

Selectboard Meeting Minutes  
Monday, February 14, 2022 at 6 pm, Town Hall and Zoom

Present: Denise Wheeler (Chair), Sharon Winn Fannon (Vice Chair), John Brabant (Member), Rick Kehne (Member), Marc Mihaly (Member), ORCA Media, Cindy Gardner-Morse,\* Marge Sweeney, Gus Selig,\* Cliff Emmons,\* Jamie Moorby,\* Alfred Larrabee, Road Commissioner, Barbara Butler, Assistant Town Clerk/Treasurer,\* Tom Blachly, Trails Committee.\*

*\*Indicates attendance by Zoom video call*

1. Call to Order: Denise Wheeler called the meeting to order at 6:15 pm.
2. Executive Session for Personnel Matters: Denise Wheeler made a motion to go into Executive Session at 6:15 pm per 1 V.S.A. subsection 313 (a) (3), personnel matters. The motion was seconded by Marc Mihaly, voted on and carried 5-0. The Board resumed Regular Session at 7:04 pm. The Chair had nothing to report publicly.
3. Public Comment:  
Cindy Gardner-Morse reminded the Selectboard about the petition filed to reduce the speed limit on County Rd. and requested a decision be made by this spring. The Selectboard briefly discussed the idea of adding a bike lane. Concern was raised about the potential insurance liability of this idea. Rick Kehne (who has experience interpreting traffic data) will review the study(s) done by CVRPC. The Board will schedule this item for a future agenda.
4. Review, Additions/Changes to Agenda None.
5. Review and Approve Warrants The Board reviewed and approved processing of invoices and orders.
6. Treasurer/Delinquent Tax Collector  
The Treasurer reported that the Town is in good financial shape for the end of January 2022. Revenues are coming in as predicted and expenses are on track. The Selectboard reviewed the Balance sheet. Property taxes owed to the school have been paid minus delinquencies. Delinquent taxpayers have agreed to payment plans. One delinquent taxpayer has been forwarded to the tax attorney for follow up and action.

FY 2022 grant balance review and reconciliation The Treasurer stated that according to accounting rules, outstanding grant fund balances must be reconciled and brought to \$0.00. The following grants are closed with negative balances that need to be resolved by transferring money from the general fund: #70 Greeter grant (Curtis Pond) **\$58.23**; #71 E. Calais CLG 2019 (FY 2020) **\$462.00** and #71 E. Calais CLG 2020 (FY 21 and 22) **\$1.00**. Sharon Fannon made a motion to authorize the Treasurer to transfer out general funds to these grants to create a \$0.00 balance, the motion was 2nd by Denise Wheeler and unanimously approved by the Selectboard. #72 Adamant CLG (FY 22) has a positive balance of \$4,000. Denise Wheeler made a motion to authorize the Treasurer to transfer in funds to the General fund in the amount of \$4,000. to create a \$0.00 balance; the motion was 2nd by

Sharon Fannon and unanimously approved by the Selectboard.

Town Office None

7. Town Meeting Public Informational Meeting Tune-Up

Notice of the Public Informational Hearing on Saturday, February 19, 2022 at 10 am have been published and posted as required. Clif Emmons will host via zoom and Jamie Moorby has volunteered to co-host in person at the Town Hall. All presenters will attend via zoom to provide the best sound quality. Clif and Gus will coordinate a check-in on Friday evening to resolve last minute issues. Barbara Butler has created slides of the warned articles that Clif will add to the presentation. The Town Hall will be arranged so that any in-person attendees will be seated directly facing the Owl speaker to improve sound quality. John Brabant intends to attend in-person at the Town Hall to assist. Clif Emmons reminded everyone in attendance (either via Zoom or in-person) to refrain from using other computers and devices to reduce strain on the band width. A practice session will be held on Thursday, February 17 at 6 pm. Gus Selig reminded everyone to speak clearly and only one at a time to help with sound quality. Clif Emmons will send all participants a unique Zoom invitation for the February 19th meeting.

