

Town of Calais, Vermont

CHARTERED 1781

Selectboard Meeting Minutes

Monday, March 25, 2019 at 7pm at the Calais Town Offices

Present: Denise Wheeler (Chair), Rose Pelchuck (Member), Sharon Winn Fannon (Member), Clif Emmons (Member, attending remotely by phone), Jerome Lipani (ORCA), Katie Lane-Karnas (Recording Secretary), Toby Talbot (Operations Manager), Sandra Ferver (Town Treasurer), David Healy, Jared Thomas, John McCullough, Scott Bassage

Absent: John Brabant (Vice Chair)

1. Call to Order: Denise Wheeler called the meeting to order at 7:01 pm.
2. Public Comment: Toby Talbot, President of EMFD, made a correction from previous meeting's discussion that the ISO rating for East Montpelier Fire Dept. is "6" and that the standard that home insurance companies use is five miles from a fire station to the home. He provided a map that showed the radius circling each fire station and the coverage in Calais (every home in Calais is currently within five miles of a fire station). He also corrected from the previous meeting's discussion that the recent truck cost \$330,000. He commented that there are currently four Calais residents on the EMFD (but the only active member is Toby Talbot, currently). He pointed out that a location for any additional fire station in Calais would still be impacted by identifying volunteers to serve in it (this is challenging as it is).
3. Review, Additions/Changes to Agenda: None.
4. Updates/Reports
 - a) Road Commissioner and Operations Manager: Rose Pelchuck made a motion to approve the 2020 Certification of Highway Mileage for the Town of Calais. There is a total of 79.972 miles in Calais (18.450 miles Class 2, 54.62 miles Class 3, 6.902 State Highway). Sharon Winn Fannon seconded; the motion passed 4-0.
 - b) Treasurer: The Treasurer and Selectboard reviewed the very detailed Treasurer's Report and Delinquent Tax Report, capturing the financial position of the town at the end of March, 2019, or three-quarters of the way of the FY19 year. The Treasurer's assessment from the report was that it appears that the General Government and Highway revenues will meet or exceed budget. General Government expenditures could quite possibly come in at or slightly over budget, and at this time it appears that Highway expenses will exceed budget largely due to weather conditions.

The treasurer reported that office staff has been working with NEMRC to make slight updates in the NEMRC application to allow more close forecasting within the Highway budget. The group reviewed the general ledger, as it is created in report form by the new NEMRC application, questioned the Town Treasurer about how the report is created, and

generally familiarized themselves with the new format. They discussed specific grants that are listed on the general ledger and how NEMRC will be able to be used to forecast what is going on in each category.

The Treasurer explained in detail how the Town pays the school. In August, the town is billed an amount based on the grand list *at that time*; changes will occur to the grand list in the course of the listers' work. There are two payments each year due from the Town to the school district, and they are due after each tax collection. Calais holds back (as permitted by law) the delinquent tax portion (the amount that has not yet been collected from delinquent taxes). Holding back the delinquent tax allows the Town a more accurate understanding of the actual amount that is due to the school. Scott Bassage complimented and thanked the Town Treasurer for the preparation of the NEMRC report; they appreciated that NEMRC reporting can span fiscal years.

The group reviewed the fund balance in detail. The Treasurer explained that when the auditor came in, the prior year's fund balance was \$318,000 to the good. The auditor had commented that that was approximately 20% of budgeted expenses, and is a good amount to have, ahead of tax collection. Having a strong fund balance helps float grant expenses as well, and the Town Treasurer suggested nurturing that fund balance going forward. This allows the Town to avoid taking out a loan to cover expenses ahead of tax collection.

They next reviewed the Delinquent Tax Report. Since the inception of the fiscal year, \$101,450.65 has been collected by the Delinquent Tax Collector. She shared the process for how she will proceed with the existing delinquencies ahead of the June 30 final due date. After having reviewed the entirety of the NEMRC reports that the Treasurer prepared, the Board decided to continue to request the full reports from the Treasurer. The Treasurer will plan to create the financial report to the Selectboard at their last meeting of the month through the end of the fiscal year.

The expense for Town Meeting and the town report was \$4,079.03 (including graphic design, printing, postage and sound equipment). Calais has its town report mailed to each household (this is a statutory requirement—unless a town put an article on the warning asking for town reports to be picked up instead of being mailed). The Board considered an opt-out list as an option (in consideration of the amount of mailed reports that ended up in post office recycling bins). The Treasurer asked the Selectboard to consider their preference in billing the school for their share of a town meeting cost, as is done in neighboring towns. Twenty percent of the pages of the town report were used by the school; twenty percent of the expense for Town Meeting would be \$816. The Board discussed communicating with the school about the cost of the meeting to the town, and acknowledged the contributions the school makes for town meeting day in terms of facilities, custodial service, etc.

- c) Town Clerk: This item was not needed.
- d) Town Hall Renovation Committee: John McCullough reported on the status of insulation and drywall (underway this week), plumbing and wiring (underway), and carpentry. The

timeline for completion of the project remains weather dependent. The Chair invited Selectboard members to join herself and Clif Emmons at the Town Hall for a meeting there on Thursday at 8am. The Committee will invite Donna Fitch to attend an upcoming meeting to discuss where the budget is at this time.

