



TOWN OF CHARLTON
Minutes of Regular Selectmen's Meeting
March 11, 2008

Submitted by _____

Date _____

Received by _____

Date _____

Present: Chairman – Peter J. Boria, Clerk – Kathleen W. Walker and Member – Frederick C. Swensen. Also present, Town Administrator - Robin L. Craver. Absent – Vice Chairman - Scott D. Brown and Member – John R. Bacon.

NOTE: Some matters may have been taken out of agenda order but were typed up in agenda order for ease of locating information when necessary.

I. Call to Order:

Chairman Boria called the meeting to order at 6:30pm with the pledge to the flag.

II. Consent Agenda:

- Chairman Boria read the agenda.
- Minutes of Regular Selectmen's Meeting – February 26, 2008. **Motion by Mr. Swensen to accept the minutes of February 26, 2008 as submitted, seconded by Ms. Walker for discussion.** Ms. Walker has three small changes. Page 2 – Ms. Walker would like to have one of her comments added that she had expressed her objection of cutting the library custodian, Page 3 – scholarship question – She would like to be able to revise it a little. Mrs. Craver stated that was the actual motion and the scholarships have already been sent to the school. Also on page 4 – Ms. Walker noted that she had asked the board if they wanted to participate in a dodge ball tournament not volleyball. After discussion, **vote taken to approve minutes with revisions.**

III. Community Relations, Announcements and Open Forum:

- Chairman Boria read the announcements.
- Ms. Walker stated that there will be an open meeting seminar through the Quinebaug Shetucket National Heritage Corridor on Thursday, April 24th at the Sturbridge Senior Center from 6:30pm – 8:30pm.
- Mrs. Craver stated at the last meeting that a grant was received by the Recycling Committee for rain barrels which is in the hallway for viewing. These will be available to purchase. Announcements will be put on cable for a contact person. Mrs. Walker stated that any money earned from this will be used to purchase more rain barrels.
- Chief Pervier stated that Linda Denault had dropped off applications for a grant scholarship in her husband's name at the police station for any student interested in law enforcement.

IV. Appointments/Resignations:

1. Senior Center Building Committee Appointments – a request has been received from Council on Aging recommending appointments to the Senior Center Building Committee: John Look, retired Architect, Norman Pederson a retired Construction Supervisor & former Library Building Committee Member, Barbara Dean, Council on Aging member and Sandra Bacon, Council on Aging member. Should these appointments be made, two openings will still be

available to be filled. Ms. Walker stated that with great appreciation for these four people coming forward – **she would make a motion for John Look, Norman Pederson, Barbara Dean and Sandra Bacon to be appointed to the Senior Center Building Committee, seconded by Mr. Swensen, motion carries.** Chairman Boria said that two positions remain open: 1 member of the public involved in the building trade and 1 member from an area Senior Center that sat on their Senior Center Building Committee. Ms. Walker has concerns that the second position might not be able to be filled. Chairman Boria had noted that if someone else should come forward, they could change the makeup of the committee. Mr. Swensen recommended asking our Council on Aging through their inter actions with other towns, they might be able to bring someone in.

2. CMRPC – Information and Member Selection – A request has been received for a member of the Board to attend a CMMPO Information & Member Selection meeting at the Oxford Town Hall on March 19, 2008 at 6:30pm. This Selectman along with area town Selectmen will be asked to choose one Selectman from this group to represent our sub region’s communities on the CMMPO for the next three years. Chairman Boria noted his interest. Ms. Walker stated that as a former member of this committee, it was a very important and difficult committee and she feels it would be great to have Chairman Boria on it therefore **Ms. Walker made a motion to support Chairman Boria’s nomination to represent us at the meeting on March 19, 2008, seconded by Mr. Swensen, motion carries.**

V. Scheduled Appointments:

6:45pm – Highway Barn Building Update – Mrs. Craver along with Gerry Foskett, Highway Superintendent have stated that the original intent of this committee was to place a warrant article on the Annual Town Meeting for this project. The design and construction documents will not be ready in time to complete the bidding process. They are seeking direction from the Board if they should come up with an estimate of cost or wait until the Fall Town Meeting when actual costs are known. Gerry Foskett, Highway Superintendent was present and explained that the committee was able to build the building on paper and put a price tag on it, they found out they have a lot of work to do. The price was outrageous and the committee is not comfortable with coming forward with an amount for town meeting yet. He suggested not estimating any cost. The committee would like to be able to come to the town with real numbers. Mr. Swensen thanked Mr. Foskett for his practical approach on this issue. Ms. Walker stated that this is a disappointment as people have been waiting a long time for this and she looks forward to seeing real numbers.

