

CHARLEMONT SELECTBOARD

MEETING MINUTES

Monday, June 9th, 2025, 5:30 pm

in person and via conference call, Town Hall, 157 Main Street, Charlemont MA

Members in attendance: Kim Blakeslee, Jared Bellows, Wilder Sparks

Others in attendance: Sarah Reynolds, Bob Nelson, Molly Cantor, Cheryl Handsaker, Madison Schofield, Star Atkeson

Jared Bellows, Chair of this meeting, called the meeting to order at 5:30 pm.

5:30 PM- Planning Board RE: Appoint Molly Cantor to the vacant planning board seat

Bob explained that the PB's vacant seat didn't appear on the ballot to write Molly in, so it was recommended that the SB appoint her for one year, and she can get on the ballot next year. Kim and Molly spoke about the role, they appreciate Molly's interest and willingness. **Jared Bellows made a motion to appoint Molly Cantor to the Planning Board for one year. Wilder Sparks seconded the motion. All in favor.**

5:45 PM- Rachel Gammell RE: Questions on accuracy of Town Meeting items and discussion on the School Items. This appointment did not happen.

6:00 PM- Representative Natalie Blais to discuss Legislative Priorities for this session and also approve letters for Recreation Tax, Fire District, and continuation of Recall Petition so legislation can be sent back with her for filing as voted at Town Meetings.

Natalie Blais came for her annual outreach and gave the Select Board members pages of legislation that she had brought forward on behalf of her constituents in the State Legislature.

Topics discussed were:

- FairShare
- Rural School Aid, there is an in-person and virtual briefing on June 25th.
- Sarah touched base on the Warrant Articles that passed on Town Meeting Floor: Rec tax, exploring Fire District legislation with Rowe, and the recall bylaw in a previous year. Ms. Blais needs the recall letter electronically again.
- They spoke about the progress on The Environmental Bond Bill or Payment for State Owned Land in lieu of taxes legislation. Jared said he would be happy to testify to the value of the land out here to the State as a whole. It can be given in person, virtually or in writing. Some State-Owned land costs communities' money. It is more valuable to the community as open land than developed, but does not bring in revenue. Blais said that Western Massachusetts is still getting less overall even though there is additional funding for the PILOT program. They spoke of the need to redevelop formulas. The EEA will look into carbon sequestration criteria as well.
- They spoke about the Farm Bill and about farmers not able to make money on the land therefore farmland being developed (as in Easthampton) into housing.
- Kim brought up an issue to Blais that she is familiar with, which is the prohibitively expensive requirement to be in code compliance before becoming eligible for home modification grants. Blais said she can look into that.

The Board needs to approve letters for Recreation Tax, Fire District, and continuation of Recall Petition so legislation can be sent back with Blais for filing.

Jared Bellows made a motion that they all sign that letter, Jared will sign as Chair. Wilder Sparks seconded the motion. All in favor.

Administrators Report:

- 1) CD Davenport South River Road Bridge Lowest Bidder, discuss and approve contract.
CD Davenport was the lowest bidder at \$539,994. and won the contract. Sarah said they will use chapter 90 and Fair Share funding to offset the grant to pay for the bridge. The Long Bridge is slated as a TIP project for 2027, and the South River Road bridge will be needed as an alternate route.
Jared Bellows made a motion to approve the contract. Kim Blakeslee seconded the motion. All in favor.
- 2) Shun Pike Porta Potty Agreement with Franklin Regional Council of Governments, funding in Mass Woodlands Grant, discuss and approve agreement. The total amount came to \$2,135.69 for one regular and one handicap porta pottie for Shunpike. They are cleaned after the weekends. DOT is doing the trash. They spoke about how to fund the extra \$135.69, Sarah suggested the reserve fund.
Wilder Sparks made a motion to approve the agreement and fund it with the reserve fund. Jared Bellows seconded the motion. All in favor.
- 3) Electrical Aggregation indicative pricing results and approval, discuss and give authorization for a Charlemont Representative to sign agreement on June 11, 2025. It is up for renewal at the end of this year. Do RFP's now. The cost will go up to 15cents in August. A representative needs to be on the call on June 11th to sign off, they will stay with the same three products. Wilder volunteered to be on the call. **Jared Bellows made a motion to designate Wilder Sparks and Sarah Reynolds to take care of it and sign the agreement on June 11th. Kim Blakeslee seconded the motion. All in favor.**