- e) CV Fiber: David Healy reported that the official trademark for the CVISP is now “CV Fiber” and updated the Board on many aspects of CV Fiber’s progress. He projected that fiber optic will likely be feasible with 40% of Calais residents participating, and he is preparing to gauge interest using a survey that will be shared on Front Porch Forum soon. CV Fiber is projecting an approximately \$70-100 per month cost range, and is currently considering the sequence or order of towns to have service rolled out. David discussed WEC’s considering running the fiber in its existing infrastructure (as opposed to renting for attaching the fiber to poles). He discussed legislative efforts (a proposed bill that would provide \$60,000 planning money for communications union districts and include moneys for bonding). He discussed existing federal grant opportunities that CV Fiber is pursuing.

CV Fiber meets monthly, and meetings are posted online through ORCA Media. CV Fiber is a government entity, and as such will hire contractors to complete the work as needed. Scott Bassage appreciated the significant assets that David Healy brings to the CV Fiber Board. The Selectboard greeted Jared Thomas, senior network engineer with RB Technologies. He introduced himself to the Selectboard and explained that he has worked in network infrastructures for fifteen years and reported that he has clarified with his employer and CV Fiber that a conflict of interest will not interfere. He spoke about his concerns about the companies currently offering internet service to consumers in Calais and his appreciation for a community-based service such as CV Fiber. CV Fiber Board representatives from Calais will plan to update the Board quarterly on their activities.

- f) Act 46 Update: This item was not needed.
- g) CVRPC: This item was not needed.

5. Appointments/reappointments:

Denise Wheeler made a motion to appoint Jared Thomas as an Alternate to CV Fiber. Rose Pelchuck seconded, and the motion passed 4-0.

- a) Sharon Winn Fannon made a motion to reappoint Jay Copping as Health Officer; Rose Pelchuck seconded, and the motion passed 4-0.
- b) Denise Wheeler made a motion to reappoint Stephanie Kaplan & Larry Bush to the Conservation Commission. Sharon Winn Fannon seconded and the motion passed 4-0.
- c) Sharon Winn Fannon made a motion to reappoint Tom Blachly, Randy Allen & Reed Cherington to the Trails Committee. Denise Wheeler seconded, and the motion passed 4-0.
- d) Sharon Winn Fannon made a motion to appoint Elizabeth Perry to serve as 2nd Animal Control Officer, and Denise Wheeler seconded. The Chair shared biography information for Elizabeth Perry (she is Clif Emmons’ wife). The motion was voted and passed 4-0.

6. Newspaper of Record: Denise Wheeler made a motion to use the Times Argus and/or the Hardwick Gazette for items that need to be published. Rose Pelchuck seconded, and the motion passed 4-0.
7. Liquor License: Clif Emmons made a motion to approve the liquor license for the East Calais General Store. Rose Pelchuck seconded, and the motion passed 4-0.
8. RFP for IT Support Services: Clif Emmons and the Board discussed how to have RFP candidates address a penalty (or possibly compensation expectation) for lost productivity due to lack of IT support. Clif Emmons will create language for the RFP and seek feedback on the entire proofed document from Attorney Jim Barlow. The Board thanked Clif Emmons for his highly professional work. The Board discussed that in order to maintain due diligence on behalf of the town, they would avoid conversation with their current vendor in advance of releasing the RFP for all vendors to access at the same time.
9. Chair update, projects, etc.
 - The Chair reported on the Woodbury Volunteer Fire Department Station Committee's visits to potential site options. The next meeting is 4/18 and will include architectural firms attending to begin providing feedback on planning options. No commitments have been made. Rose Pelchuck resigned from the WVFD Committee (due to work schedule and previous commitments).
 - The Board discussed scheduling joint meetings with the School Board and Cemetery Commission in the second week in May. The Road Maintenance Public Forums were tentatively scheduled for April 29th in East Calais and April 15th in Adamant (pending the Chair confirming
10. Review and approve minutes, warrants
 - a) The Road Commissioner paid for the truck registration personally; the Board decided to remind him that the Town credit card is available for this use. The Board reviewed the invoices and orders were processed for payment.
 - b) Sharon Winn Fannon moved and Clif Emmons seconded to approve the minutes of the 1/28/2019 meeting, with the changes as noted; the motion passed 4-0.
Sharon Winn Fannon moved and Denise Wheeler seconded to approve the minutes of the 2/11/2019 meeting, with the changes as noted; the motion passed 4-0.
Denise Wheeler moved and Sharon Winn Fannon seconded to approve the minutes of the 2/25/2019 meeting, with the changes as noted; the motion passed 4-0.
Denise Wheeler moved and Rose Pelchuck seconded to approve the full and condensed versions of the minutes of the 3/5/2019 Town Meeting, with the changes as noted; the motion passed 4-0.
Rose Pelchuck moved and Clif Emmons seconded to approve the minutes of the 3/11/2019 meeting, with the changes as noted; the motion passed 4-0.
11. Executive Session for Personnel Matters: Denise Wheeler made a motion to go into Executive Session at 9:13 pm per 1 V.S.A. subsection 313 (a) (3), personnel matters. The motion was

seconded, voted on and carried 4-0. The Board resumed Regular Session at 9:38 pm. The Chair had nothing to report publicly.

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

13. Adjournment: Sharon Winn Fannon made a motion to adjourn at 9:38 pm. The motion was seconded, voted on and carried 4-0.

Date: 3/26/2019 Respectfully Submitted, Katie Lane-Karnas, Recording Secretary
Approved by the Selectboard at the 5/28/2019 meeting

Click on the link below to view documents associated with this agenda:
<https://drive.google.com/open?id=10YCOFMAgPu4ziFfGSJbv1NPT4k1cTAK0>