7:00pm – Charlton Insurance Advisory Committee – This committee met with Brian Boyle, our Insurance Advisor. Mr. Boyle had provided this committee with quotes from Blue Cross/Blue Shield and Harvard Pilgrim Health Care. After discussions and through negotiations, Mr. Boyle was able to get Blue Cross/Blue Shield to reduce the FY09 increase for our respective group from 14.9% to 9.0% via underwriting considerations and some minor modifications to the current health insurance plan by increasing Physician Co-Pay’s from \$5.00 to \$10.00 and Emergency Room Co-Pay’s from \$25.00 to \$50.00. A formal vote was taken by the Insurance Advisory Committee to accept all of the proposed changes to the current BC/BS plan, the 9.0% premium increase and the change from Medex III to Medex II with Part D for retirees and would ask the Board of Selectmen to vote to accept the changes as recommended. Mrs. Craver would recommend approving the request of the Insurance Advisory Committee. **Motion by Mr. Swensen to accept the recommendation of the Insurance Advisory Committee regarding Blue Cross/Blue Shield, seconded by Ms. Walker.** Ms. Walker asked what the rates are right now for an individual and a family plan. Mr. Boyle stated that currently, for an individual - \$512.49 and a family plan is \$1,344.20, with the 9% increase the individual would be \$558.62 and the family would be 1,465.18. **Vote taken on the motion: motion carries.**

VI. Old Business:

1. FY08 – Budget update – Mrs. Craver provided the Board with an update on the FY08 Budget in lieu of the meeting held between the Board and the Finance Committee and the Board’s last meeting. The following is being provided:
 - Include in the ATM warrant, an article to fund the Snow and ice deficit from the Transfer from Stabilization Fund article;
 - Submit to the Finance Committee Reserve Fund Transfer advisories for tracking purposes for the fuel and Fire Department wage accounts and also the Fire Department utility account;
 - Recommending that the unused portion from Land Use Study appropriated at the October 16, 2007 Special Town Meeting, in the amount of \$35,000 be transferred to the FY08 Fire Department Wages at the May meeting;
 - Request the Finance Committee fund the Gas/Diesel account by the reserve fund until the ATM in May where we could transfer from other funds to adjust the balance; and
 - The Board should decide whether to freeze funds earmarked for weed control. If so, we would need to notify the lake association before expenses are incurred.

Ms. Walker has a concern with freezing funds earmarked for weed control. Stefan Sage from the Baker Pond Association approached the board and stated that back in 06 there was a change in the process on how pond associations could submit their invoices for matching funds. The Pond Association has to pay the full bill first then submit for the matching half from the town. He stated that normally weed treatments are done in May and June and pond associations are looking forward to do the treatments. Chairman Boria had asked Mrs. Craver that because we are transferring different accounts from different areas, would this line item be able to be kept as is? Mrs. Craver would like to say so, but cannot at this time. Mr. Swensen feels we should watch this very closely as we are talking about possibly closing the town hall one day a week, this item would only take care of a limited amount of citizens in town. Deb Marque from Lincoln Point Road wanted to make a comment about weeds. She explained a few different types of weeds. Baker Pond has a really high level of algae where the whole water looks green. It’s more of a health risk.

