

Calais Selectboard Meeting Monday, June 13, 2016

Approved 6-28-16

Present: Selectboard Members Denise Wheeler, Rose Pelchuck, Scott Bassage, Toby Talbot, John Brabant

Others Present: Alfred Larrabee, Road Commissioner; Stephen Morse and Tim Neill, Woodbury Fire Department; Jon Ramsay, VT Land Trust; Josh Sayers, Emily Potter, Millie Brumback, Stephanie Kaplan, Larry Bush, Jody Bayne, Lori Bayne, Reed Cherington, Jan Ohlsson, Nancy Rowell.

Denise Wheeler called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m.

● **Review and approve updates to Personnel Policy:** Scott Bassage made a motion to amend the Personnel Policy to require payroll by direct deposit. Seconded by Rose Pelchuck, this motion carried unanimously.

● **Appointed Officials (make appointments or reappointments as needed):** Denise informed the Board that some appointments will be made at the next meeting.

● **Approve Minutes:** Toby Talbot moved to approve the minutes from May 23, 2016. Seconded by Rose Pelchuck. Discussion: Rose pointed out that Dot Naylor's appointment is a three year term, beginning in 2016. This motion carried. Mr. Talbot abstained from the vote.

● **Road Commissioner update:** Alfred reported on current projects, including culverts on Foster Hill Road; a culvert on Doolittle property on North Calais Road; part-timer Patrick Smith is no longer with the road crew; leveling of the generator at the town office. Denise said the Board will send a letter confirming the termination of Patrick's employment. Currently the road crew is fine with the four-man staff. However, an extra sub position is needed when vacations are taken.

● **Operations Manager update**

Route 14 - Toby Talbot reported he met with VTrans District Coordinator, Shauna Clifford, on June 6th. He shared the 2014 letter from the Selectboard to VTrans regarding issues on Route 14. He said the town itself can do the work from the VTrans report which covered traffic issues in E. Calais Village and at the intersection of Lightning Ridge Road and Rte. 14. However, the town will need to apply for a right-of-way permit with the State. The same is true for the apron onto Rte. 14 in the Back Street area. The forms are being filled out at this time; Ms. Clifford said the turnaround is not long. Toby explained the logistics of having a crosswalk on Rt. 14. Denise explained that through the Safe Roads and Schools grant, she intends to pursue this safety measure.

Toby said Ms. Clifford suggested hiring a sheriff to slow traffic through the village. Some discussion followed around asking DMV for support versus enlisting the sheriff to patrol and enforce the speed limit. The Board agrees that enlisting the local sheriff is appropriate.

North Calais Wall – The grant has been received for this project. The plan has been approved; Toby is putting the bid package together. The request-for-proposals' announcement will be posted at the usual posting sites, as well as the Times Argus and online at Works in Progress.

Marshfield and Back Street - Toby suggested a stop sign at the intersection of Marshfield Road and Back Street would slow traffic. Denise asked whether a weight limit sign would deter some of the large trucks that travel down Marshfield Road. Toby suggested this could be an amendment to the traffic ordinance and be on the next agenda for discussion. John Brabant suggested including the "one way sign" in this amendment. Toby also reminded the Board that Marshfield Road has no speed limit. Denise asked Toby to put the speed cart by Doug Lilley's home.

● **Review and discuss options for TH #16 bridge in N. Calais:** Denise asked community members for their input on this issue

