

Selectboard Meeting Minutes

Monday, June 22, 2020 at 7 pm via Zoom conference call

Present: Denise Wheeler (Chair), John Brabant (Vice Chair), Rose Pelchuck (Member), Sharon Winn Fannon (Member), Clif Emmons (Member), ORCA Media, Katie Lane-Karnas (Recording Secretary), Judy Robert (Town Clerk), Barbara Butler (Assistant Town Clerk), David Delcore, Toby Talbot (Operations Manager), Alfred Larrabee (Road Commissioner), Dan George, Jeffrey Olesky, Chance Payette, Sandra Ferver (Town Treasurer), Walter Opuszynski, David Schütz, Tom Blachly, Steve Killoran, Artie Toulis

1. Call to Order: Denise Wheeler called the meeting to order at 7:02 pm.
2. Public Comment: None.
3. Review, Additions/Changes to Agenda: None.
4. “Panic” Button at Town Office: The Board discussed that the context for considering a “panic button” (dial out to emergency services) is that the idea had been raised in the past, and presently the Town is investigating services for other dial-out security services (for fire protection).

Mountain Security (also known as Seacoast Security) can install a button that dials out to emergency at a cost of \$400-500 installation and \$26 per month service fee. The current practice, used twice in the last decade, is to call in another employee’s presence to the office in an effort to defuse the situation until the disruptive person leaves. Office staff were asked about the need for such a button. Barbara Butler noted her opinion that the installation of a panic button is an effort of insurance in the case of a situation where placing a 911 call could escalate the danger. The Town Clerk noted that at this particular time of coronavirus, there are very few people at the Town Office.

Rose Pelchuck made a motion to table the option of a panic button at the Town Office for security reasons until sometime in the future; at this time, the Board heard the concerns of the office staff and don’t feel at this time it is a necessary expense. Sharon Winn Fannon made a motion to table the discussion to a time when there seems to be a strong sentiment from office staff that there is an imperative. Denise Wheeler acknowledged the concerns of the office staff working at a remote location, and encouraged staff to return to the Board if there becomes a concern. John Brabant considered ways to address security concerns, such as directing office staff to program office landline phones to dial 911 using speed dial. Sharon Winn Fannon withdrew her motion; Denise Wheeler withdrew her second to that motion. Clif Emmons offered to program the office landline as described. The office staff agreed. The Chair reiterated that if this option needs to be re-visited, staff are encouraged to return to the Board.

5. Curbcut Request #2020-02: The Board, Daniel and Christina George (applicants), and Jeff Olesky (Catamount Consulting Engineers) discussed the curbcut request for 533 Nelson Pond

Rd. (#2020-02). The curbcut is a brand new (no existing one) on the left headed north on Nelson Pond Road, just beyond Dailey Road. The applicants stated the curbcut is for a new build garage for storage (not intended for residence at any time), has a Calais zoning permit, and meets the state shoreland zoning laws. The group reviewed the engineer's site design. The Road Commissioner shared his site visit notes and requirements based on it: sight distance is going to require brush clearing; B71 will take care of corners and grade issues; the biggest concern is the water that is going to be coming off of the now-impervious road which is addressed in meeting B71. (B71 is a VTRANS standard that covers grade, pitch to meet the road, preventing water from coming into the road, corners, etc.) The Road Commissioner recommended the curbcut have a 15" culvert to allow the Town to maintain water. Jeff Olesky agreed the B71 standards can be met and the culvert can be incorporated into the project. He added that there is no ditch line there now; the culvert inlet and outlet won't be going anywhere, but would provide a drainage relief and low point for water to be held for now. He stated there will not be a significant amount of additional water drainage from the property; the driveway grade is 14%.

The Board planned to warn a special meeting for a site visit and review before the curb cut permit is issued. A number of Board members had done individual curbcut site visits (in social distance context) but were mistaken about the location of the proposed curbcut. It will be an opportunity for the Town highway department to review the status and discharge location of a nearby Town culvert (in addition to the curbcut site visit). In discussion with the Road Commissioner (who stated he was not available on Friday, 6/26 because the Crew doesn't work on Fridays), applicants, Road Commissioner and the Board it was agreed to hold the site visit on Thursday June 25 at 3:30 pm and will plan to vote on issuance of the permit at that meeting.

6. Planning for McCullough Crushing Closure: The Road Commissioner had a discussion with Fred McCullough at McCullough Crushing regarding planning for their closure (this is Calais's winter sand source). Fred told the Town they will continue to be the source of sand for this upcoming winter and for purchase in spring 2021 for winter 2021-2022, after which the Town will need to formulate a new plan and source of sand.

