



TOWN OF CALAIS

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East Calais, Vermont 05650
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calaisvermont.gov

Town of Calais Annual Town Meeting Tuesday, March 7, 2023

MINUTES

The legal voters of the Town of Calais were notified and warned to meet at the Calais Elementary School in Calais at 321 Lightening Ridge Road, on Tuesday, March 7, 2023, from 9:30 am to completion to transact the following business from the floor.

The meeting was called to order by Moderator, Gus Seelig at 9:40 am. The gavel was turned over to Town Clerk, Jeremy Weiss.

ARTICLE 1. To elect a Moderator for the ensuing year. Denise Wheeler made a motion to elect Gus Seelig for the ensuing year. The motion was seconded by Dot Helling. The motion was voted on and carried.

Gus Seelig welcomed everyone and reviewed the rules to conduct business for town meeting, which will be used in conjunction with Roberts Rules of Order. Thanks were given to the long tenure of the Selectboard and their service to the town. Lunch will be provided free of charge.

Barry Bernstein read a resolution honoring Jeremy Weiss, Town Clerk and another resolution to honor the Selectboard, all have stepped up to fill in no matter what. (See the full text at the end of the Minutes.)

ARTICLE 2. To elect the following town officials (by Australian ballot):

Town Clerk	3-year term (expires 2026)
Selectboard Member	3-year term (expires 2025)
Selectboard Member	3-year term (expires 2026)
Selectboard Member	2-year term (expires 2024)
Selectboard Member	2-year term (expires 2025)
Selectboard Member	3-year term (expires 2024)
Lister	3- year term (expires 2026)

ARTICLE 3. To elect the following Town officers from the floor:

Trustee of Public Funds 3-year term (expires 2026)

Donna Fitch made a motion to nominate incumbent, Rod Buck. The motion was seconded. No other nominations were heard and a motion for the clerk to cast one ballot for Rod Buck for Trustee of Public Funds was voted on and carried.

Cemetery Commissioner 5- year term (expires 2024)

Michael Fullerton was previously appointed to fill a vacancy for one year for a term ending 2024. Juanita Nunn nominated Michael Fullerton to now be elected to complete the rest of that term for Cemetery Commissioner. The motion was seconded, voted on and carried.

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Cemetery Commissioner 5-year term (term expires 2028)

Michael Fullerton nominated Juanita Nunn, the incumbent. The motion was seconded. No other nominations were heard and a motion for the clerk to cast one ballot for Juanita Nunn for Cemetery Commissioner was voted on and carried.

Cemetery Commissioner 5-year term (term expires 2025)

Juanita Nunn nominated Sage Kennedy, seconded by Mack Gardner-Morse. No other nominations were heard and a motion for the clerk to cast one ballot for Sage Kennedy for Cemetery Commissioner was voted on and carried.

Gus Seelig informed the public now would be a good time to ask any questions about the town report.

- Scott Bassage wants to know what's going on with CVFiber. David Healey, our representative to the CVFiber Board, spoke about the first distribution area that may be in April or early May. The second area in west Calais going into Worcester will be next. David noted CVFiber is making good progress.
- Paul Hannan made a motion to include the births, deaths and marriages lists back to next year's printed town report. The motion was seconded, voted on and carried.
- President of Woodbury Fire Department, James Dailey, questioned why two articles presented to the Selectboard were made into three Articles. Denise Wheeler said it has to do with line items as one is an expenditure and the other is a replacement fund.

ARTICLE 4. Shall the voters approve total general fund and highway fund expenditures of \$1,956,645 of which \$1,245,372 shall be raised by taxes and \$319,717 by non-tax revenue? Sharon Winn moved the article; it was seconded and discussion began.

Donna Fitch made a motion to amend the budget to include \$5,000.00 for the Selectboard annual stipend. The motion was seconded. Barry Bernstein made a friendly amendment to increase the amount to \$7,500 for an annual stipend for the Selectboard. The person who seconded the motion was in agreement. Discussion ensued. The motion, as amended to include \$7,500.00 for the Selectboard annual stipend, was voted on and carried.

