

## MINUTES OF THE WEEKLY SELECTMEN'S MEETING

### TOWN OF CHARLEMONT

February 17, 2004

The meeting was convened at 7:30 P.M. by Chairman Charles Bellows. Also attending the meeting were James Gariepy and Erwin Reynolds, Sr.. It was announced that the meeting was being tape recorded.

1. The first appointment of the evening was with Melody Whelden. Ms Whelden came before the Board to inquire why the dog named Penny, owned by Craig Rice, was still wondering loose on the streets when Charlemont has a leash law and Mr. Rice has been ordered to keep the dog contained. Mr. Bellows responded that several calls have been made to the Dog Officer. Ms Whelden stated that the Dog Officer is not doing his job and that the Board should fire him and find someone else for the job. Mr. Bellows stated that here in lies the problem as no one else has stepped forward to do the job. A letter will be sent to Mr. Rice informing him that Penny will be picked up by the Dog Officer and a letter will be sent to the Dog Officer instructing him to pick up and hold the dog . Ms Whelden next spoke about the sidewalks along Main Street that are covered with snow. Ms Whelden stated that anyone who walks Main Street, including the kids walking to school, has to walk in the road because the sidewalks are impassable due to the snow. This is dangerous. Mr. Reynolds stated that the problem with the sidewalks not being cleared is that the sidewalks are owned by the State. In order for the Town to be able to clear the walks, the Town will need a working agreement with the State, the Town will need to take out insurance to work on State owned property at a cost, also we will need to hire a part time worker with the proper license, buy the proper equipment at a cost to the Town. This request has been brought to Town Meeting several times and it has been voted down each time. An article on the Town Meeting Warrant to have the property owners clear the walks along their property has been voted down as well. Minimum estimate cost per year for this job is \$15,000 not including the purchase of the proper equipment. Estimated cost of the proper equipment is between \$40,000 and \$80,00. The BOS are not taking this issue lightly and have been doing research on it. Mr. Bellows stated that there are some people in Town that do remove snow from the walks in front of their property. Mr. Gariepy stated that if the Town needs to receive permission from the State to clear the walks, the Town can do that, but it's the expense that is the issue. Perry Schwarzer reported that Mass Highway encourages Towns to clear walks along their highways. Mr. Schwarzer also stated that in order for the Board to set an example for the Town, the Town should be clearing the walks in front of Town property. Mr. Schwarzer suggested that the Highway Crew remove the snow from the walks with the Town bucket loader. Mr. Bellows stated that the bucket loader can not remove the snow properly because of the angle of the bucket and then the remaining snow that freezes has a pitch towards Route 2, thusly leaving another dangerous situation. Also, after the walks have been cleared, residents do not sand/salt them and they become dangerously icy. Sub-contracting was suggested but there in

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additional money that the Town does not have. Mr. Gariepy agreed that the walks do need to be cleared and at ATM he will be pushing to pass either spending money to buy the proper equipment & hiring a qualified part time operator or the bylaw that will require residents to clear the walks in front of their property. Ms Whelden stated that she pays taxes and in the 3 ½ years she has lived her she has never cleared the walk in front of her property. Ms Whelden stated that the Town should pay to have the walks cleared. Ms Whelden stated that her house is for sale because of the attitude she receives from the Board very time she comes in with an issue and that the attitude she receives is because she is a woman. Mr. Gariepy stated that Ms Whelden should help with a solution. The Highway Super and/or liaison will contact Hawlemont to see if they will agree to keep the walk in front of the tennis courts clear.

2. Mr. Schwarzer was recognized. He questioned the Board if the Tax Collector's home is considered a Town office. The Board responded that Town Counsel should be contacted to find out. Mr. Schwarzer stated that he feels a Town office should not have scarecrows with their pants down and that it is inappropriate for the Tax Collector to display such scarecrows at her office/home. This issue will be put on action for next weeks meeting.

