



TOWN OF CALAIS

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SELECTBOARD SPECIAL MEETING

December 4, 2023

APPROVED MINUTES

Attending: Anne Winchester, Anne Toolan, Donny Mucherino, Jordan Keyes, Jamie Moorby (by Zoom), Teegan Dykeman-Brown, Toby Talbot, Kari Bradley

Anne Winchester called the meeting to order at 6:05pm.

Toby shared the options for purchase of a roadside mower. The mower is one year old with 400+ hours, is in good condition, and is under warranty through June 2025. The asking price is \$130,000. It could be purchased outright using the equipment reserve fund and this year's equipment budget, or financed at various levels. Toby recommended a lease to purchase arrangement, making a \$50,000 down payment, planning for the first-year payment of approximately \$20,000 in the FY2025 budget and finance the balance. This will preserve the funds in the equipment reserve fund. The SB favored this approach, so Toby will have the documents prepared for the board's next meeting.

Kari shared an office staffing model which combines the Town Administrator with the Treasurer positions, with support from a parttime bookkeeper. The SB was supportive, so Kari will incorporate the model into the budget including impact on benefits expense.

Kari then shared thoughts about Highway Department staffing based on the possibility of hiring internally for the Foreman position. The SB discussed and Kari will continue to explore it in advance of the next meeting.

Anne Toolan pointed out that the Town has \$20,000 in unused grant funds from this year that we can roll into next year's budget, specifically to reduce net material expenses. She will show Kari where specifically that can affect the budget. Jordan would like to see more context on grant income and how work can be combined for efficiency.

The SB went through the general government budget section by section to identify potential savings. Agreed-upon changes and action items are listed below.

The SB would like to discuss mileage reimbursement in the future. It was suggested that that line be moved to the general office category, since the Selectboard does not account for much of that expense.

Anne Toolan will attend the Woodbury Fire Department meeting on December 5. The East Montpelier Fire Department meeting is on December 14, and multiple board members will attend.

Meeting adjourned at 8:20pm.

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Changes to be made to the next draft FY2025 budget:

- Reduce mowing expense to \$20,000 for annual lease payment
- Insert proposed office staffing changes including wages, benefits and taxes
- Decrease Selectboard training by \$500
- Reduce Zoning Administrator stipend to \$5,000 and Zoning expenses to \$500
- Eliminate Emergency Management stipend
- Reduce Conservation Fund to \$5,000
- Remove \$600 from Conservation Recording Secretary Wages
- Reduce Conservation Newsletter to \$750
- Eliminate Town Hall picture frames amount of \$300
- Reduce Town Hall Reserve fund to \$6,000

Follow-ups:

- Anne T. discuss with Kari continuation of grants and impact on budget
- Further discussion of Highway Department staffing
- Determine how much is in Planning Commission reserve fund
- Suggest to Emergency Management Team to explore utilizing the 3 stores in town for emergency food stores
- Ask Sandra if \$500 is sufficient for tax abatement and to move mileage reimbursement
- What comes under the Professional Fees expense line?

Prepared by Kari Bradley
Town Administrator