things out and looking at putting a ramp in for safer access down to the beach. There's another year on committing the grant funding. The critical path currently is the Agency of Natural Resources application process. Getting a determination to see if this needs a shorelands permit will be key. If it's considered a construction project and part of the stabilization of that section of Lake Road it could move a lot faster. Julie Phelps stated that it also needs to go in

front of the DRB because of where it is zoned. All the information collected and being sent to the ANR will also be submitted to the DRB.

Meet new Fire & Rescue Chief Justin Bliss

Justin Bliss stated that he is excited to be here and to start his position as Fire & Rescue Chief. He went to Champlain College for Computer Networking and decided it wasn't a field for him. From there he transitioned to Emergency Services and he took a job as an AENT and then he moved onto the South Burlington Fire Department where he worked for another eight years. While there he did a lot of technical rescue and he became a paramedic there as well. In 2016 he moved with his Naval Officer wife to Virginia. He worked for the city of Suffolk, Virginia as a Firefighter Paramedic. In 2020 he and his family moved back to VT and he was a stay at home dad but continued to work in the fire and rescue industry by volunteering for the VT Urban Search and Rescue Team. He continues to work there now as a Disaster Medical Specialist. He volunteered for the town of Hinesburg as a Lieutenant managing a number of their assets. He stated that he has never run an organization as a whole, so this is an exciting opportunity for him. The Selectboard welcomed him and expressed their gratitude.

Minutes: July 11, July 18

MOTION by James Faulkner, seconded by Lewis Mudge, to approve the minutes for July 18, 2022. VOTE: 3 ayes, 0 nays, (2 absent); Motion Carried.

Louise McCarren joined the meeting in person.

MOTION by Lewis Mudge, seconded by Frank Tenney, to approve the minutes for July 11, 2022 as amended. VOTE: 4 ayes, 0 nays, (1 absent); Motion Carried.

Public comment

Tony Kinson from Mt. Philo Road stated that he has a background in fire & rescue and he and his wife just recently moved to Charlotte. He asked who manages the fire & rescue organization. Frank Tenney stated that CVFRS has their own board. He asked who monitors how they run their operation as their service is so very expensive it would seem it should be a department of the town. James Faulkner stated that CVFRS has a board of directors and at budget time they present their budget. Reorganization of this is being looked at. Matthew Krasnow stated that the MOU is the governing document between the Town of Charlotte and the nonprofit CVFRS.

Tony Kinson also stated the beach is wonderful but the stones make it difficult to enjoy the beach. He feels the large boulders should be moved back up to help with the erosion and he wonders about removal of the small stones on the shore, as he feels that it doesn't violate the Shoreline Protection Act. He stated that he would be willing to volunteer with any of these projects. Frank Tenney stated that the beach items get handled by the Recreation Director and the Recreation Commission. Julie Phelps stated that the large boulders on the beach are a safety issue and she's glad that it was brought up. Julie Phelps also stated that the Recreation Commission has had a hard time trying to find a contractor to fix the cement stairs but she saw that the Senior Center got a quote from Whitcomb Concrete and she wonders if two town projects could be handled by one contractor?

Lieutenant Debra Munson, Williston Station Commander, Vermont State Police

Debra Munson stated that she just came over to Williston from the Northeast Kingdom. She spent most of her career over in Derby. She moved over to the St Albans area and then got transferred over to the Williston Barracks this past May. She has been Station Commander for the State Police for two years, and in Williston for the past couple of months. She is adjusting to Chittenden County. She's eight months pregnant with twins currently. Once she returns from maternity leave in January of 2023 she plans to attend Selectboard meetings to introduce herself. She encouraged the public to reach out directly to her or to the Selectboard with any concerns that they would like the State Police to know about. Lewis Mudge asked if there was any capacity to add more hours. Debra Munson stated that they don't have the capacity to add more hours at this time. The Williston Barracks is currently five positions short for Road Troopers. The State Police in general are down approximately between forty and fifty troopers and likely close to sixty at this point in time. Currently they provide around thirty-five hours a month for the town. The summer is their busiest time. She asked Dean Bloch to share her email and phone number with the Selectboard.

Cemetery fence repair

James Faulkner stated that this was discussed at the last meeting but in summary the Middlebury Fence Company gave a quote for \$5,648.68 for the repair of the fence at Barber Hill Cemetery. The town's insurance will pay for all but \$1k and a town resident has offered to pay the remaining \$1,000. Jim Laberge, Cemetery Commissioner, stated that the posts are set in concrete and because of the angle of the hill if they're moved down to the bottom then it becomes a hazard to mow because the bank is so steep. Frank Tenney stated that he wonders about guard rails there. Jim Laberge stated that there are only two feet to the side of the road now and if guard rails are put in there would only be one foot left for bikers. He stated residents and through traffic drivers simply drive through the area at unsafe speeds.

MOTION by Lewis Mudge, seconded by Louise McCarren, to approve the contract from Middlebury Fence Company, not to exceed \$5,648.68, for the repair of the fence at Barber Hill Cemetery. VOTE: 5 ayes, 0 nays; Motion Carried.

Senior Center steps—repair

Gary Pittman, a member of the Senior Center board, stated that he got a quote from Mark Whitcomb, owner of Whitcomb Concrete Construction for \$2,800 and he tried but was unsuccessful with getting two more quotes following. Other companies didn't return his calls or they reported that they could get to it in a year's time. He feels this is something that needs to get repaired now. There is \$4,000 in the Senior Center maintenance budget that is unspoken for right now. Louise McCarren stated it definitely needs repair. Frank Tenney asked that the contractor be made aware that there may be more work at the town beach that the town of Charlotte would like him to do.

