

Selectboard Meeting Minutes

Monday, April 26, 2021 at 7 pm via Zoom conference call

Present: Denise Wheeler (Chair), Sharon Winn Fannon (Vice Chair), John Brabant (Member), Clif Emmons (Member), Rick Kehne (Member), ORCA Media, Katie Lane-Karnas (Recording Secretary), Elizabeth Copeland, Wilson Hughes, Judy Fitch Robert, Grace Vinson, Cindy Gardner-Morse, Peter Harvey, Alfred Larrabee (Road Commissioner), Nick Emlen, Carol Beatty, Barbara Butler, Rubin Bennett, Linda Schütz

1. Call to Order: Denise Wheeler called the meeting to order at 7:01 pm.
2. Public Comment: Peter Harvey inquired about discussion on wild chervil (roadside control of invasives). The Chair explained this item will be addressed at the May 10 meeting and further explained that the Board is working hard to be disciplined and intentional in getting topics open; they asked him to have a bullet point list for efficient review at the meeting.
- 3.
4. Review, Additions/Changes to Agenda: None.
5. Purchase, Used 2014 Western Star Truck: The group delegated Rick Kehne and John Brabant for the review and evaluation of the truck proposed, along with the Road Commissioner. The turnaround time is quick and this facilitates the process (preliminary information has been shared by the Road Commissioner).
6. Update: Town Constable and Animal Control Officer: Wilson Hughes, Animal Control Officer, updated about the ongoing situation with Elizabeth Shedd horses, which have been wandering loose and causing property damage: two horses are at John Brabant's and two horses are at a location in Woodbury. Shedd's father has agreed to pay damages and boarding. There are concerns that the horses can be carriers for life with "the stranglers." The group discussed the safety and road maintenance issue of horses and hay on the roadside at Shedd's property on Collar Hill Road (this has been resolved currently). In terms of her unregistered vehicle, the sheriff would need to write a ticket. Sharon Winn Fannon thanked the Animal Control Officer and John Brabant for putting mitigating plans in place and wondered whether we should review/revisit the options for longer term fixes on both issues (roaming horses and material and vehicles in the right of way). Denise Wheeler also thanked John and Brabant for their help. Cindy Gardner-Morse said she has had to avoid bringing her horses to Collar Hill Road to avoid the danger of running into a herd of loose horses. She asked whether the Town has sent a notarized letter to Shedd for documentation. The Town sent a letter in September 2019 to the resident about parking any vehicle or animal in the Town's right of way and included statutory reference. The Chair reminded everyone that the Board has been addressing this issue with this particular resident for years now (as documented in the minutes of many meetings).

John Brabant commented his understanding is the Town may grab the animals and stable them, but statute (created for a different period in history) allows only a fraction of expense be charged (approx. \$3 per day). He has been in phone conversation with Shedd's father regarding the limitation of that land's capability to reasonably keep animals there. The family is considering a property that may be more suitable for a home and horse owner's lifestyle.

The group discussed how to proceed. Roaming animals is a unique situation for our Town at present but does happen periodically (and in all towns). John Brabant will continue to pursue communication with this family until resolution.

The Board discussed whether it is necessary now, or would be productive, to pursue policy and/or ordinance solutions. Pursuing an ordinance may be a significant amount of work and time for an issue that is limited to one individual resident; a larger solution may involve partnering with other towns to create a larger plan, which practically, would need to come from the Statehouse. Cindy commented she would like to see an official registered letter sent from the Town documenting communication and emphasized the amount of damage that has happened to private land as well as threat to the traveling public. Cindy planned to follow up with our state representative. John Brabant commented that a person got killed in Killington area after hitting a wandering bull; a horse is almost always fatal to a person in the front seat of a car. John Brabant will continue to be in communication with this family and report back on the issue at the May 10 meeting. He emphasized that there are other, sensitive details affecting this situation that are personal to the resident which he did not feel comfortable discussing. The Animal Control Officer has been feeding and caring for other animals at the untended and unoccupied property; he is working on catching two cats. Chickens and ducks are gone. The Board thanked him for his ongoing efforts, and John Brabant for housing two of the horses.

7. Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (LHMP): Grace Vinson, CVRPC, attended the meeting for presentation and review of the updated LHMP draft (worked on since 2019, to be adopted by July 2021). It establishes the foundation for a long-term mitigation strategy to reduce risk and future losses and make Calais more disaster resilient. This is required for FEMA funds, and other reimbursements and funds if Calais were to experience a significant event. It includes a community profile, planning process/maintenance, community vulnerability by hazard, and mitigation strategy. CVRPC is assisting Calais (\$2,500 in cash or in-kind services). Six meetings have been held with the planning team completing tasks between meetings. The draft for public comment will be submitted in May; the process will ultimately have the Selectboard adopting the final plan.

