

## Selectboard Special Meeting Minutes

*Monday, April 29, 2019 at 7pm at the East Calais Rec Center*

**Present:** Denise Wheeler (Chair), John Brabant (Vice Chair), Rose Pelchuck (Member), Sharon Winn Fannon (Member), Clif Emmons (Member), Katie Lane-Karnas (Recording Secretary), Toby Talbot (Operations Manager), Todd Eaton (VTRANS Local Roads Program), Wayne Ohlsson, Jan Ohlsson, Scott Bassage

**Absent:** Clif Emmons

1. Call to Order: Denise Wheeler called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.
2. Public Comment: None.
3. Review, Additions/Changes to Agenda: None.
4. Public Informational Meeting, Winter Roads Maintenance: The Chair announced that this meeting makes the third that the Selectboard has held around Calais inviting residents to share comments on winter roads maintenance. The Board noted that the previous meetings have raised concerns around the length of Calais road crew's route length (5-6 hours). Todd Eaton (VTRANS Local Roads Program) commented that VTRANS understands the challenge of even considering hiring an additional employee because dedicated drivers with CDLs are hard to find statewide. The group discussed the challenge of communicating with the public around the nuance and detail of all aspects of road maintenance. Todd Eaton stated that VTRANS encourages road foremen—a position which he noted is becoming more of an administrative job—to accept the necessity of working more toward education, both with the Selectboard and with the community.

Those present pointed out that the communication to the public is most effective coming from an expert who can speak to the science of road maintenance, rather than from town officials. The Board discussed that the Agency of Transportation, VTRANS, may be an effective messenger to the public on the factual realities of weather, road conditions, and maintenance techniques. Todd Eaton suggested considering a low-tech means of posting what the plow routes are; he added that his office creates "Tailgate Talks" for road crews and could possibly create an equivalent fact sheet on road science for the public. The group discussed that the pieces that can be affected are public education, people's sense of responsibility, and the length of the rodeos. The Board plans to meet with the road crew regarding the suggestions and information raised by these informational meetings.

Jan and Wayne Ohlsson stated that they came to support the Road Commissioner and Town crew. Scott Bassage commented that he feels the road crew is doing a great job that continues to improve each year, and praised the Road Commissioner's capacity for listening to residents.

Discussion turned to the possibility of shared sand piles for next winter. Todd Eaton commented that gradation of material being used requires collaborating towns come to agreement on construction specs, which can then increase the cost benefit (from buying a larger combined amount). Toby Talbot noted that Calais does a routine sieve analysis of materials to insure the best quality; Todd Eaton commented that Calais is ahead of the curve by measuring the gradation of the material being used; the group considered that education regarding sieve analysis and gravel quality could be useful for the public. The Chair reiterated with Todd Eaton that communication from the state at road foremen meetings could be very effective in supporting road commissioners in improved collaboration between towns. The Operations Manager added that the selectboards also need to be communicating with each other in order to promote collaboration across town lines on road maintenance; Todd Eaton spoke to the success of collaboration that has occurred in Addison County.

The group discussed overall raised expectations on the part of the public and the need for education throughout the seasons. Rose Pelchuck commented that the Roads Committee lost energy and direction a few years ago; we should convene a new group of people to build on the work of the previous committee. The Board brought up the idea about utilizing a contractor for plowing Class 3 dead-end roads with single properties; the Operations Manager pointed out that a one-ton would be needed (rather than a pickup truck); Todd Eaton added that the contractor would have to be bonded.

#### **Suggestions raised included:**

- The Agency of Transportation (VTRANS) may be an effective messenger to the public on the factual realities of weather, road conditions, and maintenance techniques. These could be used on Front Porch Forum and be posted in public places.
- The Board could hold a public meeting ahead of winter for the purpose of education around winter road science.
- A document on the Town website mapping each rodeo (plow route).
- Communication with the school bus company regarding winter equipment specifications.
- Ensuring communications between the trucks and the Operations Manager so he can post a behind-the-scenes problem, such as a mechanical issue, to Front Porch Forum.
- Communication from the state at road foremen meetings could be very effective in supporting road commissioners in improved collaboration (between towns).
- Selectboards focusing on communicating with each other in order to promote collaboration on the roads.
- Sharing a pile and location with a neighboring town (the Operations Manager will take the next steps on this).
- Ultimately package all the ideas to be implemented into a communications strategy.
- The Roads Committee needs to be reengaged; this citizen group can be part of the communication and education outreach efforts.
- Preparation ahead of Town Meeting '20 in terms of budgeting specific potential solutions.
- Utilizing contractor(s) for plowing Class 3 dead-end roads with single properties.
- VTRANS communication with high school students to make them aware of the need for CDL drivers in Vermont.

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

6. Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 8:00 pm.

Date: 4/30/2019 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=1BdWKzeTmXANnPZzh1m-NDVnWMtUMpL1O>