2. FY09 – Revised Budget. Mrs. Craver stated that as a result of a joint meeting held on March 4th between the Board of Selectmen and the Finance Committee, the following revisions have been included:

- Reduced expense accounts by 15%;
- Eliminated Weed Control;
- Reduced Budget to reflect actual hours worked by ZBA Secretary to 6 hrs. week;
- Eliminated New FireFighter position and Library Custodian;
- Added \$40,000 to Fire Department’s Wages for overtime;
- Eliminated Health Insurance for Board/Commission members;
- Shifted Water Operating Budget to Stabilization Fund and
- Removed the Snow and Ice deficit

Other possible items:

- Override(s) – due date to have ballot questions to Town Clerk is April 1, 2008;
 - The Finance Committee & Board of Selectmen requested a review of the revolving accounts
- A recommendation will be presented to the Finance Committee at their next meeting. Chairman Boria had asked if Department Heads were notified about possibly reducing their expenses by 15%. Mrs. Craver said that they were notified at the Department Head meeting. Ms. Walker said that one possibility that might be coming our way is about the possibility of taxing telephone companies for poles and wires on public ways. The two items that she has a problem with are the weed control and the library custodian. She has spoken about these before. She supports the other items and would support an override if the town wants to go for that. Ms. Walker also stated that there were a couple of comments regarding overrides in the T & G article that she would like to read. Chairman Boria stated that he didn’t think this was the right place to

do that. Mrs. Craver stated that her understanding of the regulations and the laws for the Board of Selectmen regarding overrides, the Board would make a determination of a warrant article if it's in the best interest of the town but would be barred from actively lobbying to have people vote for it but the merits would be under the Board's purview. Ms. Walker asked if she could read the article. Chairman Boria asked if they were her recommendations that would benefit the town. Ms. Walker stated there are some very good pro's and con's. Chairman Boria stated that it is Ms. Walker's prerogative and asked if it was her recommendation for the town. After discussion, the article was not read. Chairman Boria said at our next meeting, we should have a better number for the budget and can make a decision at that time of what is needed. Ms. Walker asked if it was the intention at the next meeting to have discussion on the override. Chairman Boria replied that it was. Chairman Boria stated that we could vote tonight to approve what changes have been brought forth. **Motion by Mr. Swensen to approve the budget that's been submitted to us and forward to the Finance Committee for consideration, seconded by Chairman Boria.** Ms. Walker would encourage this Board to listen to the reasons why the weed control should not be eliminated and as far as the library custodian is concerned, she really doesn't feel that should be eliminated. Mr. Swensen would agree that if this stays on the table, then members of the Pond Associations will have an opportunity to speak. **Vote taken on Mr. Swensen's motion: Mr. Swensen and Chairman Boria – aye, Ms. Walker opposed.**

3. FY09 Annual Town Meeting

Warrant List – (see attached) Mrs. Craver gave the Board a list of warrant articles for review. She also noted that a petition was received today that will be added to the list. Mrs. Craver had also asked the Board to close the warrant tonight. Ms. Walker feels that we are closing the warrant too early. Mrs. Craver recommended closing the warrant and take each one case by case to reopen if needed to add an article. The purpose for closing the warrant is to allow enough time for hearings to be held and for town counsel to review. Mrs. Craver also recommended to include the petition that was received tonight pending the certification of signatures. Chairman Boria noted that a revision to this list of articles is to remove the BOS/Highway Barn Building Committee request for Highway Barn Construction Debt Exclusion and to include the petition received today to amend the town's general operating bylaws by repealing Section 10 Sewer Commissioner service as superintendent **Motion by Mr. Swensen to close the town warrant with the exceptions of the removal of the highway barn construction debt exclusion article and the inclusion of the citizen petition that was received today, seconded by Ms. Walker, motion carries.**