2021 hazards identified are: fluvial erosion/inundation flooding, invasive species, pandemic, dam failure, and drought. Calais is one of the first towns in Vermont to include pandemic as an identified category. Calais volunteers are Nick Emlen, Betty Copeland, Jan Ohlsson, Denise Wheeler, with support from Grace Vinson at CVRPC. Rick Kehne inquired about an app for the public to use to improve eyes and ears for reporting in emergencies like flood/natural disaster (Ushahidi.com). The plan lists ownership of Curtis Pond Dam as unresolved and discussion ensued. John Brabant reported that it is convenient to the owners and to their liability to say the dam ownership is confusing or in question; actually, there is no confusion and the Town is confident in their legal opinion that the dam is owned by the Fothergills. The Fothergills don't want the dam and have no problem with the Town pursuing an application to

have the dam rebuilt or replaced and taking the lead on it; they signed off on the Town being allowed to do that. The Town got a special reprieve from the state requirement, allowing the Town to be the applicant (instead of the owner). There is a final engineer plan for dam design; when the dam gets built and funded by someone other than the Fothergills, the League would then be able to insure it because the risks fall away as an engineer stamps that it meets all requirements, VLCT would allow insurance and the Town would then accept ownership.

8. Website Group: A group of folks have been working to update the newly revised website. They are looking for some assistance with the Recording Secretary to fulfill administrative work on this project. Nick Emlen will check to see if the funding can be covered through COVID-19 funds. The website revision created an attractive design but the content itself needs organization. Clif Emmons moved to authorize Katie Lane-Karnas to work on the website with the group. John Brabant amended the motion to pay Katie her hourly rate up to \$600, but if she reaches the \$600 amount, and the hours required are more extensive, that she be compensated at her hourly rate (\$20), up to \$1,000. Clif Emmons accepted the friendly amendment and Denise Wheeler seconded the motion. Sharon Winn Fannon reiterated that if future COVID-19 money becomes available, it would be best for Nick Emlen to seek reimbursement for this pandemic-related expense. The motion was voted and passed unanimously.
9. Annual Update with rbTech: Owner Rubin Bennett met with the Board for their annual update. The network is basically brand-new at this point (following the server installation last year), and the only thing to do in the next twelve months is the needed replacement of the recording secretary's laptop. Everything else is working at optimal performance. Workstation replacement expenses are budgeted for every four years (budget planning that reduces any unexpected costs). The server is going to last between 5-6 years; he advised adding 10% to that cost and putting aside 25% of that per year. The Town added a technology fund last year for this reason. The Town is now operating according to the plan created with rbTech, to be responsive to their recommendations in planning, and as a result have not had any surprises.

Rick Kehne inquired how local emergency planning is/can be considered inside of IT planning. Rubin commented that there is full remote access to the network, yet all planning is still contingent on the fact that the internet at the Town Office is insufficient to do what is needed. We are anticipating access to CVFiber's connectivity with high-speed internet. Our CVFiber delegate will update the Board this summer. Rubin commented that disaster planning and business continuity is standard work for rbTech and technology is changing quickly (he described operation and functionality of Starlink at this point in time) and he advised the next step is to learn a more firm timeline for CVFiber connectivity to the Town Office.

The Chair asked about Town IT security. New infrastructure includes a full security review to meet rbTech's standards, which was done as part of the implementation of the server and the Town is in a pretty good spot. Rubin commented that generally speaking it is good to do a security audit every few years; it can be a good idea to have a different company perform an assessment. If rbTech completes it, they have a process for separation of duties and can provide a quote. Clif Emmons commented that since our system is relatively new and some security measures have been taken, it makes sense to get a quote to plan for allocating for a future security audit. When financial accounting is audited, it's a separate group who performs it; the Town Clerk asked if it makes sense to hire a different firm to do a security audit on

rbTech's system at the Town. Rubin noted that they have clients opting to do both; he is certified as a security professional. There is a shorter learning curve for rbTech to learn the system and perform the work, but also supports the Town if it decides to hire a different company. He is able to speak to the Town about what VLCT is looking for in terms of security and how rbTech could meet expectations. Rick Kehne made a motion to renew our one-year contract with rbTech. (For May 1, the notice period is 60 days ahead of auto-renewal.) Denise Wheeler seconded the motion; it was voted and passed unanimously. The Board and Town Clerk thanked rbTech for how easy they are to work with.

10. Purchase of Laptop: The Recording Secretary laptop is having issues with function and rbTech provided a quote for replacement (Lenovo ThinkPad). This model is what rbTech has suggested for some time now, and supply chain issues are affecting prices and availability during the pandemic. There is an asterisk in all quotes allowing rbTech to get something price-comparable if the model is not available. If Rubin cannot find something that fulfills what the Town needs, he will return to the Board.

Denise Wheeler made a motion to authorize rbTech to purchase a laptop, with installation, at a price not to exceed \$2,500. Sharon Winn Fannon seconded the motion. Because of supply chain issues, drives are no longer regular drives that you can drop in; some of them are soldered right into the motherboard; John Brabant asked Rubin to check about the size of the drive and ability to change it out and was concerned that 250 is too low; 512 would be good.

Clif Emmons proposed a friendly amendment to the motion that the amount of \$2,500 be for equipment only and authorize for a minimum of four hours of labor. If there is more than that involved, rbTech will let the Town know. The Selectboard authorized final decision authority to Clif Emmons to work with rbTech on the best computer option. The motion was voted and passed unanimously.