3. Ruth Cannavo reported that the Emergency Preparedness Commission is giving each Town \$2000.00 so the Board of Health may purchase a computer system that will tie into the Mass. Alert network. The money will come to the Board of Health as a mini grant. Ms Cannavo research this grant further.
4. The Board signed the warrants and approved and signed the minutes.
5. The letter reminding Mass Highway that Chairman Bellows is the sole official contact for the Town concerning the Bissell Bridge and asking for an update was signed.
6. A letter reminding Shaw Walsh that dog fees are still due was signed.
7. An introduction letter for the Deerfield River Impact Committee was signed.
8. The Selectmen voted to issue and waive the fees for a 1 day only, wine only, permit for the Franklin Land Trust when they hold their yearly "Art on Sunday" event that is going to be held on March 14<sup>th</sup> between 2:00 P.M. and 5:00 P.M. at the Academy at Charlemont. The permit was also signed.
9. The Chapter 90 reimbursement form was signed.
10. The STRAP Grant reimbursement forms were signed.
11. The designation of applicants agent form for FEMA funds was signed by the Chair.
12. The RKG invoice from the FRCOG was approved and signed by the Chair.
13. The Board approved March 1 - 5 as a vacation week for their Adm. Asst..
14. The Three Town Landfill meeting, to be held on February 18, 7:00 P.M. agenda was approved.
15. The Board voted to charge an administrative fee for processing payments to the Fire Chief for inspections. The adm. fee is 10% of the fee for the inspection. A letter stating that Charlemont will be charging the processing fee will be drafted by the Adm. Asst. and forwarded to the Fire Chief.
16. Mr. Gariepy, Fire Department liaison, wrote an answer to the Fire Chiefs' questions concerning the new Fire Chief Town vehicle. The vehicle will be ready by the end of March.
17. A letter from the Highway Super Gordon Hathaway was read. The letter states that Mr. Hathaway would like to end his contract with the Town and become an hourly employee while retaining his current position as Highway Super along with his current benefits that have been included in the Highway Supers job description. Mr. Bellows recommended that as of April 1, 2004 Mr. Hathaway's contract with the Town be terminated and he become a regular Town employee, at his current compensation and his current benefits. Mr. Hathaway has exceeded his 9 ½ year mark which will bring him up to 4 weeks vacation. This recommendation was seconded. Mr. Hathaway was asked if he agreed with the motion. Mr. Hathaway stated that he did. This was unanimously voted by the Board. The job description was next reviewed. Mr. Bellows recommended that under qualifications, "or equivalent" be added at the end of "must be a high school graduate". Also added to the description is that the "Board has the right to add duties as necessary". Mr. Bellows stated that he would like to see the Super attend more meetings with Mass Highway. Mr. Bellows requested the Super to included with his time sheet a "jest" of what is lined up, weather permitting, for the following week. The general statement of duties for the Highway Super was accepted by vote. The job description will be retyped.
18. The Board asked that no appointments be scheduled for February 24 so the Board may work on their Budget, Town policies, and Annual Town Report.
19. The Adm. Asst. will draft a letter supporting Marguerite Willis' letter concerning formulas for State aid for the schools.
20. Mr. Hathaway stated that the offensive scarecrow pumpkin people are not on the Tax Collector's property.
21. Mr. Schwarzer questioned the Selectmen if the Town offices that are in homes need to be handy-capped accessible. Mr. Bellows believes that they do not and the Selectmen are trying to get all Town offices in the Town Hall.
22. Mr. Gariepy reported that because of the low amount and that the quote is through a State contractor list, only one quote is needed for the fire alarm system work. For the contract of the system, the Town will go with option #3 on the recommendation of the electrician. The office received copies of the submittals for the project. Palmeri Electric will be in within 2 weeks to start the project.
23. Mr. Reynolds stated that Raymond Purinton can not longer be on the Veteran's committee. Bud Purinton is willing to take his place. The Board voted to appoint Bud Purinton to the Veteran's Committee.

24. Mr. Reynolds reported that the MMAC will be putting together a proposal concerning State funds for Schools and MMAC will be bringing all 9 Town Representatives together at a meeting to discuss the proposal. Mr. Reynolds encouraged Mr. Bellows and Mr. Gariepy to come to that meeting with him, the date to be announced later.
25. Mr. Gariepy requested the Adm. Asst. contact the Ambulance Director to find out the status of the contract with Bay State and when the start date is.
26. The Adm. Asst. will be requesting the Town Hall Custodian to shovel to and around the Town Hall sign.
27. Mr. Gariepy stated that he supports the Town Highway Crew to see about making a safe sidewalk along one side of Route 2 or at least have the Town property walk removed of snow. The Highway Super was informed that he should have a Police Officer on duty when they are working on the sidewalks for safety purposes. Mr. Bellows stated that the Super will probably find an Officer on Friday.
28. Mr. Gariepy stated that he would not like to see Ms Whelden leave Town but to help become a solution to problems.
29. Mr. Bellows requested Mr. Reynolds Sr. to ask Erwin Reynolds, Jr. if he would be interested in becoming the Charlemont Animal Control Officer or is he would be interested in becoming the Assistant Animal Control Officer. If so, it would require the Town to purchase a couple kennels. Mr. Reynolds will research the cost of a couple kennels.
30. Mr. Bellows requested all the Board members to bring in something to add to the Selectmen's Town Report next week. Mr. Reynolds will concentrate on Schools and Mr. Gariepy will concentrate on the Fire Department and Town Hall. Mr. Bellows will concentrate on Highway.
31. Mr. Reynolds reported that the time sheet for the Crossing Guard seems to be working.
32. Mr. Bellows reported that the Board has received a letter from a resident thanking the Highway Crew for their good work with clearing snow this winter.
33. Cars traveling with excessive speed in the Town Hall driveway was reported. The Highway Super will look into installing a "Slow Children" sign for the Town Hall.

Business be concluded, the meeting was adjourned at 8:55 P.M..

Respectfully submitted:

Approved by:  
Board of Selectmen

Kathy A. Chadwick  
Administrative Assistant

This document is to be considered a draft until approved and signed by the Board of Selectmen.