

Town of Charlemont
Joint Finance Committee and Select Board Meeting Minutes
January 29th, 2025
Town Hall and via Conference Call

Board Members Present: Jay Healy, Lynn Hathaway, Kim Blakeslee, Amy Wales

Others present: Scott Sullivan, Sarah Reynolds, Star Atkeson

Members On phone: Rich Filoramo, Ron Smith

Rich Filoramo called the meeting to order at 4:29 PM.

DISCUSSION ITEMS:

- 1) Overview of tax rate reduction and what it may mean for future tax rates.
 - Sarah let the Board know that the new tax rate is based on higher assessed values. The new Berkshire East Ski Lift was assessed at 6.8 million, (already depreciated \$200,000.) Residential and mixed use rose 2 million. Single Family homes were up 8.5%, condos up 4.9%, miscellaneous residential up 10.7%, mix use up 34%. Utility/ telephone went up 17.2%, the electric generating company assessed value went up 13.1%. Residential and personal property will depreciate.
 - Rooms and meals' tax varied. FY25 Jun-Aug increased \$140,070.30. Meals tax was up \$677.86
 - September-November meals were down \$1,455.66.
 - Cherry Sheet numbers, it's too early to tell. There were two increases, VGA went up (and exemptions)
 - Chapter 70 went from \$102,000. to \$106,000.
 - The transportation revenue went up from last year. Ambulance revenue went down considerably (looking into doing a district)
 - FYI, the \$122,000 for the ambulance grant is here.
- 2) Overview of the town's current financial health and projections for the remainder of the fiscal year.
 - The current budget year is in good shape. The general fund budget is 4 million. As of January 14th, 52% is expensed, with 5 months remaining. 6 Lines are over budget The historical commission is negative \$84.
 - Sarah will send the Board the LA 4 form.

APPOINTMENTS:

4:45 Scott Sullivan, Highway Department Highway Superintendent to go over FY 26 Highway budget request

- Scott said that the HWY department is level funding everything. Winter contractual services is up. There is mechanic work that they have to ship out to have done. There were parking brake issues on the loader and the 2012 RAM had a 13,844-repair charge for wiring issue. The Ram is a lemon.
- Lynn suggested doing a 5-year rolling average instead of 3.

- Amy wants to see the whole budget before they decide on what changes to make. She suggested going up a little more than average. There is a potential of \$3,000. savings. Jay remarked that the equipment is old, and the winters are uncertain. Winter contractual services, 5 year rolling average is \$8,090. Amy thinks that a 3-year average is fine as there have been significant increases in the last 2 years.
- The old equipment is a big liability for HWY. Sarah remembered a \$40,000 transmission repair during Gordy's time
- Any repair from November 1st to April first can be charged to *winter. April to October needs to be fitted in- to the budget.
- The Board spoke about vehicles and the challenge of getting capital items approved, which is why they maintain older equipment. They spoke about leasing, (pricier than buying.) Electric trucks are still about 5 years out. They would need charging infrastructure in their headquarters.
- Kim asked questions about a mechanism other than Town meeting to make decisions. A special town meeting is also a few-months process.
- Update on the Fire Engine. The earmark made it into the earmark list in a bill with USDA items within the Federal budget.
- Rich Filoramo motioned to adjourn the meeting seconded by Lynn Hathaway. All in favor.
- Next regularly scheduled meeting will be held on Wednesday, February 12th at 4:30 PM.

Documents viewed at meeting:

Agenda of 1/29/2025

FY26 Winter Contracted services request from Scott Sullivan

Highway FY2026 Budget sheet