11. Friends of Town Hall: Carol Beatty, David Schütz, and Barbara Butler (along with Clif Emmons) are Friends members who joined the meeting. They are working on a grant proposal for a Cultural Facilities Grant (\$30,000 matching grant, 50% of which can be in-kind) that would be submitted by the Friends of the Calais Town Hall; critical is to have the support of the Town. This aims to get the second floor of the Hall outfitted for theater and performance uses such as lighting, sound design, equipment perch, room darkening panels, theater curtains and rigging. David Schütz noted these are the highest priorities of the theater members of the group, to make it usable as a cultural center, the heart of what this grant program is all about. Recipients often are town halls that don't necessarily have a great history as cultural centers but are in the mode of improving themselves to be used effectively for performance; therefore, Calais stands a good chance, with the support of the Town's elected officials. Funds from the grant Donna Fitch wrote a few years ago were used largely for ADA accessibility features for cultural purposes. Sharon Winn Fannon inquired whether the accessibility pieces will change the aesthetic of the space, or be architecturally integrated. David replied it will be done in an aesthetically pleasing way retaining the historic character of the hall itself: lighting up near the ceiling, drapery around the windows, stage legs that can be brought down. Theater folks are working on details being fleshed out within the next month (including budget and quotes).

Sharon Winn Fannon made a motion that the Board accept, and authorize Sharon Winn Fannon to sign, the letter of support for the application from the Friends of the Calais Town Hall for a cultural facilities grant. Rick Kehne seconded the motion which was voted and passed 4-0 (Clif Emmons abstained).

12. Water Filtration System for Town Hall: Clif Emmons explained that iron content and hardness of water caused a need for a water filtration system. The water has an odor and will be harder on the pipes and shorten life of the plumbing if filtration is not included. To protect the Town's investment going forward, the proposal is that the Town install a filtration system. He shared comparison quotes in accordance with the Town criteria for bid selection from Clear Water Filtration (who currently serves the Town Office) and Onion River Well & Spring. They are very comparable estimates and Clif explained each criteria score. This system would do all of the water for the building. Clif Emmons moved to approve the Clear Water Filtration quote for installation to begin as soon as they can get it on their schedule (from the General Fund). Denise Wheeler seconded and the motion passed 5-0.
13. Other Business/Old Business/New Business: The Chair suggested meeting May 3 at 7pm to approve minutes and discuss contracts and personnel issues. John Brabant commented that he is not willing to do weekly meetings anymore and is losing patience with weekly meetings driven by urgency. Sharon Winn Fannon commented that more work done outside of meetings will lead long-term to shorter and less frequent meetings and all agreed it is perfectly understandable that members not attend when they are feeling overwhelmed. This contract discussion is urgent because it is tied to timing for the EMFD contract review. Clif Emmons commented the Board has agreed to look at the contract and suggested that members review it and come back to the full Board with a thoughtful review and recommendation; Denise Wheeler and Sharon Winn Fannon agreed to be point persons on this. The Board decided not to meet on May 3, but to meet on May 10 at 6pm.
14. Adjournment: John Brabant made a motion to adjourn at 9:27 pm. Sharon Winn Fannon seconded the motion which was voted on and carried 5-0.

Date: 4/27/2021 Respectfully Submitted, Katie Lane-Karnas, Recording Secretary
Approved by the Selectboard at the 6/28/2021 meeting

Click on the link below to view documents associated with this agenda:
<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/18RH1-KKJJWjNFDe6sIq5U5r7L3S9YXE1?usp=sharing>

Future Agenda Items

- 2014 Western Star info
- Review Treasurer's Report (5/10/2021)
- Continuation of appointments/reappointments (5/10/2021)
- Curtis Pond Dam Exploratory Group – next steps (5/10/2021)
- Sign Dog Warrant for delinquent dog licenses (5/10/2021)
- Approve updated LEMP (must do on 5/10/2021)
- Consideration and approval of NCMHA Interim Mngmt. Plan and release of CC funds (Stephanie Kaplan/Rowan Jacobson 5/10/2021)
- Peter Harvey request for permission to post "Do Not Mow" Wild Chervil signs on
Fowler Rd, Bliss Pond Rd, Old West Church Rd, and Sparrow Rd and have the road

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crew delay roadside mowing on until late fall as they did last year on these 4 roads while I am identifying, digging, and documenting Wild Chervil plants on these roads. (5/10/2021?)

Covid - discuss plan for reopening Town bldgs.

County Rd. speed limit reduction

Discuss process to review and update various Town Policies and Ordinances

TH #7 discontinuance (Gary Schultz)

Update WEC and CVFiber (Barry Bernstein/David Healy)

East Calais Stormwater Treatment Design Report and Plans need land owner easements (Pam DeAndrea)

Adopt revised LHMP (7/26/2021 agenda – Grace Vison)

Ordinance for junk

WVFD building

Capital West Dispatching

ARPA funds

Vtrans Rte. 14 bridge project