Michael Fullerton asked about the Director of Public Works position. Rick Kehne spoke about the goal to create a long term position for grants management, dealing with ANR and VTrans in a timely way and planning. This will let the Road Crew manage the roads and not working in a bureaucratic role. There are different ways to handle all that needs to get done. The current way is too complicated administratively, noting that Toby Talbot has brought in more than a million dollars in grant funds to the town. We need someone professionally to bring this all together knowing the complexity of what we are facing. This is the best solution we could come up with; the new Selectboard will have their voice on where this goes. Sharon Winn encouraged us to not get hung up on the title and to give the tools to fill those positions; most importantly is to have the budget to do this. Rick Kehne went on to say we are a small town; this is a manageable position to maintain the infrastructure separating out the work from the bureaucratic part. Rick noted it will be a real benefit to the town to hire a Director of Public Works. The motion was voted on and carried to include the amendment of increasing the budget by \$7,500.

ARTICLE 5. Shall the voters appropriate the sum of \$49,500 for the operation and maintenance of the cemeteries? Article moved by Michael Fullerton, seconded, voted on and carried.

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ARTICLE 6. Shall the voters appropriate \$29,898 for the Kellogg Hubbard Library?
Article moved by Jeff Dean, new Calais representative on the KHL Board. Jeff Dean reported usage rates are up, they are asking for level funding and encouraged people to visit the library. Craig Line noted a new strategic plan is in place, noting it is forward thinking to better serve the communities. Craig noted it was a huge accomplishment done by working with amazing staff. The motion was seconded, voted on and carried.

Gus Seelig acknowledged Janet Ancel and thanked her for her many years of dedicated service to the town and State of Vermont as our state representative.

ARTICLE 7. Shall the voters appropriate the sum of \$31,100 as requested by the following organizations in the Calais and the Central Vermont area:

Central Vermont Adult Basic Education	\$ 1,000
Central Vermont Council on Aging	\$ 1,400
Central Vermont Economic Development Corp.	\$ 500
Central Vermont Home Health and Hospice	\$ 4,150
Central Vermont Memorial Civic Center	\$ 800
Circle (formerly Battered Women’s Shelter)	\$ 700
Community Connections	\$ 1,000
Community Harvest of Central Vermont	\$ 250
Family Center of Washington County	\$ 500
Friends of the Winooski River	\$ 400
Good Beginnings of Central Vermont	\$ 300
Good Samaritan Haven	\$ 1,500
Green Mountain Transit	\$ 859
Green Up Vermont	\$ 100
Montpelier Senior Activity Center	\$ 5,300
Mosaic Vermont (formerly Sexual Assault Crisis Team)	\$ 200
Old West Church Association	\$ 1,823
Our House of Central Vermont	\$ 250
People’s Health and Wellness Clinic	\$ 1,500
Rural Community Transportation	\$ 975
Twin Valley Senior Center	\$ 3,500
VT Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired	\$ 650
Vermont Center for Independent Living	\$ 800
Washington County Diversion Program	\$ 300
Washington County Mental Health Services	\$ 1,400
Washington County Youth Service Bureau / Boys & Girls Club	\$ 500
Woodbury/Calais Food Shelf	\$ 443
TOTAL	\$31,100

The Article was moved by Barry Bernstein and seconded.

Linda Schutz noted Curtis Pond swim area needs hand rails. As an avid swimmer she has had difficulties getting in and out of the pond. Linda is proposing to have two hand rails installed at a cost of \$4,000.00; one on the stone steps and the other on the grassy area. Linda brought this proposal to the Selectboard and was instructed to bring this fund request up under this article.

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Linda Schutz made a motion to amend this Article to include \$4,000.00 to install two sets of hand rails at the Curtis Pond Swim Area. The motion was seconded by Paul Hannan, and discussion ensued.

Tom McArdle, former ADA compliance officer for the City of Montpelier, noted perhaps a full accessibility assessment needs to be done. Jan Ohlsson recommended to follow the process, get a permit. Tom said a disability specialist from Vermont Center for Independent Living can come out.

Barry Bernstein made a motion to the amendment to add \$3,000.00 and give it all to VCIL. The motion was seconded. Peter Johnke, Deputy Director of VCIL, spoke on this and said this is what his group does. David Healey said this was looked at some 30 years ago and there is a wetland nearby and was never done.

