

Selectboard Meeting Minutes
July 13, 2015
Approved

Present: Selectboard members Denise Wheeler, Scott Bassage, Toby Talbot, Rose Pelchuck, John Brabant. Donna Fitch, Clerk. Others present: Jennifer Whitman, Doug Lilley, Jan Ohlsson, Reid Schenck, Alfred Larrabee, John Simanskas, Matthew Barewicz, Donald Singleton, Chris Cochran.

Public Comment on Non-agenda Items

Donna Fitch pointed out an article, "The Role of Roads in Our Environment," in the VT League of Cities and Towns' (VLCT) July newsletter that included a photo of a Calais road. Scott said the Historic Preservation Commission was meeting on 7/15/15 to review responses to the request for proposals for a qualified historic preservation professional. This person will create and coordinate a plan for the public process and funding required to rehabilitate the Calais Town Hall.

A petition with 80 signatures was received on July 13, 2015 at the town office with the following wording: "The undersigned legal votes of the Town of Calais hereby petition the Selectboard to hold a special meeting on a Saturday to vote on the following articles: Shall the town of Calais adopt the appropriation for the Kellogg Hubbard Library annually at Town Meeting Day by Australian Ballot?" Town Clerk Donna Fitch pointed out that the wording of the petition was the same as two previous petitions voted on and turned down at Town Meeting 2014 and at a special meeting in November 2014. She cited Vermont statute 27 V.S.A. § 2661 which states a question voted on shall not be presented for reconsideration or rescission at more than one subsequent meeting within the succeeding 12 months except with the approval of the legislative body. Doug Lilley stressed that he wanted the working man to be able to vote. The Board discussed whether to hold another special meeting. Scott Bassage supported holding a meeting. Rose Pelchuck pointed out that the town had been through the exact same process in November 2014. When the petition was presented at that time, the Selectboard was not required to hold a special meeting since the petition for reconsideration was not filed within 30 days after Town Meeting. However, the Selectboard, out of respect for the people who signed the petition, did hold a special meeting. Toby said the point is to go to town meeting and people will not attend town meeting if they can vote by Australian ballot. Denise suggested putting this on the town meeting warning in 2016. John Brabant pointed out that the library is just one very narrow topic and many more money decisions in much higher amounts are made by the Selectboard throughout the year. John encouraged Doug to look at expenses and budget items voted on at town meeting more broadly. Jen Whitman said that voting yet again is undemocratic and under cuts the results of the special meeting held in November and is unfair to those who attended the meeting at that time. At its first meeting in August, Denise said, the Board will vote whether to hold a special meeting; a vote cannot be taken on items that are not on the agenda.

Health Officer

Maria Melekos, a nurse who works at Central VT Medical Center, attended the meeting as she is interested in the town health officer position. Donna gave her the health officer handbook to review. Maria will talk to the previous health officer and let the Board know if she can make the commitment. Denise, as Selectboard Chair, is (by statute) the Health Officer until someone can be appointed.

Conservation Commission Member

The board interviewed Matt Barewicz for a position on the Conservation Commission. Matt grew up in Essex, his parents are dairy farmers and he did his undergraduate work at UVM. He is an economist with the State of Vermont. He attended the last two Conservation Commission meetings. Rose made a motion to appoint Matt to the position expiring in 2019. Toby seconded the motion. Motion passed 5-0.

Minutes

The minutes of June 22, 2015 were approved with no changes.

Traffic Calming Issues and Suggestions

Speed bumps cannot be put on public roads as they are an obstacle to winter maintenance and damage to vehicles can result in potential litigation.

The intersection of Route 14 and Marshfield Road by the E. Calais church is challenging. At one time there was a mirror across Route 14 from the church so that vehicles driving north could be seen before drivers pulled out from Marshfield Road. It's a fine idea, Alfred said, but the town would need to talk to the landowner. A pedestrian crossing across Route 14 in front of the store was suggested; the State would have to do this. Denise has contacted the sheriff asking for more patrols in that area. John said that if specific traffic calming measures are in the Town Plan (for example cross walks at the ball field and at the store) that the Agency of Transportation has to honor and follow through on such requests. A "slow village district" sign was suggested as well as a blinking yellow light.

In Maple Corner, the intersection of West County and Worcester Roads was discussed. Toby pointed out there has been discussion in the past about squaring up the intersection by making it a T and removing the triangle that is currently there. A stop sign at the bottom of the hill into Maple Corner was suggested. This requires a change in the town's traffic ordinance. These changes will be put on a future agenda for public input.

Operations Manager and Road Commissioner Updates

An extra 40 feet into Maple Corner will be paved in conjunction with repaving the last 1.1 mile of the County Road. The road will be closed July 13 and 14 for a culvert to be installed. Once the culvert is installed, the road crew will begin again with grading throughout the town.

Toby and Alfred hosted a public hearing on July 7th in Adamant to discuss the culvert to be installed on Center Road. The plans are on the town's web site and the town and residents are

in consensus to put the project out to bid and have the inlet wingwalls covered by ReadyRock to more easily blend in with the stonework in Adamant Village. The outlet side will remain with exposed aluminum.