The Road Commissioner shared a cost analysis and comparison of options for securing sand after the closure of McCullough's.

- In FY2019: \$11.50/yard to purchase sand; 4,896 yards total
- In FY2020, almost 4,000 yards total
- Gravel Construction in Hardwick: \$7 per yard, but it is screened, not washed, and includes a lot of silt that catches up in the equipment. Trucking is about \$13 per yard, resulting in a total of \$20 per yard.
- LePage's Gravel Pit in Barre: including trucking cost, \$21.39 per yard.

Currently, the road crew can move 6-8 loads per hour versus 1 load every two hours from these further locations. Instead of 1.5 weeks, it would take a month for the crew to fill the year's sand pile. Greg Pelchuck commented the Road Commissioner did a great job crunching the numbers and providing a comparison. And that the biggest concern is to hire bigger trucks to haul faster and not tie the Calais Highway Department up hauling material.

7. Update on Roadside Mowing: The Road Commissioner explained that the mower has been out as often as possible in the last week. Today it blew a hydraulic hose and is back at the shop for repairs. The AC is not working, a very challenging limitation in heat over 90 degrees, and the Town specifically paid to receive a fully operational AC at time of purchase. John Brabant will follow up with the seller to have their AC person come out and repair.

The Road Commissioner did not have an update to give on Peter Harvey's no-mow efforts. Areas in Town needing mowing include the Curtis Pond swim area, the Town Office, and the Town Hall, but the push mower purchased from Tractor Supply a few years ago for \$200 died and is no longer serviceable. The Road Commissioner located a used mower for \$1800 and the group discussed the potential value of buying a ride on mower. John Brabant strongly encouraged the purchase of a "zero-turn" because of its speed, edging, dexterity, and efficiency. They considered the option to find a contractor to do those three yards, considering the Road Commissioner already has a full schedule with his crew. The Board asked the Road Commissioner to investigate the cost of a used zero-turn mower and the cost of contracted service and return to present his findings.

The Road Commissioner reported that the Town has hired Ed Rowell as a temporary employee to do the mowing. Alfred raised a concern that Ed is using his own equipment, and not getting reimbursed. The Town Treasurer suggested Alfred have Ed submit an invoice for use of his equipment, rather than pay an increased hourly rate to Ed as an employee. Alfred will follow up with Ed about submitting both a timesheet (for his time) and an invoice (for use of his equipment). The Board also asked Alfred to research the cost for the Town to purchase a riding lawnmower. Sharon asked about whether hiring the equipment should have been through a bid process. Alfred said use of its equipment is unlikely to result in FY 2020 or FY 2021 total invoices for use of equipment anywhere near \$5000.00. The Selectboard wanted to be sure it pays attention to the \$5000 threshold, over which an independent contract should be handled through a bid process under the town's purchasing policy.

8. Town Office: The Town Clerk reported that ballots and envelopes have been received for the August primary; the Town Office is heavily promoting mail in ("absentee") voting for this election. Postage is paid for by the state. Social distancing is being practiced at the office; the grand list will soon be complete. Zoning applications are coming in a heavy stream.
9. Treasurer/Delinquent Tax Collector: The Board had reviewed the Town Treasurer's May report and the most recent orders in the initial June report. She expects one more order to go out before the fiscal year closes; things look "very good." General government has revenue over what was expected, partly due to not owing the school district as much as originally anticipated, as well as the delinquent taxes that came in. Expenses are also less than what was budgeted, even with having unexpected expenses. Between the extra revenue and expenditures under budget, the town is \$60,000 to the good. The fiscal year will end with a fund balance of an amount (\$371,000; an unaudited fund balance) more than the fund balance the Town started the fiscal year with (\$311,000 take out the same language here). (The fund balance carries the Town until the first tax bill funds are received.) She noted that the Town is in a strong position financially. Highway is doing fine but may go into the red by a few thousand dollars before the close of the fiscal year.

2019 delinquent taxes are at \$40,000; at the same time last year we were short \$60,000.

