

SELECTBOARD SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
LOCATION: Calais Town Office
MONDAY, JANUARY 16, 2017 @ 7:00 P.M.

Approved 1-23-17

Present: Selectboard Members Denise Wheeler, Rose Pelchuck, Scott Bassage, Toby Talbot, John Brabant

Others Present: Lisa Stoudt, Board Recording Secretary; Donna Fitch, Town Clerk & Treasurer; James Barlow, Esq.

Call to Order: Denise Wheeler called the meeting to order at 7:07 p.m.

Review and Approve Minutes: Rose Pelchuck moved to approve the minutes of January 9, 2017. Seconded by Scott Bassage. Discussion: Rose Pelchuck had recommended some edits to the minutes. This motion carried unanimously, with noted edits.

Continue discussion for development of FY 2018 Budget:

Some discussion followed around the highway crew. Toby Talbot stated that a substitute driver has been hired.

Highway budget: Toby Talbot reviewed some edits to this portion of the budget. He spoke about his desire to level-fund the salaries in the highway budget by managing overtime. The Board discussed having a ribbon cutting celebration when the Town Garage renovations are complete.

Donna Fitch reported that Melanie Rodjenski from Fothergill, Segale and Valley is planning to help in the Town Office this coming week to help prepare for the Town Report and to wrap up the FY 2016 budget. The Board thanked Donna Fitch for her continued work.

The Board discussed that it will have to make a plan and find the means to hire help between now and July 1st, for office work. Some discussion followed around the general fund for unanticipated expenses.

The topic of deficits from FY 2015 and FY 2016 was discussed again. James Barlow, Esq. suggested that the Board consider the bottom line: revenues minus expenses, when discussing deficit spending. The Board discussed the concept of unencumbered or unrestricted fund balance. FY 2016 started with a negative fund balance of approximately \$133K.

The topic of grants was discussed. The Board would like to seek clarification from Melanie Rodjenski regarding best practice in book keeping in such areas as grants. Donna Fitch shared Ms. Rodjenski's position that she is not comfortable doing this work with the Board if she were to act as an auditor for the Board in the future.

The Board briefly discussed the position of Selectboard Assistant/ Administrator, including salary and benefits. Toby Talbot suggested including some notes with the budget to explain some of the significant changes.

The Board discussed the transition to NEMRC, including the supports upon which Donna Fitch will rely during this transition.

Toby Talbot stated that the proposed operating budget at this time is \$1,616,832, which represents an approximate \$44K increase.

The Board discussed grant money: how to represent the income and expense when projects or other aspects of the town operation are paid for using grant money. Toby Talbot would like to ask Melanie Rodjenski to clarify this. Donna Fitch explained that using NEMRC will make this accounting more clear.

Continue discussion for development of 2017 Town Meeting Warning:

The Board reviewed this iteration of the Town Meeting Warning draft. Toby Talbot spoke about the benefit to taxpayers of a 10 year loan versus a 5 year loan for the excavator. The requirement for bond-like procedures for the 10 year loan makes it not pragmatic, given the time frame between now and Town Meeting Day. Mr. Talbot stated that staying with the 5 year loan will impact the capital plan for FY 2017, and going forward for five years. He will provide updated numbers for the capital plan to Donna Fitch.

James Barlow, Esq. suggested that the Board change the wording on Article 15, to include options for mailing. He will provide (to Denise Wheeler) wording to update this article.

Donna Fitch reminded the Board that the deadline to submit updates to this document is January 19th.

Continue discussion of Charter adoption and timeline – public outreach process and mailing:

The Board would like to make a brief, bulleted handout for next Monday's public hearing, based on the Town of Calais Charter informational document.

Toby Talbot reiterated the two simple issues which were an impetus for the charter: appointing a Town Treasurer, and hiring an auditor.

James Barlow, Esq. brought up the issue that the Town Treasurer is not the same as the School Treasurer, according to the charter. He had contacted the Calais School Board's legal counsel to try to clarify this but has not yet heard back.

The Selectboard will invite the Calais School Board, and the Calais representative to the U32 Board, to next Monday's Selectboard meeting, to discuss the Charter.

Some discussion followed around Australian ballot voting. Mr. Barlow asked why some town positions were elected on the floor and others by Australian ballot. The Board is not sure why this is the case, simply that it has always been done this way.

Denise Wheeler reviewed the public hearing meetings for the following two Mondays. Toby Talbot suggested posting on Front Porch Forum some of the simple “FAQs” about the proposed Charter.

Review 2016 Selectboard Report for Annual Report: Denise Wheeler asked whether Donna Fitch had received all of the information she needed to include in the Annual Report. Some discussion followed around information from the fire departments, including chief’s report, call log, and list of department members. Denise Wheeler had shared a draft of the Calais Selectboard Report. Scott Bassage provided some suggested edits for clarity. Ms. Wheeler invited suggestions or comments from Board members.

Adjourn/continue meeting: The meeting adjourned by consensus at 8:28 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Lisa Stoudt, Board Recording Secretary