



# TOWN OF CALAIS

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## SELECTBOARD MEETING Monday, November 13, 2023

### APPROVED MINUTES

**Attending:** Anne Winchester, Jamie Moorby, Anne Toolan, Jordan Keyes, Barbara Butler, Kari Bradley, Teegan Dykeman-Brown, Scott Bassage, Charlotte Hanna, John McCullough, James Dailey, Reenie DeGeus, Albert Petrella, Paul Cerutti, Jay Copping, Toby Talbot, Bill Powell (Zoom), and Rose Pelchuck.

#### **Call to Order, Changes to the Agenda and Administrative Items**

- Anne Winchester called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm.
- Anne Winchester noted CVRPC Kent Hill Scoping grant, as written, will pay salaries for workers. An addendum will also allow payment for contractors if we use outside help. The Board voted to authorize Anne Winchester to sign the scoping grant addendum, and will ratify this vote at the next meeting.
- Approve October 23, 2023 Minutes – Jordan Keyes made a **motion** to approve the Minutes as written. The motion was seconded, voted on and carried 4-0.
- Sign Board Orders – The Selectboard reviewed the town invoices presented for payment during the meeting and signed the orders authorizing payment. Going forward, the Selectboard may view the Summary Report provided by Kari, as he will have reviewed them prior to the meeting. Kari will bring the invoices with him if any questions arise or if more detail is needed.
- Change Toby Talbot's title from Highway Grants Administrator to Interim Assistant Road Commissioner. Toby Talbot has agreed to help train the new Town Administrator, Kari Bradley, with Road Commissioner duties. Toby will assist Kari in acclimating to this new position, including administering highway grants, until Kari is ready to assume the position of Road Commissioner without Toby's guidance and help. Toby agreed to continue with his current stipend compensation, as there is not that much grant work this time of year. Jamie Moorby made a **motion** to appoint Toby Talbot as Interim Assistant Road Commissioner until such time as Kari Bradley, Town Administrator, assumes full duty as Road Commissioner. The motion was seconded, voted on and carried 4-0.

#### **Introduction of Kari Bradley, New Town Administrator**

Anne Winchester introduced Kari Bradley (*see details at the end of the Minutes*) as the first Calais Town Administrator. Kari noted he was happy to be here and contributing to this new role. We viewed an organizational chart of Calais Government indicating how the Town Administrator will be helping the Selectboard administer certain town functions and other town functions will continue to be managed by the Selectboard.

#### **Appoint a Calais Representative to Attend WVFD Meetings**

Anne Winchester said we should have someone attending WVFD meetings. The president of WVFD, James Dailey, was in attendance. James lives in Calais and said he is happy to come to any Selectboard meeting to keep the Selectboard well informed.

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Anne reiterated that someone from Calais should be attending their meetings, and she suggested appointing John McCullough to be the Calais Representative to the Woodbury Fire Department. John declined the appointment since the Planning Commission meets on the same night as WVFD.

Barbara Butler asked if WVFD sends out advance notice/agenda of each of their meetings, and James said 'yes'. She suggested that the Calais SB be added to their email distribution group, and James agreed. Therefore, SB members will know in advance when the WVFD Board is meeting, and any of them may attend any meeting at their convenience.

### Accept Resignation of Gabrielle Malina from Selectboard

Anne noted the Selectboard has accepted Gabrielle's resignation from the Selectboard. The Selectboard will appoint someone to fill the vacant seat until Town Meeting Day in March. Duly noted that the Town Administrator will assume the duties as ARPA Fund Administrator, as well as the duties of Road Commissioner previously assigned to Jamie Moorby and Anne Toolan.

