

Selectboard Meeting Minutes

Monday, July 27, 2020 at 6:30 pm via Zoom video chat

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

1. Call to Order: Denise Wheeler called the meeting to order at 6:38 pm.
2. Public Comment: Rose Pelchuck noted that some schools in the district went out to bid for temperature monitoring systems, but Calais was not included; she has reached out to Dot Naylor to learn more.
3. Review, Additions/Changes to Agenda: None.
4. Updates/Reports, Treasurer: Town Treasurer and Board reviewed a spreadsheet with data relevant to the FY21 tax rate calculation. The total approved expenditures, minus total projected income, is the amount to be raised in taxes (\$1,520,824.00). This amount is divided by the FY21 grand list (a higher amount than in FY20, reflecting variables including 6 newly built houses and one with a corrected land value). The Town Treasurer rounds up to ensure collecting a sufficient amount and the suggested tax rate is 0.7476 to raise \$1,520,968.34.

Calais has ten veterans, who have been confirmed by the Veteran's Affairs Office. The Town has voted to allow every veteran who meets the qualifications a \$40,000 exemption, The State automatically allows \$10,000 (This is a reduction in the veteran taxpayers' assessed value; this tax savings to the veterans is made up by the other taxpayers in Town in the adjusted grand list. AN amount of approximately \$3,000 will need to be collected from other parcels in Calais. The other voted-in exemptions (Adamant Coop, Calais Rec. Association, Adamant Community Club, Aldrich Memorial Assoc., Calais Community Rec Center, Maple Corner Community Center) leaves approximately \$10,000 to be collected from other parcels in Calais.

The Town Treasurer recommended to the Board the 2020 town tax rate as follows: a town tax rate of 0.7476 and a combined local agreement rate of .0065 (made up of the addition of the veterans exemption rate and the non-homestead contract rate) for a total town tax rate of 0.7541. The effect of the change in tax rate is \$74 in additional Town taxes per \$200,000 assessed value. This would raise sufficient monies to cover expenditures the Town voted on at Town Meeting Day. The FY21 homestead tax rate (this is the school tax) is 1.8574 and results in a combined total tax rate of \$159 in additional taxes (over last year) per \$200,000 in assessed value (of which \$74 is the town tax, and the rest the school tax). The Board asked the Town Treasurer to include page 6 of the document with property tax bills and to clarify "Education Tax" next to the words "homestead tax rate." Non-homestead tax rate is for properties that are not a primary residence, i.e., second homes or part time residents.

The group considered: as city folks leave COVID areas and indefinitely move to live in Vermont to learn and work remotely, what is the tipping point in terms of primary residence? The Town Treasurer commented that voter registration and driver's license and where income tax returns are filed are points to look at to determine residency for taxes.

Denise Wheeler made a motion to set the town tax rate at 0.7541, made up of a town tax rate of 0.7476, 0.0050 for non-homestead contract rate, and 0.0015 for veterans' exemptions. John Brabant seconded the motion and it passed 4-0.

The Town is finishing the FY 21 year in a very strong fiscal position and the fund balance is stronger this year than it was last year. The audit is well underway.

5. Updates/Reports, Road Commissioner and Operations Manager: The Operations Manager reported the Cross Vermont Trail people put up the solar speed sign in Montpelier so he hasn't learned more details about it. The signs being looked at are mounted to a pole and can be moved to different locations around Calais. The regular traffic signs used in Town would be used for this. A permanent ROW permit would have to be established for the East Calais state Route 14 location, and the Operations Manager recommended installing it permanently at that location. The Chair will contact the school to see if they would be willing to contribute funds for the Lightning Ridge area; another suggestion is to put a stop sign for northbound traffic where the pavement turns to dirt in Maple Corner (Rose Pelchuck will share the draft traffic ordinance). A public hearing would need to be held. John Brabant noted savings from the woodchipper tax effort could be significant enough to add support to the Route 14 sign location. He reiterated the significant traffic and tractor trailer danger posed to the people who live and travel there, and his disappointment in AOT's lack of response to basic safety in that area. Two signs plus installation are estimated at \$5,500-6,000 and the Operations Manager said it would come out of the "highway budget" for the year, not from an identified line item. The road sign line item is \$3,000 and the Operations Manager suggested three signs: two permanent in East Calais, and one moveable sign. The Town Attorney has advised that a budget is a "best guess;" the signs have been being discussed for three years now and the group agreed about the serious safety issue for walkers and drivers in East Calais village.

