

Town of Calais, Vermont

CHARTERED 1781

Selectboard Meeting

Approved Minutes

Monday, September 25, 2017 at 7pm
at the Calais Town Hall

approved

Present: Selectboard Members Denise Wheeler, John Brabant, Sharon Winn Fannon, Rose Pelchuck; Selectboard Administrator Jonathan Williams, Town Clerk Judy Robert, Town Treasurer Donna Fitch, Alfred Larrabee, ORCA videographer Jerome Lipani, Rob Richert, Colleen Bloom, Heidi Thompson, Jamie Moorby, Marc Michael, Buffy Root, Larry Bush, Bev Heise

Call to Order

Board of Abatement Hearing

The Selectboard meeting commenced again at 7:20.

Public Comment (for items not on agenda): none

Review of Agenda/Correspondence: Denise Wheeler reviewed the agenda.

Selectboard Vacancy: Denise Wheeler announced that two people had sent in applications for the six month select board position. A third person had expressed interest but missed the deadline; Denise asked the board if the board should extend the timeframe for people to come forward, and make another announcement of the vacancy. John Brabant mentioned another candidate who is interested, and supported extending the deadline. Denise Wheeler recommended reopening this position to the public, and to lengthen the deadline. Sharon Winn Fannon stated that she sees this as an opportunity for a new person to serve the town. The board is in agreement to announce an October 3, 2018 deadline for expressing interest in the position.

Recurring Items, Presentations, Reports:

- a) Review, discussion, and approval of minutes: 8/28/17, 9/11/17

Sharon Winn Fannon moved to approve the minutes of August 28, 2017. Seconded by John Brabant. Discussion: some edits were suggested, for clarity. This motion carried, with noted edits. Rose Pelchuck abstained from the vote because she was absent from the 8/28/17 meeting.

Denise Wheeler moved to approve the minutes of September 11, 2017. Seconded by John Brabant. Discussion: some edits were suggested, for clarity. This motion carried unanimously, with noted edits.

b) Warrants for Payment

c) Curtis Pond (*Homeowners*)* Association: Five people were present to explain the ongoing issue due to beavers, and to briefly explain how the association was formed.

*Colleen Bloom requested a correction and noted the word “homeowners” is not part of the association’s name, and that decision was deliberate when the Association selected a name. The name is simply “Curtis Pond Association.” Jamie Moorby explained the work that is involved to manage what is done by the beavers on a daily basis. Denise Wheeler reiterated, from past discussions, that the town does not own the dam. John Brabant explained the history of this issue and the dam’s ownership. Some discussion followed about a possible solution: shooting the beavers. Colleen Bloom asked whether the town would consider helping to find and hire a trapper to trap out the beavers causing the problems. Denise Wheeler stated that the town can’t do that, that this needs to be performed by the dam and affected property owners. Colleen Bloom asked, hypothetically, what if the people who are currently working to mediate the damage, stopped their daily work. Then she believes that the condition of the pond, due to the beavers, becomes a public safety issue. John Brabant explained that it is not the town’s responsibility to maintain the dam, that it is the dam owner’s responsibility. Denise Wheeler suggested the group call Jeff Fothergill, the owner of the Curtis Pond dam.

Some discussion followed around the issue of ownership of the dam. The board hired an attorney in the past to determine the dam’s ownership. The board also hired an engineering firm to design a replacement to the current dam which according to state engineers is at risk of failure. Engineered design and construction plans for a replacement dam have been completed and received state approval. John Brabant stated that based upon those plans, the cost to replace the dam in current dollars could range up to \$400K and that a funding approach involving not only town tax dollars, but also private funding would be required for such a project to move forward. John Brabant stated that while the town is interested in arriving at a solution, from a legal standpoint, the burden to address the current dam’s safety issues is that of the dam’s owner, Jeff Fothergill, and the state, as Curtis Pond and the outflow stream are legally considered waters of the state.. In closing, Colleen Bloom asked whether the town can offer any daily help with the near daily work effort at removing the beaver dams placed at the dam spillway and was again reminded that this would need to be handled either by or with the permission of the dam’s owner and adjoining property owners. Alfred Larrabee suggested that the fall is trapping season, and believes enlisting trappers would be a more logical solution. He has names of trappers and will forward them to the Association.

