



## TOWN OF CHARLTON

Minutes of Government Study Review Committee Meeting

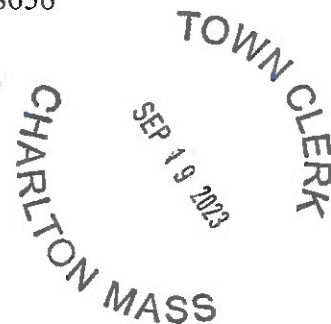
Tuesday, May 16, 2023, 6:00 p.m.

Zoom Meeting ID: 894 0867 1292

Zoom Passcode: 903228; Phone Access: +1-646-558-8656

In-Person: Senior Center - Town Hall

*Meeting Room 1*



### Committee Members Present:

Mr. Joseph Haebler, Chairman

Mr. Gerald Doble, Vice Chairman

Mr. Adam Kelly, Clerk

Mr. James Nee, Committee Member (virtually)

### Committee Members Excused:

Ms. Jeanne Costello, Committee Member

### Others Present:

Chief Daniel Dowd, Chief of Police, Town of Charlton Police Department

Mr. Jon Sanborne, Elected Member, Town of Charlton Board of Health

Ms. Kathleen Stanley, Town of Charlton Assessors Office

Ms. Kathleen Walker, Chair, Old Home Day Committee

### I. Call to Order:

A. J. Haebler called the meeting to order at 6:10 p.m.

### II. Approval of Previous Minutes:

A. Motion made by J. Haebler to amend the March 21, 2023 minutes with a pen and ink change to reflect the attendance of Mr. Russell Jennings from Charlton's Water and Sewer Commission, seconded by A. Kelly, unanimous vote.

B. Motion made by G. Doble to approve the March 21, 2023 minutes, as amended. Seconded by J. Nee, unanimous vote.

C. Motion made by G. Doble to approve the April 25, 2023 minutes, seconded by J. Nee, unanimous vote.

### III. Interviews:

A. Ms. Kathleen Stanley, Town of Charlton Assessors Office

1. Has served in current position for 3 years and asked longer-term Assessors on their feedback and inputs before meeting with the Government Study Review Committee

2. Roles, responsibilities and cross-training are important focus areas for the Assessors Office

a) A 28-year employee is leaving which will have a large impact

3. Meeting minutes and agenda are made available ASAP after each meeting

4. Receipt books are being kept for abutters
  5. Ergonomics and workplace trainings have been conducted
  6. Assessors are appointed by the Board of Selectmen
  7. Conjoining financial-type offices within Town Hall would be better
  8. CHIP-IN is a great resource and operation in town, but may be better located 0.2 miles down the road at 4 Dresser Hill Rd. (Charlton Arts and Activities Center) in order to free up more space within Town Hall for daily town operations, but still keeping CHIP-IN accessible to residents
  9. Parking is limited at Town Hall, perhaps 41 Main St. (next door to Town Hall) could be purchased in the future to expand parking, or utilizing more of the Town Common space?
  10. Proposal of purchasing, renovating, reconfiguring, etc. the old Charlton Furniture property for use as a Senior Center is not financially tenable
  11. Improve access in rear of Town Hall to be more handicap accessible
  12. Mapping company used for assessing operations is asking for plans to be submitted electronically which is great for accuracy, turn-over, and tracking
  13. Assessors are working well with the Planning Board
  14. Assessor's Office works very closely with CMRPC (Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Committee)
  15. Morale is much better now than in previous years and under different leadership
  16. New hire will help with inspections, which currently occur at a rate of about one inspection per property every 10 years (unless there are major changes, construction, etc.)
- B. Mr. Jon Sanborne, Elected Member, Town of Charlton Board of Health
1. Tasks and actions are easier to complete and communications improved
  2. Mr. Jim Philbrook, Health Director of Charlton's Board of Health, reportedly informed Mr. Sanborne that things are much improved across the town
  3. Regional and state grant support has been very helpful
    - a) Inspections (food, title 5, elderly, housing, etc.)
  4. Very few issues facing the Board of Health administratively/operationally
  5. Board of Health meets about every 3 weeks
  6. Inspections on housing that doesn't meet standards (water, sewer, electrical, etc.) and requires coordination with multiple departments (fire, police, building, etc.)
    - a) Forms, payments, notices are key actions in the workflow

