

**CHARLEMONT SELECTBOARD
MEETING MINUTES**

Monday, March 10th, 2025, 6:00 pm

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

Members in attendance: Kim Blakeslee, Valentine Reid, Jared Bellows

Others in attendance: Sarah Reynolds, Star Atkeson, Madison Schofield, Cheryl Handsaker, Charlotte Dewey, Randy Crochier

Valentine Reid called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm

Administrators Report:

1. Conway Meeting with Governor Healy about Chapter 90 and Road Formulas

Sarah spoke of a meeting that was had in Conway with the Governor in which they learned of the filing of a bill that would significantly increase chapter 90 money if it passes. The formula would be based on road miles rather than road miles + unemployment. It would bring Charlemont's allotment from 300,000. and change to @ 1 million per year if it passed.

2. Municipal Vulnerability Plan Grant update/ approve and sign paperwork to secure funding

The grant for the MVP was approved with Colrain. There will be some seed money to start a project as well. They will have some meetings with Colrain. Jared, as HWY, Ambulance and EMT liaison will be in touch.

Kim Blakeslee motioned to sign the MVP grant to secure the funding. Valentine Reid seconded the motion. All in Favor.

3. Update on Master Plan and Open Space Plan updates

- The OSRP was submitted to the State, they are waiting for feedback.
- The Master Plan Update survey has gone out today. Sarah will send out their deliverables to all the Boards for feedback.

4. Pump Track follow up and scheduling a new meeting

Sarah has forwarded the Conway School plan to the group who proposed the pump track at the fairgrounds. There was some feedback from residents. Val would like to do a meeting with parks and rec, be in the same room with everyone getting the same information. That could be a separate meeting. There was confirmation that a pump track appeared in the Open Space Plan. Val feels the Conway School of Design Plan was the North Star document. The Board discussed the reasons they feel the Conway School of Design Plans were good. They said they didn't rule out a pump track for Charlemont but wanted to focus on other locations. They will have the meeting at the beginning of the next Select Board meeting.

Liaison Reports:

1) The Mohawk and Hawlemont School Sustainability Study Meeting follow up, discuss possible town meeting warrant item about Chapter 70 funding for rural schools

Val and Kim went to the meeting and discussed the different options that were proposed. It is a long timeline with many phases. All plans involve merging Hawlemont with The Mohawk District. The Hawlemont and Sanderson buildings are in the best shape. Kim proposed, as one phase, to divide the student population in half between Sanderson and Hawlemont.

They discussed the Towns putting together a legal fund of \$50,000 for an initial exploration to bring a class action against the State, if recommended by the school committees. The last lawsuit in the 90's was successful. Jared liked the idea. They will write a letter to the school committees that Charlemont Select Board supports the

Mohawk Trail School Committee effort to draft a warrant article for the 2025 Annual Town Meeting which would fund legal action against the Commonwealth of Massachusetts regarding Chapter 70 funding.

Valentine Reid made a motion that Charlemont Select Board supports the Mohawk Trail School Committee effort to draft a warrant article for the 2025 Annual Town Meeting which would fund legal action against the Commonwealth of Massachusetts regarding Chapter 70 funding. Jared Bellows seconded the motion. All in favor.

- 2) Franklin Regional Council of Governments Health Services Contract, discussion and follow up
Randy Crochier came in to talk about the Health Agent's work in Charlemont to see whether it was good value for Charlemont to use the service or if they should consider hiring their own person. Randy provided the report of what was done for Charlemont by the Health agents. There was a lengthy discussion of all the aspects of the job. The enforcement piece was what the Selectboard was most concerned with and the Board asked Randy how they could affect change in that area. Randy said that getting access to Town Counsel was the biggest obstacle towards progress for those cases. The Select Board offered to give Randy access to a BoH legal fund. They will draft a warrant article to bring to Town Meeting which will suggest portioning an amount of money to go directly to a Board of Health legal fund and authorizing the Administrator to approve the use.
Val suggested bringing it up with the finance committee.

Kim Blakeslee made a motion to sign the new FRCOG CPHS agreement. Jared Bellows seconded the motion. All in favor.

Agenda items:

- 1) Selectboard FY 2025 Budget review and complete
- The Board spoke about line item 25, the police line item dedicated to speed patrol. It would offer additional hours to officers dedicated to patrol. Jay Pelletier wants to put money aside for traffic enforcement. The police shifts are from 3:00-11:00 PM, which doesn't give time for daytime speeding enforcement. There had been a Saturday and Sunday shift, through the community policing grants, but they aren't available anymore. It can be decided on Town Meeting Floor. The amount can be adjusted if need be. It will be brought to the Finance Committee.
 - Some assessments are missing.
 - Most everything is level-funded
 - Electricity ran a little close. In FY2024 there was an MBI payment of \$3,000, which wasn't reflected in this budget. There is space heater use which is costing an additional \$1,500. Electricity will need to be increased by a few thousand.
 - The SelectBoard needs to get salary info for the Finance Committee.
 - The Cost-of-Living Adjustment will follow the social security increase —2.5%.
 - Val suggested adding a line item to hire a 20-hour Fire Chief and EMT (to split with Rowe.)

