

## Selectboard Meeting Minutes

*Monday, October 14, 2019 at 7 pm at the Calais Town Offices*

**Present:** Denise Wheeler (Chair), John Brabant (Vice Chair), Rose Pelchuck (Member), Sharon Winn Fannon (Member, arriving at 7:30 pm), Clif Emmons (Member), Jerome Lipani (ORCA), Katie Lane-Karnas (Recording Secretary), Jan Ohlsson, Ryan Edwards, Jen Myers, Peg Bowen, John McCullough, Ed Clodfelter, Ty Roland (Fire Chief), Albert Patrella (EMFD), Sandy Conti (EMFD)

1. Call to Order: Denise Wheeler called the meeting to order at 7:03 pm.
2. Public Comment: None.
3. Review, Additions/Changes to Agenda: None.
4. Updates/Reports: This item was not needed.
5. Meet and Appoint Ryan Edwards, Design Review Board, Design Advisory Board: Ryan Edwards introduced himself and described his journey to Calais (he is an architect). He commented on how he sees the town plan being a way to realize large goals, such as promoting small businesses in Calais. Peg Bowen, DRB Chair, described the work of the DRB. Rose Pelchuck made a motion to appoint Ryan Edwards to the Development Review Board, to a three-year term that expires in 2022. John Brabant seconded, and the motion passed unanimously. Denise Wheeler made a motion to appoint Ryan Edwards to the Design Advisory Board, to a four-year term that expires in 2023. Clif Emmons seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.
6. Ambulance Proposal: East Montpelier Fire Department (EMFD) attended to discuss a proposal for purchase of an ambulance. An opportunity has arisen to purchase a \$175,000 demo ambulance, which has never been in service, that could be used to replace “Rescue 3.” (By comparison, a new ambulance might cost \$225,000). Rescue 3 recently required an \$8,000 repair, resulting in three weeks downtime, because of an issue with the exhaust/thermostat system. The group reviewed an itemized quote for the potential new Rescue 3, including trade in value for both the retiring Rescue 3 and the old Rescue 4. The total price with trade in would be \$136,000. The Capital Reserve Fund currently has approximately \$100,000; the EMFD has spoken with their bank regarding financing details and the group reviewed those. The proposal puts zero cost to the town, at this time, as the loan would be paid from the Capital Reserve Fund (through revenues).

Engine 4 is slated to be replaced in 2020. The last fire truck asked for out of taxpayer dollars was Engine 2 in 2002—all the rest have been paid for out of ambulance revenues. Rose Pelchuck commented that it sounds like a wise deal to be able to get an ambulance at a low

cost, with ability to trade in at a good price. Denise Wheeler moved to authorize EMFD to commit up to \$136,000 plus associated loan costs from the EMFD Capital Reserve Fund to purchase a 2016 demo ambulance from FESCO Emergency Sales to replace Rescue 3, paying off the existing loan on Rescue 2 and consolidating loans for Rescues 2 and 3 into payments of approximately \$62,500 annually for five years, as requested. John Brabant seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

7. School Bus Tires Issue: John Brabant and Denise Wheeler reported that they have requested the unified school board add the winter school bus tires as an item on their next meeting agenda.
8. UVM Capstone Roads Project: The Chair reported on the monthly check in phone meeting that happened last week. Participants came out and met with the Road Commissioner, rode around town, and planned to return to travel in a town truck. Participants are enthusiastic and foresee replicating aspects of this project in other small Vermont towns. Questions being posed include: Are we sufficiently staffed? Are we loading sufficient materials for the amount of roads that we have? Project outcomes could include data points that allow towns to make comparisons; road maintenance plan; use of apps.
9. FY21 Budgeting: The Board sent an email to chairs and vice chairs announcing the start of budgeting for FY21. The Board discussed reserving two half days (Saturday 12/14, Saturday 1/11) to work on FY21 budgeting. The Chair noted there will be a 12% increase to BCBS insurance rates for this budget. Property tax bills increased this year due to the Act 46 merger, and it remains unclear how the courts will land on Act 46. The Board discussed the need to remain cognizant of these many increases and the impact to taxpayers in this budget planning season.
10. IT and rBtech Contract: rBtech's recent work has been met with approval by staff members. The Board discussed moving into executive session at the end of the meeting (to discuss specifics of vendors).
11. Chair Updates:
  - The Chair reported that the WVFD Building Committee stalled over the summer as they awaited a DRB variance for setbacks. WVFD has been donated the property next to the old store - the house will be torn down in order to build the new station. They have received their permit and conditions include a snow removal plan (to avoid Route 14) and rain runoff onto Route 14. They don't require a state stormwater permit and are pursuing an asbestos test. A detailed drawing will be ready in a few weeks. The next meeting is 10/24 at 7 pm.
  - The auditors, Sullivan, Powers & Co., will attend the 11/11 meeting to review the results of the current audit. The Board will review and sign the new engagement letter 10/28/19. Overall, they found no significant deficiencies in their yearly audit of Calais.
  - Update Petition #19-27, IBEW Local 300 – Certificate of Voluntary Recognition has been received.
  - The Planning Commission is in the process of interviewing zoning administrator candidates. Jan Ohlsson commented that the PC will come to the Board with a

recommendation in November. The position is approximately 20 hours per month (this position will fulfill the work currently performed by John McCullough and Dot Naylor).

