

Town of Calais, Vermont

CHARTERED 1781

Town Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, March 3, 2020 at 9:30 am at the Calais Elementary School

ARTICLE 1. To elect a Moderator for the ensuing year:

The Town Clerk presided over the election of a moderator. Denise Wheeler motioned to nominate Gus Seelig. The motion was seconded and unanimously approved.

ARTICLE 2. To ask questions about the reports of town boards and officers.

The status of delinquent taxes, issues of Emerald Ash Borer and landowner tree rights, unionization of the Highway Department, and introduction of Selectboard members were part of the discussion.

ARTICLE 3. To elect the following Town officers from the floor:

Town Agent: Denise Wheeler nominated Tina Bielenberg for a 1-year term. The motion was seconded. A motion was made to close nominations and have the Clerk cast one ballot for Tina Bielenberg; the motion was seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Trustee of Public Funds: Denise Wheeler nominated Rodney Buck for a 3-year term and the motion was seconded. Denise Wheeler moved to close nominations and have the Clerk cast one ballot for Rodney Buck. The motion was seconded and carried unanimously.

Cemetery Commissioner: A nomination was made for Randy Koch for a 5-year term; the motion was seconded. Denise Wheeler motioned to close nominations and have the Clerk cast one ballot for Randy Koch. The motion was seconded and carried unanimously.

ARTICLE 4. Shall the voters approve total highway and general fund expenditures of \$1,661,574 of which \$1,354,449 shall be raised by taxes and \$307,125 by non-tax revenue?

Denise Wheeler moved to approve this article, and the motion was seconded. Discussion ensued.

The Moderator called for a vote on the article and the article passed.

ARTICLE 5. Shall the voters appropriate the sum of \$49,400 for the operation and maintenance of the Town cemeteries?

The article was moved by Mack Gardner-Morse and then seconded.

The Moderator called for a vote on the article and the article passed.

ARTICLE 6. Shall the voters authorize the Selectboard to borrow an amount not to exceed \$18,500, for a term not to exceed three years, for the purchase of a new Town Office server?

Clif Emmons moved to approve this article, and the motion was seconded. Discussion ensued.

The Moderator called for a vote on the article and the article passed.

ARTICLE 7. Shall the voters appropriate the sum of \$30,000 to paint the exterior of the Town Hall?

Denise Wheeler moved to approve this article, and the motion was seconded. Discussion ensued.

An amendment was made to add “up to \$30,000” and the motion was seconded.

Discussion continued.

The Moderator asked the body to vote on the amendment to limit the sum of “up to \$30,000.” The amendment was voted and failed.

Rick Kehne proposed an amendment to increase the amount to “up to \$50,000” and the motion was seconded.

Discussion continued.

The Moderator asked the body to vote on the second amendment (“up to \$50,000”). A division of the house was called for, and the amendment passed.

The original question was called, and the original article was approved with the amendment of “up to \$50,000.”

ARTICLE 8. Shall the voters authorize the Selectboard to borrow an amount not to exceed \$25,000, for a term not to exceed four years, for the purchase of a used wood chipper?

Scott Bassage proposed an amendment: “for the one time purchase of a used wood chipper.” The amendment was seconded.

Discussion ensued.

The amendment to add “one time purchase” was voted and passed.

Discussion turned to the original question of the wood chipper.

The question was called, and the body voted to end debate on the article.

The original article, with amendment, was brought to a vote and passed.

ARTICLE 9. Shall the voters appropriate \$27,132 for the Kellogg Hubbard Library for its operating expenses?

The article was moved by Craig Line and then seconded. Discussion ensued.

The article was brought to a vote and passed.

State Representative Janet Ancel addressed the meeting and introduced Senator Tim Ashe, President pro tempore, accompanying her to local meetings. Rep. Ancel announced a [house concurrent resolution honoring Donna Fitch and John McCullough](#) for their work on the Calais Town Hall Renovation Project. The resolution notes their extensive work and leadership. The Town then announced John McCullough as the first recipient of the John McCullough Citizen of the Year Award.

Rep. Ancel reviewed a few pieces of recent legislative activity, and took questions from the floor.

