



TOWN OF CALAIS

3120 Pekin Brook Road
East Calais, Vermont 05650
802-456-8720
calaisvermont.gov

SELECTBOARD MEETING

June 26, 2023

MINUTES APPROVED 7/24/23

Attending: Jamie Moorby, Gabrielle Malina, Anne Winchester (via speaker-phone), Anne Toolan, Jordan Keyes, Barbara Butler, Christian Meyer, Bill Davis, Patrick O'Donnell, Reed Cherington, Steve Owens, John McCullough, Donna Fitch, Tom Blachly, Toby Talbot, Walter Opuscynski, Scott Bassage, Kristin Schultz, Joshua Schultz and Rose Pelchuck.

The meeting was called to Order at 6:00 pm by Gabrielle Malina, Selectboard Vice Chair.

Changes to the Agenda and Administrative Business as follows:

- Approval of Meeting Minutes – The Selectboard reviewed the June 12th Minutes and the June 13th site visit to Leonard Road and follow up meeting Minutes. Jordan Keyes made a **motion** to approve both sets of Minutes as written. The motion was seconded, voted on and carried 5-0.
- Central Vermont Humane Society Annual Contract - The Selectboard reviewed the contract for boarding stray dogs and cats, including the fee schedule for the 2023-2024 term. Jordan Keyes made a **motion** to approve the contract and authorize Gabrielle Malina to sign it. The motion was seconded, voted on and carried 5-0.
- Town Invoices and Sign Orders – The Selectboard reviewed the town invoices presented for payment during the meeting and signed the orders authorizing payment.

Public Comment

- Reed Cherington submitted a letter to the Selectboard about mowing on the bank along Kent Hill Road to the west of the Town Hall, on town property. Reed has been trimming several times a year with a handheld trimmer but can no longer do so. Ed Rowell mows the rest of the Town Hall property but it's too steep for his equipment. Reed requests that the Road Commissioners request that the town Road Crew mow that bank twice a year. Anne Toolan responded by saying our roadside mower is out for repairs, but the Road Crew can mow it by hand. Anne Toolan will ask them to put it in their rotation. Reed noted it hasn't been mowed yet this year.
- Jamie Moorby reported public comment from Andrew Nemethy requesting the town NOT mow on Sparrow Road. The road leads to only two houses and Andrew maintains and mows the fields right up to the roadside. He prefers to do it himself to reduce invasives and encourage pollinator plants. Anne Toolan thinks it is fine for them to skip mowing it and will notify the Road Crew. Jordan Keyes noted the town needs to have a wider discussion, at another time, around policies and public requests regarding roadside mowing (or mowing exclusion areas) on specific road segments.
- Reed Cherington asked for confirmation that the utility poles WEC is installing along Leonard Road will be clearly off to the side of the road and not blocking the right of way in case the road becomes more used in the future. Anne Toolan confirmed that was the case and said we will be discussing the WEC ROW request later in the meeting.
- Bill Davis reports the light in the Town Hall parking lot is on all night every night and there are lots more bugs on that side of the building. Donna Fitch reports that John McCullough has already called WEC and they are working on a solution. The porch light is set on a motion sensor.

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CVRPC New Executive Director

Christian Meyer is the new Executive Director of the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission. Meyer laid out details about CVRPC and some of their programs that the town can utilize. They work on transportation, flood and storm-water management, land use, regional planning, ongoing legislation, economic planning, help building municipal plans, educational programs, local hazard mitigation plans, grant writing, can help administer grants and related programs, GIS mapping services and help set up shared services between towns. They helped with the creation of the North Calais Village district designation, are helping on the Kent Hill Road culvert project, currently working on the storm water management project near the East Calais Post Office. He said there are other areas in town that they could help with storm-water management plans. Soon they'll be working on new FEMA maps and how they impact Calais Zoning (in 2025). This summer CVRPC will be doing a new bridge and culvert inventory for Calais as well as some traffic studies.

Gabrielle Malina asked about examples of planned services between two towns and how that would work. Some examples are shared assessors, shared zoning administrators, etc. The person would be hired by CVRPC and then hired out certain hours to different towns. These shared positions haven't been implemented in central Vermont, but have been in other parts of the state.

