

CALAIS SELECTBOARD MINUTES

March 9, 2015

Approved

Present: Selectboard members Scott Bassage, John Brabant, Rose Pelchuck, Toby Talbot, Denise Wheeler; Lori Bayne, Lisa Levangie, Mary and Terry VanVeghten, Paul Rose, Michael Birnbaum, Matthew Lutz, James Lapaglia, Sandra Robinson, Stephenie Kaplan, Peter Wells, Michelle Meacham, Scot C. Richards; Wilson Hughes, Animal Control Officer; Nedene Martin, Delinquent Tax Collector; Alfred Larrabee, Road Commissioner; Will Walters, Hardwick Gazette.

Administrative work: Congratulations to Scott Bassage and Denise Wheeler for winning reelection at town meeting.

Scott nominated Denise as chair. The motion was seconded, voted and carried. Scott nominated John Brabant as vice chair. The motion was seconded, voted and carried. John nominated Donna Fitch as clerk and administrative assistant. The motion was seconded, voted and carried. Selectboard meeting dates were sent for the second and fourth Mondays of the month at 7pm. November through April meetings will be at the town office, and May through October meetings will be at the town hall.

Appointments: Toby made a motion to appoint Neal Maker, Tree Warden; Drew Lamb, Assistant Tree Warden; Nate Singleton, Second Constable and Assistant Animal Control Officer. The motion was seconded, voted and carried. Scott made a motion to appoint Nedene Martin to a one-year term as delinquent tax collector. The motion was seconded, voted and carried. Scott made a motion to appoint Charlotte Hanna Bassage, Bill Russell and Gail Graham to three-year terms on the trails committee, with terms expiring in 2018. The motion was seconded, voted and carried. Scott made a motion to appoint John Brabant as alternate to Central VT Solid Waste Management District and the motion was seconded, voted and carried.

Road Commissioner update: The road crew is getting ready for mud season, pushing back snowbanks to lessen snowmelt onto the roads. There are two applicants for the open road crew position. Road Commissioner Alfred Larrabee recommends advertising in a bigger market to find capable candidates. Alfred is getting quotes on a new six-wheeler truck, which was approved at town meeting, and is also pricing a seven-year warranty. Toby respectfully requests that we not forward highway-related emails to him as he already receives them.

Selling Town-owned Property Received at Tax Sale: The town is now the owner of the property at 40 Fellows Road. Denise reviewed the information from VLCT attorney, Sarah Jarvis, about the process the town may use to sell the property. She pointed out the town cannot make a profit. Toby made a motion to go with Option #1 from Ms. Jarvis' email:

"This is a question that requires researching the chain of title to the property in the town's land records. We suggest that you have a lawyer complete this task. Assuming that there are no limitations found in the chain of title, the sale of municipal property is governed by 24 V.S.A. § 1061 which requires that the selectboard take one of two routes:

1. They can come to a (tentative) agreement with a purchaser, then announce the terms of the proposed sale publicly (by posting in multiple places in town and publishing in the newspaper) and

allowing time for the public to petition for a public vote on the subject. If there is no such petition the sale can go through.”

The motion was seconded. Taxes for FY2015 will be included in the sale price. John Brabant mentioned the village water district bill. The motion was voted and approved.

Natural Resources Inventory: Toby would like to put it out to bid since it is spending \$17,000 of town money. Toby made a motion to put it out to bid for advertising for three weeks. The motion was seconded, voted and carried.

Wifi Tower on Bayne Comolli Road: Denise Wheeler recused herself from the selectboard and handed the proceedings over to John Brabant, Vice Chair. Vtel is proposing a tower for internet. A show of hands indicated many neighbors are opposed to the project. The neighbors are asking the town to help them oppose the project as it is in a residential area, is detrimental to health and they have concern about the process Vtel has taken. Comments included:

- It has not been a democratic process.
- Suggest siting it on state or town lands.
- Discrepancy with data on application with coordinates which state different locations. The construction document doesn't match up.
- The landowner no longer wants it on his land but has signed a contract with Vtel.
- The tower would be a redundant piece of infrastructure.

Stephanie Kaplan said the Public Service Board has to find the project in the “public good.” It may be a duplicate service. Michael Birnbaum from Cloud Alliance said if there is correct legal opposition, applications can get withdrawn. Co-location was identified as a good thing. The 45-day window for feedback is now running. He spoke about Plainfield's efforts and ultimate win in getting Vtel to withdraw its application for a tower in Plainfield in October 2014. There is already coverage in this area from a tower in Woodbury. Michael would be willing to put that in writing. Toby suggested the group get the Plainfield data, clean it up and present it to the Calais Selectboard for study and review. Michael pointed out that this is a preliminary application period and to hold off on Toby's suggestion until Vtel has filed the application.

Restricted Landing Area: Denise returned to the selectboard at 8:40 pm. Matt Lutz would like to apply for a Restricted Landing Area on his property. There are no restrictions in Calais zoning. A motion was made to authorize John Brabant to sign a letter of support from the selectboard. The motion was seconded and passed 4 to 0 with Denise abstaining.

Wifi Policy: Scott said all town systems will be protected. Wifi will be available to the public and not to access town business. Discussion to continue.

Dog Ordinance: Wilson Hughes, animal control officer, suggested including a fine for unregistered dogs. A sizeable fine will get to register their dogs. For nuisance dogs, he suggested the following fines:

- 1st offense: \$15
- 2nd offense: \$50
- 3rd offense: \$100

This will be discussed and finalized at the meeting of March 23rd.

Other Business: Nedene Martin, delinquent tax collector, says that the pay (from the 7% delinquent tax penalty) averages about \$21/hour. She talked about the delinquent tax policy (printed in the town report) and spoke of taxpayers who paid their 2014 taxes, but still owe 2013 and 2012 taxes. There are 55 delinquent taxpayers. Two tax sales will take place on March 23, 2015 in the town office. There is about \$135,000 in outstanding delinquent taxes. Nedene recommends the position compensation stay as it is (7% penalty) and not go to hourly pay. Nedene expressed sincere thanks to Donna Fitch and Judy Robert for their genuine cooperation working with her in her capacity as delinquent tax collector.

Executive Session: At 9:15 John Brabant made a motion to go into executive session in accordance with Title 1 V.S.A. § 313 (a)(3) for the purpose of discussing a personnel matter. The motion was seconded, voted and carried. The regular meeting resumed at 9:35 pm with nothing to report.

Agenda items for March 23 meeting:

Town meeting recap
Dog ordinance
Reapprove road standards
Reauthorize Emergency Plan
Town Plan from Planning Commission
Wifi policy for town office
Town appointments

Scott made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:37 pm. The motion was seconded, voted and carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Donna Fitch, Clerk