Business Items for Possible Vote:

a) Transportation Items:

i. Falco Curb Cut Review/Approval #CC04-2017: Alfred Larrabee was not aware of this request. Jon Williams put it in his folder last week at the town office, but Alfred had not seen it yet. The board will address the curb cut at a future meeting.

ii. Road Crew Vacancy: Alfred Larrabee stated that he received one

application; however, this person does not meet one of the qualifications listed (CDL license) Jon Williams is going to re-advertise. Denise Wheeler asked the best form of communication between Jonathan and Alfred. Alfred suggested sending time-sensitive documents as email attachments.

Alfred explained that he has begun digging on Hayden Road. He shared the color choice for the concrete and said he consulted with neighbors to the bridge in choosing the color. He reported that the contractor has requested some payment up front, even though up-front payment was not specified in the RFP or in the bid. Alfred stated that the contractor is writing a contract specifying details, including the payment plan. The board agrees that the request for partial payment up front is reasonable.

iii. East Calais Falls Erosion Issue: Rob Richert shared some photos he took on this site visit, as well as a written report summarizing the issue. He shared a proposed solution, based on the visit and his experience. The board discussed whether grants might be available to help with this issue. Alfred Larrabee said he has spoken to the state, and his understanding is that there is no money available to fill the ravine in question. The land in question is private property; board members discussed the fact that the erosion issue is caused by runoff from town property. Alfred Larrabee does not think one of the property owners is going to be satisfied with the solution that he has come up with to slow down the erosion issue. Rob Richert said he spoke with the property owner earlier today, and explained to him that the town would request an easement on his property, if the town were to address the issue on his property. Some discussion followed around the fact that a VAST trail is also affected by this issue. Denise Wheeler thanked Rob Richert for volunteering his time to help with this issue. Sharon Winn Fannon shared that Pam DeAndrea at Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission is creating a list related to planning around stormwater issues, and Sharon wants to be sure that Pam's list includes issues Alfred Larrabee knows about, even if the road crew has already worked to mitigate the problem.. Rob Richert will email the document he created to the Selectboard. Denise Wheeler will contact Pam DeAndrea and suggest that she contact Alfred Larrabee; Pam might have some ideas about funding sources as well. Alfred stated that he believes his idea to slow down the erosion would be a less expensive part of the solution. He stated that this is the type of project that gets bigger as time goes on. Rob Richert stated that "chipping away" little by little makes sense. Denise Wheeler suggested that the solution that Alfred proposed could be done this year, and would be a step toward "chipping away" at the issue.

Denise Wheeler asked Alfred to add to his jobs list, his proposal to begin work on the erosion issue. Alfred stated that he believes an easement is needed to begin. John Brabant suggested that he begin with permission from the property owners, in light of time, and inform them that an easement will be sought in the future. Alfred asked Sharon Winn Fannon whether she had discussed this with Beth McCullough, one of the property owners. Sharon did not speak to the property owners. John Brabant suggested getting written permission from the property owner before beginning. Alfred Larrabee stated that the work previously done on the property occurred when the bank owned the property. The board agreed that Alfred should go forward with "phase one" of this project, and the board will consider other phases at a future date.

iv. Traffic Ordinance Revisions: Jonathan Williams added road names to the ordinance, and updated with some proposed stop sign installations. The board discussed the proposed Haggett Road stop sign and agreed that this sign should not be installed.