**Public Comment – none.**

### FY'25 Budget Requests

- Kellogg Hubbard Library - Dan Groberg, Executive Director, and Jeff Dean, Trustee from Calais, reported it has been a busy year and thanked the town for the support. Over 500 people in town took out 13,000 items. Dan reported costs are going up from \$18 per capita last year to \$20 per capita for the next fiscal year (Montpelier pays \$55 per capita). The KHL had eight feet of water in their basement, causing \$1.3 to \$1.5 million in damage; flood insurance covers 1/3 of that. The library is fundraising and is asking for an increase of just under \$4,000.00.
- East Montpelier Fire Department - Albert Petrella, Fire Chief, and Jay Copping, President, came to present their proposed budget for next year. Albert explained the need to raise the annual stipend to \$12,000 from \$9,400 which it had been for many years. The Department has a process to determine the amount each firefighter receives based on the level of active participation in calls, drills, trainings and meetings. All officers get a stipend; they help with retention, he noted. Albert explained there are a lot of costs they can't control. For example, turnout gear is up to nearly \$5,000.00 for one set. Jay Copping spoke about ambulance staffing issues EMFD is contending with in order to provide quality service to the communities they serve. Jay Copping spoke about EMS pay and that it is not just locally but nationwide. The Selectboard was reminded about the Joint Selectboard Meeting coming up in December. The Selectboard expressed thanks for all you do. Albert Petrella thanked the town for keeping EMFD in the loop about closed roads during the flood.
- Woodbury Fire Department - Paul Cerutti, Fire Chief, and James Dailey, President, came to present their proposed budget for next year. It was discussed at length about having it as a separate article versus included in the town budget. Historically it was part of the budget and only has been a separate article for the past few years. The Town of Woodbury is paying for the new \$1.3 million fire station. Calais would pay part of the operating expenses. Paul Cerutti noted the Call Volume is way up, as it has been a bad summer. Their membership will vote to approve their budget in December. Social issues are driving the need for emergency services. The Selectboard thanked WFD for all their work. Paul agreed the town did a great job during the flooding to keep the fire department aware of what was happening. Albert Petrella said the EMFD budget is also not yet approved by the membership.

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### Receive Changes to Zoning Regulations from the Planning Commission

Jan Ohlsson, PC Chair, officially passed the newly revised Land Use & Development Regulations for the Town of Calais on to the Selectboard for further action. Jamie Morby made a **motion** to accept the latest version of the revised Zoning Regulations as presented. The motion was seconded, voted on and carried 4-0. Anne Winchester noted the Selectboard will be working on the budget for the next couple of meetings and suggested holding a public hearing in January.

### Presentation of Proposed FY'25 Highway Department Budget

Toby Talbot, Interim Assistant Road Commissioner, reviewed the proposed budget for the Highway Department and provided an update. Dana Huoppi did three weeks of roadside mowing this year with the rental mower. Toby reported we need to mow for four weeks twice a year. He noted that we could, instead, purchase a used mower, and make payments of \$28,000 in each of the next four years. Toby suggested leaving the \$28,000 in there and determining later whether to use it to rent or buy a mower. Toby reported gravel costs from \$12.00 to \$17.00 a yard; many town roads had been rebuilt this year so may be able to level fund gravel line item. Jordan Keyes suggested long term planning; space capacity for buying ahead and storing gravel. Toby said there isn't the space at the Town Garage to stockpile gravel and trucking is the biggest issue coming up. Toby spoke about hiring out a big tractor trailer to haul sand but then how do they unload on to the sand pile?

Grants – Toby said the Road Crew may be able to help with the Kent Hill French Mattress to lessen the costs or have a contractor do it for about \$30,333.00. Toby is working on a PACIF grant for a fire alarm dial-out system for the town office.

Toby discussed the Capital Reserve budget and the need to continue to grow that fund. Overall the highway department budget is up 8%. They are meeting with the sales representative from R.R. Charlebois to spec out the new truck. The cost to purchase the 7-year, extended warranty has gone up to \$17,000. Toby is weighing if we should put money aside instead of buying the extended warranty. The town should still stay on a 7-year replacement cycle for the trucks and heavy equipment. Jordan Keyes would like data on the cost of repairs for the excavator, graders and mower for each category. Jordan wants us to do better tracking on in-house repairs to determine overall costs. Toby did post the ad for part time temporary winter positions. Jordan suggested posting on Indeed.com.

### Administrative and Budget Items

- Potential for increasing liability insurance coverage from \$250,000 to \$10 million for an extra \$340 per year with PACIF. The Selectboard decided to keep it the same and not spend \$340 more per year.
- Our current medical insurance plan for employees in FY'25 is the BCBS Gold CDHP. Kari Bradley said the union contract says we have to have the Gold plan or equivalent so no changes to medical plan coverage. Kari reported we have four full time office staff and four full time road crew members.
- Discussion about Health Reimbursement Allocation for full-time employees. The Selectboard agreed to put an amount in the budget to fund the HRA.
- Add a New Authorized Signer for the town's Community Bank Checking Account. Jordan Keyes made a **motion** to approve Town Administrator, Kari Bradley, as an authorized signer on the Community Bank checking account. The motion was seconded, voted on and carried 4-0.

### Selectboard, Town Clerk and Administrative Reports

- Status of Shedd v. Calais - Jordan Keyes will circulate a document and each Selectboard member will give him their feedback on this ongoing legal matter.