Agenda items:

- 1) Reorganization of the Selectboard – elect a chair
Kim said that she had spoken to Sarah and would elect herself in the role of co-chair. Jared and Kim discussed how they would share the role. **Wilder Sparks made a motion to elect Jared and Kim as co-chairs as described. Jared Bellows seconded the motion. All in Favor.**
- 2) Selectboard Policies Document update, discussion and vote: policies include all policies voted previously by selectboard and include items such as complaints, mileage, appointing members to empty board seats, website policies, flag policy, and surplus property disposition.
This policy book is a lot to read and will be deferred to the next meeting. **Jared Bellows made a motion to table it for the next meeting. Kim Blakeslee seconded the motion. All in favor.**
- 2) Assessors request to contact the town council concerning tax map updates
Jared had spoken to Carlene, the Assessors' clerk and was told that the rules have changed they need to update the maps and do it properly, therefore have requested to use Town Counsel advice. They need clarification on what to do if there is a dispute and the landowner's maps don't agree.
Jared Bellows made a motion to give assessors' permission to contact Town Counsel with a question. Wilder Sparks seconded the motion. All in favor.

- 3) National Grid Request to remove language from the Legate Hill Pole Petition Decision. At the Legate Hill Pole Hearing decision, the Select Board included the language in their motion that National Grid be responsible for the cost of reattaching broadband to the new and replaced poles that were in the pole hearing. Now National Grid would like them to remove that language saying that they didn't have the authority to do that. Sarah would like to get clarification from Town Counsel, and bring it back for next meeting.

Jared Bellows made a motion to give Sarah Reynolds permission to contact Town Counsel with the question. Wilder Sparks seconded the motion. All in favor.

Approve and Sign:

- 1) Minutes of May 27, 2025

Jared Bellows made a motion to approve and sign the May 27th Minutes as written. Wilder Sparks seconded the motion. All in favor.

- 2) Payroll and Vendor Warrants

Jared Bellows made a motion to approve and sign the payroll and vendor warrants. Kim Blakeslee seconded the motion. All in favor.

- 3) Seasonal Renewal Liquor License Form Alcoholic Beverage Control Commission

Jared Bellows made a motion to approve and sign the Seasonal Renewal Liquor License Form. Kim Blakeslee seconded the motion. All in favor.

- 4) KP Law invoice 153342

Jared Bellows made a motion to approve and sign the KP Law invoice, Wilder Sparks seconded the motion. All in favor.

- 5) Day-off request from Thorne Palmer.

Jared Bellows made a motion to approve Thorne's request; Wilder Sparks seconded the motion. All in favor.

- 6) Vacation request from Carlene Hayden

Jared Bellows made a motion to grant the time requested; Kim Blakeslee seconded the motion. All in favor.

Jared Bellows made a motion to adjourn the meeting and sign the paperwork at 6:45; Wilder Sparks seconded the motion. All in favor.

Documents reviewed in meeting

Agenda of June 9, 2025

Minutes of May 19, 2025

Minutes of May 27, 2025

FRCOG Professional services Agreement porta potties at Shunpike signed by Claire McGinnis dated 5/28/2025 and Jared Bellows dated June 9th, 2025

Email from Carlene Hayden to the Select Board re: request to use remaining FY2025 Holiday/Vacation time dated June 5, 2025

Legislation introduced by Natalie Blais

Charlemont's Fire District warrant article wording

May 2025 SelectBoard Policy Book Draft