7. Occasionally, the Board of Health is unintentionally left out of the loop on various things that the Board should have been a part of
    - a) A. Kelly asked if a workflow management system with business logic which automatically notified/routed actions to certain persons and/or departments would be helpful to mitigate this issue and improve communications in the future – Mr. Sanborne agreed
    - b) A recommendation was also made to create detailed checklists for various scenario types
  8. No staffing issues currently
  9. 3 members on the Board of Health are elected on 3 year terms which are staggered from each other
    - a) Members are “promoted” over the course of their 3 year term
  10. Casella contract ends in November 2023. Board of Health can be consulted to play part in new contract award
    - a) Contract is handled by the Town Administrator’s Office
  11. Board of Health works well with Emergency Management (Fire Department) in Charlton
    - a) Some Board of Health personnel are trained in Hazardous Materials and are part of drills
  12. Not immediately clear if there’s specifically-tailored professional development trainings available for Board of Health members
  13. Stipend changes have impacted the Board of Health slightly, but it’s not a major issue. The Town should consider incentives to bring in members moving forward as the number of candidates continues to stagnate/decrease across all areas of Governmental service and support
- C. Chief Daniel Dowd, Chief of Police, Town of Charlton Police Department
1. Overall, things are going well across the Department
  2. Staffing continues to be an issue
    - a) Overtime is “okay” and costs an exorbitant amount of money, but hiring additional personnel is difficult due to long-term costs for healthcare, benefits, etc.
    - b) 1 person working overnight in Dispatch
      - (1) Although it tends to be “quiet”, it’s risky due to inability to meet a sudden influx of calls
      - (2) If the singular Dispatcher has to leave the dispatch desk (e.g. use the bathroom), a patrolling officer has to be recalled from the field and return to the Police Department in order to staff the desk while the Dispatcher steps away momentarily
        - (a) Inefficient use of resources

- (b) Also pulls one less patrol from the field
- (3) Monday-Friday has 2 Dispatchers per shift
- (4) Recommendation is to either have at least two dispatchers per shift at all times, or resort to “Regional” Dispatch service with surrounding communities
- 3. Animal Control is currently aligned under the Police Department
  - a) Not a burden to Police Department operations or administration
  - b) *May* be better aligned under Board of Health due to inspectional nature of the function, roles, responsibilities
- 4. Union relationship is good
- 5. Officer evaluations are within the Union contract
  - a) Advised by legal counsel to not do evaluations due to potential litigation
- 6. Still a “good amount” of drugs, overdoses, and unattended deaths
  - a) These incidents are not “advertised” as much by the Police Department out of respect for families and loved ones
- 7. Amazon’s consultant reportedly stated that the Police Department will be impacted the most by the new facilities and operations, however, the Police Department received no funding, assets or assistance as part of the “Amazon deal”
- 8. Most traffic-related activity for the Department are “slow moving accidents” on both Route 20 and 169
- 9. Construction details for Police Officers are not as sought after as they once were (for overtime work).
  - a) Town gets 10% of collected fees from construction details
  - b) Traffic Constables
    - (1) Great resources when the Town can get them
    - (2) Newer Massachusetts POST (Police Officer Standards and Training) requirements are too stringent, detaching candidates from doing the training and filling positions
- 10. Facilities
  - a) Various Departments in town have been responsible for the upkeep and maintenance of their respective facilities
  - b) The Town needs a dedicated facilities manager who manages municipal buildings across the town
  - c) The Town needs a comprehensive maintenance plan to ensure larger-type projects are tracked and budgeted for to ensure costs and workloads are more evenly spread from year to year (as well as anticipating work due to known lifespans)