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- Curtis Pond Dam Project - Jamie Moorby reported a potential design change was discussed at the last meeting. The D&K engineers came up with another idea; she received the official recommendation to reject both bids received 9/26/23 due to being substantially over budget. That will allow us to have conversations about a value-added engineering process that can achieve the same goal and keep within our budget. D&K feels optimistic they can put a plan to come in close to our budget. The attorney said once we reject the bids we are free to come up with different ideas with the contractor who has this new idea to save money. We don't have to go out to bid again. Jamie Moorby made a **motion** to accept the recommendation from DuBois & King that we reject both bids received for the Dam Project because both bids came in significantly over budget. Jamie, on behalf of the town, will work with D&K to initiate a conversation with one of the contractors who has indicated they may be able to bring the project into budget through a value-added engineering process. The motion was seconded, voted on and carried 4-0.
- IT Update - Jordan Keyes and Teegan Dykeman-Brown met with rbTech to discuss future IT needs. Having the server set up on premise is a little more intensive. Alternative server comes with its own costs, licensing and keeping stuff in the cloud. rbTech recommends to stay the course with our established server. Teegan is making sure access works for what they need to access, noting that it is not that easy to put some things on the website. Jordan said there are other platforms with workarounds out there.
- Town Clerk Report - Teegan Dykeman-Brown reported she has not been in the office for two weeks as she has been out with Covid. Barbara has been busy processing tax payment checks. John McCullough and Teegan are talking with Tim Maker about options for cooling the office.
- Town Administrator and Road Commissioner Report - Kari Bradley reported he is learning a lot. Barbara Butler asked if Singleton Road is open, and Anne Toolan reported 'yes'. Kari will make a post to announce that on FPF.

### Continuation of Meeting

Anne Winchester noted the Selectboard will continue this meeting to Tuesday, November 14, 2023 at 6:00 pm at the Town Office for the purpose of meeting in Executive session under 3 VSA Section 313 (a) (3), the appointment of a public officer and to discuss a personal matter. We will interview candidates for the Selectboard position vacated by Gabrielle Malina. The Selectboard invited Kari Bradley to join them.

Anne Winchester declared the meeting continued at 8:40 pm.

Rose Pelchuck  
Interim Recording Secretary

**Continuation of Meeting, Tuesday, November 14, 2023, at the Town Office**

Present: Anne W. Anne T. Jamie, Jordan, Kari and Selectboard candidates

Anne Winchester called the meeting back to order at 6:00 pm, continuing the meeting from the prior evening. The Board interviewed three Selectboard candidates individually: Jarrod Weiss, Rose Pelchuck, and Donny Mucherino.

Questions included:

- What is something you like and something you find frustrating about Calais?
- What opportunities do you see for improvement or impact in our town?
- What strengths would you bring to our team?
- What did you enjoy about previous board experience?

The SB briefly deliberated to make a selection. Jordan **moved**, Jamie seconded and the SB voted to appoint Donny Mucherino to serve in the vacant Selectboard seat until the next election. Appreciation was expressed for each of the candidates.

Jordan **moved**, Jamie seconded and the board voted to go into executive session under 3 VSA Section 313 (a) (1) (B) labor relations. Jordan moved, Jamie seconded and the board moved to leave executive session with nothing to report. The meeting adjourned by consensus at 7:44pm.

Continuation Notes Submitted by Kari Bradley

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*Front Porch Forum (partial post)*

**Calais Has a New Town Administrator**

**October 25, 2023**

**Anne Winchester** • Marshfield Rd, Plainfield

Kari Bradley, as most of you know, grew up in Calais and attended Calais Elementary School and U-32 High School. Following a few years in college, graduate school in Montana, and living and working in Montana for a few years, Kari and his wife, Gabrielle Malina, moved back to central Vermont where they raised three children and Kari took a job as General Manager of Hunger Mountain Coop in 2004, a position he held for 19 years.

At Hunger Mountain, Kari managed a \$29 M operating budget and led a team of 20 managers and over 180 employees. During his time there, he built the membership to over 10,000.

We are so excited that this talented individual has stepped up to help us manage our budget, establish policies and systems that have long needed updating, and take on a share of the increasingly large and complicated day to-day workload that comes with running a small town in the 2020's. We ask the community to join us in welcoming Kari who will start work on Monday.

There is an unhappy component to this as well. Kari's wife, Gabrielle, has been a strong and valued member of the Selectboard since last March. Sadly, she submitted her resignation from the board this morning, as remaining on the board would have put her in the conflicting position of managing her husband. Of course, she had recused herself from all executive sessions and discussions regarding hiring of the Town Administrator as soon as Kari became a candidate. We are very sad to lose her.