

Town of Calais
3120 Pekin Brook
Road East Calais, VT
05650
July 24, 2017 Regular Selectboard Meeting
Unapproved Minutes
7:00pm at the Calais Town Hall

unapproved

Board Members Present: Denise Wheeler, Chair; Rob Richert, Rose Pelchuck, Sharon Winn Fannon, John Brabant; Town Clerk Judith Robert, Selectboard Administrator Jonathan Williams

Others Present: ORCA Videographer Jerome Lipani, Heather Scandale, Renee Grzankowki, Jim O'Riordan, Millie Brumback, Tami Deblois, Dick Rouelle, Scott Bassage, Donald and Dorothy Singleton, Heather Johnson, Andrew Ness, Cynthia Johnson, Rowen Jacobsen, Mary Jacobsen, Lisa McCarthy, Emil Cambel, Wilson Hughes, Anne Toolan, Bessie Benjamin, Rita Benjamin, Jamie Moorby, Betsy Parah, Tom and Sharon McArdle, Ed Walbridge, Dennis Hunger, Fletcher Dean, Jon LaRue, Jodi DeGraza, Richard Larow, Kimberly Farone, Ray Zelesky, Melissa Fair Cohen, Bill F___, Mary Elder Jacobsen, Alfred Larrabee, Heidi Hoffecker

1. Call to Order : Denise Wheeler called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

Ms. Wheeler stated that the Board will hold a public forum next Monday night, 7 p.m. She read a statement aloud to those present, from the Calais Selectboard. Ms. Wheeler allowed ten minutes for public comment.

2. Public Comment – for items not on agenda

Cynthia Johnson: has tried to reach Peg Bowen; has been harassed when trying to park to use Number Ten Pond. She stated that she has been told there are 20 active members in the Women's Relief Corps. She invited any people present who want to meet upstairs to talk about this issue together, as "Friends of Mirror Pond."

A community member remembered being assured as a child that this pond will always be available to the public. Wonders if it will be possible to contact more members of the Women's Relief Corps.

Some discussion followed about ownership of the pond.

Tom McArdle: clarified: what type of road is in question? Denise Wheeler stated that it is a Class 4 Road.

Dot Singleton: what is the process for classifying a road as a town road? Some discussion followed around right-of-way.

John Brabant suggested that the people who are present and invested, spend some time together talking about what they would like to see, and suggestions. This is a town-wide issue.

Ms. Wheeler asked that community members try to talk amicably and respectfully, and she noted that the property has been recently vandalized.

A question was raised about the memorial monument.

George Brumback – the town should hire a lawyer to act for the public interest, and not act in the interest of private individuals.

Rob Richert: spoke about the issue of public access to privately owned entities (such as pond); this is complicated and a common issue; there is no "cookie cutter" solution.

3. Review of Agenda : Denise Wheeler introduced Jonathan Williams, Selectboard Administrator. She noted that she would like to add to tonight's agenda: *Letter of Collaboration for Resilient Roadways*, and *update from Historic Preservation*.

4. Recurring Items, Presentations, Reports, Including Items for Possible Vote:

a) Review, discussion, and approval of minutes: 7/10/17: Rose Pelchuck moved to approve the minutes of 7/10/17. Rose Pelchuck had suggested some edits for clarification. This motion carried unanimously.

b) Warrants for Payment: The Board circulated and reviewed board orders.

(1) Accounts Payable

(2) Payroll

5. Business Items for Possible Vote:

a) Transportation Items:

i) Road Signage Conformance Update : Jon Williams shared that he, Alfred Larrabee, Toby Talbot, and Denise Wheeler had met with Dan Currier about signage compliance according to the *Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices*. They had shared the sheriff's report about signage issues in the town. Mr. Williams suggested some of the possible next steps: (1) Option for intersection in Adamant: sign review by Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission (CVRPC), or road safety audit by Vermont Agency of Transportation (VTrans). (2) Options for signage compliance, town-wide: formally request road safety audit, or handle "in-house" in the town, or handle "in-house" with assistance from Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission. Rose Pelchuck stated that she has lived in Adamant for over thirty years; she does not see a problem with the intersection in Adamant. She would not like to "make a mountain out of a mole hill" as a result of an isolated incident. She feels that the signs throughout the town are a greater priority than the Adamant intersection. The Board discussed this. The Board decided to make signage compliance in the town a priority, and to pursue the CVRPC's input regarding the Adamant intersection next year (as opposed to going through VTrans.)