10. Appointments to Trails Committee: Rose Pelchuck made a motion to appoint Walter Opuszynski (to fill unexpired term of Reed Cherington, expires in 2022) and Steve Killoran (to fill vacancy of Bill Russell, which expires in 2021) to the Trails Committee for a term of three years. Denise Wheeler seconded and the motion passed 5-0.
11. Town Hall Use and Consideration of Use Guidelines During COVID19: the Certificate of Occupancy for the newly renovated Town Hall was certified on June 15. The Chair noted that people are clamoring to use the space, and, there are specific guidelines and significant challenges in meeting the COVID19 standards. The Chair has been doing research and compiling information so the Board may make informed decisions about Town groups' practice. Each Board, Committee, Commission will have to take the VOSHA on line training course and be certified; health screening safety checks would have to be done before anyone comes in; notices on the doors; the layout of the interior must accommodate six foot distancing (20-25 people would fit in the Town Hall, including sitting in the hallway). A record of everyone who attended, status of the health check, and record of disinfection of all surfaces must be kept.

VLCT's response to the Chair's inquiry is that all CDC and ACCD guidelines must be followed to prevent future liability. It is unclear whether there will be enforcement or consequences for non-compliance. The guidelines are for government entities (not for local government to enforce in private settings). The group considered who gets to decide whether to go to in person meetings. The Chair noted it is within the Board's prerogative to make that decision across all Town groups (committees, boards, etc.), as each group's actions affect the others in a shared space. The Chair will continue to gather information and will present a memo to the Board for further discussion and decision in the near future (Jay Copping will be invited). John Brabant commented on the increased risk by age and the significant contribution of people over the age of 60 in Calais town government, and his concern about the potential for exposure and need for caution. The group discussed the value of proceeding with caution and scheduling the discussion for July; the Cemetery Commission and DRB will be notified they cannot at this time have an inside meeting until critical information is acquired and a decision is made by the Board.

12. Indivisible Calais Dance Party Request: Barbara Butler described the request on behalf of Indivisible Calais, to hold an outdoor Dance Party at the newly graded Town Hall parking lot. She explained that it would be billed as an Indivisible Calais Covid-19 version of a Masquerade Ball: "Wear a mask, Give aid, Have a ball!" She described their plan for safety, use of facilities, and cleaning, and that it would not be scheduled until after the Governor has raised the 25-person limit. This event would raise money to support the many years of finances being handled by just a few people. The Chair noted that the Board needs to figure out their process for all groups before making decisions for individual groups. John Brabant offered a word of warning on states that have increased permitted numbers of groups and the impact on caseload as a result. The Board asked Indivisible Calais to wait until their July 13 meeting for a decision.

13. Town Hall Painting RFPs: Three responses were received by the deadline, which is good news considering how many contractors are busy or unavailable. David Schütz, Clif Emmons, and Denise Wheeler reviewed them as planned and created a recommendation. They shared a rubric with scoring based on the merits of the bids (reviewed per the criteria in the Town's purchasing policy). All vendors are willing to be adaptable and work in phases should the need arise. The group discussed significant differences between quotes such as paint quality, timeliness, warranty and primers. The recommendation made is for GT Painting. The rest of the Board thanked and appreciated the thorough work and recommendation of the group. Clif Emmons added the good work of the Town Hall Committee and Friends of Town Hall groups contributed to being at this point.

John Brabant made a motion to accept the recommendation of the review group for the painting bid by GT Painting at their bid price, approach, and materials (the entire building to be painted as soon as possible). The motion was seconded and voted; it passed 5-0. Sharon thanked the review group for systematically applying the purchasing policy criteria and presenting its recommendation succinctly. David Schütz appreciated Clif Emmons's excellent work on securing three bids and overall organization of the paint bid process.

14. Friends Management Agreement: Artie Toulis walked the group through a first review of two documents for management of the Town Hall rentals, developed based on templates from the Plainfield Opera House friends' group and support from Tom Blachly. Two documents have been created for review: the first covers use of the Town Hall, process for promoting it, fee schedule for use of the space; second is the agreement between the Town and the Friends group that defines the role of the Friends group. The Friends group's management of the space will be a revenue generator for the Town (not a cost). The Friends will do the money collecting, and send compensation to the Town. The Friends group would be managing the upstairs space; John Brabant asked that the document include clarifying language about the use of space being primarily upstairs, and ensure not conflicting with Town function downstairs. There will also need to be a way to factor in following the Selectboard's guidance on use of the building as it is Town government (this consideration being in sharp focus in the current pandemic). The maximum capacity for the entire building is 130 people; somewhere this will need to be made clear on how many people can use space. The Friends group will take the Board's comments back and return to the Board with changes.
15. Keypad Access to Hall: John McCullough is installing a keypad, which allows for ease of changing who has access at any time. Being compliant with ADA access, fire door access, and aesthetic features led to choosing a keypad with key (as opposed to a digital lock keypad).
16. Woodbury Volunteer Fire Dept. 2020-2021 Contract for Fire Protection Services: The first payment is due July 1. Chance Payette attended the meeting.