CV Fiber Update

David Healy, Calais representative on the CV Fiber Board, was unable to attend the meeting. The CV Fiber update will be at a subsequent meeting. There are two upcoming workshops scheduled that are open to the public on July 18th and July 27th at 5:30 pm at the Town Hall. These meetings will provide an overview of CV Fiber progress to bring high-speed internet to town; all the details will be posted soon on Front Porch Forum.

Highway Department and Road Issues

Anne Toolan gave a brief report on the progress made by the Road Crew on Leonard Road. Anne reported things are stable but the bulk of the work has been completed for this phase. Once construction is complete and large heavy truck traffic lessens, the Road Crew will go back and finish restoration of the area. Orr will be billed for this first phase of work soon. Jordan Keyes asked if they've done a silt fence or other mitigation to stop down-slope erosion? Anne Toolan said no silt fence but other measures were taken and seem to be working well.

Barbara Butler asked about the next steps. Has Orr seen this bill? Anne Toolan replied no. Jordan Keyes recommends showing him the itemized bill and discussing with him if he'd rather be billed incrementally or all at the end. Anne Toolan will discuss the bill and payment plans with Orr and this will be discussed at the next Selectboard meeting to devise a formal payment plan.

Larry Orr Application for a New Curb Cut on Leonard Road

Jordan Keyes suggests that a road crew member goes over the Curb Cut conditions with Orr to ensure that bank stabilization on both sides of the curb cut are adequate and that the culvert under the road at that spot is of an adequate size, and decide if he is going to do the work himself or have the road crew assist with it. This Curb Cut Permit application will be discussed and get finalized at the next meeting once the road crew has met with Orr.

WEC Town Right-of-Way Permit on George Road and Leonard Road

Both the Calais Road Crew and Calais Tree Warden have reviewed the application for placement of utility polls on George Road and Leonard Road and made comments. Conditions proposed from Neal Maker, Calais Tree Warden are as follows:

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That WEC take care not to spread invasive honeysuckles. There are a number of honeysuckles growing under the proposed line, between the existing pole to the east and the proposed pole L1. Machinery should be kept away from these when possible, since seeds or roots can be carried by machinery to new areas.

WEC will remove any larger ash trees in the ROW, even if they don't need to be removed for wire clearance. Specifically, there are three, larger, white ash trees joined at the base, in the southern R-O-W on George Road between the existing pole and L1, which probably don't need to be removed, but which will pose a hazard to the lines and the road when emerald ash borers kill them.

Jordan Keyes made a **motion** to approve the WEC Town ROW permit with conditions prescribed by the Tree Warden noted above and to authorize Gabrielle Malina to sign it. The motion was seconded, voted on and carried 5-0.

Beaver Control on Kent Hill Road

Toby Talbot reported beavers have been busy rebuilding their dams on Kent Hill Road. Beaver baffles won't work in this area since the water level is too low. Anne Toolan spoke to the Game Warden. Future culvert blocking exclusion fencing can be installed. A trapper will be contacted. Anne Winchester will circle back with the landowner and tell them trapping is the next step. Jordan Keyes would like to have some more info on this. Toby will provide some beaver policies that other towns have taken.

Calais Trails Committee

Trails Committee Chair, Tom Blachly, took over from Reed Cherington, to lead the 10-member committee that administers a 17-mile network of trails in Calais. Landowners are welcome to contact Tom if they want to have a new trail developed on their property. There is an annual landowner permission form that must be completed and landowners have every right to back out. Tom Blachly provided a map of the trails network to the Selectboard. Gabrielle Malina inquired about e-bikes on the trails. Tom said landowners decide the use of the trail on their property that is addressed with signage; trail descriptions are on the town's website. Thanks for this incredible trails network! Reed Cherington noted East Montpelier owns their town trails and have raised large sums of money. Reed said that it is something to aspire to.

Tom Blachly spoke about the Chapin Forest area, which is quite beautiful, although years ago some landowners had concerns. It would be interesting to revisit it. Eric Sorenson saw some rare plants there. Tom noted part of Chapin Road is a Class 3 road, then turns to a Class 4 road and has some major washout. In the future, it would be nice to have a trail on the Class 4 portion that connects it down to Pekin Brook Road.

Jordan Keyes suggested that the Trails Committee put together a usage and maintenance plan for the whole trail network; something that more broadly defines what the trails could be used for. It would be a good progression to get thoughts around beneficial conversations to say how these trails should be used.

