

SELECTBOARD MEETING
Approved Minutes

August 20, 2012

7:30pm East Montpelier Fire Dept. Station 2

JOINT MEETING OF THE CALAIS SELECTBOARD and EAST MONTPELIER SELECTBOARD

Attending: Calais Selectboard Members: Denise Wheeler, Toby Talbot, John Brabant, Scott Bassage and Mike Garand; East Montpelier Selectboard Members: Bruce Johnson, Steve Sparrow, Seth Gardner and Carl Etnier; EMFD Board Members: Jay Copping, Sandy Conti, Ty Rolland, and Paul Guare; Larry Brown, Don Welch and Rose Pelchuck.

Actions:

Denise Wheeler, Calais Selectboard Chair, called the continued meeting from August 13, 2012 of the Calais Selectboard to order at 7:35pm.

The DRAFT CONTRACT WITH RESPECT TO FIRE SUPPRESSION, AMBULANCE AND OTHER EMERGENCY RESPONSE SERVICES (not dated) was created by Bruce Johnson to have something to work off of. The other document Bruce Johnson provided was Data Sheet for Cost Allocation Categories To Go With EMFD Cost Allocation Agreement Between Calais & East Montpelier. Toby Talbot gathered the EMFD Call Volume Data and Averages and all documents were discussed.

Denise Wheeler asked, "Are we going to combine the fire and ambulance into one document?" Toby Talbot noted the difference between the fire contract, ambulance contract and the lease contract for the building. Bruce Johnson noted the capital purchases and the bond for the building are split 1/3 Calais and 2/3 East Montpelier. Bruce Johnson discussed non-taxable properties located in East Montpelier, naming U-32, Central Vermont Humane Society, Orchard Valley Waldorf School and East Montpelier Fire Department. Calais also has tax-exempt properties, much fewer businesses and a smaller population. The Selectboards looked at the call volume data and Data Sheet for Cost Allocation that contained grand list information in order to decide what percentage split each town should contribute. Toby Talbot suggested drafting the document to reflect the cost allocation of 1/3 for Calais and 2/3 for East Montpelier.

John Brabant would like to include language on page 5 to "Appendix A" that EMFD has to get both Calais and East Montpelier Selectboard approval prior to contracting with another town for ambulance service. Both Selectboards agreed to combine fire suppression, emergency services and ambulance service contracts into one document.

John Brabant explored putting parameters around the EMFD Contingency Fund. Toby Talbot explained that a level of flexibility is needed to operate. The Contingency Fund has no taxpayer dollars and is funded by ambulance revenue. The oversight by the Selectboards comes annually and again at the quarterly financial review meetings. EMFD also has an independent audit annually, copies of which are provided to the towns. Other discussion ensued around voter approval from the floor at Town Meeting verses Australian ballot.

Denise Wheeler spoke about better understanding the treasurer's report and Larry Brown invited the Selectboard members to attend Board meetings and/or monthly business meetings. Referring to page 3, Number 11, John Brabant will draft language to change the "shall appoint" to "may appoint" a member to the EMFD Board of Directors.

The Selectboards talked about fire suppression inclusive of fire fighting and emergency services. Some discussion was about the Capital Fire Mutual Aid and the fact that Calais does not have its own fire department.

Toby Talbot said he thinks it goes back to state statute and it goes back from there. Mike Garand recalls the Town of Orange is in the same boat without their own fire department, therefore ineligible to join CFMA. It was agreed that after the towns are done making the document changes agreed upon tonight to the DRAFT CONTRACT WITH RESPECT TO FIRE SUPPRESSION, AMBULANCE AND OTHER EMERGENCY RESPONSE SERVICES (with a date), they would then give it to EMFD by mid-October for review and recommended revisions. Jay Copping, EMFD President agreed with the timeline.

Lt. Paul White, Vermont State Police – The Selectboards welcomed Lt. Paul White and introductions were made. Lt. White began his presentation this evening by giving the reason he came tonight. “As an agency we are trying to do a better job getting to towns to meet collectively,” Lt. White said. He has been station commander in Middlesex for five years making connections with many towns already. The Middlesex barracks serves 18 towns (have separate contracts with East Montpelier for 40 hours per month and Orange), including the 12 towns in Washington County. Lt. White wanted to provide an opportunity to discuss any concerns since there was a bad apple in Chittenden county and a recent incident. The VSP took a look at internal controls and have reevaluated the way they do things.

Lt. White talked about staffing coverage in the Middlesex barracks. Contracted time is all overtime; troopers patrol either before or after their shift or on a day off. The troopers are each assigned a general area to patrol (six towns). Denise Wheeler would like to meet with Lt. White to better understand VSP service to Calais and write up something to put in Front Porch Forum to inform the public.

Larry Brown, EMFD Deputy Chief, complimented the VSP and personally thanked Lt. White for the professionalism his troopers exhibit and how they handle the people they deal with. Lt. White said, “EMFD has always been a great place to stop by when in this area.”

Constable Discussion: Denise Wheeler asked Lt. White to explain the new requirements for Town Constables. Lt. White explained they have to go for one week of part time law enforcement training and get 60 hours on-the-job training time with an agency. It is difficult to get an agency to sign off on training issues for constables since the VSP are busy training new state police officers (have to get the training within one year of going to the police academy). As of July 1, 2012, the constables cannot do any law enforcement without proper training.

Questions and answers as follows:

Regional dispatching is no longer; our calls go to the dispatch center in Williston.

Mental health training is required semi-annually for State Troopers; a hot button issue.

Carl Etnier asked about the State Police Policy on undocumented workers. Carl has a radio program and wanted to clarify his understanding with respect to the issue.

Denise Wheeler mentioned the Harley Breer living in Calais episode. That is when Denise last spoke to VSP.

Lt. White responded that unfortunately, VSP is reactive instead of proactive.

Denise Wheeler thanked Lt. White for coming and meeting the Calais Selectboard this evening. John Brabant made a motion to adjourn at 9:35pm. The motion was seconded, voted and carried 5-0.

VSP Advisory Board – Lt. White said the VSP has struggled to decide if that board still serves a purpose; are they a viable means of communicating to the town Selectboards? Lt White wondered if it is still a productive committee to have. What is appropriate to go through the Advisory Board or go directly to the Selectboard? The Minutes of their meetings are mailed to each town clerk. Denise Wheeler has not been informed of action at the Advisory Board Meetings. Wayne Whitelock and Jane English are the Calais reps on the VSP Advisory Board. Denise also mentioned that the Neighborhood Watch Program seemed to have lost focus and attention.

Respectfully submitted,

Rose Pelchuck

Selectboard Administrative Assistant