- d) Currently there are multiple contracts for the same or similar services across the entire town which means a loss of potential savings (e.g. pest control services)
- 11. Overall, everyone means well and works together, even when there's opposing views on various issues
- D. Ms. Kathleen Walker, Chair, Old Home Day Committee
  - 1. 3 members from the Board of Selectmen are on the Committee – great!
  - 2. Committee “almost ended a few years ago” due to “not being fun anymore”
    - a) People and atmosphere make it better
    - b) Make sure everyone has a voice and can participate
    - c) Lots of volunteers, even if not officially a Committee member
    - d) Focus on putting people in positions/roles they want to do
    - e) Committee has 18 members, had to be capped to remain effective
    - f) Try to give everyone backup and support so they're not alone
    - g) Trying to recruit younger people is very difficult
    - h) Need to keep people engaged in order to retain them
  - 3. Works closely with Highway Department for equipment and labor
  - 4. Fire Department handles fireworks and associated permitting
  - 5. Police Department helps with details
  - 6. Even if not present at meetings, various Departments, Boards, etc. are always found to be accessible and supportive
  - 7. Keeping the website updated is very important to ensure accuracy of information
  - 8. Various organizations, businesses, etc. used to contribute financially in years past, but the Committee is now shouldering a majority of the costs
    - a) Town provides about \$5,000/year to the Committee
    - b) Actual cost of executing Old Home Day is about \$15,000/year
    - c) Acts and performances, services, vendors, etc. are not free
    - d) Funding uncertainties are a real challenge for the Committee
    - e) Reliance on fundraising is more important now than ever
    - f) Need more money to keep this Town tradition alive
  - 9. Networking and small town dynamics solves most of the roadblocks and various issues (i.e. friend of a friend)
  - 10. Rain Date being sought for future Old Home Days
  - 11. 1 day is still sufficient to host the event
  - 12. Trying to avoid being a carnival, keeping things simple and “country-like”
  - 13. Bay Path relationship is critical
  - 14. Relations and interactions with Town Hall are happier and better overall
- E. General statement

1. Any TIF's with future companies should have a requirement that all impacted Departments receive some kind of benefit (financially, resources, assets, etc.)

**IV. Other Business:**

A. None.

**V. Next Meeting and Adjournment:**

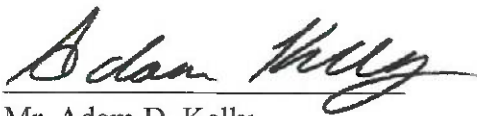
A. Motion by G. Doble to adjourn, seconded by A. Kelly, unanimous vote at 7:51 p.m.

B. Next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, June 20, 2023, at 6:00 p.m. in Meeting Room 1 at Town Hall and also available on Zoom.

**VI. Contact:**

A. Any questions, comments or concerns should be addressed to the Committee via email at [GovStudy@townofcharlton.net](mailto:GovStudy@townofcharlton.net)

**Respectfully submitted by:**



Mr. Adam D. Kelly

Clerk

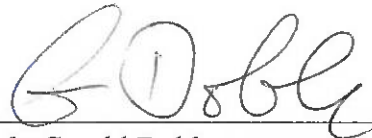
Government Study Review Committee

**Accepted by:**



Mr. Joseph Haebler

Chairman



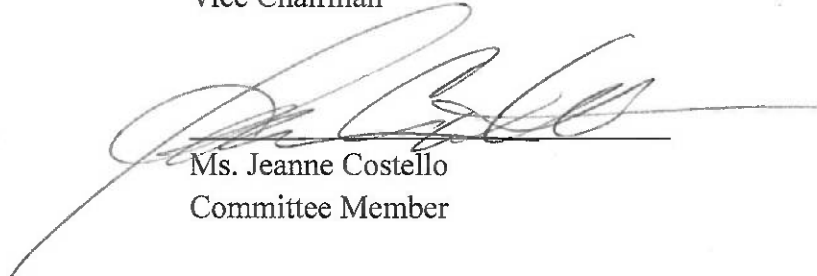
Mr. Gerald Doble

Vice Chairman

*[Resigned prior to voting / signing]*

Mr. Adam Kelly

Clerk



Ms. Jeanne Costello

Committee Member

Mr. James Nee

Committee Member