

Selectboard Meeting Minutes

Monday, October 26, 2020 at 7 pm via Zoom conference call

Present: Denise Wheeler (Chair), Sharon Winn Fannon (Vice Chair), Rose Pelchuck (Member), John Brabant (Member), Clif Emmons (Member), ORCA Media, Katie Lane-Karnas (Recording Secretary), Sandra Ferver (Town Treasurer), Jan Ohlsson, Liz Curry, Brian Pine, Marc Mihaly, Toby Talbot (Operations Manager), Alfred Larrabee (Road Commissioner), Tom Blachly, Peter Livaditis

1. Call to Order: Denise Wheeler called the meeting to order at 7:06 pm.
2. Public Comment: None.
3. Review, Additions/Changes to Agenda: None.
4. Updates/Reports: Road Commissioner and Operations Manager: The Operations Manager did not attend the meeting for an update. Sharon Winn Fannon made a motion to authorize the Chair to sign the CVRPC Letter of Intent to Participate (in the FY21 municipal roads grants and aid program), with inclusion of all members' names, and Rose Pelchuck seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Clif Emmons made a motion to authorize the chair to sign the Municipal Mitigation Better Roads FY21 grant (#BR0835, Marshfield Rd. culverts, in the amount of \$14,444) on behalf of the Selectboard. Rose Pelchuck seconded and the motion passed 5-0.

VTRANS has informed the Town of a one-time supplemental aid payment in the amount of \$42,756.78 (revenue to the Highway budget). If we go over budget this fiscal year, this amount will be used. The Town Treasurer clarified that if Highway expenses are less than revenues, by virtue of a Town article, the delta is booked over to the Capital Equipment Fund. We are awaiting grant money reimbursement (for the George Road project) which will happen once invoices are received, and this supplemental aid helps to create "padding" until that happens. There are no restrictions on this money.

The Operations Manager joined the meeting and stated that the speed signs are in and the Town is still awaiting VTRANS permit for the state highway location. The Highway Department will install a signpost in Maple Corner. Potential additional locations will be discussed at a subsequent meeting.

5. Updates/Reports: Treasurer/Delinquent Tax Collector: The Board and Town Treasurer reviewed the Town financial report for September 2020. Expenses are on track and nothing is standing out at this time. Compared to last year, the Town is ahead in tax collection. The FY19 delinquent taxes outstanding as of 10/22 are at \$5,787.97 and the Delinquent Tax Collector

reported there is a good chance that amount will be collected. The final audit document is ready for presentation to the Board (possibly the November 9 meeting).

Clif Emmons moved and John Brabant seconded to authorize the Chair to sign the Financial Management Questionnaire (presented from the Town Treasurer) on behalf of the Board. This list of internal controls is a state requirement, and the form gets filed. The motion passed 5-0.

6. Updates/Reports: Town Office: The Town Office is busy focusing on the upcoming election. The Washington County Attorney has provided advice and procedure around polling place activity.
7. Updates/Reports: Road Commissioner: The Chair has printed enlarged maps of the plow routes to provide to the Highway Dept. (the Road Commissioner will pick them up). The Chair reported that CVRPC will be scheduling a traffic study on County Rd. in their 2021 schedule; the Chair has communicated with the relevant authorities to gain accident and speeding reports. The Road Commissioner reported he does the health screening with employees every morning and folks are healthy.

John Brabant provided an update on the status of the woodchipper issues and noted further discussion with the seller remains. The Road Commissioner is working on the speed sign programming. The crash-protected anchors get driven into the ground (preferably before the ground freezes), and the unit will be on a post that can be moved between these anchor locations. The Board directed him to install the Maple Corner location and the Lightning Ridge Road location. Rose Pelchuck reported that there is a berm on the road edge following grading at her road, disallowing water to sheet off; the Road Commissioner will inspect it. Clif Emmons thanked the Road Commissioner for the road cones at the Town Hall, which are done being used.

8. East Calais Community Trust (ECCT): The Chair is a Board member of ECCT and will recuse herself from any vote taken. Introductions were made: Selectboard members; ECCT members Jan Ohlsson, Denise Wheeler, Marc Mihaly; community member Alfred Larrabee; and community development consultants Liz Curry and Brain Pine.

ECCT described their progress over the last months and the renovations about to be pursued. Ryan Edwards is working on conceptual plans for gaining community input. Approx. \$200,000 in authorized grants, tax credits and donations has been gained. Renovating the entire building and apartments will cost north of \$700,000. Additional grants are being pursued, including the Community Development Block Grant administered by the Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community Development (ACCD). This grant must come through a Town, and then flow to a sub-recipient, which in this case would be ECCT. The grant would pay for all the costs of administration, and those would be carried out by ECCT. ACCD has urged that a pre-application be filed so they can evaluate our likelihood of success and the potential amount of funding. The pre-application is exploratory only—it does not commit the Town or ACCD to file a formal application or take any other steps. The ECCT is here to answer any questions and asking the Selectboard to approve the filing of that pre-application.

