

Selectboard Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, May 26, 2020 at 7 pm via Zoom conference call

Present: Denise Wheeler (Chair), John Brabant (Vice Chair), Rose Pelchuck (Member), Sharon Winn Fannon (Member), Clif Emmons (Member), ORCA, Katie Lane-Karnas (Recording Secretary), Alfred Larrabee (Road Commissioner), Jan Ohlsson, Bill Powell, Cathleen Gent, David Delcore, Chance Payette, David Schütz, Linda Schütz

1. Call to Order: Denise Wheeler called the meeting to order at 7:03 pm.
2. Public Comment: John Brabant noted his frustration that Vermont legislative meetings may only be observed, without the ability to ask questions, adding that the public and press are welcome to participate in Calais. The Chair invited ORCA Media and reporter David Delcore (in attendance) to ask questions at any time.
3. Review, Additions/Changes to Agenda: None.
4. CVSMD Household Hazardous Waste and Facility Project: Cathleen Gent, District Manager, shared an update: CVSMD has had a goal for some time to have a household hazardous waste facility; it is consistently the District's number one request from the public. The District is using grant monies and a reserve fund to begin work on such a facility. The cost to get it operational is \$1.2 million; it is expected to be open by spring 2022. Fundraising is being undertaken. Barre, Montpelier, Berlin or East Montpelier may be the location of the facility. The planning phase includes a committee specifically charged with moving this project forward.

There are currently five seasonal collection events, but once the facility is available in central Vermont, these events may no longer be held remotely. 84,000 pounds of hazardous waste were collected this year; with the COVID situation, the need remains for people to have somewhere to bring hazardous waste. The five events for collection will be able to be held over the summer with some restriction (Cathleen noted that ARC will accept compact fluorescent bulbs, and they may be dropped off at the WEC office with advance notice as well; they will not be accepted at the five hazardous waste events this year). The food scrap/landfill ban is expected to go into effect as planned, as well as other contingencies of Act 148, although the Senate is continuing to discuss COVID implications for the act. The District has been offering curbside sales of composting materials. The office is closed but information can be found on their [website](#). ARC in Barre reopened to the public last week for accepting certain materials.

5. Updates/Reports (as needed or requested)
 - a) Operations Manager: The Operations Manager was not present for an update as requested.

- b) Road Commissioner: The Road Commissioner was not present for an update as requested. The Board discussed dusty roads; the Highway Department had run out of sodium chloride and had been awaiting resupply. The Board noted the importance of staff attending as scheduled, or communicating to the Board if unable to attend.
 - c) Review summer projects schedule: This item was tabled until the Road Commissioner and Operations Manager are present.
 - d) Review opportunities for FY 21 budget savings: This item was tabled until the Road Commissioner and Operations Manager are present.
6. Listers' Extension for 2020 Grand List: Jan Ohlsson explained that the Listers have requested an extension because of the COVID context: they couldn't do their work for about four weeks, and then were limited in office time. They cannot do interior inspections (seven new houses), and have asked property owners to provide documentation via email along with exterior inspections. The houses will be re-inspected in 2021. Grievances are going to be delayed about two weeks, after which a final grand list can be generated for taxes. The State requires the Listers request this extension. The tax rate cannot be set until the grand list is confirmed by the tax department. It seems this timing would result in the tax rate being set in mid-July.

60-70 change of appraisal notices will be sent. Three to four grievances are anticipated. Property owners will be offered one day to do a virtual grievance; or, they can come in another day to the Town Hall with a mask.

Clif Emmons made a motion authorizing the Chair to sign the letter granting an extension to the requirement for transmission of the grand list to PVR. John Brabant seconded, and the motion passed 5-0.

7. Woodbury Volunteer Fire Dept. 2020-2021 Contract for Fire Protection Services: Chance Payette discussed the contract that provides for fire protection for 2020-2021. The contract now allows Calais to wait until after the first tax payment has been collected to pay for the capital replacement fund. The contract includes volunteer fire department services; the truck replacement fund and capital replacement fund. The group discussed the dates and portions of payments due. The contract must be signed by June 30 and is being presented in advance for the Board's review.

