

Selectboard Special Meeting Minutes

Saturday, December 14, 2019 at 9 am at the Calais Town Offices

Present: Denise Wheeler (Chair), John Brabant (Vice Chair), Rose Pelchuck (Member), Sharon Winn Fannon (Member), Clif Emmons (Member), Katie Lane-Karnas (Recording Secretary), Sandra Ferver (Town Treasurer), John McCullough (joining by phone at 12:20 pm)

1. Call to Order: Denise Wheeler called the meeting to order at 9:08 am.
2. Public Comment: During public comment, Sharon read the attached statement into the Selectboard record. Clif Emmons commented that the idea for someone on the SB to take on a paid position had just emerged; he agreed with much of what Sharon said, including that if a paid position is needed, putting it out for applicants is a good idea. John Brabant said he agreed with Sharon's comments. Discussion turned to conflict of interest, encouraging volunteerism, and defined boundaries for volunteers and staff, and growing workload. The Board discussed removing the stipend Selectboard administrative position the Chair has performed for the last few years and considered how to address this work in the near future.
3. Review, Additions/Changes to Agenda: None.
4. East Calais CLG Grant: The Town has received CLG grants for North Calais, East Calais, and Adamant. The East Calais Community Trust is a group working to purchase the East Calais Store (the Chair disclosed that she is a member of the Trust's Board). The Calais Historic Preservation Commission proposes to submit a grant application to the Division for Historic Preservation for a total of \$30,000 (\$12,000 in kind or cash local match). Sharon Winn Fannon made a motion to endorse the Calais Historic Preservation Association's grant application for CLG grant, and allow John Brabant to sign on behalf of the Board (Denise Wheeler recused herself). The motion was seconded and approved 4-0.
5. FY 21 Budget Development: The Board and Town Treasurer reviewed every line item, clarifying many details and their understanding of each item. Some examples include: the audit line items (differentiating between the town audit and professional audit) were decided to be located sequentially in the budget for ease of voter understanding. The copier line item name was edited from "Copier Lease & Maintenance" to "Copier Maintenance," and the Treasurer explained how maintenance charges are incurred for the copier which the Town owns. The increase seen in the line item for "Election Expenses" is due to the expense that will be incurred for configuration of the vote tabulator (ballot counting) for a number of elections in 2020.

The Treasurer maintained detailed notes of all changes. As part of their budget development and review, the group recalled historical changes and evolution of positions and responsibilities. For example, the Town Treasurer position is full time (the position came to

include a number of responsibilities formerly held by the now vacant Selectboard Administrator) and the Delinquent Tax Collector is a separate position. The Board appreciated that Sandra manages the delinquent taxes so well, and is able to integrate the responsibilities into the workday rather than staff needing to make daily calls to a DTC working a full time job outside the office.

The Board considered approaches that would provide residents the most budget information, detail, and notes/comments. They considered maintaining an easy to read printed budget in the Town Report, but also directing readers to an expanded digital version on the Town website.

Server: Rubin Bennet (rbTech) had confirmed the age of the server and advised that the server is likely to last until the start of the FY21 year (July), at which point it must be replaced (\$18,000), to avoid the likely situation that it die and cause a significant security issue. The Board decided to create a line item for Technology Fund for the purpose of starting to build a reserve fund to cover things like this in the future (discussion was for \$8,000 per year). There is a need to both start a reserve fund for the future and make a warned item for a loan for the replacement of the current server.

Items under “Police Patrol” continue to increase while the revenue from ticketing decreases; the group was not sure what the contributing factors are to this trend.

The Swim Fund is an appropriation that includes the Town’s maintenance of the raft and dock, both of which need repair this year.

The Town Hall has not been utilized for a few years during renovation. John Brabant commented that he wants to make sure that the space is fully functional for Town business, including basic supplies. The Board noted that the reserve fund is to include uses such as purchase of surplus file cabinets, or shelves, etc. that are to be utilized by Town government. A “Friends” group is currently being formed as a non-profit organization, and ultimately the Board will approve bylaws that guide rental usage, etc. John Brabant reinforced his ongoing concern that the Town Hall remain used primarily as a Town office space with the Board having full decision-making sway, including being used as full time office space if the Board so decides. Clif Emmons is a member of the forming Friends group representing (and keeping informed) the Selectboard. The Board discussed their preference to continue to fund the Town Hall Reserve Fund at \$10,000 per year (cost for a heat exchanger may be approximately \$1400). Door hardware and metal railing remain to be funded through the Reserve Fund; the Board had capped use of funds out of the Reserve Fund that would bring it below \$10,000. The Committee has requested an article on the warning for the exterior painting at approximately \$30,000 (John McCullough advised that the exterior, which includes primed trim put on by Greenline Builders, will require painting by next summer, including scraping of lead paint). The project is currently at \$-28,000, but roughly \$30,000 in grant money reimbursement (for the disability accessible lift) is due in. John Brabant commented that he sees the Town Hall as another piece of town infrastructure, and if we run over (just as in Highway), the project gets brought to completion and a budget is a best guess, while the Town is doing the best it can; if we go over budget, the building gets finished just like the roads and any other piece of Town infrastructure. Denise Wheeler commented with her appreciation that

the Committee has done everything they can to keep the budget coming in on target, even with Greenline Builders folding, and John McCullough continuing to be offering tireless work.

