

Selectboard Meeting Minutes

Monday, January 24, 2022 at 6:30 pm, Town Hall and Zoom

Present: Denise Wheeler (Chair), Sharon Winn Fannon* (Vice Chair), John Brabant (Member), Rick Kehne (Member), Marc Mihaly (Member), ORCA Media, Katie Lane-Karnas* (recording minutes), Barbara Butler* (Assistant Town Clerk), Jeremy Weiss* (Town Clerk), Scott Bassage*, Theo Shores*, Alfred Larrabee, Gary Schultz*, Megan Sullivan*, Michael Fullerton*, Reed Cherrington

**Indicates attendance by Zoom video call*

1. Call to Order: Denise Wheeler called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm. Hybrid meeting technical issues were fixed.
2. Executive Session for Personnel Matters: Denise Wheeler made a motion to go into Executive Session at 6:42 pm per 1 V.S.A. subsection 313 (a) (3), personnel matters, and the Board invited Alfred Larrabee, Road Commissioner, to join them. The motion was seconded, voted on and carried 5-0. The Board resumed Regular Session at 7:18 pm.

Sharon Winn Fannon made a motion that the Town of Calais offer a market adjustment increase to non-management, full-time road crew of \$1.30 per hour. John Brabant seconded the motion which was voted and passed unanimously.

3. Public Comment: None.
4. Review, Additions/Changes to Agenda: None.
5. Review and Approve Warrants: The Board reviewed and approved processing of invoices and orders.
6. Road Commissioner Update: The Board reviewed a list of “secondary plan B” road categorization as part of the winter road maintenance planning for emergency, contingency situations. The Road Commissioner and Operations Manager had worked with Rick Kehne to put this in writing. In the case of an emergency, the Road Commissioner would make a situation-dependent message to broadcast to the public.

Denise Wheeler made a motion to amend this text to the existing winter roads maintenance policy. Marc Mihaly added a friendly amendment that it is moved in its substantial form as reviewed, with ability to make minor edits. Denise Wheeler accepted the friendly amendment, and John Brabant seconded. The motion was voted and passed unanimously.

The Road Commissioner has continued to advertise the open highway position but has not yet received candidate interest.

7. Town Meeting Preparations: Jeremy Weiss reminded the group that the Town Clerk position will be up for election again in 2023. He pointed out that the moderator is typically elected from the floor for the ensuing year, but Gus Seelig (who has served as moderator for many years) hadn't filed a consent form for Australian ballot and the deadline was 5 pm today. Gus Seelig remains Calais's elected Moderator up until Town Meeting Day 2022. Marc Mihaly made a motion to extend the deadline for receipt of Town candidate consent forms to the extent permissible by state law. The Board initially asked the Town Clerk to investigate further what is permissible but ultimately decided that if needed, they could advertise and then appoint for this position, and the motion was not pursued.

The Town Meeting Warning edits, article details, and the town attorney's comments were reviewed. Denise Wheeler made a motion to approve the warning, as edited and reviewed by the town's attorney, with edits as noted. The motion was seconded, voted, and passed unanimously.

Discussion turned to how to proceed with the informational meeting (which occurs ahead of Town Meeting day) and the Chair asked each member for their input. Sharon Winn Fannon commented that it is very difficult as the remote member to hear what is happening in the room; she suggests that everyone who can be on Zoom do that, but offer the Town Office location so people can participate who don't necessarily have access to Zoom. She noted it is more egalitarian when each member can be clearly heard and seen on a virtual meeting. Rick Kehne agreed, noting he would love to have a hybrid meeting, but the quality of acoustics is so difficult that full Zoom would be a better viewing/listening quality. Marc Mihaly agreed as well, suggesting the full Board is on Zoom and a staff person manages an as-needed Town Hall public location, including assisting live participation for asking questions. John Brabant commented that the legislature is doing hybrid meetings; Town Hall acoustics need to get addressed as soon as possible. He commented it is of the utmost importance to offer a hybrid option because we have folks in our community who can't access a virtual meeting, and the Board has an obligation to them. The Chair was in agreement, noting the message can be to emphasize to voters the best option will be for folks to attend by Zoom as they are able. The in-person option would require masks.

Denise Wheeler made a motion and Marc Mihaly seconded to hold the informational meeting by Zoom, with all Selectboard members on Zoom and a hybrid option at the Town Hall available for folks who need it, supported by a staff member. The motion was voted and passed unanimously.

The Town Clerk commented that discussion has led to changing the planned informational meeting date from February 26 (as discussed at the last meeting) to February 19, allowing sufficient time for voters to attend and then still have time to mail in their ballots. Denise Wheeler made a motion to hold a public info meeting on Saturday, February 19, 2022 at 10 am; Rick Kehne seconded. The motion was voted and passed unanimously.

Marc Mihaly moved to confirm the Board's decision to vote by Australian ballot for Town Meeting 2022. The motion was seconded, voted, and passed unanimously.

8. Development Review Board (DRB) Candidates: Denise Wheeler recused herself because she serves as a member of the DRB and therefore did not participate in the discussion and did not vote. Ashley Moore introduced herself and explained that having lived all over Vermont and worked in a number of organizations in politics, she is now seeking involvement in local community work. Sharon Winn Fannon explained that the DRB framework is based in statute, and then there is a quasi-judicial role for members. Ashley Moore discussed her commitment to engagement in Vermont communities, and writing experience, as well as her willingness to participate in training.