The Board inquired how the WVFD is anticipating reduced budgets and funds from towns in the COVID-19 context. Act 102 (S.344) authorizes selectboards to look at their budgets and figure out where savings can be garnered as taxpayers struggle and towns see increased delinquencies. Chance Payette responded that all WVFD budgeted expenses are necessary and based on bills to pay; the Department is not at this point anticipating any savings and will not identify budget reductions until directed by the feds, state, or towns. Rose Pelchuck commented that in looking at areas of the budget to cut, fire departments are not one of the locations she would select to cut. If a house burns, there cannot be no one to respond. The group considered the capital replacement fund, which is to pay for the two original trucks; new air packs; Chance Payette noted that cutting the replacement fund is cutting emergency services. The Board asked WVFD to email about the specific use of the Capital Reserve Fund (\$31,000 is paying for Engine 1; the remaining is getting the \$120,000 saved to replace another vehicle). The Board appreciated the work of the Department. Paul and Chance are

working on acquiring their medical licenses and will be able to add into the contract medical response at no additional cost (an ambulance will not be sought; this would be medical support but not transport).

8. CVFiber's Grant Application: The Board discussed its understanding of David Healy's update provided at the last meeting. The Board emphasized its concern about supporting a project that could potentially result in an alternative to fiber, such as utilizing wireless in some locations. The Board's understanding is that fiber will be rolled out as far as it can with the existing materials, with wireless filling gaps only temporarily. John Brabant noted the Town had a big backlash with the VTEL tower, and the majority of Town would far prefer fiber to premises especially because of additional radiation, a situation the Town would like to avoid with CVFiber. The Board edited the letter of support to underscore Calais's interest to see "fiber to premises"—not just "high speed internet"—as a first priority, and added this language to the letter of support:

The new norm is fiber-optic-cable-delivered high-speed internet to every premise. Our understanding is that as an interim measure, that until fiber can be delivered to every premise, some gaps may be temporarily bridged as an interim measure using wireless technology, but that wireless will not permanently displace the full deployment of fiber to premises for all users.

John Brabant made a motion authorizing the Chair to sign the letter of support for CVFiber's grant application for engineering and construction funding for Phase 1 Pilot Project as edited. Sharon Winn Fannon seconded, and the motion passed 5-0.

9. Town Hall: Clif Emmons updated the Board that the Town Hall RFP for painting has been advertised and sent to vendors. Given our situation with the pandemic, the RFP clarifies it is subject to final review and approval by the Selectboard before proceeding; the RFP also notes the project could potentially include requesting pricing for work phases.

As the phase of restoration is nearly complete, the alarm system is installed and operational. If a fire occurred there today, the system would send out an audible alarm, hopefully alerting a neighbor to call the fire department. It may be time to improve that system to include a "call-out system" that would alert directly to 911, protecting the significant investment the Town has made in renovation.

Clif Emmons made a motion to authorize investigating the cost and options for such a call-out system. John Brabant seconded. The group considered if the Town may gain a reduction on insurance premium with this; if the same company is used as the Town Garage, could a discount be gained? The motion was voted and passed 5-0.

The Wi-Fi hotspot is not yet installed at the Town Garage as planned; the Board discussed concerns about liability with people driving around the Town Garage parking lot (where there are often trucks, graders, sand pile, etc.). The group discussed instead locating it at the Town Hall with the capability to move it elsewhere when the Town so decides. There is an option of having two connections: one password protected, and one open. Originally, the Town Hall site

could not be considered (there was a qualification against a site that already had some kind of Wi-Fi. The Town Hall Wi-Fi, however, is an antiquated system with security concerns. Clif Emmons made a motion to locate the Wi-Fi hotspot at the Town Hall. John Brabant seconded, and the motion passed 5-0.

The Town Hall renovation has two small outdoor projects remaining that the Board hoped to check in with the Road Commissioner about; after this, the Town Hall's Certificate of Occupancy can be gained. All other items have been completed.