Toby made a motion to reappoint Alfred Larrabee Road Commissioner for the next year. John seconded the motion. Motion passed 5-0.

Road crew raises budgeted for in the fiscal year 2016 budget are effective July 1, 2015. Donna will make the updates and provide pay checks retroactive to July 1.

Toby met with residents in North Calais on a Sunday regarding the closure of the bridge that links North Calais and Upper roads. A letter from the neighbors was presented to the Selectboard indicating their support of keeping the bridge closed. (The bridge was closed because it was not structurally sound.) To change the classification, a meeting will need to be warned and the statutory procedures for a road classification change will have to be followed. There was discussion of the name of the bridge and if it is a Class 3 or 4. It was decided it was a Class 3 as that is how it is labeled on the official town highway map. On that map, the bridge is a part of Hayden Road. Alfred said if the bridge is closed that Upper Road will need to be widened at that intersection as the road is narrow there. Chris Cochran disagreed. Alfred said that others need to voice their opinions. Denise said there will be a site visit as part of the discontinuance process and public input can be given then. According to a couple people in the room, the old name for the road was "Dondonde."

Curb Cut for Cemetery on George Road

John Simanskas, Cemetery Commissioner, submitted a request for a curb cut on George Road into the Hudson Cemetery (across from Shortt Cemetery). The selectboard asked him to check with the zoning administrator to see if a permit was needed for the gravel parking area. Alfred will put in the culvert if the Cemetery Commission buys the culvert; he supports helping out by using town gravel. Toby made a motion to approve the curb cut with the cemetery commissioners buying the culvert and the town installing it and providing gravel for the parking area after it has been approved by the zoning administrator. The motion was seconded. Motion passed 5-0. The curb cut is about 500 feet from the curb cut to the parking area for people to access Chickering Bog nature area.

Town-owned Property on Fellows Road

Attorney Gloria Rice confirmed there is an easement to the property at 40 Fellows Road. The town recently received a delinquent water bill for the property. Alfred pointed out the lien was recorded in the office before the tax sale. The Selectboard discussed whether purchase of the property should go out for bids again or go to the second highest bidder. (Two bids were received for the property at the tax sale. The property was awarded to the highest bidder, who changed her mind about buying it.) Alfred Larrabee is the second highest bidder, and the Board discussed whether the option to buy the property should go to Alfred or be bid out again. John did not want it to appear that there was an impropriety in Alfred buying the property and said it

should go out to bid. As the property has several issues, Donna said she was afraid the town would end up being stuck with the property and receiving no taxes for it. Rose made a motion to solicit bids, to indicate the purchaser is legally obligated for the water bill, and include the new information about the easement on the property. John seconded the motion. Rose, Denise, Scott and John voted yes. Toby voted no. Motion passed 4-1. Denise said she would like to see the bid process expedited.

Painting bids for Town Office

Bids were opened for painting of the town office:

Woodchuck Painting, Chuck Talbert - \$3,400

Build and Paint, Robert Harris - \$6,750

Works of Hands Painting, Hans Stewart - \$13,446.56

Donna will scan and email the bids to the Selectboard for review.

Deficit

Donna pointed out that while the town has a way to deal with surpluses (as voted by the town at town meeting), there has not been a vote on deficits. She had emailed VLCT's advice on how to address deficits to the Selectboard. Toby made a motion to reduce the FY2015 deficit when setting the FY17 and FY18 tax rates. John seconded the motion. Motion passed 5-0.

Zoning Administrator (ZA) Job Description

Denise thinks the zoning administrator job should be advertised soon since the town only has Dot Naylor as the acting ZA through the summer. The pay needs to be established before the position can be advertised. Rather than pay a per hour amount, it has been suggested that the pay be per permit or per permit plus an annual stipend. The position may be 14 to 20 hours a month averaged out over the year. Donna will provide information on number of hours worked in past years. Scott will contact Central VT Regional Planning for their input. Denise will work with Dot to finalize the job description.

Curtis Pond Dam

John reported he now has the engineering report from Dubois & King for repair of the dam. The engineering document (246 pages) was emailed to an incorrect email address. The cost estimate is \$314,000, however, the estimate is now a couple years old. Though the town does not own the dam, the State will allow the town to apply for permits and sign off as the applicant but not as the owner. The town needs to decide how to pay for the repair. A bond vote? Create a fire district? Should the community around the dam pay more than others who live further away but who also enjoy the pond? The town would take ownership after construction and after state inspection. The Selectboard needs to figure out an approach and get public input, John said. John will review the engineering plans, will bring the information to the Selectboard and, if there are changes, the board can send them to Jeff Tucker at Dubois and King.

Final Meeting in July

Scott made a motion for the board to meet at its regularly scheduled time on July 27 (7 pm, Town Hall) with the only agenda item being to set the town tax rate. Denise seconded the motion. Motion passed, 5-0.

At 9:30 Denise made a motion to go into executive session in accordance with Title 1 V.S.A. § 313 (a)(1) for the purpose of discussing a legal matter. The motion was seconded and passed 5-0. The board came out of executive session at 9:40 pm with nothing to report.

A motion was made, seconded and approved to adjourn the meeting at 9:45 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Donna Fitch, Clerk