ARTICLE 10. Shall the voters appropriate the indicated sums as requested by the following organizations in Calais and the Central Vermont area, as follows:

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| Calais Community Connections | \$1,000 |
| Central Vermont Basic Education | \$1,000 |
| Central Vermont Council on Aging | \$1,400 |
| Central Vermont Development Corp | \$500 |
| Central Vermont Home Health and Hospice | \$3,600 |
| Central Vermont Memorial Civic Center | \$800 |
| Circle (Formerly Battered Women's Services & Shelter) | \$700 |
| Family Center of Washington County | \$500 |
| Friends of Winooski River | \$300 |
| Good Beginnings of Central Vermont | \$300 |
| Green Mountain Transit | \$859 |
| Greenup Vermont | \$100 |
| Montpelier Senior Center | \$4,900 |
| Old West Church | \$200 |
| Peoples Health and Wellness Clinic | \$1,500 |
| Rural Community Transportation | \$975 |
| Sexual Assault Crisis Team | \$200 |
| Twin Valley Senior Center | \$3,000 |
| Vermont Association for the Blind | \$650 |
| Vermont Center for Independent Living | \$800 |
| Washington County Diversion Program | \$300 |
| Washington County Youth Service Bureau | \$500 |

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| Woodbury/Calais Foodshelf | \$529 |
| Washington County Mental Health Services | \$1,400 |
| TOTAL | \$26,013 |

Mack Gardner-Morse moved the article and it was seconded, and discussion ensued.

The article was voted and passed.

ARTICLE 11. Shall the voters authorize payment of property taxes in two equal installments, with the due date of the first installment on or before 4:00 p.m. on a date that falls not less than 30 days after the tax bills are mailed, but not earlier than Monday, August 3, 2020, and the due date of the second installment shall be on or before 4:00 p.m. on Monday, November 16, 2020?

The article was moved by Denise Wheeler and then seconded, and discussion ensued.

The article was voted and passed.

ARTICLE 12. Shall each property tax installment payment be made via one of the following three options:

- 1) by delivery to the Treasurer by 4:00 p.m. on or before the due dates as set forth in Article 11
- 2) by U.S. Postal Service, with postmark on or before the due dates as set forth in Article 11; or
- 3) by credit card payment via www.calaisvermont.gov, by 4:00 p.m. on or before the due dates as set forth in Article 11?

The article was moved and seconded, and discussion ensued. The article was voted and passed.

ARTICLE 13. Shall interest in the amount of 0.5% per month or any part of a month, be charged on unpaid taxes?

The article was moved and seconded. The article was voted and passed.

ARTICLE 14. Shall the Town allow an interest-free grace period of seven (7) calendar days following each due date as set forth in Article 11 during which no interest shall be charged?

The article was moved and seconded. Discussion ensued.

The article was voted and passed.

ARTICLE 15. Shall a delinquent tax penalty be set at 4.5% of the total amount of the 2020 delinquent tax?

The article was moved and seconded and discussion ensued.

An amendment was offered to change the penalty amount to be set at 3%. The article amendment was voted and passed.

The article, as amended to set the penalty amount to 3%, was voted and passed.

ARTICLE 16. Shall the Town allow a penalty-free grace period of seven (7) calendar days after Monday, November 16, 2020, during which no delinquent tax penalty shall be charged?

The article was moved and seconded. The article was voted and passed.

ARTICLE 17. Shall the voters authorize a reserve fund under 24 VSA 2804 known as the Conservation Fund to be used to acquire real property or other rights or interests in real property, and undertake other activities consistent with the purposes of 10 VSA Chapter 155 and 24 VSA Chapter 118, as well as preserve historic resources and provide education and public outreach to promote natural resource conservation? Detailed guidelines for the use of the Conservation Fund money shall be proposed by the Conservation Commission and adopted by the Selectboard, after public hearings.

The article was moved and seconded and discussion ensued.

The article was voted and passed.

ARTICLE 18. To transact any other non-binding business that may legally come before the meeting.

Discussion about many local projects and efforts, including coronavirus, the Memorial Hall renovation, and the Town Hall Friends group and East Calais Community Trust occurred.

ARTICLE 19. To elect the following Town Officers by Australian ballot:

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| Selectboard member | 3-year term |
| Selectboard member | 2-year term |
| Lister | 3-year term |
| Town Clerk | 3-year term |

The meeting adjourned at 12:20 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Katie Lane-Karnas, Recording Secretary
Approved by the Selectboard at the 3/9/2020 meeting

Selectboard Chair, Denise Wheeler Date

Selectboard Vice Chair, John Brabant Date

Selectboard Member, Rose Pelchuck Date

Selectboard Member, Clif Emmons Date

Selectboard Member, Sharon Winn Fannon Date