

Selectboard Meeting Minutes

Monday, March 9, 2020 at 7 pm at the Calais Town Offices

Present: Denise Wheeler (Chair), John Brabant (Vice Chair), Rose Pelchuck (Member), Clif Emmons (Member), Jerome Lipani (ORCA), Katie Lane-Karnas (Recording Secretary), Greg Pelchuck, Pat Finnie

Absent: Sharon Winn Fannon (Member),

1. Call to Order: Denise Wheeler called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.
2. Public Comment: None.
3. Review, Additions/Changes to Agenda: None.
4. Selectboard Organizational Items:
 - a) Oaths of Office: Selectboard oaths of office were completed.
 - b) Official Meeting Schedule: The Selectboard set the Town Office as their official meeting place on second and fourth Monday of each month at 7 pm.
 - c) Official posting locations for agendas: Clif Emmons made a motion for official posting places for agendas to be at the Town Office, East Calais Rec Building bulletin board (which houses the post office), Maple Corner Store and electronically on Front Porch Forum. Rose Pelchuck seconded, and the motion passed unanimously. (This is a slight change following the closure of the East Calais Store.)
 - d) Designation for Signing Orders: Clif Emmons made a motion, and Rose Pelchuck seconded, to authorize a designated Selectboard member (Denise Wheeler) to sign orders on behalf of the town (pursuant to 24 V.S.A. §1623). The motion passed unanimously.
5. Broadband Innovation Grant: Washington Electric Coop would like the Town's support for a grant that would allow them to assess what their involvement would entail in collaborating with CV Fiber to lower costs for bringing high speed broadband to the community.
John Brabant made a motion to authorize the Board to send a letter of support for the Broadband Innovation Grant; the motion was seconded. Clif Emmons made a friendly amendment for the Selectboard to authorize Denise Wheeler to sign and send the letter. The friendly amendment was accepted, and the motion passed 4-0.
6. Bobcat Compact Excavator Proposal: As explained at a previous meeting by John McCullough, snow on top of the standing seam roof on the now-heated newly renovated Town Hall has been falling dramatically from the roof, becoming a danger and resulting in built up snow and windows blocked. The west side of the building allows less than ten feet to work with in terms of machine snow removal before the septic area is impacted.

Greg Pelchuck attended and described various options available to the Town in handling snow removal in this situation. A small Bobcat allows for scraping and moving of snow in narrow spaces. Greg Pelchuck and Board members reviewed cost and spec details comparing two new and a number of used Bobcats. The manufacturer's discount offered to municipalities is significant, and comparable to the used prices (out of state used machines would incur additional cost for transport); Greg Pelchuck recommended purchasing a new machine at the municipal rate. A block heater would need to be specked so it starts during the winter; the question of a shed in which to store the machine was raised. The cost of rental over approx. 5 years is comparable to having purchased one new. The Board is currently gathering information and requested Greg to get a price on a five-year lease and rental rates.

7. Recap Town Meeting: A straw poll at Town Meeting showed preference of locating future Meetings at the Town Hall. The Chair noted that the Town has a usage agreement with the school. The existing septic system allows for 135 people (more would be permissible with porta johns), and the certificate of occupancy will indicate how many bodies are allowed in the space. Use of both floors would require live video footage allowing all to see the moderator and participate in the meeting. The Board noted that the school building works well for being open and accessible to the voters. Use of the sound system (thanks to Artie Toulis) is much improved sound for folks; handicapped accessibility is friendly; use of the kitchen facilities is excellent; and bathrooms are good.

Increasingly, the only workers who get Town Meeting Day off are teachers and state employees; this disallows many people to easily attend. The Board stressed the importance of the regular use of the Town Hall for many municipal functions. Pat Finnie added the comment that in the past, he observed many people look in the back door, observe how full the room was, and leave immediately. The lack of space prevented people from engaging in the civic process (230 people attended this year at the school). The Board considered a Monday night meeting which would potentially allow more voters to attend; they discussed how to provide as many opportunities as possible for voters to express their thoughts on this. An informational meeting may be a place to also consider the impact of a lowered delinquent tax rate or four payments.