Denise Wheeler made a motion to approve and sign the Woodbury Volunteer Fire Dept. 2020-2021 contract for fire protection services; Clif Emmons seconded. Sharon Winn Fannon noted that she raised concerns in the past, but since the Board has decided not to make major reductions in their FY 21 budget, she supports going forward. The Board thanked Chance for his patience and support, and to relay that to the Department. The motion was voted and passed 5-0. Clif Emmons made a motion to authorize the Chair to sign the WVFD contract on

behalf of the Board (given the current COVID situation). The motion was seconded and passed 5-0.

17. Washington County Sheriff's Department Contract: The contract was sent just before the office shut down for COVID, and has finally been resent to the Town. It encompasses April 2020 through March 31, 2021. There is a slight increase over last year, and they have continued providing services although the contract signing has gotten delayed. The Town asks the Sheriff to do patrols in particular areas and they are helpful in responding right away. Denise Wheeler made a motion to approve the Washington County Sheriff's Department Contract in the amount of \$4,000 (the amount budgeted in FY21). Clif Emmons made a friendly amendment to authorize the Selectboard Chair to sign the contract on behalf of the Board (given the current COVID situation). The motion with amendment was seconded and passed 5-0.
18. Decision on FY 21 Budget Saving Adjustments: Act 102 (H.344) allows Selectboards to reduce approved budgets for tax savings, which the Board had discussed in depth the last several meetings. The Board has decided not to make any line item adjustments (pursuant to the allowances permitted by Act 102) however will be very mindful and cautious to stay within the budget that the Town approved, and reserve the right to make any savings for which they see the opportunity. The Board noted that there is the opportunity, up until January, to forgive penalties and interest for late taxes.
19. IT Update: The Town Treasurer's laptop is close to the end of its functional life; a quote solicited from rbTech for repair versus purchase of a new laptop proved that increased productivity and viable life of a new laptop made more sense. This will be paid out of the FY 21 General Office budget.
20. Invasive Species and Tree Health: Sharon Winn Fannon received feedback from a resident who was concerned about road maintenance practices' effect on tree health (especially maple trees dying), and the Tree Warden and Conservation Commission Chair confirmed that road practices do affect trees on the roadside. She pointed out the continued need for a holistic and integrated approach to Town road practices and conservation practices, with all stakeholders working together, rather than tackling issues piecemeal within separate silos. When the road crew and the conservation committee are not working together seamlessly, reconciling the disconnects falls to the select board. Sharon believes the select board has been clear about its expectation that road maintenance should consider and as much as possible incorporate environmental and aesthetic concerns of the town, and that perhaps we need to be more clear that we expect the road team to take a leadership role in working with the conservation commission. The Chair suggested a joint meeting with the Conservation Commission, the Highway Department, and Selectboard would be timely. John Brabant added historical knowledge about the evolution of an environmental perspective within Calais Town government, and that there is value in shifting gears to move fully in the direction of a new approach. Calcium chloride is a type of salt, sodium chloride is another. No winter salting of dirt roads is done in Calais. Calcium chloride, which does have deleterious effects on broadleaf trees (maple) and to a lesser extent other trees, is applied during the summer to reduce significant dust (with the Selectboard's support). The Board reviewed a minutes search

on these topics that underscore the ongoing work the Board has done over the last few years toward these efforts. The group recalled the history and status of the Roads Committee.

21. Chair Update

- Local Hazard Mitigation Plan: The Chair is working on planning around this.

22. Review and approve minutes, warrants

- a) The Board reviewed the invoices and orders were processed for payment.
- b) Approval of minutes was tabled for a subsequent meeting.

23. Executive Session for Personnel Matters: Sharon Winn Fannon made a motion to go into Executive Session at 9:51 pm per 1 V.S.A. subsection 313 (a) (3), personnel matters. The motion was seconded, voted on and carried 5-0. The Board resumed Regular Session at 10:02 pm. The Chair had nothing to report publicly.

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

25. Adjournment: Clif Emmons made a motion to adjourn at 10:03 pm. The motion was seconded, voted on and carried 5-0.

Date: 6/25/2020 Respectfully Submitted, Katie Lane-Karnas, Recording Secretary
Approved by the Selectboard at the 7/27/2020 meeting

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