8. Road Commissioner

Alfred Larrabee reported that he received an inquiry about one of the vacant road crew positions. He currently works for Vtrans. He has a restricted CDL license that only allows him to drive an automatic truck. Vtrans only purchases automatics. He can retake the CDL test to eliminate this restriction however this is difficult to schedule during the winter months. Employees pay for the cost of their CDL test but Alfred assists by providing his time and a Town truck. Alfred would like any new employee to provide some assurance that if the Town provides assistance; they will work for the Town for some specified period of time. Sharon Fannon suggested that we ask the Town Attorney to write up an employment agreement to recover Town costs. Denise Wheeler reminded everyone that we already have this built in with the sequencing of sign on bonus payments. The Selectboard approved Alfred to offer new employees an hourly starting salary range of \$19 to \$21 based on experience.

9. Congressional directed spending requests

Marc Mihaly stated he would recuse himself from any vote on this matter but provided testimony. Marc explained that this is a one-time opportunity to request funds from retiring Sen. Patrick Leahy's office. Marc spoke with Tom Berry, who recommended that Calais submit a letter of interest and then, after discussion with the Senator's staff, fill out their specific application forms. Letters of interest must be submitted no later than March 11th. Marc suggested that we submit a letter of interest and he will complete the necessary forms for Selectboard approval at our next meeting.

Letter of interest to Sen. Leahy re: Curtis Pond Dam

Sharon Fannon made a motion that the Selectboard submit a letter of interest to Sen. Leahy's office for congressionally directed funding for repairs to the Curtis Pond Dam project, the motion was 2nd by Denise Wheeler and unanimously approved by the Selectboard (Marc Mihaly recused himself from the vote).

Letter of interest to USDA NRCS Watershed Protection Program (PL566)

Marc Mihaly stated he would recuse himself from any vote on this matter but provided testimony. The NRCS is searching for applicants as they have a lot of money to spend. Marc explained that this is a long and bureaucratic process and there is no guarantee funds will be available. The first step of the process is a Preliminary Investigation Feasibility Report (PIFR) followed by authorization of funds for a watershed plan, then followed by possible funding for

recommended projects. NRCS hires outside consultants to manage these grants; Dubois & King is frequently used by NRCS as a consultant (in 2014 D & K provided a cost estimate to Calais for repairs to Curtis Pond Dam). Submission of a letter of request for funds does not obligate the Town. Sharon Fannon made a motion to approve submission of a letter of request to the NRCS for planning assistance funding for repairs to the Curtis Pond Dam, the motion was 2nd by Denise Wheeler and unanimously approved by the Board (Marc Mihaly recused himself from the vote.)

10. Letter to CVRPC and the PUC regarding Worcester Cell Tower

John Brabant explained that there is an application for a cell tower in Worcester and is not subject to the local review process. Our Representative was supportive of the law not requiring local approval. The tower is 198' in height. The project, if built, will be visible in the landscape directly adjacent to the Ellis Bruce Trail in Calais and significantly impact the view shed. The project has not yet been submitted to the PUC (Public Utilities Commission) for review. John's intent is to put the Calais Selectboard on notice of this project so we are prepared to provide a response as needed. Tom Blachly reiterated the Trails Committee's concern about this project. There are questions related to this site i.e., have they considered other sites with less visual impact? Marc suggested the company be required to provide proof of necessity and improved services. The PUC requires applicants to look at alternatives. John stated that the most important criteria is to determine if it fits into the Worcester and CVRPC's town and regional plan. John requested this be a continuing agenda item for providing updates and take action as needed.

11. Training with town attorney for DRB, DAB, ZA and Selectboard

John Brabant requested that the Selectboard review the DAB guidelines surrounding appointments to the DAB to determine if the guidelines create a conflict of interest by members living in the Kents Corner Historic District. Denise Wheeler will check the guidelines. Denise noted that there are several new DRB members. New members have reviewed the recorded training provided by the Town's attorney a few years ago. She also suggested that a required training and Q&A be scheduled with the Town attorney to give everyone a refresher and provide an opportunity to ask questions. The Board supported this approach.

12. Review and approve minutes

Denise Wheeler moved and John Brabant seconded to approve the following minutes with edits: November 22, 2021; December 6, 2021; December 9, 2021; December 13, 2021, December 27, 2021; January 10, 2022; and January 24, 2022, the motion was unanimously approved by the Board.

13. Executive Session for Personnel Matters: None.

14. Other Business/Old Business/New Business: None

15. Adjournment: Rick Kehne made a motion to adjourn at 9:15 pm. Denise Wheeler seconded the motion which was voted on and carried 5-0

Dated: 2/21/2022 Respectfully Submitted, Denise Wheeler and Rick Kehne

Approved by the Selectboard at the February 28, 2022 meeting.