Calais Trails Committee Appointments

Jordan Keyes made a **motion** to appoint Patrick O'Donnell to the Trails Committee for a 3-year term expiring 2026 and to reappoint Toni Kaeding and Denise Wilder for 3-year terms expiring in 2026. These motions were seconded, voted on and carried 5-0.

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Declaration of Inclusion

Steve Owens came before the Selectboard to propose that the Town of Calais adopt the following Declaration of Inclusion, which has been adopted by 112 other Vermont towns. See the website at <https://vtdeclarationofinclusion.org/> for the full details. Steve Owens is willing to initiate the process. Calais is the only town in our five-town school district that hasn't signed on to this. This website has steps to go through. Jamie Moorby is strongly in favor of adopting this and that we keep talking about it and seeking ways to reinforce the message that Vermont is a safe and welcoming place for all. Jordan Keyes made a **motion** to adopt this Declaration of Inclusion as presented and as a first step have it printed and displayed in the Calais Town Office. The motion was seconded, voted on and carried 5-0.

The Town of Calais condemns racism and welcomes all persons, regardless of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, gender identity or expression, age, disability, or socioeconomic status, and wants everyone to feel safe and welcome in our community. As a town, we formally condemn all discrimination in all of its forms, commit to fair and equal treatment of everyone in our community, and will strive to ensure all of our actions, policies, and operating procedures reflect this commitment.

Curtis Pond Raft Bank Account

The town auditor recommends that the Treasurer open an account specifically to receive funds being raised privately to go toward the purchase of a new raft at the Curtis Pond swim area. (Authorized by the Selectboard on June 12, 2023.) Jordan Keyes made a **motion** to authorize the Treasurer to open a Swim Program bank account for the purpose of receiving contributions raised by a "Go Fund Me" campaign to pay for a new raft. This will be managed by the Swim Program Committee and the bank account will be closed upon the successful completion of this fundraiser. The motion was seconded, voted on and carried 5-0.

Town-wide Public Vote on 2023 Proposed Zoning Amendments

On June 12, 2023 the Selectboard approved some tentative dates in July for a town wide vote on the proposed changes to the Zoning Regulations. Jamie Moorby made a **motion** to approve August 1, 2023 for a town wide vote and rescind the other dates as approved at the June 12th meeting and to sign the Warning. The motion was seconded, voted and carried 5-0. The Selectboard has to have another public hearing that will likely be held before a regular Selectboard meeting in July.

Lister Salary

The previous Selectboard increased the budget line item for Listers from \$8,000 in FY'23 to \$12,000 in FY'24 in order to increase the hourly rate. John McCullough reported that state law now requires annual certification of listers but allows three years to comply. Jamie Moorby made a **motion** to increase the hourly pay rate for the Listers to \$22.00 per hour effective July 1, 2023. The motion was seconded, voted on and carried 5-0.

Discussion About Personnel Structure of Town Staff

Donna Fitch has been collecting information about current jobs done by volunteers and options Calais might want to consider for engaging more professional staff to help with the work. The Treasurer Hiring Committee has been meeting and Minutes are being taken. Marianne Miller offered some changes to the Treasurer's job description.

Background checks in many areas will be included in the job description and they have worked on the ad and where to advertise the position. Donna will send the revised job description to the Selectboard. The Selectboard prefers the committee comes back with a salary number and hold off on advertising.

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Working Group – Donna Fitch provided a Power Point presentation that showed the current structure of Calais Town Government along with different structures. One scenario had a town manager which is a statutory position, with this scenario we would no longer have an operations manager. Donna will add the Selectboard Administrator to the current town organization chart. Another scenario is with a Town Administrator that has no independent authority as the town manager does. Anne Toolan was concerned about a Road Foreman having to do grants. Donna said the town manager or town administrator would be doing the grant applications and tracking. The Committee is committed to making sure the jobs are challenging, meaningful and well thought out. Barbara Butler spoke about the physical space in the town office. Union considerations about whether the road foreman can or cannot be in the union were mentioned.

Donna suggested having a town forum to generate public ideas about restructuring town government. Barbara Butler suggests having a handout/fact sheet to define the positions. Jordan Keyes wondered about work loads and functions of the positions. Anne Winchester will put this on the next agenda and invite former Selectboard members.