Valentine Reid made a Motion to set town Employee Salary Cost of Living Adjustment in line with Social Security at 2.5%. Kim Blakeslee seconded the Motion. All in Favor.

- 2) Additional Warrant Articles Requested for Town Meeting:
- Mohawk Trail Water Heater Repair
 - Rowe request for Late Bus Article again this year: Val would like to know the length of the contract to see if it is possible to approve multiple years at a time.

- Hinata requests to take over the portion of Warfield Road that runs in front of Hinata Buildings:

Highway Super was in favor of the idea. A turnaround will be made. It will be Hinata's responsibility to maintain the road. It is all part of the commercial property, and they have a utility project they are doing. The Highway Super said he needs a letter from the property owner outlining his plan. When he sends the letter it can be included with the Town Meeting warrant. The Board is in favor of allowing Hinata to take over the portion of Warfield Road indicated in the map.

Cheryl asked if the section of the road has a municipal easement. Sarah said she will ask, and confirmed that things on the poles are still covered by the easements.

- Franklin Regional Council of Governments Charter Amendment Warrant Article Request, Sarah suggested rewording it in more understandable language. Val and Jared are not in favor of the consolidation of power and will most likely speak against it on Town Meeting floor. Cheryl said that a plain language version was available, and she will send Sarah the link.

- Review warrant articles to date:

- Sarah asked the Board to consider putting the remainder of the money needed (\$10,000) for the Town Hall Heat Pump project on the warrant. The Board thought it was a good idea.
 - The compactor was missing, Sarah will type up a list of everything to review, to date, and will send out.
- 3) Town of Hawley requests a letter of support for the replacement of Kings Brook Culvert on Route 8A
The Chair of Selectmen from Hawley requested a letter of support for a culvert replacement. People coming from Charlemont use that route to access Pittsfield. **Valentine Reid made a motion to agree to support Hawley's grant application and to authorize Sarah to draft a letter that Val will sign. Jared Bellows seconded the motion. All in Favor.**

Approve and Sign:

- 1) 1 set of Minutes from Legate Hill, Mountain View Drive, Laurel Lane, Potter Road, Phipps Road Pole Hearings and February 3, 2025 Meeting Minutes
Valentine Reid motioned to accept the one set of Minutes from the Legate Hill, Mountain View Drive, Laurel Lane, Potter Road, Phipps Road Pole Hearings as written. Kim Blakeslee seconded the motion. Valentine Reid And Kim Blakeslee in favor. Jared Bellows abstained

Valentine Reid motioned to accept the February 3, 2025, Meeting Minutes as written; seconded by Jared Bellows. All in favor.

- 2) Berkshire Highlands Pentathlon Special Permit Application
Police and Fire okayed the permit.
Valentine Reid made a Motion to approve signing the Berkshire Highlands Special Permit Application. Jared Bellows seconded the motion. All in favor.

The Valentine Reid motioned to adjourn 8:03PM. Jared Bellows seconded the motion. All in Favor.

Documents reviewed in meeting

- Letter From Valentine Reid to Hawley Board of Selectmen dated March 10, 2025, re: support of replacement of culvert at King's Brook on Route 8A in Hawley.
- Email from Will Cosby to the Administrator and the Hawley Administrator, dated 2/21/2025 re SB letter supporting culvert replacement 8A?
- Aerial view map of Warfield Road at Hinata
- Capital Expenditure Update for MTRSD from Bill Lataille, Assistant Superintendent of Business and Finance re: Capital Expenditure Update for Water Heater Replacement at Mohawk Trail Regional High School, including water heater apportionment schedule FY2025 for all the schools and an invoice 028153 from Jamrog HVAC dated 1/28/2025

- Charlemont SelectBoard Meeting Minutes 2/24/2024, 2/3/2025
- FRCOG Charter Change fact sheet 14 pages with attached explainer.
- FRCOG Charter Change packet review dated 1/30/2025
- Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) 2.0, Attachment A: Scope of Services and Additional Terms and Conditions and Attachment B: Budget and Approved Expenditures.
- FRCOG Cooperative Health Service Services to Charleton 2024
- Chapter 90 Funding and Reform, Healy-Driscoll administration, 11 pages
- Email to Administrator from Lora Fulton dated 3/9/ 2025 re: Why we should consider building a pump track skills park here in Charlemont.
- FY2026 Invoice to The Town of Charlemont from Upper Pioneer Valley Veterans' Services District dated 3/6/2025
- Email to Administrator from Susan Zavotka, dated 2/27/2025 re: Late Bus
- Commonwealth of Massachusetts contractor Authorized Signatory Listing
- Notarized Commonwealth of Massachusetts contractor Authorized Signatory Listing
- Standard Contract Form signed 3/10/2025 by Valentine Reid for MVP
- Letter from Massachusetts Department of Agricultural resources to Valentine Reid dated 3/6/2025 re: Nomination of inspector of Animals
- Special Event Permit Application from Berkshire East/ Highlands Pentathlon dated February 20, 2025