

Calais Town Selectboard Meeting
Monday, May 9, 2016
Unapproved

Present: Selectboard Members Denise Wheeler, Toby Talbot, Rose Pelchuk, John Brabant (arrived at 7:09), Scott Bassage was absent. Others Present: Alfred Larrabee, Road Commissioner; Donna Fitch, Clerk & Treasurer; Katie Lane-Karnas, Reed Cherington, Tom Blachly, Jamie Moorby, Ginny Sassaman, Josh Sayers, Emily Potter, Lucy Sayers, Marilyn Bush, Gail England, Karin McNeill.

Ms. Wheeler called the meeting to order at 7:05.

Appointments

Trails Committee, Tom Blachly

Ms. Wheeler moved to appoint Tom Blachly to Trails Committee, 2 year term, expires in 2018. Seconded by Toby Talbot, this motion carried unanimously

Swim Committee, Katie Lane-Karnas & Mark Whitman

Ms. Wheeler moved to appoint Katie Lane-Karnas and Mark Whitman to Swim Committee, each serving a one-year term. Seconded by Toby Talbot, this motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Cherington clarified that Trails Committee positions are for three years and the individual term expiration dates as printed in the FY2015 town report are accurate. Ms. Pelchuck will revise the Appointed Positions list.

Approve Minutes

Toby Talbot moved to approve the minutes of April 25, 2016. Seconded by Rose Pelchuck, this motion carried. John Brabant abstained from the vote.

Road Commissioner Update

Alfred Larrabee reported the recent rain has made for extra road work. He reported that winter sand has been put up; the salt shed is full; plows are off the trucks. The road crew is ready for summer projects which will include Mirror Lake Road with work to be started this week and expected to take three days. For a couple of hours traffic will not be able to pass because culverts will be replaced. This is a dead end road. The residents on that road will be informed of the road closure.

Mr. Larrabee shared information about the North Calais Bridge repairs. Ms. Wheeler requested to have this item on a future agenda with specific/ detailed information to share with the board. Mr. Larrabee will information to either Donna Fitch or Toby Talbot to pass on to the board. Mr. Larrabee finished the computer course; he plans to take another in the future; this particular course did not live up to his expectations. Ms. Wheeler asked about planned vacations. Mr. Larrabee shared some staffing issues, especially around a part-time, substitute position. Mr. Larrabee reported that the "spare" truck is having engine issues which he is still trying to diagnose. The truck is intended to be traded in next month.

Operations Manager Update

Ms. Wheeler reported the meeting regarding improvement to Back Street (held at 5:30 pm that evening in E. Calais) had gone well, with input from many. There were 14 attendees plus the road commissioner and three selectboard members. Ms. Wheeler encouraged those present to create an ad hoc group to discuss some of the issues that arose. Some issues were less related to the actual paving and more related to issues such as speeding and safety.

After the 5:30 pm meeting, John Brabant met with residents on Back Street. He supports having an ad hoc committee, e.g., "East Calais Village Committee," to address some of the issues. Mr. Brabant said the Vermont Agency of Transportation (VTrans) needs to take notice and perform a safety study of the area. Some discussion followed around the issue of traffic in the village. A few years ago, a report was done by VTrans about the intersection of Rt. 14 and Lightening Ridge Road and possibly E. Calais village. Ms. Pelchuck will search past selectboard minutes for information. Mr. Talbot said there seems to be consensus among those attending the meeting that an "apron" onto Rte 14 from Back Street would be beneficial. Ms. Wheeler had assured those present that no decision will be made at tonight's meeting and encouraged an ad hoc group to be formed. She would attend meetings, barring schedule conflicts.

A structures grant has been submitted for the North Calais wall. Toby and Alfred will be meeting on site with Shauna Clifford, AOT District 7 Advisor.

ROW Permit Request

Mohamed Ben Ali submitted a right-of-way (ROW) request for a fence around the edge of his property which would be in the town's ROW. Mr. Talbot had visited the site. The board considered the request, but decided more information was needed. Ms. Fitch will contact Mr. Ben Ali and/or his contractor and/or the zoning administrator to ask that the fence area be staked and the type and height of fence be detailed. Mr. Larrabee was in agreement that more information was needed. Mr. Talbot stated that anything in the ROW gets in the way of plowing. The owners need to be aware that anything that happens to the fence due to town road work (e.g., plowing) would not be the town's liability. (This is stated on the ROW permit form.) The ROW request will be put on the May 23rd meeting agenda.