Secret Garden Meeting at Maple Corner Community Center

Jamie Moorby and Gabrielle Malina attended a meeting at Maple Corner Community Center hosted by Carlo Rovetto, owner of the Secret Garden property, and attended by neighbors, both curious and concerned. Josh and Kristin Schultz voiced concerns about this entity holding a festival-like event in Calais without any permits. Josh questioned a curb cut going up there; concern about police and emergency vehicle access; looks like some work has been done around there. Neighbors are concerned and as Josh reads the zoning regulations, this seems like it is a commercial music venue. The property is in the Resource Recreation District off Woodbury Mountain Road. Josh stated their family's concern along with many neighbors and he thinks this is an important town issue; trying to do whatever we can to protect this part of our community; there are a lot of concerned folks. Anne Toolan noted drug use has spread. The Schulz's expressed concerns about noise and impaired driving. The events are being marketed as BYOB to a party deep in the woods. Gabrielle Malina doesn't know what the next steps are going to be. John McCullough explained that Calais is NOT a 10-acre town. Jordan Keyes asked who will reach out to Natural Resource Board and John McCullough will look into this. The property owner, Carlo Rovetto, bought the land from Andy Shepard and has five years to pay for it. Andy Shepard is considered a co-owner of the land. Jamie Moorby suggested someone reach out to Carlo.

Highway Department and Roads

- **Pile of Abandoned Tires at Town Garage** - Anne Toolan spoke about abandoned tires around town and the used tire pile that had accumulated for years at the town garage. The Road Crew has been cleaning up around the town garage and properly disposed of the huge pile of tires (paid for out of the highway budget). Jamie Moorby would like to find a long term solution to tire collecting on Green Up Day and a way to respond to situations of finding abandoned tires along the roadside throughout the year. Jamie reported she played phone tag with the State Green Up Day Coordinator to find what the Green Up Day grant will pay for so we know for the future. Barbara Butler asked how other towns handle the tire disposal problem. Gabrielle said Jamie will report back after from hearing from the State Green Up Day Coordinator.
- **Proposal for “No Parking Signs”** on west side of County Road in Maple Corner village and “warning signs” at Curtis Pond swim area - Jamie Moorby noted the shortage of parking in Maple Corner for events for many years. Historically, the people using the Community Center were responsible for putting out traffic cones on one side of the road. Barbara Butler noted it is dangerous to collect the cones late at night. The Board of the Maple Corner Store and Community Center asked Jamie Moorby to have the town permanently install No Parking Signs on West County Road from the store parking lot to Worcester Road.

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- And also for the first 100 feet of the Worcester Road. The area neighbors have been notified. Jordan Keyes made a **motion** to have Jamie Moorby investigate the placement of the No Parking Signs and report back to the Selectboard with the cost. The motion was seconded, voted on and carried 5-0.
- **2023 Calais Highway Map** - Barbara Butler showed a new town map to the Selectboard and will have copies printed.
- **Town Road Sign Inventory** – The Selectboard briefly reviewed the CVRPC 2013 list of road signs that describes the type of sign, exact location, and when it was last inspected. The inventory is up for a review. Anne Toolan suggested asking some volunteers to go around to inspect and document the signs. Perhaps it can be divided into sections of town. Gabrielle Malina left it to the Road Commissioners to devise a plan for inspections this summer 2023.

Selectboard Reports

- **Curtis Pond Dam Project** - Jamie Moorby and Gabrielle Malina noted the railing being installed at the Calais Swim Area is ADA compliant.
- **Status of Bond Vote** – Jamie Moorby spoke to Thomas Meloni, Esq. and he is confident that the Town did things correctly in preparation for taking the bond vote to replace the Curtis Pond Dam and that he would feel comfortable defending the vote. Jamie Moorby read the details about the resolution to certify the bond vote taken at Town Meeting March 7, 2023.
- **Shared Documents and Emails** - Jordan Keyes had nothing to report.
- **Status of Shedd v. Calais** - Anne Toolan and Jordan Keyes had nothing to report.
- **Collective Bargaining** - Jamie Moorby, Anne Toolan, Jordan Keyes - The process is coming along; nothing to publicly report.

Jordan Keyes declared the meeting adjourned at 9:55 pm.

Rose Pelchuck
Interim Recording Secretary