- Millie Brumback: How long a process is this? She stated the minutes do not reflect her concern at the previous meeting. She is concerned about the historical value of the bridge. She felt that having a meeting in someone's living room in North Calais was excluding to others. She would like to see road money appropriated to repair the bridge (for example, road money that remains from this past mild winter).
- Josh Sayers – in support of the bridge re-opening.
- Emily Potter – on Hayden Road – very steep driveway; in support of bridge repairs.
- Nancy Rowell – feels that the road should stay open; it has been there for some time; is very convenient
- Others stated their support of the road staying open.
- Reed Cherington – agrees with the sentiment that was shared. Doesn't think the signage has changed – the sign still says "Road Closed" – would like, in the interim, for the sign to assure for pedestrian passage. Alfred does not think the road is safe or suitable for pedestrians. Some discussion followed around the report on this road. Alfred said the report stated that railings would be needed for safety. Alfred believes that a decision needs to be made on this issue; he feels that the situation is unsafe presently. John suggested putting jersey barriers on either side of the bridge and block it off, and indicate "no pedestrians" until it is repaired.
- Jody Bayne – uses the road all the time, would like to see it open; he thinks the town needs it for plowing. He stated that he believes the road is safe: one can tell by looking. John said the Board needs to defer to the expertise of the engineers who reported that the road is unsafe.
- The issue of town liability was discussed. Jody stated that he does not think jersey barriers suit the character of the area.
- Millie – concerned that the Board puts so much stock in a report from a "fancy engineering company." We need to make decisions about what is going to happen to the road. Why don't we make a decision and go with it?
- John stated that he is being responsive to the road commissioner and to the report of the experts. Some discussion followed about taking measures to make the bridge safe in the meantime.
- Discussion followed around meetings being open to the community. John stated that neighborhood meetings happen often and if Millie felt left out of such meetings in the past, going forward he will call and let her know when they are planned; they are not meant to exclude.
- Stephanie Kaplan – asked about the cost of repair? Does this figure into the issue?
- Toby – estimated cost of approximately \$30K. Next year in the Structures Grant, some money might be available.
- Denise pointed out that ATVs are not supposed to be using the roads.
- Scott – feels that the Board should apply for a grant next spring (April) and move forward. Some discussion followed around VTRANS grants, which have April 15 deadline and are awarded around June 1st.
- Alfred asked for the Board to make a decision as soon as possible so that everyone can be aware of the direction. Toby suggested that the next agenda include a plan for action on T.H. #16 Bridge.

● **Review and sign annual contract with Woodbury Fire Dept. (Stephen Morse)**

Mr. Morse shared a memo with the Board, with two proposed contracts for Town of Calais fire services contract. Denise stated that she is not happy with the way dispatching is assessed to Calais. Denise thanked Stephen Morse for getting the information to the Board in advance of the meeting as requested. Toby Talbot moved to approve the 3-year average contract (Contract B) as presented. Seconded by John Brabant. Discussion: Board members asked for clarification around the 3-year average cost, plus dispatching cost. This motion carried unanimously.

The Board thanked Stephen Morse and the fire department.

● **Discuss Armstrong Farm with Jon Ramsay, Vt Land Trust:** Denise thanked Jon Ramsay for the site visit which was held previously. Denise asked whether the Board will receive a guarantee that the house will not be torn down. Jon Ramsay explained that the easement will say that the owner has the right to maintain, renovate or replace the farmhouse (so there is no such guarantee). Mr. Ramsay explained the possibility of a “historic notification” provision as part of the easement, but still does not stipulate that the house has to remain. Mr. Ramsay explained some of the considerations when recruiting a buyer: Does the proposed operation fit the property? Is it financially feasible? Does the buyer have the wherewithal to bring his/ her plan to fruition? Is the buyer local or from far away? John Brabant spoke about the opportunities/potential for the farm house and his desire that it be keep intact.

Mr. Ramsay summarized the property: over 100 acres, frontage on Pekin Brook, road frontage on George Road, Peck Hill Road and Pekin Road, approximately 50 acres of open land, approximately 25 acres of open pasture. The hope is to facilitate the sale of the property through conservation. Jon Ramsay stated that VLT is willing to go to great lengths to do that.

Stephanie clarified that the Conservation Commission is supposed to make a recommendation to the Selectboard regarding this issue; however she had suggested that Jon Ramsay meet with the Board tonight to hear their thoughts. Some discussion followed around the assessed value of the property. The property was appraised by VLT at approximately \$350,000. The town has it appraised at \$423,300.

