

Selectboard Meeting Minutes

June 23, 2014

Approved

Present: Selectboard members Denise Wheeler, Scott Bassage, Rose Pelchuck, Toby Talbot; Donna Fitch, Clerk; Rod Buck, Paul Cerutti, Davis Cherington, Virginia Kern, Randy Koch, Stephan Morse, Carolyn Morton, Juanita Nunn, Paul Rose, John Rosenblum, John Simanskas, Conrad Smith, Peg Tassey.

Denise Wheeler called the meeting to order at 7pm at the Calais Town Hall. The first order of "business" was to present Donna Fitch and her husband John McCullough (in absentia) with flowers, chocolate, wine and a dining gift card in honor of their 35th wedding anniversary. Donna noted that it was her marriage to John that caused him to serve the town as Lister, 911 Address Coordinator, chair of Design Advisory Board and a member of the Planning Commission. The Board thanked Donna for being at the selectboard meeting rather than on a second honeymoon in Paris.

Center Road Culvert Grant

Paperwork from Agency of Transportation for Center Road culvert grant has been sent to the town for signatures. The Selectboard will sign the grant papers after a neighborhood meeting has been held about the project.

Historic Preservation Commission Appointments

Denise made a motion to reappoint Reed Cherington, Ernie Parrish and Chris Cochran to Historic Preservation Commission for a term of three years with the terms expiring in 2017. Scott seconded the motion and it passed 0-4.

Trails Committee Term Assignments

Denise made a motion to assign terms, as recommended by Reed Cherington, as follows: One 3-year term - Toni Kaeding, expiring in 2017; three 2-year terms – Randy Allen, Reed Cherington, Tim Howe, expiring in 2016; three 1-year terms – Bill Russell, Charlotte Hanna Bassage, Gail Graham, expiring in 2015. Toby seconded the motion and it passed 0-4. On behalf of the Selectboard, Denise thanked the committee for their work.

Tree Warden(s) Appointment

Scott Bassage made a motion to appoint Drew Lamb as Tree Warden and Neal Maker as Assistant Tree Warden for the ensuing year. Toby seconded the motion and it passed 0-4. The Tree Warden is a one-year appointment, usually appointed after Town Meeting.

Minutes Approved

Both June 9, 2014 and May 27, 2014 minutes were approved unanimously.

Operations Manager Update

Toby Talbot reported that the road crew has been working on culverts, ditching, and resurfacing West County Road, laying a new coat of gravel from Maple Corner Store to the Oberg/Copa residence. The 2007 truck has had problems and has been out of commission. Toby filed an amendment to the Agency of Transportation (AOT) grant, originally for North Calais retaining wall, asking to use the money for Martin Road culvert. Tom Anderson, AOT, has been out to look at the culvert. Doug Grout will begin roadside mowing this week; Scott said Doug should avoid poison ivy at Stevens on Pekin Brook Road. Denise said she has received a lot of positive feedback about the road crew. Toby finalized highway

personnel evaluation form and sent a copy to Donna. He will do an initial evaluation of the Road Commissioner and then the Selectboard will meet with the Road Commissioner.

The Island at Curtis Pond

John Rosenblum, representing Maple Corner Community Center board, and Carolyn Morton and Peg Tassej from the newly formed committee to care for the Island, attended the meeting to present a draft ordinance to address problems occurring at the Island. Jamie Moorby and Ginger Clammer are also on the committee. The purpose of the ordinance is to restrict camping to Calais residents; permits would be handled by town clerk; signage would be put up at the fishing access and on the Island. People may be less likely to misbehave if name is registered with the town. If there is no registration, the constables could enforce the ordinance. Peg discussed the problems that happened last year – guns, threats to pond residents, trees cut, loud noise late at night, chain saws, the State Police having to be called.

