

## Selectboard Meeting Minutes

*Monday, October 12, 2020 at 7 pm via Zoom conference call*

**Present:** Denise Wheeler (Chair), Sharon Winn Fannon (Vice Chair), John Brabant (Member), Rose Pelchuck (Member), Clif Emmons (Member), ORCA Media, Katie Lane-Karnas (Recording Secretary), Alfred Larrabee (Road Commissioner), Sandra Ferver (Town Treasurer), Toby Talbot (Operations Manager),

1. Call to Order: Denise Wheeler called the meeting to order at 7:02 pm.
2. Public Comment: Clif Emmons mentioned that the Friends of the Town Hall was not able to put the guided tour together for Fall Foliage Weekend because of a need for more volunteers to launch it successfully during pandemic; they have decided to move forward and offer the same on October 24 (see Selectboard details from the [September 28, 2020 meeting](#)).
3. Review, Additions/Changes to Agenda: None.
4. Updates/Reports: Treasurer: The group reviewed VLCT 2021 Renewal Application Packet, beginning with the Property Schedule. They considered the insured value of the Town Hall post-renovation and the potential actual replacement cost; they considered John Brabant's comparison property post-and-beam price estimate. The Board discussed inviting an insurance company representative to a meeting in the future to discuss details about historic reconstruction cost and "guaranteed replacement cost." For the Town Garage content, vehicles and equipment are covered under their own policies; the Road Commissioner noted he felt the amount as listed is sufficient to cover contents. The standard deductible is approximately \$1,000. John Brabant moved to increase the Town Hall insurance policy to \$1.5 million and go with the "guaranteed replacement cost" policy type. Denise Wheeler seconded, and the motion was voted and passed 5-0.

The Board and Town Treasurer reviewed details in the renewal application. The Town Treasurer explained that the worker's compensation amounts are estimates based on the 2019 audits and increased by approximately 1.5%. Parks and Rec will decrease because there was no Swim Program in 2020 and perhaps not in 2021; it does include the Cemetery Sexton's stipend. The Town Treasurer suggested using the insurer's provided estimate for Highway wage amounts, which would be adjusted based on what comes to pass.

5. Scheduling Agenda Items: Items for Selectboard meeting agendas are expected to be sent to the Chair by Thursday at noon. If items arrive later than Thursday at noon, they will be pushed to the next meeting (unless it is an emergency). This schedule allows for Board members to review a draft agenda, adequately prepare, and manage a reasonable quantity of items to be addressed. The Road Commissioner commented that curb cut permit applications also require some time for review before the Board gets his input, and the Board encouraged him to notify the Chair when he has had time to review a curbcut permit.

6. Updates/Reports: Town Office: This item was not needed.
7. Updates/Reports: Operations Manager: The Operations Manager left the meeting call and the Board tried unsuccessfully to contact him. The CVRPC Letter of Intent to Participate in Municipal Roads Grants-In-Aid Program for FY 21 Projects was tabled until a subsequent meeting with the Operations Manager present.
8. Road Crew Evaluation of UVM Roads Report: The Road Commissioner commented that he found some of the report useful and some not possible to implement. For example, starting the truck route at the elementary school isn't feasible because there is no sand pile there, no where to warm the trucks, etc. The report pointed out that the Town Garage is out on the corner of town; the Road Commissioner discussed ways that this practical detail affects winter roads maintenance. Some roads are traveled several times because they are the route to other roads in the town; others are dead ends. Each plow route is very long at approx. 20 miles, and each route caters to school bus travel, which is somewhat variable by year (as student needs shift).

Sharon Winn Fannon asked the Road Commissioner if the report, or the conversations with Todd Eaton (Vermont Local Roads field representative) inspired any ideas or changes. The Road Commissioner commented that he makes changes yearly to the plow routes to respond to the bus routes. The challenge remains that the Town Garage is at the very edge of town, and the Road Commissioner described the demand as "way up." He discussed a fifth truck and additional driver for improved plow efficiency. If the road crew spare person is hired, he is paid regular time and kept under 32 hours per week, which gets routes done faster and results in less overtime from the rest of the road crew. The Road Commissioner explained that the "spare" has been handled as a fill-in when someone is sick, and he has attempted to stick to running the crew with four people and avoided hiring a fifth person. The Board encouraged him to increase communication with the Board to bring forward his needs and ideas such as this request for more hours for a temporary person in the winter.

