

Selectboard Meeting Minutes

Monday, December 6, 2021 at 7 pm, Town Hall and Zoom

Present: Denise Wheeler (Chair), Sharon Winn Fannon* (Vice Chair), John Brabant* (Member), Rick Kehne (Member), Marc Mihaly (Member), Wayne Fisher, ORCA Media, Katie Lane-Karnas* (Recording Secretary), Jeremy Weiss* (Town Clerk), Jim Hogue

**Indicates attendance by Zoom video call*

1. Call to Order: Denise Wheeler called the meeting to order at 7:10 pm.
2. Public Comment: Jim Hogue commented that he finds everyone in Calais very cooperative about wearing masks in buildings when asked; he brought documentation that masks do not work, but planned to share them only if the topic was up for discussion. (Local mask mandate was not a warned agenda item.)
3. Review, Additions/Changes to Agenda: The Chair suggested discussing the budget review in regular session and discussing personnel salary in executive session; John Brabant added he would like to discuss a real estate matter in executive session as well.
4. Budget Review: The Chair explained the budget being presented has been reviewed line by line with the Town Treasurer. Discussion ensued about approx. \$10,000 of renovation to the vault to allow for new roller shelf and plat map storage which would be used for years to come. Town Clerk Jeremy Weiss explained that the entire card catalog was digitized, giving scanned images from book 23 to current, and from 2011 to current; all of those images are also indexed in a digital, comprehensive, searchable index. More than forty years of records were captured, and ARPA funds are expected to be used to finish work on the digitization.

The listers have not historically spent the full wages and a note is made to consider reduction of that line item (at the same time, changes in NEMRC will require funded training). The monthly NEMRC audit is budgeted separately from the yearly audit. An increase in election cost has been due to mailing ballots to all voters (reimbursement happens for statewide elections but not local elections). The draft budget includes funding for DotGov to create Outlook email accounts for all town personnel, selectboard members, listers, etc. The Town Clerk explained that this allows account recovery, password recovery, linking with the website, streamlining team meetings and scheduling, and management by rbTech. There are one-time fees to migrate everyone's emails over. If discovery is ever required, this means of email management is more streamlined. John Brabant pointed out we have not had any issues with Gmail accounts and questioned if this is an unnecessary expense; he promoted pushing back on the need for more technology at any cost. Sharon Winn Fannon and Marc Mihaly discussed what more would need to be learned before the Board could have information for a decision. Questions include: how will the server for the Outlook be located and funded? How

will current email accounts be forwarded to a new account? What password benefit is there between Gmail and Outlook? Is the security and spam filter any better with Outlook, and how? What are the other towns in the area using? What is the driving force for this change? The Town Clerk agreed to return with this information and that some of the questions would be better answered by rbTech. The Board noted that absent some compelling reason, it is not likely to include this budget item for FY23.

An estimate for monthly office cleaning has been included and the Town Clerk discussed Town Office building expenses with the Board. The Board decided to increase line item 71 (heat and electric) by 40%, commensurate with recent spikes in heating costs (\$5,180). The Town Clerk noted a PACIF grant would cover the entire initial cost of a fire alarm system; Seacoast then charges a monthly service fee that has been added to the budget. The group reviewed each line item, including Town Office reserve fund, VMERS, health insurance, funded zoning administrator assistant position, increased stipends for constable and town health officer.

***Note: the Zoom meeting was interrupted at 7:55 pm and resumed at 7:57 by phone connection. ***

Planning Commission has requested funding to complete a re-do of the plan (to pay CVRPC to accomplish one-time formatting) and new software. Conservation Commission's Fund allocation was planned to remain at \$5,000. Town Hall cleaning needs to be planned now that it is being used and the Town Clerk will check with his contact for an estimate. Increased utilization of the Town Hall and increased cost of heating warranted raising utilities line items.

Discussion continued line-by-line, through Town Hall Reserve Fund (one percent increase on a 1.2 million dollar building was used as a guiding rationale). Sharon Winn Fannon asked if we are adopting an approach for guiding reserve funds for buildings, and appreciated Marc and Rick's expertise on suggesting this rationale. The group decided this is a plan for moving forward, and the Chair is noting in the budget development document as an annual 1% for buildings.

Long term debt being paid off was reviewed. Marc Mihaly inquired about payment of connection of the fiber optic line from the final pole to the interior of the Town Office; this is being paid for (see motion from previous meeting) in FY22.

Highway budget is being created and will be presented in a future meeting.

5. Executive Session for Personnel Matters: Denise Wheeler made a motion to go into Executive Session at 8:17 pm per 1 V.S.A. subsection 313 (a) (3), personnel matters and 1 V.S.A. subsection 313 (a) (2), real estate matters. The motion was seconded by Marc Mihaly, voted on and carried 5-0. The Board resumed Regular Session at 8:47 pm. The Chair had nothing to report publicly.
6. Other Business/Old Business/New Business: None.

7. Adjournment: Rick Kehne made a motion to adjourn at 8:47 pm. Marc Mihaly seconded the motion which was voted on and carried 5-0.

Date: 12/7/2021 Respectfully Submitted, Katie Lane-Karnas, Recording Secretary
Approved by the Selectboard at the 2/14/2022 meeting

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