Sale of Town Owned Property

An email from VT League of Cities and Towns (VLCT) was reviewed which presented an opinion about whether a town can sell town-owned property acquired at tax sale for a profit after the one-year redemption period. Since the town will not be making a profit from the potential sale of 40 Fellows Road, this information is no longer pertinent. Ms. Wheeler moved to sell the property owned by the town at 40 Fellows Road for \$16,895.17, the amount that the town has into the property which includes taxes, penalties, legal fees and expenses. Seconded by Toby Talbot, this motion carried unanimously.

Trails Committee Expenditure

Reed Cherington asked the selectboard to approve \$500 for trail improvements that are currently underway. Toby Talbot moved to approve the Trails Committee request for \$500. Seconded by John Brabant, this motion carried unanimously. Mr. Cherington asked for clarification: Does the Trails Committee have to ask board approval to spend money that has been donated? The board does not believe it has to approve the spending, but it does have to be accounted for in the budget.

Proposed Park and Ride Resolution

The Calais Energy Group, represented by Ginny Sassaman, presented a “Resolution to Place Park-and-Ride Lots in East and West Calais.” Ms. Sassaman spoke to the board about an effort to get a bus route into the east side of Calais. The first step would be to designate a park and ride location. In order to qualify for VTrans state grant money, the land must be either town land, or leased by the town, and be at least big enough for ten cars. The site needs to be maintained by the town (e.g., plowing and surface). The recreation field in East Calais would be a good site, but they have not had formal discussion yet around that space. Ms. Sassaman spoke about some of the benefits of having public transportation in the area and asked for the selectboard to express support for the concept. Discussion followed about possible sites.

Ms. Wheeler expressed concern around committing to the dollar amount contained within the resolution and also wondered about the town’s liability.

Mr. Talbot moved to adopt the resolution, minus the reference to \$1,000. Seconded by Mr. Brabant. Discussion: Ms. Wheeler asked Mr. Larrabee for his input. He stated he would ask for more information at a later point. The committee will send the document to Ms. Wheeler who will date it, edit/ delete the aforementioned sentence, and get board signatures. The committee thanked the selectboard; they will share this progress on Front Porch Forum. This motion carried unanimously.

Life/Disability Insurance Through VLCT

The open enrollment period for obtaining life and disability insurance through VLCT ends May 15th. Should the town switch from Dearborn Insurance to insurance through VLCT? Ms. Fitch suggested that Larry Smith, VLCT representative, discuss this with the board. The time frame may have passed to change insurance this year; however, the board may want to consider making this change for next year. Ms. Fitch will follow up.

Review of Town Officers Education Conference

Rose Pelchuck shared what she had gained from this conference held at the Stoweflake Inn in Stowe, including information around the new Clean Water Act (Act 64) which impacts the town. Discussion followed about the issue of the state raising revenue through “fees” versus “property taxes.”

Committees Posting to Town Website

Ms. Fitch suggests that committees post agendas and minutes to the website directly. Ms. Wheeler agreed and said she also wants to refresh committees about the Open Meeting Law now that there are new committee members and changes to the law. Training would need to take place for those people posting to the web.

Armstrong Farm Site Visit with VLT

A site visit to the Armstrong farm at 8 George Road will take place with the Vermont Land Trust on Wednesday, May 25, 5 p.m. Ms. Wheeler will create an agenda since there is likely to be a selectboard quorum.

Other/New/Old Business

Ms. Wheeler said that Scott Williams, States Attorney, requested to join a selectboard meeting. He will be on the May 23rd agenda.

Discussion followed around payroll direct deposit. The board is not sure whether statute allows that direct deposit be mandatory. Mr. Talbot suggested the selectboard might have to adopt a policy to make it mandatory. Ms. Fitch will look into this.

The board agreed that Dot Naylor will assist zoning administrator John McCullough with paperwork to include conditional use requests before the Development Review Board and listing the permits on the web and in the office.

The board adjourned by consensus at 8:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Stoudt, Board Recording Secretary