The group discussed if there are limits to the number of hours Ed Rowell can work and if a local young person can get the job for summer hours so Ed can be utilized more in winter. The Road Commissioner planned to utilize Ed Rowell this winter to increase road maintenance and decrease the four person road crew overtime hours. He noted that increasing temperatures and storms, the increased population, increasingly aged people, all contribute to changing perceptions and expectations on road maintenance. Sharon Winn Fannon encouraged the Road Commissioner to continue to communicate with the Board about adjustments he is making, and to identify quantifiable ways he is making improvements. This would provide concrete information for the group to remain on the same page and communicate back to the public. The Road Commissioner will make adjustments to snow routes with addition of a fifth part time worker and return to present the routes on November 9.

9. Discussion of County Road Traffic: The Chair proposed the Board ask Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission (CVRPC) to do another traffic study (the last one was done in 2014) and ask CVRPC to help interpret the resulting data; tasks to lower the speed limit could then be initiated. A report from the sheriff on speed stops and crash reports from the Vermont State Police can be acquired to learn more solid information to decide if the Town wants to

proceed. John Brabant considered questioning AOT regarding what the quantifiable difference is between County Road in East Montpelier (40 mph) and Calais (50 mph); certainly, in the 1980s there was less development in Calais, but that has changed.

10. Roads Update, GAR Road Curbcut: John Brabant moved to authorize Vice-Chair Sharon Winn Fannon to sign the curbcut permit for GAR Road (the final, amended permit with the corrected name) on behalf of the Board, with the names of all Board members listed. (Denise Wheeler had recused herself due to her participation on the DRB as an alternate on this matter.) The motion was seconded by Rose Pelchuck, and passed 4-0.
11. Town Hall: Exterior painting is in the home stretch and on track to be completed around Election Day.
12. IT Update: This item was not needed.
13. Appointments/Reappointments: Peter Lividitis has expressed interest and subsequently been invited to join the Trails Committee. He will be invited to meet the Selectboard and be appointed on 10/26/20.
14. Other Updates:
  - The CVSWMMD Board of Directors meeting, which followed Calais's [meeting with their representative](#), did not include any agenda item regarding Calais's voiced concerns and requested communication. John Brabant will create a draft letter for the Board's review. A future action item may be to take a second look at the Town's membership and to invite CVSWMMD executive committee to answer questions around what the Town is getting for its membership. There are alternatives (Cabot has left and joined a different district; Northfield left as well) and equivalent or better service may be available. They discussed gaining data and making a calculation of an appropriate refund for services not provided.
  - John Brabant has followed up with Virginia Heavy Equipment inquiring about the status of the woodchipper and the invoice for futile repairs made.
  - Election day coverage (Nov. 3) will include 3-4 people following social distance guidelines to perform the vote tabulator/count tasks at the end of the day. Early voting processes have been well underway following procedures as usual. The Town Clerk and Chair have discussed election day decisions to support safe voting experiences for Calais voters.
  - The grouped discussed organizing Town policies and ordinances on the website. Going forward, the Board will consider how to regularly review every three years, for example, with a note on the most recent date each item has been reviewed.
15. Review and approve minutes, warrants
  - a) The Board reviewed the invoices and orders were processed for payment.
  - b) Sharon Winn Fannon moved and Denise Wheeler seconded to approve the minutes of the 10/5/2020 meeting; the motion passed 5-0.
16. Executive Session for Personnel Matters: This item was not needed.

17. Other Business/Old Business/New Business: None.

18. Adjournment: Sharon Winn Fannon made a motion to adjourn at 9:04 pm. John Brabant seconded the motion which was voted on and carried 5-0.

Date: 10/13/2020 Respectfully Submitted, Katie Lane-Karnas, Recording Secretary  
*Approved by the Selectboard at the \_\_\_\_\_ meeting*

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