Denise consulted with a Vermont League of Cities and Towns' (VLCT) attorney who suggested considering other options instead of an ordinance, which other towns have found useful, including a facilities permit or rental agreement with a security deposit. VLCT noted that enforcement of an ordinance can be an issue. An ordinance requires an overriding authority, and the Selectboard cannot simply create one specific to the Island. The question was asked if there is an ordinance for the swim area. If so, rules for the Island could be tacked on to the swim ordinance. Denise asked Conrad Smith to review the draft ordinance and asked Donna to send him the swim ordinance if there is one. [Since the meeting, Donna confirmed there is a Curtis Pond Recreation Area Ordinance.] Toby suggested a town facilities use policy since there would not be the 60-day process that an ordinance requires. Carolyn Morton said she would like to see the best plan, not just do what is quick, but what is best for the long term. Denise will ask VLCT for the statute that would cover an ordinance. She will also call Matt Nally, VT State Police, about more policing especially around July 4th.

Woodbury Fire Department

Paul Cerutti and Stephan Morse of the Woodbury Fire Department presented a choice of contracts for fiscal year 2015. Toby made a motion to accept the service contract in the amount of \$22,001. Scott seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously. Paul reported that the town of Woodbury and the fire department are working to move the fire department out of the flood zone, a goal that has been in the town's flood hazard mitigation plan since 1989. The Woodbury Selectboard has directed the fire department to come up with a plan and voted money for a conceptual review. The fire department staff is working with an architect; they have a proposed site and hope to have costs by August.

Trustees of Public Funds

Rod Buck, Trustee of Public Funds, reported on the long-term investment objective for the Calais Cemetery Fund. He began by referring to the VLCT document "Who Has Control Over Cemetery Monies?" pointing out that Cemetery Trust Funds are monies managed by the Trustees, and Cemetery Funds are monies appropriated for the care of the cemeteries under the control of the Cemetery Commissioners in the town budget. The long-term investment goal is to preserve purchasing power while keeping up with inflation in order to grow the fund so that earnings can significantly contribute to cemetery expenses in the future. The investments are a diversified mix of funds (stocks, bonds, conservative real estate, etc) with little risk but with the ability to keep up with inflation. Earnings will be reinvested to grow the fund to \$200,000, which should eventually contribute about \$9,000 a year to cemetery expenses. An endowment spending method would be used to determine how much money would be taken from the Fund. For example, The Vermont Community Foundation (which holds the Maple Corner Community Center funds) uses a rolling average over three years, takes 4 1/2% of assets

and allows MCCC to spend that amount of money each year. Cemetery Commissioner Juanita Nunn asked if \$3,000 from the Cemetery Trust Funds would be used in FY2015 for cleaning the monuments at Robinson Cemetery. Rod explained this would defeat the purpose of growing the fund. The cost of cemetery plots was discussed; the cost may be too low. Proceeds from plot sales is invested with the Cemetery Trust Fund and is the only source to grow the Fund along with any donations. Toby said there is a need to balance affordability of plots with the cost of cemetery and plot maintenance. The plot prices were last reviewed in June 2011 by the Cemetery Commissioners. Donna will mail the price list to the Selectboard. Juanita suggested determining how many plots are left in order to plan for future needs. The cemetery budget was discussed and past practice of Selectboard reducing the budget at times. Donna suggested Commissioners come to Selectboard meetings during budget preparation time so the Selectboard understands the cemetery expenses. Toby emphasized establishing a cemetery capital budget to plan for future expenses. Donna pointed out that the investments are public record and invited anyone to come into the office and look at the records.

Conrad Smith CRAC

Conrad Smith distributed a map from the Calais Roads Advisory Committee (CRAC) highlighting the committee's suggestions for which roads should be 1) secondary roads, 2) collector roads and 3) very low traffic roads, based on info CRAC collected earlier. The map shows highlighted in blue = secondary roads, 30 miles per hour, 14' wide; yellow = collector roads, 35 miles per hour, 24' wide; pink = very low traffic roads, 12' wide, 25 miles per hour. These labels are not meant to be current conditions; they reflect how the town *wants* the roads to be. Conrad asked the Selectboard to pay attention to roads where CRAC was not sure about the desired classification: northern part of West County, Bayne Comolli, Balentine and Robinson Cemetery Roads. Lightning Ridge Road is classified as "secondary" due to farm, schools, people driving kids to school. Toby distributed a list of roads that are private. CRAC will come back at the end of July after Selectboard has time to review. How to share this information with townspeople was discussed, possibly meetings in each community.