Denise Wheeler made a motion that the Town purchase two permanent signs to be mounted in East Calais, and one moveable sign and to ask the school board to help pay for the moveable one that would be used quite frequently on Lightning Ridge when school is in session. John Brabant seconded, and the motion passed 4.0.

Sue Killoran called to ask if wild chervil season is over so that the burdocks can get mowed on Old West Church Rd. The Road Commissioner said all the main drags have been mowed and a few less travelled roads remain. The roadside mower had some issues (AC, several hydraulic lines, all new flail head teeth needed) but is back in use with a rotary head installed. The Road Commissioner has plans for ordering all new teeth and working on replacing them in the flail head at the garage during a slower season. The Board directed the Highway Department to mow Old West Church Road (along with Fowler, Singleton, and Bliss Pond Road) upon communication from the Chair and make it the first road of the day, and pressure wash the mower and all attachments before leaving the garage. The Chair will communicate with Peter Harvey. The Road Commissioner will submit to the Town Treasurer for paying the repair bill

from Fournier's (the seller will pay the repair costs and the Board agreed to pay the total travel time for the repair person, \$240).

The Chair has reached out the CVRPC regarding Calais's existing tree inventory and potential future planning and is awaiting response.

The Board thanked Greg Pelchuck for his help in locating and investigating a woodchipper. John Brabant and Greg investigated a 2011 commercially used chipper at a dealer in Virginia that has no dents, auto-safety devices, good motor, rated at 12" trunk size for \$21,995 shipped to Vermont. The Road Commissioner commented that this is approximately half the price of a new chipper and noted that safety features have advanced significantly over the last ten years which is worth remembering and his reservations about used equipment. John Brabant made a motion to authorize purchase of the chipper for \$21,995, delivery included. Denise Wheeler seconded the motion and it passed 4-0.

The Road Commissioner visited the location for curb cut permit on the County Road and measured the sight distance from the south at 600 feet, more than required. The Chair also made a site visit. A culvert is not needed by the Town. John Brabant made a motion to approve the curb cut (Markinson, 2020-03) on County Road and authorized the Chair to sign on behalf of the Town. Clif Emmons seconded and the motion passed 4-0.

The "slingshot" connection installation project is underway allowing two-way connection from the Town Office with access to the alarm system at the Town Hall. The Operations Manager commented that the alarm system does need to talk to a hard-wired line, not a wireless connection. He will double check with Seacoast and get back to Clif Emmons on Tuesday. Denise Wheeler made a motion to authorize Clif Emmons and the Operations Manager to coordinate work on the pieces needed to make the internet connection for the security alarm system at the Town Hall (a couple extra hours of rbTech's time). Clif Emmons seconded and the motion passed 4-0.

6. Updates/Reports, Town Office: The Town Clerk has communicated with the Board about the significant challenges around work in the Town Office in the context of the pandemic. Board members acknowledged the heightened stress and continued serious concerns about the pandemic. It appears that the atomization of the virus remains for up to 3 hours and up to 30 feet away; so many questions remain about the virus itself. John Brabant pointed out that the state policy around Act 46 to close small schools, ironically, is in cross purpose to people fleeing urban areas and buying homes in Vermont. In the context of COVID19, families relocating to Vermont seek small, local schools (exactly what is being targeted for elimination by state policy). Members noted how many out of state plates and walkers are in Calais this summer. The Town Clerk's Office has a plan in place and working through challenges as staff keep the Board updated. The Secretary of State's Office has required in-person voting, but the anticipated numbers for in-person voting in Calais are very low.
7. Town Hall/Friends of Town Hall Update: Clif Emmons did the first round of edits adding in Selectboard requested language and shared with the Friends group (for the Management Agreement). Subsequent drafts will continue to be shared. Lead remediation will take 2-3

weeks with the weather being a big factor, as well as only one person working who has the lead remediation certification. He has already been scraping and will halt for the days of the Primary Election.

