

# Selectboard Meeting Minutes

Monday, December 9, 2019

6:00 pm Calais Town Office

**Present:** Denise Wheeler (Chair), John Brabant (Vice Chair), Rose Pelchuck (Member), Clif Emmons (Member), Sharon Winn Fannon (Member), Alfred Larrabee, Marc B. McHale, Carolyn H. Brennan, Craig Line, David Schütz, Scott Bassage, Ann Marie Shea, Jim Clark, David Healy, Chance Payette, Tim Neill, Mary Elder Jacobsen and Chris Cochran.

Call to Order: Denise Wheeler called the meeting to order at 6:05 pm.

Executive Session: Denise Wheeler made a motion to go into Executive Session with Alfred Larrabee, Road Commissioner, to discuss personnel matters in accordance with 1 V.S.A. § 313 (a)(3). The motion was seconded, voted on and carried 5-0. The Regular session resumed at 7:03 pm. The Chair had nothing to publicly report.

Public Comment: None.

Review, Additions/Changes to Agenda: One addition to the agenda included discussion about a CLG Grant, which will be discussed first. David Schütz, Historic Preservation Commissioner, reported the Historic Preservation Commission unanimously recommends the CLG grant application for basic engineering to resurrect the East Calais General Store. This project is for an historic building that is not only a gathering place but a commercial necessity as a store that is vital to our residents on that side of town. David explained his concerns about the building and the need to do a “needs assessment” in order to put together a capital budget. The CLG grant application is due 12/17/19 and the grant is awarded in April 2020. East Calais Community Trust is a local group trying to save the building. The Selectboard will officially support the grant application at the meeting on Saturday, December 14, 2019.

Maple Corner Store: Liquor and Tobacco Licenses - Jim Clark and Ann Marie Shea came before the Selectboard to ask for approval of the liquor and tobacco licenses for the new owners of the Maple Corner Store effective December 17, 2019, the closing date for transfer of store ownership. Denise Wheeler made a motion to approve the 1<sup>st</sup> Class, 2<sup>nd</sup> Class and 3<sup>rd</sup> Class licenses as presented effective December 17, 2019 for the Maple Corner Community Store, Inc. Clif Emmons seconded the motion, it was voted on and carried 5-0.

Kellogg Hubbard Library – Carolyn Brennan, Co-Director, and Craig Line, Calais Board Member, came before the Selectboard to discuss library operations, usage and Warning request for funding in the next fiscal year. The funding request is the same as it has been the past two years. The stats in general indicate it has been a really great year, Carolyn noted. Craig noted the library is always looking for ways to reach out and inform people of what's going on at the library.

Woodbury Volunteer Fire Department – Chance Payette and Tim Neill came to the Selectboard with their annual financial requests. The FY 2020-2021 Operating Budget request is \$33,908.35, the Truck Fund request is \$17,850.00 and the Capital Replacement Fund request is \$31,000.00. In reviewing the proposed budget, Chance noted the vehicle maintenance costs are down since they are buying newer trucks. The proposed budget is down 0.7% overall. Dispatching and insurance are the two areas going up. Chance Payette is now a certified instructor in active shooter training, CPR and other areas and would welcome the opportunity to present to town employees if interested. Regarding medical training, Chance reported there are eight medically trained personnel at WVFD and they are looking to get a license from District 6 (to have a Fast Squad). WVFD is working on lowering the cost numbers to build a new fire station in Woodbury Village; they will now turn their fundraising efforts to large corporations. Denise Wheeler appreciates the atmosphere of working with WVFD. The Selectboard expressed sincere thanks for all their efforts.