MOTION by Louise McCarren, seconded by Frank Tenney, to approve the repair of the Senior Center steps for \$2,800 with the contractor, Whitcomb Concrete Construction. VOTE: 5 ayes, 0 nays; Motion Carried.

Registration with Public Utility Commission for Town Garage

James Faulkner stated that on the September 01, 2022, the PUC is going to take a penny away per kilowatt hour from anybody that is starting a new solar project. The goal is to have the town garage solar powered and he has done some research to see how much money that would save the town. In order to save that penny, the town needs to file for permit before September 1, 2022. He spoke with SunCommon and if they become a preferred vendor, they will file that permit for the town which would be a savings of \$500 for the town. The permit will last for one year only. It's undecided who the vendor will be for the solar panels at this time. For the current design of the town garage, 121,000 kilowatt hours per year is projected to be collected from the panels. There is potential for the roof solar panels on the town garage to supply enough power to run all three buildings, Town Hall, Library, and the Senior Center. Louise McCarren stated that she supports solar power but she remains skeptical about the regulatory structure and its ability to sustain. This topic will be discussed further at the next meeting and potentially voted upon at that time.

Contracts for FY23**• Town Hall Cleaning**

Dean Bloch stated that Town Hall cleaning RFP didn't initially get any responses, but following advertising in Seven Days, we received two response. One was from a woman who lives in Middlebury, Cindy Pratt; she provided an excellent reference. Her fee is higher than what the town budgeted for by around \$1,000 per year but her rates are in the realm of the current average. Her rate is \$200/week for cleaning two times per week. Dean Bloch reports that he did meet with her on two occasions and she has her own insurance and her own vacuum.

MOTION by Lewis Mudge, seconded by James Faulkner, to approve the contract with Cindy Pratt for Town Hall cleaning and to authorize Dean Bloch to issue her contract to be signed by the Chair not to exceed \$200/wk. VOTE: 5 ayes, 0 nays; Motion Carried.

• Lewis Excavating

Dean Bloch stated this contract with Lewis Excavating is for the Road Commissioner and it runs March to March. We neglected to get this done last March. This contract is for road maintenance and not bridge maintenance.

MOTION by Frank Tenney, seconded by Lewis Mudge, to approve the contract with Lewis Excavating, LLC for maintenance of town highways to be signed by the chair. VOTE: 5 ayes, 0 nays; Motion Carried.

Town Garage**• Open for public comment**

Mary Kinson stated she would like to know the expense to the town for the solar project on the town garage on top of what is already going to be spent on building it. James Faulkner stated that it's a completely separate issue to the expense of building the town garage. There might be some grants and some incentives or they may try a third party. Frank Tenney stated that the solar project is not part of the expense to build the town garage. The plans for the town garage are simply that it will be solar ready. In the interim the town garage will be run by electricity and wood. James Faulkner stated that Junior Lewis collects wood as he takes trees down for

proper road travel, and it makes sense to use the dry wood. The new outside wood furnaces no longer create billows of smoke, and the primary energy source will be the wood and the back up will be electricity. The fuel supply is basically going to be free as the trees need to come down anyway. It will be air to water heat pumps and it's going to be radiant heat in the work area. The good thing about this is that the work area will be set at 55-58 degrees so it will be less expensive to heat compared to other town buildings. The town doesn't own any of the equipment. Without Junior Lewis the equipment would be needed and would run around \$3 million. Tony Kinson asked about the ARPA fund lasting longer than one year. Frank Tenney clarified that municipalities will receive a set amount that can be used in multiple years.

Town employee compensation review—process

James Faulkner stated that there is the Salary Administration Policy and two employees are questioning their compensation. The way this is to be handled is that the supervisor will review the case. So, in this case Dean Bloch is going to review one and the other will be reviewed by Matthew Krasnow. They will each do the review that is needed and then will present something to the Selectboard. This is the policy.

Selectboard updates

James Faulkner stated that the plan for the Halloween party that takes place annually is to expand slightly. There's a town resident who would like to have a band on the corner by the Brick Store. James Faulkner, Dean Bloch, and Lewis Mudge met with Fire & Rescue, the town Constable and the taxpayer that is requesting this. The discussion was about safety issues such as lighting, traffic and closing of roads. The Constable was adamant that Ferry Road, as a state road, can't be closed, but it's possible to close a portion of Greenbush Road. The taxpayer wanting this is willing to pay for flaggers at those locations. The plan is to meet again in a few weeks. Frank Tenney stated that he is in favor of this but he questions the safety and liability of the event. Louise McCarren stated that the event may need to be moved.

Contracts [possible executive session per 1 VSA §313(a)(1)(A)]

MOTION by James Faulkner, seconded by Lewis Mudge, to enter into executive session under 1 VSA §313(a)(3) to discuss contracts, with a request for Dean Bloch and Rob Mullin to join. VOTE: 4 ayes, 0 nays, (Matthew Krasnow absent); Motion Carried.

Matthew Krasnow joined the meeting in person at the beginning of the executive session. Louise McCarren left towards the end of the executive session.

MOTION by Frank Tenney, seconded by Lewis Mudge, to exit executive session and reconvene as the Selectboard. VOTE: 4 ayes, 0 nays, (Louise McCarren absent); Motion Carried.

No action taken.

Adjournment

MOTION by James Faulkner, seconded by Matthew Krasnow, to adjourn. VOTE: 4 ayes, 0 nays, (Louise McCarren absent); Motion Carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:37 p.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted, Brooke Milo, Minute Taker. Edits by Dean Bloch.