



TOWN OF CALAIS

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SELECTBOARD MEETING Monday, September 11, 2023

Minutes APPROVED September 25, 2023

Attending: Anne Winchester, Jamie Moorby, Gabrielle Malina, Anne Toolan, Barbara Butler, Teegan Dykeman-Brown, Scott Bassage, Donna Fitch, Toby Talbot, Reed Cherington, Jarrod Weiss, Charlotte Hanna and Rose Pelchuck.

The meeting was called to order at 6:01 pm by Anne Winchester, Selectboard Chair. Anne acknowledged the passing of Bill Russell, longtime Calais resident and community leader. Bill was a former School Board Chair, Town Moderator for many years, a former Trustee of Public Funds, on the Trails Committee, and more. He will be missed.

Changes to the Agenda and Administrative Business as follows:

- Anne Winchester announced the successful audit results of the Vermont Community Development program (VCDP) grant for the East Calais Community Trust (ECCT) project. ECCT scored the highest possible score on 17 out of 17 scores, and everything was completed to the satisfaction of the VCDP staff.
- Donna Fitch noted that the Town Hall shutters have finally been installed.
- Anne Winchester asked if Selectboard members had any questions regarding the August Financial Report submitted by the Town Treasurer. She noted that in only the first two months of the new fiscal year, the Town's legal expenses have already reached half of the year's budgeted amount.

Approval of August 28, 2023 Minutes – Gabrielle Malina 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.

WEC Application Permit to Work in Town Right-of-Way – The Selectboard reviewed the application from WEC to work in the ROW for cutting/trimming trees on Bliss Road in order to install utility poles for Adrienne Lutschg. Gabrielle Malina made a **motion** to approve the permit as requested. The motion was seconded, voted on and carried 4-0.

Warning for Selectboard Special Meeting – Anne Winchester recommended the Selectboard accept the draft Warning for a Special Meeting to be held on Tuesday, Sept. 26, 2023 at 3:00 pm to open the bids for the Curtis Pond Dam reconstruction project. The Selectboard agreed to post the Warning as written.

continued

Public Comment - Barbara Butler asked the Selectboard to consider holding a "Meet and Greet" during the weekend of the Calais Fall Foliage Festival (FFF). Given the new Selectboard and the new Town Clerk were elected only six months ago, she thought it would be a great opportunity for the public to come meet Selectboard members and the Town Clerk. The Selectboard members agreed, as did the Town Clerk. Barbara will work offline with FFF Coordinator Jamie Moorby to find the best time.

Presentation on Highway Capital Equipment – Anne Winchester asked Toby Talbot to provide insight about the town's purchase of capital equipment. Toby explained that the usual procedure for buying trucks is to purchase them with a 7-year extended warranty, and to replace the truck near the end of the 7-year life of the truck. However, the Town currently has a truck whose 7-year warranty expires this month, and the previous Selectboard made no arrangement to replace that truck before the end of the 7-year warranty. A new truck will probably take a year and a half to get delivered, so Toby recommends the Selectboard consider ordering a new truck now. Current price for a 10-wheeler dump truck is \$277,475 that includes cab, chassis and snowplow equipment package. First payment if it arrives in March 2025 would be a year later in FY'26. There will probably be a trade-in value of approximately \$60,000 to \$70,000, but that is only an estimate. There is currently \$120,000 in the heavy equipment fund and \$72,000 in the current budget under Highway Capital Equipment fund that will not be needed this year. The Selectboard thanked Toby for this information and agreed to have this on the next meeting agenda.

FEMA Update - Toby Talbot gave a brief FEMA update, reporting that all is going well. He has drafted FEMA compliant contracts that must be drawn up for each and every independent contractor that has helped with flood recovery. Toby needs the start date of each individual contractor, which Anne Toolan will provide. Gabrielle Malina made a **motion** to authorize Road Commissioner, Anne Toolan, to sign each contract on behalf of the Selectboard. The motion was seconded, voted on and carried 4-0.