4. 4 Dresser Hill – Chairman Boria stated that at our last meeting this was brought up and we then scheduled a meeting last Thursday with different departments to discuss possible use of 4 Dresser Hill. Lance Gelb, President of Charlton Dudley Football & Cheer was present to address the need for a place to practice for pop warner football and cheer. They are in need of a field to practice at night. They need a field where lights could be put up. They are planning on walking it to see what's useable for them. They are not seeking funding from the town. Chairman Boria felt that if the Board was in agreement with the idea, we could let them move forward with some sort of plans where we would have to make a decision in the future. There was no opposition from anyone at the meeting. Chief Pervier stated that in regards to the parking at this location, would the areas where the fields will be constructed, will this affect the parking. Chairman Boria said the main points to consider is to save room for a senior center, to save room for an access road to add a field and increase parking. All four of these things are being considered at once. Ms. Walker wanted to mention two concerns. One is the equity of girl's sports and she does support the football field in general and has been reassured by Recreation that there is equity in recreation for girls sports. Mr. Swensen thanked the Dudley Charlton football and cheer for their willingness to invest money into town fields. His concern would be that this field would enable them to have larger tournaments. Mr. Gelb stated that this is just a practice field. No tournaments would be held. Mr. Swensen stated that

when the town voted to acquire the land, it was under the impression that it would be for a fire, highway or senior center. He feels that as long as we keep that in mind, we don't want to comprise this. **Motion by Mr. Swensen to support the effort of the Charlton Dudley Football & Cheer to develop a practice field at 4 Dresser Hill, seconded by Ms. Walker, motion carries.** Mrs. Craver would ask the Board to recommend that as they move forward to work closely with Chief Pervier as far as parking. Ms. Walker's second concern is that 4 Dresser Hill has an opportunity that this town can make use of. She feels that this town hasn't had a lot of people involved in the decision of what to do with it. She feels that we should have a "charrette" which means to harnesses the town and energies of all interested parties to create and support a feasible plan. She would like the board to at least read it and then consider it. She had mentioned that there are some seniors that don't necessarily want a senior center and some people in recreation that don't necessarily want football fields and in going through a process like charrette, would open up the communication lines.

VII. New Business:

1. Highway Department – Mechanic Position. Mrs. Craver stated that the Board has a letter from Highway Superintendent Gerry Foskett asking to consider/vote on eliminating the position of the Mechanic from the Highway Department. He would ask the Board to approve the removal of the mechanic position from his department to allow more flexibility and cost effectiveness. It is his opinion that a full time mechanic is unnecessary as the department has been operating on a stipend basis for mechanical work. Should the board approve this request, the contract requires 30 days notice under Article 26 – Layoff and Reinstatement to be provided to the Union and any member/employee that this may affect. It is the intention to keep the same staff but just to eliminate this position could be considered a layoff/reinstatement. Mr. Swensen had asked if this would cause a problem with the union by eliminating a specific position. Mr. Foskett replied that in the union contract, this falls under management rights where we have the right to eliminate or create positions. There might be some resistance but a creation of another position would become part of this plan. Mr. Swensen asked if these two positions would be on different scales at different rates? Would it be a net gain or loss for the union. Mr. Foskett said that if you base this on a pay rate, it would be a net loss for the union. He could only point out the plus sign for the town which would be a gain in savings. He wanted to make sure the real reason he is asking for this is for the flexibility to assign staff the way he needs on day to day basis. For the past 18 months, the mechanic has been on IOD. He has had to alter the schedules and has seen that the operations have run more smoothly with no disrespect to this employee. The mechanic has a bump rule in the contract that he can apply. Mr. Foskett stated that this will not put anyone out of work as if this was the case, he probably wouldn't be sitting here asking for this. This is a tough decision on his part but with the best interest for the town at heart, he felt he had to come forward. Mrs. Craver clarified a section in the union contract that we do have management rights but we do have to inform the union. **Motion by Mr. Swensen to vote to eliminate the position of full time mechanic and add the position of light equipment operator for the Highway Department, seconded by Ms. Walker, motion carries.** Mr. Swensen reiterated that with the budget discussions and constraints that have been on the table, Department Heads were asked to review their budgets and make cuts where possible and he appreciates this. Mrs. Craver to send a letter to the union with the information.
2. Request from Worcester County Realtors – they are seeking permission to locate a collection box for Troops in Iraq within the Town Hall. Mrs. Craver had stated that due to the recent theft of the "Gold Cane" within the Town Hall, she would ask the Board to make this decision. Ms. Walker noted that the Municipal Building Committee is meeting tomorrow to come up with a template for the town hall for what can be posted and what can't, how it works and how it doesn't and she would like to bring this to that committee and get a recommendation from them. The Board had no objections to this.