CV Fiber Update – David Healy, CV Fiber Calais Delegate, provided an update since it all began in May 2018. There are seventeen towns that have signed on to joining the effort to bring high speed internet service to underserved area in Vermont. David is co-chair of the Business Development Committee that is looking to secure grant funding. They have secured a \$12,500 Think Vermont grant (fundraising as it is a 1:1 grant) and a Rural Development Planning grant for \$25,000 (in-kind matching). They also received a highly competitive Broadband Innovation Grant for \$60,000 and now have enough revenue to hire a consultant to do a feasibility study and devise a business plan. They did a survey of which 94 people in Calais replied (of 680 households) and David reviewed the data with the Selectboard. They are partnering with Washington Electric Co-op, Inc and are encouraged with the way things are going. David estimates it will be about five years before this is up and running. They have a website and ask for the residents' continued support.

North Calais Memorial Hall Association (NCMHA) Property Tax Exemption - The NCMHA attended to request property tax exemption as a qualified charitable organization. The property was exempted by the Legislature in 1888, and NCMHA is reaching out to them to see if that can go over that as the public intent for the property has not changed. They have received the transfer of ownership (as of July 10, 2019) and purchased the parking area (\$14,000). The NCMHA provided an update on the letter that established the Selectboard's requirements for receipt of Conservation Funds. The Association reviewed the ways they have complied with the Board/Town's terms. No decision was made on this request. They will do more research regarding a legislative exemption.

Selectboard Annual Stipends – Selectboard annual stipends in recent years have been in the amount of \$594.00 for each member and \$1189.00 for the chair, Clif Emmons made a motion to give the Selectboard 2019 stipends in this amount consistent with the budget. John Brabant seconded, and the motion passed 5-0.

Staff Bonuses - The Selectboard discussed giving annual bonuses to employees. Sharon Winn Fannon made a motion to give a bonus in the amount of \$375.00 before with-holdings to staff who have worked for the Town for at least three months: the road crew, office staff, and the Selectboard Recording Secretary, with half that amount going to Ed Rowell since he is a per diem road crew member. The motion was seconded by Clif Emmons, voted on and passed unanimously 5-0.

IT Update – After the Board’s meeting with Rubin Bennett of rbTech, they reflected that the company had done a good job addressing concerns, including the Board’s articulation of their desire for rbTech building an alliance/partnership approach to the relationship, and expect Rubin Bennett to complete an “executive summary” for presentation annually to the Board ahead of budget development. Rubin committed to provide the Board with this year’s executive summary shortly. rbTech confirmed that the server is at the tipping point and the Town may wait until the new July FY21 budget.

Review and approve minutes, warrants -

The Board reviewed the invoices and orders were processed for payment.

Clif Emmons moved and Denise Wheeler seconded to approve the minutes of the 12/5/2019 meeting, with the changes as noted; the motion passed 5-0.

Clif Emmons moved and Rose Pelchuck seconded to approve the minutes of the 11/25/2019 meeting, with the changes as noted; the motion passed 5-0.

Executive Session - Denise Wheeler made a motion to go into Executive Session at 9:15 pm to discuss personnel matters in accordance with VSA 1 V.S.A. § 313 (a)(3). The motion was seconded by Rose Pelchuck, voted on and carried 5-0. The Regular session resumed at 10:30 pm. The Chair noted John Brabant had a question about an invoice for a consulting fee from Alfred Larrabee's private business, in the amount of \$1,500. Denise Wheeler said an anonymous donation was made to the town in the amount of \$5,000 that was earmarked for general septic system costs including the work done by Alfred at the town hall. The vendor invoice payment was for Alfred Larrabee because he provided a service outside the expectations of his job and regular town work. The anonymous donation was made to cover this amount and other expenses to help contain the budget, the Town will issue payment to Alfred as a bonus.

Other Business: Brian Thomas' curb cut permit was discussed. The Board decided not to reissue an amended permit.

Adjournment – Clif Emmons made a motion to adjourn at 10:34 pm. Rose Pelchuck seconded, and the motion passed 5-0.

Date: 12/14/2019 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=1E0veLXGewRsrTrWsmMsHllyf-TSTzls>