David Schütz, member of the Town Hall Friends group, explained that Hasso Ewing of Calais has been working with a group of curators and 65 artists from throughout the state to create "Shelter in Place," a project whose hope is that an exhibition can be mounted in a prominent venue in Montpelier. It is to be installed in a forest of red dogwood branches, gathered in Calais. Hasso needs a place to install the exhibition where it can be appreciated virtually during the month of June; it will then move to Montpelier. Hasso needs a hall where it can be put together and be made available for an online presence, and the upstairs of the Town Hall is being considered. Hasso had begun working on the project, inadvertently misunderstanding that members of the Town Hall Friends group had the capacity to allow use of the space. David Schütz noted that he is bringing the question of the project's use of the Town Hall to the Board (the body that can approve use of Town space), and that Town Hall renovation project manager John McCullough supports the project.

The state governs the guidelines of the Certificate of Occupancy, requiring a visit from the state building inspector who is backlogged due to COVID. The Town is very limited in spaces to use (grievances, meetings, etc.) and the Chair will contact the Dept. of Public Safety to learn if a waiver or allowance for some way to use the building can be gained. No groups will be permitted to use the space until the Certificate is gained. The Board appreciated Hasso's project, but asked David Schütz to relay the Board's regrets that the space cannot be utilized until the certificate of occupancy is gained.

10. Curtis Pond Swim Access: The Chair spoke with the Swim Committee Chair. The main concern about whether swim lessons can proceed is whether an instructor can be hired. Locals have been concerned that the swim access has already been very crowded. The governor's directive has been that people should swim and then leave so others may swim. Linda Schütz commented that she loves Curtis Pond, and is concerned about the entrance going down the steps and going to the grassy meadow. In the past, people set up at those locations, and you have to move past them at a very close distance. She added that there is a path that goes down from the parking, but there is a second path that could be identified for helping manage the direction of foot traffic, thereby supporting social distancing. She would be willing to work with some people to create signage about the details, and posting on FPF, and The Bridge. The group discussed how people are not going on vacation, so they are staying here and looking to swim. Katie Lane-Karnas commented that there have been concerning amounts of people and no expectation set about use of the swim and boat access areas. The Board considered imposing a "residents and their guests" on the swim area until guidelines are formed (the same restriction for use of the Curtis Pond island. John Brabant commented that Curtis Pond is a Town property for use by Town residents; it is insured by the Town, and implications could arise with not ensuring best practices in alignment with the State's standards for public health

during COVID-19. John Brabant will contact the insurance carrier (VLCT) to learn more about liability; Denise Wheeler will contact the State and Wrightsville Reservoir.

11. FY 21 Review Act 102 (S.344): This item was tabled for a subsequent meeting.
12. IT Update: Installation of the new server is scheduled for 5/29/2020.
13. Review and approve minutes:
Clif Emmons moved and Sharon Winn Fannon seconded to approve the minutes of the 3/14/2020 meeting, with the changes as noted; the motion passed 5-0.
Sharon Winn Fannon moved and John Brabant seconded to approve the minutes of the 5/4/2020 meeting, with the changes as noted; the motion passed 5-0.
14. Chair Updates:
 - Appointments/Reappointments (6/8/2020)
 - Follow up with “stakeholders” to identify potential opportunities for savings (6/8/2020)
 - EMFD quarterly meeting with E. Montpelier Selectboard (Thursday, 6/11/2020)
15. Executive Session for Personnel Matters: Denise Wheeler made a motion to go into Executive Session at 9:04 pm per 1 V.S.A. subsection 313 (a) (3), personnel matters. The motion was seconded, voted on and carried 5-0. The Board resumed Regular Session at 9:14 pm. The Chair had nothing to report publicly.
16. Other Business/Old Business/New Business: None.
17. Adjournment: John Brabant made a motion to adjourn at 9:14 pm. The motion was seconded, voted on and carried 5-0.

Date: 5/26/2020 Respectfully Submitted, Katie Lane-Karnas, Recording Secretary
Approved by the Selectboard at the 6/8/2020 meeting

Click on the link below to view documents associated with this agenda:
<https://drive.google.com/open?id=1J1E4Zny-Ho0lUm7V8naAgRIQP9UWdxIN>