The pre-application allows all stakeholders to really consider this path (clarifying if funding will be sufficient for a small town's capacity). Liz Curry has been administering grants like these for thirty years, for example, for Richmond and Swanton. She explained that costs to the Town are reimbursed through the grant. The final application is due February 9. The grant may be in the amount of approx. \$200,000; the purchase of the building is already completed and so the dollars will go primarily to the cost of contractors doing the renovation and additional grant administration costs. The pre-application functions to give the Town a better idea of what the grant amount will be. This grant addresses both low income housing and economic activity, and therefore is broad in terms of what the funds may be used for. The Town's participation in the grant is mostly financial (monies coming in and out); the ECCT will manage the administration. The Town Treasurer has weighed in that she does not have workload concerns with the responsibility of writing checks. The ECCT reiterated that this requested resolution is only for the pre-app; further information would then be shared with the Board and then the opportunity to decide if and how to move forward.

John Brabant made a motion to approve the Resolution (with edits as noted by Rose Pelchuck) to file with pre-application. Rose Pelchuck seconded the motion which was voted and passed 4-0 (the Chair recused herself because she is a member of the ECCT).

9. Appointment: Peter Livaditis met the Board and Trails Committee Chair Tom Blachly supported his addition to the Committee. Peter and his extended family have been very engaged in the trail network already. Denise Wheeler made a motion to appoint Peter Livaditis to fill the unexpired term of Randy Allen 2022, for a three-year term. John Brabant seconded and the motion passed 5-0.
10. Updates/Reports: Town Hall: Painting of the Town Hall is almost complete. The tours of the renovation were very well received and residents are eagerly anticipating its use. Scott Bassage's archive of historic Town Hall photographs were used to offer comparison. The Friends group has planned to go on a meeting hiatus for the next couple of months through the holidays; some grants are on the radar for 2021.

The Board reviewed the "Guidelines for Use of the Calais Town Hall" document. The Guidelines will be altered to be called a "policy." A signature line, date, and indication of review at least annually (in conjunction with review of the Management Agreement) will be added to the document. Clif Emmons made a motion to approve the *Policy for Use of the Calais Town Hall* with changes as noted; the motion was seconded by Denise Wheeler and passed 4-0 (Clif Emmons recused himself as he is a member of the Friends group).

The Board reviewed the "Management Agreement" document. Details of the document discussed included the security deposit location of the vault and the tenant key, lock box, and calendar. John Brabant raised concern about ceding a lot of authority from the Town to a private non-profit and making a substantive policy decision that could change Gospel Hollow into a much busier area. Historically, uses have been very quiet uses (not parties and events). He questioned if this could result in a substantive change to the neighborhood and calls for a fuller public conversation. He suggested slowing decisions down to be brought to a vote of the townspeople. Clif Emmons noted that the Friends group's "General Terms of Use" and "Rental Agreement" documents are specifically addressing these concerns; some snags on

those documents delayed putting all of these documents in front of the Selectboard as a package, and he suggested reviewing all of these documents as a complete package.

The question was raised: What is the threshold level of use that was anticipated when the State issued its waivers? The Board considered how a change of level of activity could potentially impact Fire Safety or Act 250 requirements and place the Town at risk. Discussion moved to details of the Town paying the Friends group for efforts such as to promote events on the website. The current amount is a placeholder (\$6,000) and would need to be added as a line item on the budget. The Vice-Chair thanked Clif Emmons for his work on the Friends group and suggested starting to have a member present at Selectboard meetings who is not sitting in the middle. The Chair requested a specific budget describing how the money being asked of the Town would be used. Rose Pelchuck reiterated her appreciation for Clif Emmons's work on the Friends group and the benefit of asking another member to come present to the Board. The Chair thanked Clif Emmons as well.

11. IT Update: This item was not needed.

12. Other Updates

- The Town of Calais, a number of other towns, and VPIRG have caused CVSWMD Board to attend an ANR public information session on Thursday, October 29, 2020 at 7pm to provide additional information on two draft solid waste management certifications:

[Join Microsoft Teams Meeting](#)

[+1 802-828-7667](#) United States, Montpelier (Toll)

Conference ID: 848 658 534#

John Brabant noted that this issue has been important to him and he has assisted other municipalities in drafting their letters to request this meeting. He filed a records request weeks ago to learn more, but ANR has not been responsive, citing COVID-19 as the reason. He has followed up on the records request, asking that the meeting be delayed until those records are produced. (Statute requires within ten days.) These are serious decisions being made without any public information meetings and John Brabant emphasized the further problematic impact of the agency having been non-responsive to the records request made in advance of those meetings.

- Election Day is November 3 and the office staff have done an amazing job. The group discussed people who can be on call or present to be responsive to Election Day polling place concerns.

13. Review and approve minutes, warrants

- a) The Board reviewed the invoices and orders were processed for payment.
- b) Denise Wheeler moved and 9:11 and Sharon Winn Fannon seconded to approve the minutes of the 10/19/2020 special meeting, with the changes as noted; the motion passed 5-0.

14. Executive Session for Personnel Matters: Denise Wheeler made a motion to go into Executive Session at 9:11 pm per 1 V.S.A. subsection 313 (a) (3), personnel matters and §313(a)(1)(A), contractual issues. The motion was seconded by Sharon Winn Fannon, voted on and carried 5-0. The Board resumed Regular Session at 9:48 pm. The Chair had nothing to report publicly.

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

16. Adjournment: Rose Pelchuck made a motion to adjourn at 9:49 pm. The motion was seconded by John Brabant, voted on and carried 5-0.

Date: 10/28/2020 Respectfully Submitted, Katie Lane-Karnas, Recording Secretary
Approved by the Selectboard at the 11/30/2020 meeting

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

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/11ZuSDhCmTqi-TcYTo7OhM-f1Eiwtu0B0?usp=sharing>