

Selectboard Meeting Minutes (CONTINUATION)

Monday, January 4, 2021 at 7 pm via Zoom conference call

Present: Denise Wheeler (Chair), Sharon Winn Fannon (Vice Chair), John Brabant (Member), Rose Pelchuck (Member), Clif Emmons (Member), ORCA Media, Katie Lane-Karnas (Recording Secretary)

1. Call to Order: The Chair called the continued meeting of December 28, 2020 to order at 7 pm.
2. Right of Way Permit #2020-02 (480 Pekin Brook Road): The Board discussed the ROW permit that was approved by vote ~~on~~ at the Dec. 28 portion of this meeting. They considered adding a condition to ask the utility, Green Mountain Power, to meet with the Tree Warden. The original vote is as follows:

Sharon Winn Fannon made a motion to approve the ROW permit to GMP for the project at 480 Pekin Brook Road, with the condition and instruction that the project be completed with an eye to preserving as many trees as possible (cut only what is necessary) and authorizing the Chair to sign on behalf of the Board. Denise Wheeler seconded and the motion was voted and passed 3-0.

Rose Pelchuck made a motion to add a supplemental condition to the approved ROW application number 2020-02, that the applicant contact the Calais Tree Warden and meet with him before they do any tree cutting. Sharon Winn Fannon seconded and the motion was voted and passed 5-0.

3. Budget Planning: The Selectboard returned to the final version of the FY22 budget and visited every line item, reviewing percentages of change and making notes. The Town Office Staff had provided detailed calculations on anticipated hours for 2021 to inform the budget planning. The Board made a note to have a discussion prior to FY23 budget on the salary versus hourly nature of the town clerk position. The listers explained that mapping work was limited due to COVID-19 during FY21, so the FY22 budget number reflects the cost of that will include making up for work missed the fiscal year previous. A number of software licenses are up for renewal in the FY22 budget, all of which are essential during remote meetings and working. A note was made for the Chair to check with CVFiber Calais Representative David Healy for an estimated figure for high-speed internet expense if and when it does connect to Gospel Hollow in FY22. A placeholder of “not to exceed \$10,000” was set for a new line-item under Town Hall, “CVFiber Broadband Ext.” The actual budgeted amount of the line item amount (informed by David Healy) is not to exceed \$10,000. (See motion regarding this item under “Executive Session.”)

COVID-19 is causing rate increases, such as unemployment insurance which is up 75%. The social services listing is now complete, and the Board reviewed the entire list. The Calais Food Shelf has increased. The management agreement aspect of the Friends of the Calais Town Hall

is still under construction, and the group anticipates an allocation of \$6,000 per year for that management service (Clif Emmons confirmed that rental costs for the Hall for functions will contribute to that service cost). It is likely that the Hall will not be able to be used for a half year, which meant they brought their request down to \$3,000.

The Board noted it is working on the Highway Budget, even though the Operations Manager has not provided rationale for his calculations. The board increased gravel and sand line items based on fiscal year actuals and percentage increase (our professional auditors have advised not leaving the gravel budget line item inflated above actuals). Each line in Highway was reviewed. The Road Commissioner is looking for a truck to purchase that would replace one regularly in need of repair; the Vehicle/Equipment Repair line item is level at \$55,000 in anticipation of a reduction in need of as many repairs. Clif Emmons explained that there has been some confusion for Highway submitting a number of expenses as “Communication” (this line item, as a result, appears to be an increase) when those expenses should have been differentiated between two lines, “Radios and Paging” and “Communication.” The Board recalled the uses of the Road Commissioner’s official business cell phone (including apps related to the job, communicating with team members when in a cell service area).

4. Other Updates: The LGER Grant submission is for the following items: revising the Town website to better serve the public, supply staff with equipment to work remotely under pandemic conditions, update phone system in the office to better handle calls and remote workforce) were all reimbursed (in the amount of approx. \$38,000).
5. Executive Session for Personnel Matters: Sharon Winn Fannon made a motion to go into Executive Session at 8:34 pm per 1 V.S.A. subsection 313 (a) (3) to finalize budget related personnel issues and to discuss personnel issues otherwise. The motion was seconded by Rose Pelchuck, voted on and carried 5-0.

The regular session resumed at 10:00 pm. The Chair reported the Selectboard granted an unpaid leave of absence request from road crew member Bruce Campbell, effective December 14, 2020 with a return to work date of March 8, 2021. The Selectboard authorized the Road Commissioner to hire a full time, temporary person to cover the leave.

Denise Wheeler made a motion to award an immediate one-time, \$1,000.00 bonus to Toby Talbot, Operations Manager, to thank him for all his hard work when the Road Commissioner was on leave last winter and for all he has done for the town this past year. The motion was seconded by John Brabant, voted on and carried 5-0.

Denise Wheeler noted that the 2.35% raises for the Office staff and Road Commissioner that were budgeted effective July 1, 2020 were put on hold pending outcome of the Union negotiations (which are ongoing) and she would like us to authorize that they go into effect retroactive to July 1. Sharon Winn made a motion that we approve a retroactive pay increase, effective July 1, 2020, of 2.35% for the town office staff and Road Commissioner. Denise Wheeler seconded the motion; it was voted on and carried 5-0. Note: The Selectboard had budgeted up to 2.35% for fiscal year 2021 pay increases and chose to grant the full amount of 2.35%.

Sharon Winn reported the Selectboard also finalized FY 2022 personnel-related budget numbers in executive session, therefore Sharon made a motion to bring to the voters the Selectboard proposed budget, which includes General Government, Highway and Special Articles, in the combined amount of \$1,818,105.00, which represents a 1% decrease overall from FY 2021; the motion includes the caveat that Denise Wheeler is going to speak to the town representative of CVFiber to see what is the appropriate number to put on that line, and the Selectboard authorizes a final budget for CVFiber fees of up to \$10,000. The motion was seconded by Denise Wheeler, voted on and carried 5-0.

Denise Wheeler made a motion to approve an informational meeting (prior to Town Meeting Day) be held on Saturday, February 20, 2021 at 1:00 pm via Zoom. The motion was seconded by Clif Emmons, voted on and carried 5-0.

After the budget was approved, John Brabant raised an issue/concern about replacing the 2009 town "spare" truck. John Brabant made a motion to have the Road Commissioner get the 2009 "spare" truck fully evaluated for mechanical soundness and condition of rust by an independent professional before the Selectboard will authorize a replacement. The motion was seconded by Denise Wheeler, voted on and carried 5-0.

6. Other Business/Old Business/New Business: The next meeting is Monday, January 11, 2021 at 7pm via Zoom.
7. Adjournment: Rose Pelchuck made a motion to adjourn at 10:17 pm. Denise Wheeler seconded the motion which was voted on and carried 5-0.

Date: 1/6/2021 Respectfully Submitted, Katie Lane-Karnas, Recording Secretary
Approved by the Selectboard at the 1/25/2021 meeting

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