Linda Schutz wants someone from the town to work with in order to provide oversight and not just give this money over to VCIL. Gus Seelig said the Selectboard could appoint a committee, guided by the town. Gus explained it might be more process than you were hoping for Linda. John Brabant suggested to just go with Linda's original motion for handrails. Dinah Yessne spoke against it (Linda Schutz motion), that it will cost far more and needs to be done right. Paul Hannan then withdrew his second to the amendment Linda Schutz made. Larry Bush then made a second to Linda's motion to amend this Article.

Barry Bernstein called the question to end debate on the amendment to the amendment to add \$7,000.00 to VCIL to install railings at Curtis Pond Swim Area. The vote failed on the amendment to the amendment.

Back to the original amendment motion Linda Schutz made to amend this Article to include \$4,000.00 to install hand rails at the Curtis Pond Swim Area. Further discussion ensued.

Peter Johnke said the town is legally obligated to make the swim area handicap accessible.

Donna Smyers recommends that the Curtis Pond Dam Association form a committee to work on getting the handrails installed and give them the \$4,000.00. Tom McArdle said the town needs to have the work documented if you can't meet all the codes of the ADA law.

Fletcher Dean said this is a slippery slope; he used to be on the committee to review these special funding requests. If we do give to the Curtis Pond Dam Association, we may want to stipulate that this is a one time appropriation.

John Brabant noted we can amend the original town budget as an option, we can't undo the original previously passed article but we are allowed by Roberts Rules to add to the approved budget.

Daniel Keeney called the question to end debate. It was voted on and approved to end debate. Gus Seelig recited the motion to give \$4,000.00 to the Curtis Pond Dam Association for the one time purpose of adding ADA compliant hand rails to the Curtis Pond Swim area. A division of the house was called and the Board of Civil Authority lead the hand count. Gus Seelig reported: 80 yes votes, 30 no votes and the amendment passed.

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The main Article #7 as amended is now on the floor. Mack Gardner-Morse would like to see a report in the town report or at least on the town website of what these organizations are doing and would like to see the value of what they do. Mack was in agreement to have a committee review these funding requests prior to town meeting. Rick Winston spoke on behalf of the Montpelier Senior Activity Center – they offer meals, classes and offerings to people over 50 years; they are only funded at 25% from the City of Montpelier; Rick encouraged everyone to support the Center.

Old West Church is celebrating its 200th anniversary this year and has a one time request of \$1,823, with events starting in June reported by Barbara McAndrew, President of the Old West Church Association.

Article 7 had been amended to appropriate \$35,100 to the above organizations, including \$4,000.00 to the Curtis Pond Dam Association for the installation of two ADA compliant hand railings at the swim area. The motion was voted on and carried.

Town Moderator, Gus Seelig, gave the floor to State Representative, Marc Mihaly (D) Washington-6, to speak to townspeople about what's going on at the State House. Representative Mihaly began by presenting each member of the Calais Selectboard the Vermont Public Service Award issued by the Secretary of State in honor of their dedication and years of service to the Town of Calais.

Marc serves on the Appropriations Committee, where he and the committee are working on the state budget. He is in favor of using the federal ARPA funds for one time big ticket items since the funds go away after they are used up. Suggested uses are housing with its long term benefits to the state, childcare and broadband to name a few. More information can be found on Marc's website as follows: marcmihaly.com. Marc went on to say one major issue is childcare, Vermont families can't find childcare; the solution will likely involve large state subsidies. The Paid Family Leave bill will pass the House. Affordable Heat legislation (S5), he will support, although not perfect, he will support it. Vermont pays a billion a year for heating oil and propane. If you use the benefits of this bill to retrofit your house, it will save you money Marc cited. Prop 5 passed in every single town in Vermont protecting reproductive rights. Vermont passed a shield law to protect our care providers and patients against lawsuits from out of state entities. Marc opened the floor to answer a few questions. Marc stayed for lunch and made himself available to answer questions.

ARTICLE 8: Shall the voters authorize a reserve fund known as the Planning Commission Reserve Fund for the purpose of hiring consultants, matching funds for grants, and other expenses related to town plan and zoning regulation revisions?