6. 2020 Town Meeting Warning: The significant portion of the budget dedicated to Fire & Ambulance, whose budget is not created by the Selectboard, was considered. Taking something out of the Town budget and instead adding it as a warned item creates a hard conversation but increases transparency and helps the voters understand it. The group discussed a Town Meeting warned item “Shall budget items for Fire and Emergency Services be separately warned budget items, beginning in FY22, which accurately reflects the organizational structure and budget authority of those organizations?” This promotes the discussion of budget solutions and notifies both departments about the need to be responsive to the voters rather than the Board.

The group discussed the woodchipper which had been previously considered for a warned item, a total expense purchased new at \$45,000. Enough funds will be available in the Highway Equipment Fund to pay for a used tractor mower (as discussed over the past year for roadside mowing and management of invasives) and used woodchipper, and the Board planned to work with the Road Commissioner to make the purchases. There will not be a need to include the tractor mower and woodchipper in the proposed budget nor as a warned item.

The Board clarified the parts of the budget over which they have ownership (General Government and Highway) and those which they do not (Cemetery, Social Services, Emergency Services) and compared rates of increase. The Emergency Services portion of the budget will be organized into a third category of the main budget (#1-General Government, #2-Highway, #3-Fire & Ambulance, including the WVFD Equipment Reserve Fund, thereby removing it as a special warned article); this will allow all to clarify where increases are happening and what organization is responsible to the voters for each section.

The Treasurer discussed some approaches the Board has available to them in considering salary budgeting.

7. Executive Session for Personnel Matters: This item was not needed.
8. Other Business/Old Business/New Business: None.
9. Adjournment: Clif Emmons made a motion at 3:35 pm to continue this meeting to Thursday, December 19, 2019 at 5:00 pm. The motion was seconded by Sharon Winn Fannon, voted on and carried 5-0.

Selectboard Special Meeting Minutes (continued)

Thursday, December 19, 2019 at 5 pm at the Calais Town Offices

Present: Denise Wheeler (Chair), John Brabant (Vice Chair), Sharon Winn Fannon (Member), Clif Emmons (Member), Sandra Ferver (Town Treasurer)

Absent: Rose Pelchuck (Member)

10. Call to Order: Denise Wheeler called the meeting to order at 5 pm.
11. Public Comment: None.
12. Review, Additions/Changes to Agenda: None.
13. Tractor and Woodchipper: John Brabant made a motion to purchase a pre-owned Ford 6640 Tiger Special tractor with side boom mower and flail head from Fournier's Equipment in the amount of \$20,000. This will be taken from the Highway Equipment Reserve Fund. Sharon Winn Fannon seconded the motion and was approved unanimously.
John Brabant made a motion to approve the purchase of pre-owned 2014 Vermeer BC1000XL Woodchipper (or similar model and price range) in an amount not to exceed \$25,000. The Treasurer will reach out to Merchant's Bank for a quote on a loan with the first payment due in FY 21. This was seconded by Sharon Winn Fannon and unanimously approved.
14. Budget Planning: The Board reviewed Version 6 of the FY 21 proposed budget and made adjustments.
15. Adjournment: At approximately 9 pm the Board decided to continue this meeting to 10 am on Friday, December 19, 2019 to further discuss health insurance options with the Treasurer.

Selectboard Special Meeting Minutes (continued)

Friday, December 20, 2019 at 10 am at the Calais Town Offices

Present: Denise Wheeler (Chair), Sharon Winn Fannon (Member), Clif Emmons (Member, attending by phone), Sandra Ferver (Town Treasurer)

Absent: John Brabant (Vice Chair), Rose Pelchuck (Member)

16. Health Insurance: The Board reviewed and discussed with the Treasurer the options and cost increases for BC/BS health insurance coverage and check needs to be sent to BC/BS no later than 12/26/19. Clif Emmons made a motion that the Town maintain the current BCBS Gold Plan CDHP with the premium split being 90% town portion and 10% the responsibility of the employees, decision going into effect 12/20/19 and the plan renewing on 1/1/2020. Sharon Fannon seconded and the motion passed unanimously. Sharon will create pie charts/graphs to add a visual concept of employee expenses to the Town for the Town Report.

The Board is considering lowering the contribution to the HRA in FY 21 to offset the increase in insurance premiums.

17. Town Meeting Warning and Selectboard Report: The Board agreed to review the 2020 Town Meeting Warning and Selectboard Annual Report to be discussed at a special meeting on Thursday, January 2, 2020 at the Town Office.
18. Other business/old business/new business: None.

19. Personnel Matters - possible Executive Session per 1 V.S.A. § 313 (a)(3): This item was not needed.

20. Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 12:15 pm with a motion by Clif Emmons, second by Denise Wheeler; the motion passed unanimously.

Date: 12/31/2019 Respectfully Submitted, Katie Lane-Karnas, Recording Secretary
Approved by the Selectboard at the 2/10/2020 meeting

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

<https://drive.google.com/open?id=156IN6iSoGgx5p6nk9WRVXn1q59ytyCz8>