b) Drew Lamb Sugar Works, Sap Lines, & Tank Request: The Board discussed this request. Denise Wheeler had suggested adding that the town has the right to terminate the agreement with advance notice of 90 days. Discussion followed around liability insurance. Sharon Winn Fannon had researched a similar situation recently and stated that the cost of liability insurance in that case was approximately \$500 annually. Sharon Winn Fannon spoke about the possibility of a "for cause termination" in the lease. John Brabant suggested that since the town has no interest in the piece of land, the Board might consider subdividing/ selling the piece of land at fair market value. Ms. Lamb stated that she and Drew will investigate the personal liability issue, and her understanding is that the Board will talk further about "for cause termination." This issue will be on the next Selectboard agenda. John Brabant asked to have the town property map available for the Board's reference at that meeting.

c) Authorization for Payment of Town Website Domain: Denise Wheeler moved that the Town reimburse Rose Pelchuck for the town website domain, renewal date effective September 30, 2017. Seconded by Sharon Winn Fannon, this motion carried. Rose Pelchuck abstained from this vote.

d) Possible Appointment of Second Town Constable/Animal Control Officer : Some discussion ensued with Anne Toolan, about her desire to be involved as Animal Control Officer and possibly as Second Town Constable. Wilson Hughes expressed his support. Denise Wheeler moved to appoint Anne Toolan as Second Town Constable and Animal Control Officer, effective immediately. This position is in effect through Town Meeting Day 2018. Seconded by John Brabant, this motion carried unanimously.

e) Set Tax Rate: Donna Fitch shared that the first payment for the most recent loan begins in FY2018. She had shared with the Board the document: 2017 (FY18) Tax Rate Calculation.

Rose Pelchuck moved to set the town tax rate at 0.6844, as presented by Town Treasurer Donna Fitch, for Fiscal Year 2018. Seconded by Sharon Winn Fannon, this motion carried unanimously.

f) Set Delinquent Tax Penalty Rates: Sharon Winn Fannon asked whether setting the delinquent tax penalty and paying the town tax collector are two separate issues. The Board had asked for counsel from Jim Barlow. Ms. Winn Fannon asked for clarification around this issue of tying tax penalty rate with payment for the tax collector. Jonathan Williams referred to the *Vermont Delinquent Tax Collector's Handbook*.

Sharon Winn Fannon moved to set the delinquent tax penalty rate for FY2018 at 1% above the weighted average of the town's loans held during FY2017, valued at their original principle, and the interest rate for the associated loans on June 30, 2017, if the loan is still outstanding on June 30, 2017, or the last day of the loan, if the loan was satisfied before June 30, 2017. Seconded by John Brabant, this motion carried unanimously.

Sharon Winn Fannon moved to pay the Town Delinquent Tax Collector for FY2018, at a rate equal to 7% of delinquent tax, minus the delinquent tax penalty rate for FY2018, so that the tax collector is compensated at a rate of 7%. Seconded by Rob Richert, this motion carried unanimously.

g) Town Hall Edible Gardens Management Plan: The Board acknowledged the long term maintenance plan that had been submitted for Gospel Hollow Edible Park. Denise Wheeler invited any questions or comments from Board members. Sharon Winn Fannon suggested that the Board plan at least once a year to put this item on the meeting agenda. The Board briefly discussed an annual timeline for Board meeting agendas.

John Brabant noted again that the Board needs to consider a fair approach to liability issues, for example, around farming and lawn mowing. The Board agreed that this topic needs further discussion at a future meeting.

h) Grant Spreadsheets Review with Selectboard Administrator : Jonathan Williams shared that he intends to maintain and update the Grants spreadsheets and to report to the Board once or twice yearly. Donna Fitch suggested that this might require updating the Board more than once or twice yearly - possibly "as needed."