Jan Ohlsson, Planning Commission Chair, moved the article. The Planning Commission is updating the Town Plan and are asking for a reserve fund so they have the ability to hire planners; more volunteers are needed to serve. Jeremy Weiss, Town Clerk, offered his support of this article. The motion was seconded, voted on and carried.

ARTICLE 9: Shall the voters approve a \$2,500 appropriation to the Planning Commission Reserve Fund? Sam Dworkin moved the article. Jack Russell made a motion to amend the article to \$5,000.00. The motion was seconded. The Planning Commission process needs to be as inclusive as possible, as it is very, very challenging to write with only four people. Jack

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Russell said the Town Plan has a requirement that the Selectboard report on the goals that would answer how we get younger people to move to town and many other questions. Jan Ohlsson is asking to hire consultants to organize community meetings to hear from townspeople about what they would like the town to look like into the future.

The motion to amend Article 9 to appropriate \$5,000.00 to the Planning Commission Reserve Fund, was voted on and carried. The main motion as amended to appropriate \$5,000.00 to the Planning Commission Reserve Fund, was voted on and carried.

ARTICLE 10. Shall the voters authorize payment of property taxes in two equal installments, with the due date of the first installment on or before 4 pm. on a date that falls not less than 30 days after the tax bills are mailed, but not earlier than September 1, 2023, and due date of the second installment shall be on or before 4 pm. on Wednesday, November 15, 2023?

Sharon Winn moved the article and it was seconded. Mack Gardner-Morse asked why we can't have quarterly payments when many other towns do it. Charlotte Bassage recommends the new Selectboard consult with the Trustee of Public Funds to discuss cash management. Barbara Butler, Assistant Town Clerk, noted you can make tax payments at your own rate, whatever is comfortable for your financial budget. Sharon Winn talked about the effort to process tax payments four times a year with the resources required in our small town. Barbara Butler noted we have to wait till the Grand List is frozen on April 1st. Denise Wheeler said State Education Funding plays a role, too. Janet Ancel noted state funding requirements have some deadlines that towns need to adhere to. The motion was voted on and carried.

ARTICLE 11. Shall each property tax installment payment be made via one of the following options:

- 1) by delivery to the Treasurer by 4 pm on or before the due dates as set forth in Article 10
 - 2) by U.S. Postal Service, with postmark on or before the due dates as set forth in Article 10;
- or
- 3) by credit card payment via www.calaisvermont.gov by 4 pm on or before the due dates as set forth in Article 10?

Denise Wheeler moved the article. The motion was seconded, voted on and carried.

ARTICLE 12. Shall interest in the amount of 0.5% per month or any part of a month, be charged on unpaid taxes?

Denise Wheeler moved the article. The motion was seconded, voted on and carried.

ARTICLE 13. Shall a delinquent tax penalty be set at 3% of the tax collected from each delinquent taxpayer?

Sharon Winn moved the article. The motion was seconded, voted on and carried.

ARTICLE 14. Shall the town appropriate \$65,564 to fund the Operating Expenses of the East Montpelier Fire Department, to be paid in quarterly installments starting July 1, 2023?

John Brabant moved the article. It was noted an incorrect amount was submitted for the Town Report; the actual number is \$66,564.00. John moved the article as amended for the correct amount. The motion was seconded.

James Dailey inquired about the increases in the operating budget of 4.1% this year. Sharon Winn noted that Emergency Services used to be in the Selectboard budget and was broken out separately to provide transparency. Rose Pelchuck spoke in favor of supporting

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EMFD noting the invaluable emergency services they provide. Rose introduced Albert Petrella, EMFD Fire Chief, who spoke about the services and costs of providing fire and ambulance service to our community. Albert stated, "You pay for it and hope you never need it". Mary Alice Profit cited a recent article that talked about Vermont being in a state of crisis for emergency services to get to rural places in one's time of need. Viability is the underlying issue; she suggested we need to think about how we function as a community; we want to be positive and support them, Mary Alice noted.
The motion was voted on and carried.

ARTICLE 15. Shall the town appropriate \$130,300 to fund the Operating Expenses of the East Montpelier Ambulance, to be paid in quarterly installments starting July 1, 2023?
Denise Wheeler moved the article. The motion was seconded, voted on and carried.