Loan in Anticipation of Taxes

The Selectboard signed the loan in anticipation of taxes for \$220,000 with an interest rate of 1.81%. (The loan is repaid when property taxes are paid in the fall.)

Town Hall Foundation

A rotting sill at the Town Hall required Scott Bassage, Seaver Rogstad and Ernie Parrish to give up their Sunday for an emergency repair. Scott and Ernie crawled under the floor and took photos. Scott read a statement which he asked to be inserted into the minutes:

"The Town Hall is the heart of the community, an icon in Gospel Hollow. Calais would not be the same without it. The Historic Preservation Committee has made some great progress: 1) Adding Gospel Hollow to National Register District, 2) determining the building is not in the flood plain, assessing the building's condition and needs, creating a work plan and repair budget, 3) creating a town hall fund, 4) installing a new roof, 5) applying for funding to do investigations and repairs. However, the town has deferred maintenance for years, and it has come time to make a decision. The town hall foundation is going. About 1/2 to 1/3 of the foundation has essentially degenerated into cracked, crumbled and buckled cinderblock and spongy, rotted mildewed sills and joists. It is not a question of "if" or "when." We have to address the problem right now. Twenty years ago, we tried doing it ourselves as best we could. That solution lasted less than 20 years. The result is that the original sills in the northeast corner are destroyed. Those 200-year-old beams are forever destroyed for half their length or more. When we start down the road to "The Big Lift," we need to be together and we need to be prepared. I believe that for

the next step, we need the support of the taxpayers (bill payers) of Calais. For that, I believe we need unimpeachable assessment and recommendations. Then we need a finance plan.”

Scott reiterated that the Selectboard needs credible recommendations for what the Board proposes to do to fix the foundation. Arnold & Scangas Architects did an engineering study in 2013, including options for the foundation. Toby suggested the next step is to get a couple options and prices, in order to understand the extent, scope, and cost of repairs. He suggested calling Dave Rogers. Denise said it is important to preserve the Town Hall for the future.

East Calais Church Renovation

Scott reported that Josh Larkin is heading up the committee that is working on East Calais Church renovations. About \$50,000 is needed for the roof, and the committee is determined to raise the money. They will be holding a coin drop.

New Open Meeting Law

New open meeting laws passed by the legislature require the Selectboard to designate official posting places for meeting agendas and minutes. If the town has a web site, the law requires minutes to be posted to the site. *ALL* town boards, commissions and committees are required to post agendas and to post minutes to the web site within five days of the meeting. Several towns have shut down their web sites due to lack of staffing to comply with this law. Denise has alerted all committees in town. Toby asked Donna to list all the town’s organizations that must comply with this law. Here is the list: Selectboard, Listers (some exceptions), Auditors, Justices of the Peace, Trustees of Public Funds, Cemetery Commissioners, Development Review Board, Planning Commission, Conservation Commission, Design Advisory Board, Historic Preservation Commission, Trails Committee, Calais Roads Advisory Committee.

Scott made a motion that the follow locations be the official posting places for agendas. Rose seconded the motion, and there were reluctant ayes all around.

Official Posting Places for Agendas:

- Town Website
- Town Office
- Maple Corner Store
- E. Calais Store
- Front Porch Forum

Toby made a motion that the town web site be the official place for posting minutes. Scott seconded. The motion passed 0-4 with reluctant ayes.

Official Posting Place for Minutes:

- Town Website

Fireworks Permit

Chris Miller applied to the East Montpelier Fire Department (EMFD) for a fireworks permit for the town swim area at Curtis Pond. Toby asked the Selectboard how they felt about this use of town property. The Selectboard agreed there were many trees in that area and they preferred to not have fireworks there. Toby will report this to EMFD.

Other business

Even though he was unable to attend the meeting, Will Walters (Hardwick Gazette) supplied chocolate which helped the Board stay awake past 10:00 pm. Donna reported that new election laws include the use of tabulators to count votes in towns with a checklist of over 1,000 voters to take effect in 2016. Tabulators will be used for Primary and Presidential elections but not for local elections.

The meeting adjourned at 10:10.

Any documents referred to in these minutes are available by snail or email. Call the town office to request.

Respectfully submitted,

Donna Fitch, Clerk

Next meeting agenda items:

Center Rd. grant

Island

Town hall foundation