3. Technology Committee – Mrs. Craver stated that the Technology Committee is requesting (1) purchase new hardware for Archiving Electronic Mail (Barracuda) at a cost of \$4,999.00 which is available in the Computer Hardware line item within the current budget and purchasing of the licensing software for this at a cost of \$1,249.00 which is available in the License and Software line item also within the current budget. (2) They are asking the Board to review and approve of the recommended policy for the retrieval of archived email. Chief Pervier, a member of this committee explained the importance of the retrieval of the archive emails. Mrs. Craver stated that financially she can not make a recommendation to do this but the need to have this is there per Statute and Laws. The Committee has worked very hard on this and we do need to have it. Ms. Walker supports this request as she feels it is important to archive our emails. She can't help but notice that this is almost the same amount of the custodian that we turned down but she feels it should be done and would like to put it in the 09 budget. Mr. Swensen asked if there were any penalties if we do not comply with this now? Mrs. Craver stated that there is a risk that we could get fined. The amount is already appropriated in this year's budget. Chairman Boria asked if the \$5,000 would cover all the hardware that we would need to cover this. Chief Pervier feels it would. Chairman Boria also asked if the software license is an annual fee? Chief Pervier was not sure. Ms. Walker asked if this could be tabled until the next meeting so questions could be answered. Chief Pervier to find out what is the length of the license? Will the committee be coming back next year for more money for this product? How long will this enable the emails to hold without getting more hardware? Mr. Swensen would like to table this discussion until the next meeting and ask Chief Pervier to get some answers for us: length of expected capacity/projected usage? Amount of annual cost for software and length of the license fee and penalties if we don't do this now and what the harm would be.

- VII Town Administrator Report (see attached) Mrs. Craver reviewed her report. Questions on Landfill portion. Ms. Walker questioned why a cease and desist by DEP is being issued and is concerned about it not being delivered until next Friday. She also asked if the Town should be issuing a cease and desist also. Mrs. Craver said this would fall under the purview of the Board of Health. Mr. Swensen would agree that this is his same concern. Chairman Boria stated that we could send a letter from our Board to the Board of Health airing our concerns of BATG. Mrs. Craver is meeting with the Chairman of the Board of Health in the morning and she will be glad to let her know.

Mrs. Craver was notified by Town Counsel Cosgrove that the Chambers have appealed the decision of the courts. Attorney Cosgrove is looking for direction on what the board wants him to do. Minimal cost has been used for this issue. **Motion by Ms. Walker to continue with the recommendation that the Town Administrator has given and to have counsel keep proceeding on this issue to protect the town's interest, seconded by Mr. Swensen, motion carries.**

Mrs. Craver stated that we also received a letter from Leicester stating that they would like an off ramp in North Oxford. The letter is in the Board's reading folder. Ms. Walker thinks it's a great idea and would like to discuss it to be in Charlton. Put on agenda for next meeting. Mrs. Craver to solicit info from department heads who could provide input on this and how it would effect the town such as Police, Fire, Highway, Planning Board, EDC.

- X. Open Forum Fire Chief Cloutier said that the Casella contract has been signed and we have a hazardous waste day coming up on March 29, 2008 in Southbridge. He needs two volunteers from the community to work that day. They would be there to check id's and to make sure they are actually Charlton residents. Ms. Walker volunteered to be one of the residents and she will bring it to the recycling committee and is sure they can get a couple of more people.

- XI. Adjourn/Executive Session: Motion by Mr. Swensen to adjourn at 8:19pm, seconded by Ms. Walker, motion carries.
- XII. Next Meeting Announcement:
- Next Regular Selectmen's Meeting – March 25, 2008

Respectfully submitted by:
Mary C. Devlin
Administrative Assistant

Accepted by:

Peter J. Boria, Chairperson

Scott D. Brown, Vice-Chairman (absent)

Kathleen W. Walker, Clerk

John R. Bacon, Member (absent)

Frederick C. Swensen, Member