ARTICLE 16. Shall the town appropriate \$17,850 to the Woodbury Volunteer Fire Department, to be added to the truck replacement fund starting July 01, 2023?
Denise Wheeler moved the article. The motion was seconded, voted on and carried.

ARTICLE 17. Shall the town appropriate \$31,000 to fund the Capital Replacement Fund of the Woodbury Volunteer Fire Department, to be paid in full by January 1, 2024?
Denise Wheeler moved the article. The motion was seconded, voted on and carried.

ARTICLE 18. Shall the town appropriate the sum of \$38,724.36 to fund the Operating Expenses of the Woodbury Volunteer Fire Department, to be paid in quarterly installments of \$9,681.09 starting July 1, 2023?
Denise Wheeler moved the article. The motion was seconded, voted on and carried.

ARTICLE 19. To transact any other business that may legally come before the meeting.

David Schutz announced there is a free lunch but before we do this, Historic Kents' Corner has a fundraiser, a jar to donate to the Woodbury Calais Food Shelf. David went on to say that lunch is

given in honor of public service. This Selectboard may have attended 2000 meetings, received an average of 300 emails per week or 15,600 per year. John Brabant served for 18 years, has received over 3000 emails. Denise Wheeler served for more than 20 years.

David went on to say that Jeremy Weiss is now added to an illustrious roster list of former Calais town clerks. Hopefully we don't scare the daylights out of the new Selectboard as we honor these public servants today. David thanked all those who provided the food: Joe Buley from Joe's Kitchen gave us a great deal on the chili, Red Hen Bakery and Cabot Cheese. Volunteer bakers were all thanked, including Denise Wheeler who made Dot Naylor's Maple Pie.

Barry Bernstein offered two resolutions to honor and thank the Town Clerk and Selectboard as follows:

Resolution for Jeremy Weiss, Town Clerk

The residents of Calais offer their thanks and appreciation to Jeremy Weiss for his service as our Town Clerk. Jeremy during his time built on the work of our past Town Clerks, shepherding improvements to the keeping and storage of town records, town processes and inclusion of photos and statements of Selectboard candidates in our town report. Jeremy always was willing to go the extra mile and with a smile.

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Resolution for the Calais Selectboard

The residents of Calais offer their thanks and appreciation to the Calais Selectboard for their dedication and many years of service to our town. Denise Wheeler, as past Chair, John Brabant, Rick Kehne have given many years and thousands of hours of their time, to address often very controversial issues that face our town, Sharon Winn has also given much of her time and most recently as the Chair of the Board. All of the Selectboard has stepped in to fill the void whenever necessary no matter where any of the residents of Calais has stood on any issue, our town recognizes the often thankless task of serving these positions requires.

Barry Bernstein made a motion to adopt these resolutions. The motion was seconded, voted on and carried.

Nick Emlen, Emergency Management Director, reported some useful information is on back table.

There was a motion to adjourn at 12:30 pm. The motion was seconded, voted on and carried.

Respectfully submitted,
Rose Pelchuck

The lawful voters of the Town of Calais were further notified and warned to meet at the Calais Elementary School at 321 Lightening Ridge Road, on Tuesday, March 7, 2023, between the hours of seven in the forenoon (7:00 am.), when the polls will open, and seven in the afternoon (7:00 pm.), when the polls will close, to vote by Australian ballot on the following voter-petitioned Article:

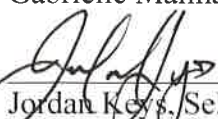
ARTICLE 20. Shall general obligation bonds of the Town of Calais in an amount not to exceed Four Hundred and Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$450,000), subject to reduction from available state or federal grants or other financial assistance, be issued for the purpose of renovation of the Curtis Pond Dam to State dam safety standards, the estimated total cost of which is \$700,000?

2023 Town Meeting Minutes Adopted on March 27, 2023.



Anne Winchester, Selectboard Chair

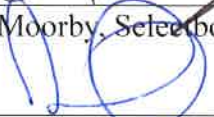
Gabrielle Malina, Selectboard Vice Chair



Jordan Keys, Selectboard Member



Jamie Moorby, Selectboard Member



Anne Toolan, Selectboard Member