

SELECTBOARD MEETING
Approved Minutes

January 27, 2014

7:00pm Calais Town Office

Attending: Denise Wheeler, John Brabant, Scott Bassage, Toby Talbot, Rose Pelchuck, Donna Fitch, David Antone, Conrad Smith, Warner Shedd, Barbara Weedon, Candi Smith, Rachael Bliss, Eva Gumpreck, J.C. Myers, Craig Line, Peter Harvey, Stephanie Kaplan, Gus Seelig and Judy Copa.

Actions:

Appoint Acting Zoning Administrator – Denise Wheeler reported that due to Rolf Mueller’s family emergency, Dot Naylor (former ZA) has offered to serve the town as Acting Zoning Administrator until such time as Rolf would like to resume his position. Denise recommends the appointment of Dot Naylor. Scott Bassage made a motion to appoint Dot Naylor as acting Zoning Administrator until such time as Rolf Mueller would like to come back. The motion was seconded, voted and carried 5-0.

Public Comment - Craig Line is looking to resign from the Calais Roads Advisory Committee. Denise Wheeler asked him to put it in writing.

Approval of the January 20th Meeting Minutes – Toby Talbot made a motion to approve the Minutes as written. The motion was seconded, voted on and carried 5-0.

Annual Highway Mileage Certificate – The Selectboard reviewed the road mileage data on the form presented. Toby Talbot made a motion to approve the Annual Certificate of Highway Mileage for year ending February 10, 2014 as follows:

Class 2 = 18.45 miles
Class 3 = 54.62 miles
Class 4 = 12.50 miles
State highway = 6.902
Total road miles = 79.972 miles

The motion was seconded, voted and carried 5-0.

Tax Sale of Properties - Scott Bassage made a motion to authorize Donna Fitch, Town Clerk and Treasurer, to bid on properties at the tax sale on February 11, 2014. The motion was seconded, voted and carried 5-0.

WEC R-O-W Permit Requests – The Selectboard reviewed the requests from Washington Electric Co-op to work in the town’s right-of-way cutting trees and moving poles on West County Road. Permit conditions were discussed. Judy Copa has not heard from WEC regarding cutting trees on her land. Donna Fitch will contact WEC. No action taken with regards to the permits. The Selectboard will draft a letter to WEC and Fairpoint Communications asking about removal of old poles after the phone lines are moved to the new poles.

Calais Roads Advisory Committee (CRAC) – J.C. Myers, Chair of the Committee, formally presented the *Town Road and Bridge Standards, Town of Calais, Vermont, CRAC Recommended Draft [Version v]* dated January 9, 2014 to the Selectboard. J.C. Myers reported the committee met twice a month, welcomed public comment, broke up into working groups and had site visits. The three main areas of work were as follows:

1. Road and bridge standards
2. Management systems (highway operations)
3. Inventory of roads

J.C. Myers, Craig Line and Doug Lilley worked on the Management System. The reports details what gets tracked and plans in two main categories, Capital Work and Maintenance. Management draws from these

standards and planning how this construction project is going to abide by these standards. Peter Harvey would like to see before and after pictures of project sites.

Conrad Smith, Stephanie Kaplan, Peter Harvey and Trey Martin did the work on Road and Bridge Standards. They talked to people all over the country looking at what is happening in other places. They spoke about crowns, ditches and vegetated shoulders. David Antone, Director of VT Local Roads Program, recommends not doing a grader ditch. The recommended standards will include seeding and mulching to end up with vegetated shoulders, called a verge. These need more routine maintenance of the roads. The committee has provided invaluable work that the Selectboard truly appreciates. John Brabant spoke about legislation to allow the Selectboard to reduce speed limits without having to do a traffic study. David Antone responded.

Inventory of Roads – Craig Line, Barbara Weedon and Conrad Smith looked at roads, permanent characteristics and nonpermanent characteristics. A Summary Index Card will be made for every road in town with the name, location, length, width speed limit, description and issues with the road. Although data has been gathered for 21 roads, their work is not nearly done. Craig Line is willing to continue helping with the inventory even though he will not be formally on the committee.

Warner Shedd spoke about a letter dated February 1, 2014, regarding state standards and that towns would receive higher funding levels if they sign on to these 2013 State Road and Bridge Standards. Towns, such as Calais, are penalized if they do not sign on. Warner has met with our State Representative, Janet Ancel, about possibly pursuing legislation to exempt towns that have other duly adopted Road and Bridge Standards.

Highway Operations Management Position – The Selectboard worked on developing a management position to have someone work with the town road crew, do a road inventory, do project planning and a capital budget among other things. In so doing the Selectboard developed a Highway Operations Manager job description. Toby Talbot has come up with an alternate proposal (second proposal). Toby Talbot said, “We recognize that these things need to be created, I am committed to moving the town ahead and have the skills and willingness to step in.” “I see it as a development process and not a permanent position,” Toby said. Scott Bassage gave his position in that this will accomplish the same thing without calling it a manager. Conrad Smith said the time frame needs to be longer to figure out the cost of the standards (cost and benefit). Toby Talbot said he is committed to abiding by the new standards and committed to planning road projects. Stephanie Kaplan strongly stated that she is very concerned about this proposal, as she has spent seven months doing this work. Based on the history, Stephanie is not at all confident that Toby Talbot is going to implement the standards and she is very distressed over this. Doug Lilley recommends advertising for a manager instead of hiring two or three guys. J.C. Myers said the new standards and management system needs to be done in a way that does not meet with continued resistance from the town’s road crew. Barbara Weedon feels it is inappropriate, as a Selectboard member, for Toby to objectively evaluate road crewmembers. John Brabant notes this proposal needs an honest and thorough appraisal even if it moves us in the right direction. If this proposal is chosen, Peter Harvey would like regular updates on how this is working such as getting a weekly narrative report of what has happened this week and what is expected next week. The report should be available to anyone and would provide something concrete for accountability. J.C. Myers noted relationships are important (between the Road Commissioner, Road Crew and Highway Operations Manager). The Selectboard will fully evaluate this proposal and will decide on Toby’s proposal at the Feb. 10th meeting.

Warning Articles - Warning articles were discussed with Town Moderator, Gus Seelig beginning with Article 10. John Brabant proposed an article in favor of expanding the state’s existing bottle bill. John Brabant will email text to Donna Fitch for inclusion on the town warning. The Selectboard was in favor to add this article to the Warning. Doug Lilley clarified his intent of his petitioned Warning article regarding voting by Australian ballot.

Scott Bassage made a motion at 10:00pm to continue the meeting to Wednesday Jan. 29th at 8:30am. The motion was seconded, voted and carried 5-0.

Respectfully submitted,

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Rose Pelchuck
Selectboard Member and Administrative Assistant