



TOWN OF CALAIS

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SELECTBOARD MEETING APPROVED MINUTES

Monday, December 8, 2025

6:00 pm Calais Town Hall

Selectboard Attendees: Barbara McAndrew, Christy Mihaly, Jamie Moorby, Jordan Keyes, Bill Davis

In-Person Attendees: Kari Bradley, Teegan Dykeman-Brown, Barbara Butler, Shana DuBois, Neal Maker, Reed Cherington, Darryl Garland (EMVFD), Tom McArdle, Diane Fitch, Thomas Parker (EMFD), Paul Cerutti, Retta Dunlap, John Brabant, Clarice Cutler, Doug Lilley, Daniel Keeney

Zoom Attendees: Reenie De Geus

Call Selectboard Meeting to Order, Mountain Tamers Request

Jordan called the meeting to order at 5:57 pm

- Possible Action: Approve request to use town highway sections: Tom McArdle presented an annual request for snowmobile travel along designated sections of town highway, all machines are registered and insured, and the list was submitted to the town.

Jamie made a motion to approve use of the town highways for Mountain Tamers snowmobiles. Motion was seconded, voted on and passed 5-0.

Fiscal Year 2027 Budget

- Budget requests from Woodbury Volunteer Fire Department and East Montpelier Fire Department: Darryl Garland from EMFD advised the largest change was splitting and shifting costs from fire budget to the ambulance budget; largest increases were due to dispatching and insurance; overall budget increase of 5% for ambulance service and 3% for fire.

Discussion continued surrounding specifics within the budget line items.

Reeta Dunlap from WVFD advised the budget went up about 5% and increasing the truck capital fund due to a new tanker truck on order.

Discussion continued surrounding specifics within the budget line items.

- Funding recommendations from Social Services Appropriations Advisory Committee: Barbara presented the budget line items for a total amount of \$31,649, which is slightly higher than FY26. The committee also recommended proposing no increase to the library's appropriation. The selectboard accepted the committee's recommendations.

Discussion continued surrounding the legality impacts for potential requests which will require additional research by the Town Clerk.

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- Additional information regarding highway grant projects: Kari advised the two grant projects in the draft budget, and he provided additional documents for the Luce Rd Culvert and the Marshfield Rd backstreet adding of pavement.
- Consider options to reduce draft municipal budget: Kari advised the draft budget shows a year over year increase of 10.9% with the big drivers being insurance increases, truck purchase, road projects, and more.

Discussion continued surrounding possible ways to reduce the budget increase with an aim to bring down the increase closer to a 4% increase. The selectboard approved paying for one year of financing for a new truck from the equipment reserve fund and reducing legal expenses by 25%.

- Next steps in budgeting process: Kari will make suggested changes to budget draft and bring updates to a following meeting.

Conservation Easement Contribution

- Possible Action: Approve request from Conservation Commission to contribute \$15,000 from the Conservation Fund toward the Fitch Farm Conservation Easement Project: Jordan provided context on the request and opportunity of the project with the Fitch Farm.

Neal provided details surrounding the Conservation Easement Project with the Vermont Land Trust.

Bill asked if the easements are permanent, and Clarice Cutler with VLT confirmed it is permanent.

Discussion continued surrounding the specifics of the Easement Project.

John Brabant stated this project is a huge gift to the town of Calais and is happy to see so much agricultural land protected.

Christy made a motion to authorize Conservation Commission contributing \$15,000 from the Conservation Fund toward the Fitch Farm Conservation Easement. Motion was seconded, voted on and passed 5-0.

Jordan advised the additional documentation provided by the Conservation Commission for the FY27 budget will be reviewed at a future meeting.

Public Comment: Up to 15 minutes; time will be divided so that everyone has equal time to speak:

John Brabant stated it would be helpful during budget season if the board packet could be posted on the website; John advised that Back Street is a very bumpy and rutty road and keeps folks going slow and the additional maintenance costs; he doesn't think it's the intention of road crew but now the plowing is causing the widening of the road; with the changes to Act 250 the town might need to account for legal fees for advocating.

Doug advised the bales of hay are on the sides of trees on his property and that the road crew is plowing too close to the trees.

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Administrative and Possible Action Items

- Accept resignation of Shana DuBois, Recording Secretary: The select board accepted resignation.
- Authorize Recording Secretary recruitment and hiring process: The select board authorized moving forward with the hiring process.
- Approve Minutes of November 24, 2025 Selectboard Meeting: Christy made a motion to approve the November 24, 2025 minutes. Motion was seconded, voted on and passed 4-0, with 1 abstention.
- Vote to Approve Board Orders; Sign Board Orders: Jamie made a motion to approve the Board Orders. Motion was seconded, voted on and passed 5-0.
- Approve purchase of extended warranty for new dump truck: Barbara made a motion to approve the purchase of an extended warranty out of the capital reserve fund. Motion was seconded, voted on and passed 5-0.
- Approve 2025 employee bonuses: Christy made a motion to approve 2025 employee bonuses as submitted by Town Administrator, \$500 to full time employees with \$250 to three other employees. Motion was seconded, voted on and passed 5-0.
- Abate de minimus property tax balances: Christy made a motion to approve abatement of property tax balances under \$5.00. Motion was seconded, voted on and passed 5-0.
- Allow Calais stores access to town seal to print on retail merchandise: Teegan provide context that the request is to sell merchandise for use of the town seal.

Christy advised she'll research and bring information back to the select board at a future meeting.

Office Staffing Model

- Discussion of job descriptions and task lists including office assistant position: Kari recommended that this be tabled until next meeting and the board accepted.

School District Ballots

- Possible Action: Approve request to allow WCUUSD to mail ballots to all active, not challenged registered Calais voters for potential January 2026 election: Daniel advised the district needs unanimous consent from all five towns to do this.

Discussion continued surrounding pros and cons overall.

Christy made a motion to approve mailing ballots to all active, not challenged registered voters. Motion was seconded, voted on and passed 5-0.

Mailing 2026 Town Meeting Ballots

- Possible Action: Approve mailing of 2026 Calais municipal Town Meeting ballots to all active, not challenged registered Calais voters: Teegan advised there is a cost associated with printing and mailing out of house versus in-house and made available at Town Meeting.

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Jamie made a motion to have Town Meeting ballots printed professionally and mailed to all active, not challenged registered Calais voters, and hand counted in the town office. Motion was seconded, voted on and passed 5-0.

Mailing Town Reports

- Discuss possible Town Meeting Warning item to consider changing requirement to mail Town Reports:
Teegan clarified this is to put up for a vote

Prepare for December 11 East Montpelier Fire Department Meeting: Kari confirmed the meeting details and which members of the Select board can attend.

Draft 2026 Selectboard Calendar Review: Discussion on some of the dates to ensure moving versus skipping meetings.

Reports

- Town Clerk: Teegan advised most of the items were discussed in the course of the meeting; confirmed the plaque for Eva arrived and will be hung in the office; starting to work on Town Report items.
- Town Administrator: Kari advised the County Rd shoulder work invoice received was significantly higher than initial proposed cost from Pike and Norm advised could reduce some but is still over \$7675 over, Kari will go back to Norm with Pike; the issue with the straw bales in town right of way near Doug Lilley's property and the road crew's request for them to be moved; Kari confirmed the road crew has been working intense hours with the winter storms; getting ready to pay Selectboard stipends and confirmed those will be paid based on the Select board year (March-February); confirmed next agenda items.

Adjournment

Jordan declared the meeting adjourned 8:42 pm.

Shana DuBois
Recording Secretary