8. IT Update: rbTech will be working and coordinating with the painting contractor and Andy Felice to get the slingshot system at Town Hall set up. Clif Emmons will email Andy Felice. The server work is done and the final migration complete. A temporary fix is in place and working for data backup until the slingshot system is set up. The Town is in good shape in terms of being on top of IT needs.
9. Appointments/Reappointments: Denise Wheeler made a motion to approve the following list of appointments and reappointments, with Stephanie Kaplan's term length on the DRB yet to be determined, and addition the position of Auditor and that person being NEMRC, for a term of 1 year. Rose Pelchuck seconded and the motion passed 4-0.

Position	Last Name	First	Term End	Term Length
Animal Control Officer	Hughes	Wilson	2020	one
Animal Control Officer, Second	Perry	Elizabeth	2020	one
Central VT Regional Planning Delegate	Brabant	John	2020	one
Central VT Regional Planning, Alt.	Ohlsson	Jan	2020	one
CVRPC TAC Committee	Ellenbogen	David	2020	one
CVRPC TAC Committee Alternate	McNeill	Karin	2020	one
CVRPC Clean Water Advisory Committee	Brabant	John	2020	one
CVSWMD District Delegate	Powell	Bill	2020	one
CVSWMD District Delegate, Alt.	Brabant	John	2020	one
Constable, First	Hughes	Wilson	2020	one
Constable, Second			2020	one
Delinquent Tax Collector	Ferver	Sandra	2019	one
E-911 Coordinator	Winchester	Anne	2020	one
Energy Coordinator	Powell	Bill	2020	one
Gospel Hollow Warden	Felice	Andy	2020	one
Inspector of Lumber	Pelchuck	Greg	2020	one
Selectboard Recording Secretary	Lane-Karnas	Katie	2020	one
Treasurer	Ferver	Sandra	2019	one
Tree Warden	Maker	Neal	2020	one
Tree Warden Assistant	Lamb	Drew	2020	one
Town Service Officer	Miller	Marianne		
Web Master	Bassage	Scott	2020	one
Web Master	Robert	Judy	2020	one
Web Master	Lane-Karnas	Katie	2020	one
Weigher of Coal	Harvey	Peter	2020	one
Development Review Board (member)	Kaplan	Stephanie	TBD	TBD

10. Review and approve minutes, warrants

- a) The Board reviewed the invoices and orders were processed for payment.

- b) Rose Pelchuck moved and Clif Emmons seconded to approve the minutes of the 6/8/20 meeting, with the changes as noted; the motion passed 4-0.
 - c) Rose Pelchuck moved and Clif Emmons seconded to approve the minutes of the 6/13/20 special meeting, with the changes as noted; the motion passed 4-0.
 - d) Denise Wheeler moved and John Brabant seconded to approve the minutes of the 6/22/20 meeting, with the changes as noted; the motion passed 4-0.
 - e) John Brabant moved and Clif Emmons seconded to approve the minutes of the 6/25/20 special meeting, with the changes as noted; the motion passed 4-0.
 - f) Approval of the 7-13-20 meeting minutes was tabled until all members have a chance to review them.
11. Executive Session for Personnel Matters: Denise Wheeler made a motion to go into Executive Session at 8:39 pm per 1 V.S.A. subsection 313 (a) (3), personnel matters. The motion was seconded, voted on and carried 4-0.
Sharon Winn joined the meeting to participate in the Executive Session.
The Board resumed Regular Session at 9:38 pm. The Chair reported the Selectboard will provide training to the Development Review Board (DRB) and Zoning Administrator via Zoom by the town's attorney, Jim Barlow, Esq., on the Open Meeting Law, how to conduct a quasi-judicial hearing and record keeping.
12. Other Business/Old Business/New Business: None.
13. Adjournment: John Brabant made a motion to adjourn at 9:39 pm. The motion was seconded, voted on and carried 5-0.

Date: 7/29/2020 Respectfully Submitted, Katie Lane-Karnas, Recording Secretary
Approved by the Selectboard at the 8/10/2020 meeting

Click on the link below to view documents associated with this agenda:
https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1SIETsMk1I8Yjt0GplDFqweKv_rGEgdTI?usp=sharing