

## **SELECTBOARD MEETING MINUTES**

Monday, December 14, 2015

Approved

Present: Calais Selectboard Members Denise Wheeler, Chair, Scott Bassage, John Brabant, Rose Pelchuck, Toby Talbot was absent; Lou Cherry, Adm. Asst.; Town Clerk Donna Fitch; John McCullough, Gary Root, Jack Russell and Jan Ohlsson, Planning Commission; Bill Gray, Mountain Tamers Snowmobile Club; Alfred Larrabee, Road Commissioner; Dot Naylor, Zoning Administrator; Stephanie Kaplan and Julie Hand, Conservation Commission; Peter Harvey, Reed Cherington; David Ellenbogen.

Chair Denise Wheeler called the meeting to order at 7pm.

### **NON-AGENDA ITEMS**

Denise made a motion to appoint Lou Cherry administrative assistant to the Selectboard on a trial basis through the date of Town Meeting with an annual stipend of \$1,500. Scott seconded. Motion carried 4-0.

### **SELECTBOARD MINUTES**

Scott asked that Toby be given credit for the amendment to the Town ROW Ordinance in the November 23, 2015 meeting minutes. Scott made a motion to approve the minutes. John seconded it. Motion passed 4-0

Denise made a motion to approve the December 2<sup>nd</sup> minutes of the joint meeting with the East Montpelier Selectboard and Fire Department. Scott seconded. Motion carried 4-0.

### **ROAD COMMISSONER UPDATE**

Because of the warm weather and the absence of snow, the road crew has been catching up on grading and brush cutting. Denise made a motion to give the road crew a holiday bonus of \$250. Scott seconded the motion. Motion carried 4-0. A complaint was received about the ditching at the intersection of Worcester and County Roads. Alfred put up reflectors which should help until snow builds up a barrier between the road and the ditch.

### **MOUNTAIN TAMERS SNOWMOBILE CLUB REQUEST**

On behalf of the Mountain Tamers Club, Bill Gray requested permission to travel on designated town roads for trail crossings. There are no changes from last year. Rose made a motion to approve the road crossings for snowmobilers. John seconded the motion. Motion passed 4-0.

### **TOWN HIGHWAY MAP**

Reed Cherington said he initially believed there were three possible errors on the official town highway map. On further reflection, he realized two of them were not errors and the third (the end point of Long Meadow Hill Road) was not so significant but what it could be corrected next year. (The deadline for changes to road designations is in February each year.)

### **TAXES**

Scott expressed serious concern, as identified by the number of requests for tax abatements, that taxes are becoming burdensome for the residents of Calais. The largest amount of taxes is paid to U-32 Jr/Sr High School. Scott said any budget increase over last year is too much; there should be a

decrease instead. A general discussion ensued. John Brabant suggested the selectboard attend a Calais Elementary School meeting. Meetings are held at 6 pm the first Wednesday of the month. (In reality, meeting times and dates vary – check the school web site.) Denise will ask Scott Thompson, Calais rep to U-32, to attend a selectboard meeting to talk about the U-32 budget.

**PUBLIC HEARING ON PROPOSED CHANGES TO CALAIS ZONING REGULATIONS**

The Selectboard reviewed the proposed changes to the Calais Zoning Regulations. In particular, there was considerable discussion around shoreland protection and any reduction of the shoreland district. The Planning Commission’s draft incorporated the State of Vermont’s recent Shoreland Protection Act into the Calais shoreland zoning section in order that applicants not have to go through two application processes and because Calais shoreland regulations were more restrictive. John Brabant was concerned that Calais not weaken its standards, but develop equally protective regulations “unhinged” from the State regulations. The consensus was that Calais develop its own standards for the shoreland district. It was stated that Susan Warren, a retired Shoreland Protection Act expert, attended a Conservation Commission meeting and explained that the purpose of the legislation was for towns that do not have any shoreland protection regulations. She stated Calais zoning regulations do a great job of protecting shoreland.

John McCullough, the Planning Commission’s shoreland protection expert, agreed to decouple the town’s shoreland regulation wording from the State’s and provide a new draft. The Planning Commission thanked the Selectboard for a useful and helpful meeting. At 11 pm Rose moved the meeting be continued to Monday, December 21, 2015. John seconded the motion. Motion passed 4-0

Respectfully Submitted,

Lou Cherry, Administrative Assistant