Report from Hiring Committee

- Donna Fitch provided an update on the Treasurer recruitment. The committee has two semi-finalists. With second interviews scheduled for Friday of this week, they may pare that down to one finalist. The Selectboard discussed meeting in executive session to interview potential candidate(s). Donna got advice from VLCT as to whether it is possible to meld the Treasurer and Delinquent Tax Collector job descriptions. The answer is "no", since the Treasurer's duties are outlined in state statute. One person can do both positions, as has been the case in Calais.
- The Selectboard reviewed a revised job description for Town Administrator. They agreed to add language about liaison with certain people and professional organizations for Town Administrators. Barbara Butler felt the job description should include collaborating with Town Office staff, suggested adding proficient with negotiating contracts, responsible for vendor relations, and have the ability to diagnose and troubleshoot basic IT issues. It was discussed where a Town Administrator will be physically located. Anne Winchester sees this person and position evolving with the person hired to help us figure out how this is going to work. Donna spoke about advertising the position. It was agreed the application deadline will be Sept. 30.
- Review of Road Foreman job description – Jamie Moorby offered a couple edits. Vermont Local Roads network is a place to advertise the opening. The Selectboard set a September 30th deadline for applications. The Selectboard authorized the hiring committee to advertise for the Road Foreman and Road Crew member.

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Agreement with Friends of the Calais Town Hall – Clif Emmons attended via speakerphone to present changes to the Agreement between the Friends of the Calais Town Hall and the Town. The Town Hall usage policy details what can and cannot occur at the Town Hall. One thing that hasn't come up is usage by quasi-municipal groups that are not officially appointed by the Selectboard. Clif spoke about insurance coverage in different instances and if something would be covered or not. User agreement would be an understanding entered into that allows an entity to be covered by the insurance policy. Clif envisions having someone to do the cleaning and fundraisers at least once a year with some revenue returned to the Town towards maintenance of the building. Jamie Moorby made a **motion** to accept and sign the 2023 Agreement with Friends of the Calais Town Hall. The motion was seconded, voted on and carried 4-0.

FY'25 Budget Discussion – Anne Winchester reported budget work for the next fiscal year will take place at every meeting this fall with the goal to have the final numbers in by November 27th and completely done by December 11th (with a little wiggle room so not to bump up against the holiday season). Anne Winchester divided up the different subsections listed in the Town Report and assigned which Selectboard member would work on each section with the respective Committees/Commissions regarding their budget needs. In advance, Anne Winchester will send a letter to the committees and ask them to prepare budget numbers to be included in the next budget.

Charlotte Hanna suggested thinking more broadly to think about where the Town is going; try to get budget priorities for the future noting that it is important to think beyond next year. Jamie Moorby said we need numbers for next year's budget, but encourage committees to think what's coming up down the line. Gabrielle Malina would like to be paying closer attention to fiscal responsibilities for the Town. Anne Winchester wants to have a dialogue with the committees and commission and make sure they are all working towards the same goals.

Selectboard Reports

- FEMA - Gabrielle Malina reported our FEMA Team had a successful meeting with Michelle Miller and Toby Talbot presented our completed projects so far. FEMA can begin working on those project reimbursements. A number of people have to review the information submitted. Gabrielle noted Michelle is the Town's advocate and other people make the final decision. Volunteers' time sheets are very important, since the Town gets paid for that, too. Michelle has ten other towns that she is responsible for, and she had high praise for Toby as our Town FEMA Coordinator.
- Highway Department and Roads - Anne Toolan reported the Town Garage needs a dedicated generator and reported the site was being assessed on 10/17/23. Anne Toolan reported the state requested the town reduce the number of segments for road work in their MRGP grant to between 6-8. All road segments will need to be reassessed in MRGP ARGIS app by April 2024. Anne Toolan made a **motion** to extend the \$200.00 per month stipend for flood response as emergency road crew coordinator to Tyler Stecker on a month by month basis. Gabrielle requested it be until such time as the FEMA flood recovery work is completed. The motion was seconded, voted on and carried 4-0.
- FEMA Compliant Contracts need to be delivered to, signed by contractors, returned and filed with the Town. Toby Talbot has drawn up a contract for each road construction contractor hired during the flood and will get those contracts out to them. This is a requirement from FEMA.
- Curtis Pond Dam - Jamie Moorby and Gabrielle Malina had a site visit at the dam with DuBois & King Engineers. Five reputable firms were represented to review the RFP for the dam renovation project. Lots of technical discussion with the engineers was heard. The Town is not bound to take the lowest bid. All the legal documents are in the works. Gabrielle noted that Don Heise was there, as they will be very impacted by this project. Don's questions were answered.

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- IT Needs – none.
- Status of Shedd v. Calais - Anne Toolan made a motion to go into Executive Session at 8:29 pm under 1 VSA Section 313 (a) (E) pending or probable civil litigation to which the public body is a party. The motion was seconded, voted on and carried 4-0. Anne Toolan made a **motion** to come out of Executive Session at 8:45 pm. The motion was seconded, voted on and carried 4-0. The Selectboard had nothing to publicly report.

Anne Winchester declared the meeting adjourned at 8:46 pm.

Rose Pelchuck
Interim Recording Secretary