Other notes from Town Meeting 2020:

- Move Town Report contact info to inside of front cover
- Selectboard member to proof term expirations in Town Report
- Made sure Selectboard members are set up at the meeting behind a table appropriately sized; locate the Town Treasurer near the front
- Offer a description at Town Meeting of how the Board's process works (agenda; email or phone communication; posting; anyone can attend)
- Address acronyms such as "CVRPC"—cheat sheet? Glossary?
- The school may be replacing their folding chairs, which would be available to the Town Hall. They would also be available for the Town to borrow for any informational meeting.
- The Friends group raised a question: ORCA may be asked to be put on the list of entities supported on the social services list. ORCA provides a great public service and the Town would like to see them continue. ORCA would need to complete the form for this.

8. IT Update: rbTech is getting Calais scheduled in for server replacement which will occur this summer. There is a concern, which Calais has already expressed and addressed when working on the RFP, around security. Staff will have access to training that addresses this.
9. Friends of the Town Hall Committee: Approximately \$300 was raised at Town Meeting lunch for the Town Hall. Clif Emmons reiterated that septic use allows approx. 130 people without additional porta johns; the certificate of occupancy will define the Labor and Industry permitted occupancy; John Brabant pointed out that the space is also expected to continue within “historic usage” in terms of attendees at events. Sunday May 24 in the afternoon is the date set for the grand reopening. The program may include an open house, program, food, and entertainment. The first performance of Gospel Hollow Players is anticipated to occur in June (Bob Hannon and Chris Cole). Forty-eight people joined the Friends group at Town Meeting; membership is expected to be no cost and volunteer effort welcomed.
10. Chair Update: The Chair attended the WVFD Building Committee. There may be a special town meeting requested in the fall for a bond vote (the Chair suggested they consider an informational meeting and then utilize the November scheduled vote). Fundraising is happening now and the site donated across from the current station is still being pursued. Deconstruction and removal of the current building and prep of the land is slated to occur in the spring. Town resources (trucking) will be utilized to contain costs.
The Chair updated the Board on communication she has received from the Health Department regarding coronavirus.
11. Review and approve minutes, warrants
 - a) The Board reviewed the invoices and orders were processed for payment.
 - b) Rose Pelchuck moved and Denise Wheeler seconded to approve the minutes of the 3/5/2020 town meeting, with the changes as noted; the motion passed 4-0.Clif Emmons moved and John Brabant seconded to approve the minutes of the 1/2/2020 meeting, with the changes as noted; the motion passed 4-0.
Clif Emmons moved and John Brabant seconded to approve the minutes of the 1/9/2020 meeting, with the changes as noted; the motion passed 4-0.
Denise Wheeler moved and John Brabant seconded to approve the minutes of the 1/13/2020 meeting, with the changes as noted; the motion passed 4-0.
Clif Emmons moved and John Brabant seconded to approve the minutes of the 1/27/2020 meeting, with the changes as noted; the motion passed 4-0.
12. Executive Session for Personnel Matters: John Brabant made a motion to go into Executive Session at 8:30 pm per 1 V.S.A. subsection 313 (a) (3), legal matters. The motion was seconded, voted on and carried 5-0. The Board resumed Regular Session at 9:12 pm. The Chair had nothing to report publicly.
13. Other Business/Old Business/New Business: None.

14. Adjournment: Clif Emmons made a motion to adjourn at 9:13 pm. The motion was seconded, voted on and carried 4-0.

Date: 3/10/2020 Respectfully Submitted, Katie Lane-Karnas, Recording Secretary
Approved by the Selectboard at the May 4, 2020 meeting

Click on the link below to view documents associated with this agenda:
<https://drive.google.com/open?id=1NVct7rCy5cDw9IP7Ew91Qd4AA1TP1Ofg>