- Listers are currently elected, and their work is always increasing in complexity and demand. Jan Ohlsson commented that she works about 20 hours per month, and \$12,000 is budgeted annually for payment to the 3 listers' salaries. Ed Clodfelter lives in Calais and is an Assessor in multiple towns, as well as senior appraiser for NEMRC. He and Jan Ohlsson agreed that it takes a number of years to learn enough about the position to really approach it with full confidence. As the responsibilities of listers continues to increase and Calais's current listers will retire in the near future, the Town is considering moving the powers and functions of the Board of Listers to a single paid position of Assessor. This process would need to be warned for Town Meeting. If the position is approved at a future town meeting, it must be filled within 45 days.

Ed Clodfelter added background from his professional expertise to the conversation on the position a Town is in, in terms of meeting state requirements and finding qualified residents to serve. The state created a four-level certification program for assessors, but there is no specific professional requirement for a person serving as assessor. Ed Clodfelter commented on the widespread issue for towns voting to move from a board of listers to an assessor who then are not able fill the position within the 45-day timeline—it therefore is essential to identify an assessor in advance of that timeline. He identified several responsibilities of the assessor that are of an unpredictable nature and above monthly planned assessor work: correspondence, property transfer, questions, and current use come up all the time. The assessor position does not have a residency requirement. Ed Clodfelter offered his expertise to the Town as the Board considers what avenue to take. The group considered potential hours and payment for an assessor and how to invite people who haven't been involved before to participate. Jan Ohlsson commented that she is willing to serve one more term (three years), and the Board stated their intention to continue this planning process.

- The Office staff meeting this week included discussion of the new server and also a simple keypad entry system. A keypad system would allow those who need entry to the office to get in without the Town Clerk needing to come down at inconvenient times with a key to open the office. Programming a new code will prove less expensive than replacing keys and allow staff to be aware of who has access to the building at any time. There will be a way for staff to lock the building from the inside on days they are working but the office is closed, and the Board will check on building insurance requirements before making the change.
- A Town Hall update will happen on the 10/28/19 meeting. There will be a town-wide house tour at the end of the month to benefit the family of Ernie Parrish, and the tour will include the Town Hall.
- CVSWMD budget is not increasing for Calais for 2021. They will hold a public hearing on 10/23 at 5 pm.
- John Brabant clarified that the office roof does not have a leak; there are a combination of factors during an ice jam that cause a problem. Andy Felice believes there may be heat loss that it is getting out and causing the ice jam and there may be a relatively simple fix involving insulation.
- The Curtis Pond Dam was inspected by the state. It remains in the same condition, and this report provided recommendations. The dam is not the responsibility of the Town, and the Board has declined the use of Town employees in repair work to avoid liability.

12. Review and approve minutes, warrants
  - a) The Board reviewed the invoices and orders were processed for payment.
  - b) Denise Wheeler moved and Sharon Winn Fannon seconded to approve the minutes of the August 5, 2019 meeting, with the changes as noted; the motion passed 5-0.  
Clif Emmons moved and Rose Pelchuck seconded to approve the minutes of the September 23, 2019 meeting, with the changes as noted; the motion passed 5-0.  
Rose Pelchuck moved and Denise Wheeler seconded to approve the minutes of the September 24, 2019 meeting, with the changes as noted; the motion passed 4-0 (Sharon Winn Fannon abstained as she was not present).
13. Other Business/Old Business/New Business: Clif Emmons commented on his participation in the Fall Foliage Festival forest walk hosted by the Conservation Commission. There will be some proposal coming from the Commission for a warned Town Meeting item regarding future uses of Town Forests. John Brabant shared the history of the Woodbury Town Forest, bequeathed by Hugo Meyers, which was given with the purpose of allowing residents to access firewood. The Board discussed the need to look for original understandings that may have been part of the transfer of land to the town as town forest.
14. Executive Session for Personnel Matters: Sharon Winn Fannon made a motion to go into Executive Session at 9:11 pm per 1 V.S.A. subsection 313 (a) (3), personnel matters and 1 V.S.A. § 313(a)(1), contracts. The motion was seconded, voted on and carried 5-0. The Board resumed Regular Session at 10:05 pm. The Chair had nothing to report publicly.
15. Adjournment: Denise Wheeler made a motion to adjourn at 10:08 pm. The motion was seconded, voted on and carried 5-0.

Date: 10/15/2019 Respectfully Submitted, Katie Lane-Karnas, Recording Secretary  
*Approved by the Selectboard at the 10/28/2019 meeting*

*Click on the link below to view documents associated with this agenda:*  
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