Mr. Ramsay spoke about the VLT’s role in facilitating the sale. He shared a proposed timeline:

- July – advertise RFP process
- July 7 – meet with Conservation Commission
- July 27 – applications to Conservation Board
- Early August – host open house on property
- September – proposals due
- Early October – Vermont Housing and Conservation Board meeting (to consider application)
- Through fall – work with buyer
- mid-December – either VLT needs to buy property or needs to deposit down payment
- December – decision is made on property
- Through spring – wrap up with incoming buyer
- Winter 2017 – pre-closing process with Vermont Housing and Conservation Board
- Spring/early summer 2017 – process complete?

Jan asked the Board to consider that if the land is appraised higher than the sale price, the common level of appraisal will be affected. Discussion followed around funding sources for the project, which will likely include support from the Board. Jon Ramsay briefly explained an Agricultural Land Easement Plan. John shared his concerns about large parcels of land being bought and eventually planted with corn. Some discussion followed around standards to be included in the easement. The Natural Resources Conservation Service, VLT and Vermont Housing and Conservation Board would be co-holders of the easement. Mr. Ramsay spoke about the possibility that the town be granted executory interest.

● **ROW permit – Ben Ali (Curtis Pond – extension of wooden fence)**

To be included in directions, comments: less than 6 feet high (so it doesn’t require a conditional use permit). Toby moved to approve the ROW permit as presented. Seconded by Scott, this motion carried unanimously.

● **Schedule joint Selectboard and Planning Commission meeting with Amy Picotte, Lakeshore Manager, ANR, Watershed Management Division**

Denise explained her intention to schedule a joint meeting of Planning Commission and Selectboard with Amy Picotte. Rose requested a 7:00 start time. Stephanie encouraged the Development Review Board to be included in the meeting.

● **Review and approve quote for exterior painting Town Office:**

Scott moved to approve the estimate of approximately \$6,000 from Tom Frost for painting the outside of the Town Office as presented. Seconded by John, this motion carried unanimously.

● **Review proposed NEMRC Contract (municipal accounting software and support):**

Toby reminded the Board this expense has not been budgeted. Denise reminded the Board that the professional auditors had suggested this transition. Toby moved to approve the NEMRC contract. Seconded by Scott, this motion carried unanimously.

● **EMFD quarterly meeting change of date from Thurs., 7/21 to Thurs., 7/14:** Denise noted this change.

Reports/Updates (as needed or as time permits)

Denise reported a site visit is planned for June 27, 2016 at 11:00 at the Curtis Pond dam to strategize around the beaver problem. John reminded the Board the dam is private property, and the Board should be sure the Dam Safety Engineer provides critical input. Denise, Toby and John (possibly Scott) will attend.

Denise shared an issue around “off road mudding” on a logging road which goes from Calais to Worcester.

Denise reported she and Scott have been working together around an issue at Number 10 Pond: property use, especially around the fishing access. Game Warden Sean Fowler will erect additional signage and patrol the area. John stated he doesn’t believe the fishing access ramp is under the purview of the Board; it is a state issue, and the Board should not take this issue on.

Executive Session:

Zoning Violations, Appeals, Litigation, and Personnel Matters – John Brabant made a motion to go into Executive Session at 9:13 pm in accordance with 1 V.S.A. subsection 313 (a) (1) for the purpose of discussing real estate matters and personnel matters. The motion was seconded, voted and carried 5-0.

When the regular session resumed at 10:12 pm, Toby Talbot made a motion to accept the offer from Alfred and Marieka Larrabee to buy the property at 40 Fellows Road in East Calais village for \$14,000 conditioned on full payment to the town and the understanding they are purchasing property that may contain material and legal defects. The motion was seconded, voted on and carried 5-0. Regarding the personnel matter, Denise Wheeler stated there was nothing to publicly report.

Toby Talbot made a motion to adjourn at 10:15 pm. The motion was seconded, voted on and carried 5-0.

Respectfully submitted,
Lisa Stoudt, Board Recording Secretary

<http://calaisvermont.gov/>

Future Meeting(s)

- Appt. Colin Doolittle, Calais Roads Advisory Comm. (6/27/16)
- East Calais Revitalization Committee (ECRC) update (Joni Larow 6/27/16)