Applicant Megan Sullivan introduced herself and explained her interest in land parcels and policy, and relevant former work at Burlington Housing Authority. She is currently a social worker and her education background is in environmental science. The Board explained the quasi-judicial nature of DRB membership and Megan confirmed her experience with policy writing and understanding of the quasi-judicial nature of the role. John Brabant emphasized that as a jury on the DRB, you are comparing application for a project that has triggered DRB jurisdiction with regulations and it can be difficult to review one's neighbor's project. In judging and deliberating and ultimately making a decision, it can be challenging to implement the law in context of neighbor's emotional lobbying.

Applicant Scott Bassage commented that when he first applied, it was in support of the Town as there were not other applicants, and he strongly supported the candidacy of both folks who spoke before him and suggested he might serve as Alternate. He has served in every planning capacity other than DRB over the past decades, and if there is a need he is willing to serve. Marc Mihaly appreciated that the Board is very aware of all the roles Scott serves in Calais, and his qualifications for candidacy, such as Planning Commission, Selectboard, Justice of the Peace, innumerable boards and efforts such as the renovation of the Town Hall. Board members thanked him, and all candidates. Sharon Winn Fannon noted that Sam Colt withdrew her candidacy. The term expirations for open positions are 2023 and 2024, and for the alternate position, 2025; the terms are three years in length. Marc Mihaly expressed his opinion that Scott's suggestion in favor of serving as an alternate and appointing Ashley and Megan as full members, is excellent. Marc Mihaly moved to appoint Ashley Moore to the term that expires in 2023; that Megan Sullivan to the term that expires in 2024; and Scott Bassage to the Alternate position term that expires in 2025. Rick Kehne seconded, and the motion was voted and passed unanimously. The Board congratulated and thanked the new DRB members.

9. Face Coverings: The Chair noted that Maple Corner Community Store, Maple Corner Community Center, Calais Elementary School, and the Town Office all require masks; the post offices have followed local mask wearing. East Montpelier has a ton of local businesses, in contrast to Calais, and they have a town mask mandate. The Board discussed being open to scheduling a discussion about this at a meeting if any local proprietor or merchant wants to speak to the Board. Members commented strongly in favor of supporting our community businesses' need for face covering protection. Sharon Winn Fannon requested a discussion about hybrid meeting technology (which needs improvement), and requiring masks for in-person Selectboard meetings. The current practice is mask wearing in the Town Office, Town Hall, and for salespeople coming into the Town Garage. On technology, Sharon noted that the current room setup doesn't allow some members of the select board to see the screen of virtual

participants and, ironically, in order to actually look at the screen, select board members on one side of the table must actually turn their backs to the table and the camera. Denise said she would work on a better room setup for future meetings.

10. Town Highway#7/Carr Rd.: Gary and Jill Schultz have asked the Town to discontinue TH7, otherwise known as Carr Road (this request was originally made at the time the “ancient roads” were being worked on). The Chair shared the draft notice of hearing and site inspection for the discontinuance, prepared by the town attorney. The Chair screen-shared the image of an old map that illustrates that this town highway does not go beyond the Town boundaries into Worcester. Reed Cherrington commented that he believes there will be a lot of interest in this road, and asked that the site visit be held in April. The Board planned a site inspection for April 16, 2022 at 10 am. Rick Kehne moved and John Brabant seconded to proceed with the request to look at discontinuing Town Highway 7. A friendly amendment was made and accepted: Saturday April 16 at 10 am was chosen for a site visit; a hearing will follow immediately after. The motion was voted and passed unanimously. Gary Schultz asked what the interest is that he mentioned, and Reed commented that the Trails Committee is always interested when a potential block of trails is impacted, in looking ahead as far as centuries in the future, beyond current ownership of the property. The Chair noted further questions will be entertained at the public hearing.

11. Constable Appointment: The Board thanked Travis Shores for coming back, after they had interviewed him on January 10. The Chair asked the Board if they have any more questions about the role of constable in Calais. John Brabant asked for a sit-down meeting, a more in-depth discussion and program for how the constable position would be borne out. He noted specifically the ongoing, difficult and personal situation with large animals roaming. Travis Shores commented that he sent a plan to the Board about what needs to happen, such as trainings he will take. He added that state statute requires consulting the Vermont Sec. of Agriculture on any citations for livestock, horses included. He suggested a need for a later conversation about materials required for the fulfillment of the animal control officer position, including paperwork and holding locations. He explained how the Town would sponsor his training at the law enforcement academy (no fee; a two-week commitment and further training hours). Prior to completing law enforcement training, he can still fulfill the constable duties for enforcing ordinances (but not being armed). Marc Mihaly supported the appointment of Travis, with a plan for discussing how the role of constable may be augmented at a following meeting and a clear plan of action. The Board reiterated they want to take this slow, step by step. When Woodbury trained a constable to be able to use radar and issue speeding tickets, it was integrated step by step.

Marc Mihaly moved the appointment of Travis Shores to the positions of Animal Control Officer and Town Constable for terms of one year. Rick Kehne seconded. The motion was voted and passed unanimously.

12. Review and approve minutes: This item was tabled for a subsequent meeting.

13. Executive Session for Personnel Matters: John Brabant made a motion to go into Executive Session at 9:31 pm per 1 V.S.A. subsection 313 (a) (3), personnel matters. The motion was

seconded by Denise Wheeler, voted on and carried 5-0. The Board resumed Regular Session at 9:50 pm. The Chair had nothing to report publicly.

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

15. Adjournment: Marc made a motion to adjourn at 9:48. Rick seconded the motion which was voted on and carried 5-0.

Date: 1/25/2022 Respectfully Submitted, Katie Lane-Karnas
Approved by the Selectboard at the 2/14/2022 meeting

Click on the link below to view documents associated with this agenda:
https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1qFnUM2NDUO_uM828mXoVNRkf9fk9HjCS?usp=sharing