Denise Wheeler explained the process of approving a traffic ordinance. Some discussion followed about the difficulty of accurately naming the roads in the town. Rose Pelchuck reminded the board that the Ancient Roads Project resulted in a file of information listing all of the town roads. Jonathan will continue to research this issue; the board will continue to consider this.

b) Budget Update/Review: Donna Fitch asked the board how they would like to review the budget. Denise Wheeler stated that one of the most important roles of the Selectboard is to review and monitor the budget. She asked board members to review Donna's updated budget summary and notes before the meetings so that this can be an agenda item that is given attention. A budget review will be added to the agenda for the second board meeting of each month. Donna explained that Melanie is helping close the books from FY17; she will provide a review at the next board meeting. Donna invited questions or comments from the board.

c) Draft Mileage Reimbursement Policy: Jonathan created this draft policy. Donna Fitch shared the form that Toby Talbot uses to submit for mileage reimbursement. John Brabant suggested adding a line to the form that is currently used, stating that any mileage or expenses submitted after a certain time (for example, a year) will not be reimbursed. Denise Wheeler suggested addressing this through the Personnel Policy, which is currently being updated.

d) Legal Fees/Statement of Services: Denise Wheeler stated that James Barlow, Esq.'s contract is up for renewal in October 2017. John Brabant moved to approve renewing the contract for James Barlow, Esq., as submitted. Seconded by Rose Pelchuck, this motion carried.

e) Lakes and Streams Newsletter: Larry Bush shared the most recent newsletter and reported the Lakes and Streams committee has been discussing the possibility of surveying the townspeople to see, for example, if there is interest in the newsletter. He shared that the Conservation Commission supports asking the town for the funds to cover the newsletter. Donna Fitch explained that the bill for the printing and mailing the newsletter has already been paid from money from the Lakes and Streams budget. Denise Wheeler shared that the board has suggested that this newsletter be shared electronically. John Brabant spoke about the cost of printing and mailing the newsletter, on top of the environmental impact of paper copies. Sharon Winn Fannon asked whether this ad hoc committee should be reporting to the selectboard. Some discussion followed. Donna Fitch stated that her recollection is that the Lakes and Streams Committee has in the past asked the board to put this item on the agenda for Town Meeting Day for the townspeople to approve. Donna Fitch suggested that maybe Lakes and Streams and the Conservation Committee - and the Planning Commission? - coordinate efforts to create a survey.

f) Amended Delinquent Tax Policy (next meeting)

g) Temporary Procedures for Town Hall Event Proceeds. The board discussed conversations that have taken place in the past about town hall events. The board agreed that as they remember the discussion, they were assured that no expense would fall to the town. Donna Fitch drafted a “*proceeds from events at the town hall*” document. Sharon Winn Fannon suggested that the board consider creating a capital fund for such proceeds if they are to continue. Regarding the document Donna had created, Sharon Winn Fannon suggested that an end date be included. She suggested some other edits for clarity. She will send suggested edits to Donna; Donna will share an updated version with the board. The board agreed that this document should be revisited/ reviewed in April 2018 or May 2018 when the Town Hall will be open again for use.

h) Town Hall Sign: Donna Fitch suggested a temporary sign for the town hall, with the intention of creating a more permanent sign after renovations.

Review of Assignments/Upcoming Meetings:

next agenda: review delinquent tax policy

Jonathan will create a shared policy amendments folder in google drive. Board members discussed how to amend documents in meeting folders. The board continues to refine the use of google drive for sharing documents.

Denise Wheeler will share a draft evaluation form for the board to consider, for town positions such as selectboard administrator

Sharon & John - conflict of interest

Rose & Denise - evaluation forms

Denise & Sharon - personnel policy

Donna Fitch shared that John McCullough will create a rough layout of “space needs” for the town hall building, for the board’s consideration.

Adjournment: The board adjourned by consensus at 10:03 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Lisa Stoudt, Board Recording Secretary

Approved at the 11/27/2017 Selectboard meeting

<http://www.calaisvermont.gov/>