

Charlemont Board of Health Minutes

May 27, 2026

Zoom

Present: Doug Telling, Scott Randall, Rob Lingle Star Atkeson – secretary

Guests: Wilder Sparks, Kurt Schellenberg, Jonathan Mirin, John Hoffman, Ellen Landauer, Godeliève Richard, Hussein Hamdan

Appointment: 6:15 Jonathan Mirin Discussion regarding a potential energy-saving and public health impact reduction measure related to National Grid's smart meter rollout scheduled for June 11

Jonathan Mirin and Ellen Landau addressed the Board regarding National Grid's June 11 smart meter rollout, worried about the effects of radiofrequency (RF) emissions on public health, and impacts on the Town's rural character and aesthetics. They asked the Board of Health to open an investigation and request that National Grid pause the rollout. Landau questioned the reliability of some peer-reviewed studies funded by industry and encouraged the Board to consider independent and international research. Mirin referenced the recent Town Meeting vote regarding small-cell setbacks, arguing that residents supported greater local control over wireless infrastructure. He described National Grid's planned communication system as a mesh network using whip antennas, displayed a map of the proposed installations, suggested using the Verizon tower at Berkshire East as an alternative, and argued that the FCC had not adequately considered evidence regarding long-term RF exposure.

Board members discussed the current scientific understanding of RF exposure and the Board's authority over the issue. Scott Randall said he would like to see peer-reviewed. Rob Lingle stated that, based on information he had reviewed, smart meters emit RF levels comparable to a television remote and that Wi-Fi routers emit more RF. Lingle questioned whether the Board of Health had jurisdiction over utility infrastructure, noting that regulation generally falls under the Department of Public Utilities. W. Sparks noted that RF emissions from smart meters are non-ionizing and differ from forms of radiation known to directly damage DNA. He said he was not aware of scientific evidence establishing health risks from smart meters but remained open to reviewing additional research.

John Hoffman urged the Board to apply a precautionary approach, stating that community concerns should be taken seriously even where scientific consensus has not been reached. Landau compared the discussion to historical public health controversies, arguing that emerging risks can take years to fully understand. Board members discussed the possibility of collecting local RF measurements, while noting that RF signals are already present from numerous sources in homes and communities, making the results difficult to interpret. Godeliève Richard suggested preserving areas of Town with limited cellular coverage while allowing greater cellular service in other areas.

Rob Lingle moved that the Board measure the RF from a smart meter. Doug Telling seconded the motion. Doug Telling – Yes, Rob Lingle – Yes, Scott Randall – Yes

- Mirin asked whether the Board could communicate its concerns to the Selectboard. W.Sparks, Select Board member said that he would be willing to bring it forward for further discussion.

Action items:

1. Minutes of 4/28/2026

Scott Randall made a motion to approve the April 28, 2026 minutes as amended. Rob Lingle seconded the motion. D.Telling-yes, R.Lingle-yes, S.Randall-yes.

Discussion:1. 107 Main Street – Charlemont Inn

Hussein Hamdan joined the meeting to speak about the Inn. Hamdan will be applying for an Underutilized Property Grant from Massachusetts. Lingle was less than pleased that work was not consistently being done, one of the conditions for allowing the condemnation placards to remain off the building. Hamdan reiterated his preference to not have condemnation placards visible on the Inn. He does have no trespassing signs. The posted “no trespassing” signs satisfied Lingle. The condemnation placards may remain off the building.

2. 280 Zoar Rd there will be a full outside inspection this summer, with orders to follow.3. 2155 Route 2 The Board would like the health agents to do an inspection there, and write a letter to the owner to correct the violations for trash in the yard.**Recurring Topics:**1. Health Agent Report

- Some of the health agents are doing a 3-day class on car seat safety and installation.
- Food truck inspections are ramping up.
- Schellenberg is busy doing many Title Vs, contractors and installers are busy.
- Colrain sewer district is a big project.
- M.Ward is training fulltime to get certified to do Title V inspections.

Doug Telling made a motion to adjourn @7:40 pm. Rob Lingle seconded the motion. Telling -yes, Lingle- yes, Randall- yes.

Documents Reviewed

- Agenda 5/27/ 2026
- Minutes of 4/28/2026