i) Transition to Municipal Departments' Written Reports for Selectboard Meetings : Some discussion occurred around written reports at Selectboard meetings. Jonathan Williams explained that some boards choose to have written reports in advance of Board meetings; this would allow the Board to review the reports before the meetings, and can decide whether or not

the author of the report is needed at the meeting. The Board discussed that the small town nature of Calais Selectboards, and the face-to-face interactions, are valuable. Donna Fitch suggested that Alfred Larrabee and Toby Talbot might create a bulleted list versus a written report. Jonathan Williams offered to help with creating a bulleted list or report of some type, based on their input. The importance of having documents in advance of meetings was discussed. Sharon Winn Fannon stated that she likes having a timed agenda, and being realistic about what is possible to accomplish in the course of a meeting. Denise Wheeler asked Board members to read and review documents before meetings to make efficient use of time. Discussion followed. John Brabant stated that he believes the Board meetings should allow time for discussion. He would like time to be available for all Board members to speak. He asked, if tighter time frames are imposed, to be sure that everyone has the opportunity to speak.

j) Review and Update Internal Controls : Internal Controls: The VCLT had provided a checklist for the Board to consider around internal controls.

c) Letter of Collaboration for Resilient Roadways: Denise Wheeler shared the document: Letter of Collaboration for Resilient Roadways, with Alfred Larrabee. He will participate on this committee; he stated that he is willing to do so, as long as it occurs during his regular work day.

Denise Wheeler asked Board members to review the Letter of Collaboration for Resilient Roadways.

Sharon Winn Fannon moved to approve the Letter of Collaboration for Resilient Right-of-Ways: Rural Road Vegetation Assessments from the Vermont Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation, and to authorize Denise Wheeler to sign the document. Seconded by Rob Richert, this motion carried unanimously.

6. Business Items for Discussion

a) Selectboard correspondence : Judith Robert asked, with roles changing, what is the Board's preference about her attending Selectboard meetings.

The Board briefly discussed reviewing and updating policies. Conflict of Interest and Personnel policies were brought to the attention of the Board. Denise Wheeler will visit the Town Office and discuss agenda creation, and this topic will be addressed as well, in planning agendas.

Denise Wheeler thanked Jonathan Williams for the work he's done so far and stated that he has "hit the ground running" over the past two weeks. Donna Fitch stated that she, Judith Robert, and town administrator and town clerk assistant are working on keeping track of tasks and time spent on each. Jonathan Williams shared that in some towns this position is paid for, at least in part, by grants.

b) Historic Preservation Update: Scott Bassage provided an update about plans for the entryway to Calais Town Hall, as a result of the Fire Marshall's input. He spoke about building a railing and working on the entryway steps. Discussion followed about the use of the Town Hall building, and the issue of liability. Scott Bassage stated that he believes that imposing liability insurance requirements on those who want to make use of the Town Hall is likely to be cost prohibitive. He will research this issue. John Brabant stated that he feels it is important that the Selectboard treats everyone with consistency. He suggested pursuing whether an addendum is available to the current liability policy for such related matters. Denise Wheeler suggested that the Vermont League of Cities and Towns (VLCT) might attend one of the Selectboard meetings to answer questions and concerns.

Jonathan Williams will contact VLCT to possibly include on the next agenda. Alfred Larrabee brought up the issue of a proposed ramp at the entryway being in the way of plowing in the

winter if it is not portable.

7. Closing Public Comments, Review of Assignments, and Adjournment: Sharon Winn Fannon asked how to address discrepancies in the board orders when she is reviewing them. Some discussion followed; Denise Wheeler stated that this is most appropriate to occur when the Town Treasurer reports. The Board discussed the format of the agenda. Sharon Winn Fannon suggested that Jon Williams review the board orders before the meetings, to look for such discrepancies. This would serve as an additional internal control. Denise Wheeler will work with Mr. Williams about agenda format. Some discussion followed about the possibility of scanning and sharing as PDF, board orders in advance of the meetings. Donna Fitch will have the board orders ready for Jonathan Williams to review on the Thursdays before Board meetings.

Sharon Winn Fannon asked, regarding tonight's board order, about a couple discrepancies. Donna Fitch clarified.

Denise Wheeler spoke briefly about the plan for next Monday's Public Forum meeting. Some discussion followed around having a moderator at the meeting. Sharon Winn Fannon stated that it is important that Jim Barlow not be in a position to have to answer questions from the community at the meeting on Monday. John Brabant stated that this meeting would not constitute a Selectboard meeting.

The board discussed the issue of town-wide issues versus town governance issues, in the context of Memorial Hall.

The board adjourned by consensus at 10:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Lisa Stoudt, Board Recording Secretary