

CALAIS SELECTBOARD Minutes
LOCATION: Calais Town Office
MONDAY, DECEMBER 12, 2016 @ 7:00 P.M.

Approved 12-19-16

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

Others Present: Lisa Stoudt, Board Recording Secretary, Bruce Johnson, Ty Rolland, Donna Fitch, Kim Swasey, Casey Northrop, Seth Gardner, Gene Troia, Alfred Larrabee, Nedene Martin, Jan Ohlsson, Karin McNeill

- Administrative work and changes or additions to the agenda: Denise Wheeler called the meeting to order at 7:09 p.m.

(Seth Gardner called the East Montpelier Selectboard meeting to order at 7:09 p.m. as well.)

No changes to the agenda

- Public Comment: none

- Continue discussion with East Montpelier Selectboard of the FY 2018 Ambulance & Emergency Services budget requests by the EMFD:

Denise Wheeler reviewed that the Board had decided to meet further after the December 5th joint meeting to continue to discuss the scenarios that were discussed at the December 5th meeting:

Scenario 1 the original EMFD proposed amount that includes paid staff coverage for evenings, nights and weekends (\$170,000.00); (replace one full time equivalent with a paid paramedic, employed with benefits) (day shift: 8-4; evening 4 - midnight: currently one paid person per shift)

Ty Rolland explained:

CURRENTLY: week days:

(currently, 2x weekly a second person works 7-4

3x weekly (Wed., Thurs., Fri.) a second person works 4.5 hours

Midnight until 8 a.m. is staffed with volunteer

Weekends: 8-4 shift and 4-midnight shift (on Saturday a second staff person might be scheduled)

Some discussion followed about the workload of the current staff at the firehouse. Gene Troia stated that he sees that 336 man hours of coverage are needed. Currently 167 hours are in place as compensated in Scenario 1.

Bruce Johnson explained that the \$170K as discussed is replacing the current 40 hours weekly with a full time employee.

Scenario 2 with added paramedic coverage minus nights and weekends (\$202,000.00); Bruce

Johnson explained that this is adding staff for having 2 people at all times, day and night, Monday through Friday.

Scenario 3 with added paramedic coverage plus nights and weekends (\$219,000.00)

Seth Gardner stated that some clarification is needed to explicitly state who is volunteer and who is paid. Ty Rolland stated that the Fire Department currently has six staff members. He explained the configuration in detail.

Scott Bassage asked whether there is a way to get to Scenario 3 and still hold the increase to taxpayers to 7.5%.

Seth Gardner spoke about the possibility of using some of the capital reserve fund, to be used for personnel rather than equipment, to alleviate the burden on taxpayers.

Gene Troia stated that he believes the Boards are willing to contribute up to 7.5% increase and to find additional money in other places to fund the program (for example, ambulance revenue).

Some discussion followed about union requirements.

Seth Gardner stated that this has been discussed as a temporary solution; creating a sustainable program will require further discussion.

Ty Rolland stated that there might be opportunities in the future for additional contracts, which would bring in additional revenue.

Some discussion followed about the cost of equipment, including trucks. Ty Rolland described the fleet as it currently exists. He explained that many of the “demo” trucks are built for urban areas (using hydrants); they are not appropriate for use in East Montpelier.

Some discussion followed about reducing contributions to capital reserve, which as a result reduces money available to buy equipment.

Board members discussed this proposal as a “bridge,” and that the Fire Department/ Ambulance Program would have to create a more sustainable program. Denise Wheeler stated that she believes it is not sustainable, and that the townspeople cannot afford an increase.

Seth Gardner stated that before the next budget cycle, the Boards will have to more closely examine the sustainability of the program.

Gene Troia stated that he believes the program can work, going forward, if the staffing as described is supported. Some discussion followed around per capita cost.

Discussion followed around the East Montpelier Fire Department providing services to neighboring towns. Denise Wheeler clarified that the Board members had asked to be kept apprised of engaging other towns; they did not express not supporting this endeavor if needed.

Ty Rolland stated that “Ambulance Transfers” can be a source of income as well, if staffing will allow.

Gene Troia (on behalf of East Montpelier Selectboard) moved to approve the EMFD/ Ambulance Service budget request as presented, and further, approve that the EMFD/

Ambulance Service fund additional staffing up to \$50K from ambulance revenue. Seconded by Casey Northrup, this motion carried unanimously.

Scott Bassage (on behalf of Calais Selectboard) moved to approve the EMFD/ Ambulance Service budget request as presented, and further, approve that the EMFD/ Ambulance Service fund additional staffing up to \$50K from ambulance revenue. Seconded by Rose Pelchuck. This motion carried; Toby Talbot abstained.

Capital Reserve: Some discussion followed around equipment.

Toby Talbot stated that requests for bids will be offered to three separate equipment vendors. They will bring back information to Boards for consideration.

Currently the Boards clarified that the capital reserve will be used for equipment without additional monetary input from the towns.

Toby Talbot stated that Calais currently has money in its budget to contribute to the capital reserve.

Ty Rolland explained that when a bid has been received for equipment for purchase, the EMFD/ Ambulance Service will meet with the Boards to ask to purchase using reserve funds.

At 8:22 the East Montpelier Selectboard left the meeting.

- Review & Sign Town Invoices, Highway Orders and Budget Update
- Appointments
- Review and Approve Minutes: Rose Pelchuck moved to approve the minutes of November 28, 2016. Seconded by Scott Bassage, this motion carried unanimously. Scott Bassage moved to approve the minutes for December 5, 2016. Seconded by John Brabant, this motion carried. Toby Talbot abstained.
- Road Commissioner update: Alfred Larrabee reported on plowing activity; he shared that one of the town trucks had rolled off the road recently due to icy conditions - repairs to the truck are underway. Alfred Larrabee reported that he continues to seek a part-time substitute staff person. He reported about proposed work on a water line on Marshfield Road; he asked whether the Board requires a right-of-way permit for this work. The Selectboard requires a permit for this job; Alfred will follow up on a permit.
- Operations Manager update: Toby Talbot moved to approve the annual Christmas bonus of \$250 each. Seconded by Scott Bassage, this motion carried unanimously.
- Review Highway Winter Operation Plan – delayed plowing to next day after storms of short portions of Class 3 roads and response to letters sent to those residents

- Status of repairs to Town Office roof: Toby Talbot reported that this work is still being pursued.
- Delinquent Tax Collector Update/Report (Nedene Martin): Nedene Martin reported that Calais currently has just under \$5K in delinquent taxes. The Board thanked her for the great work carrying out this job. She attributed the success to others in the process, including the Board, the Town Office employees, and the lawyer who works with her on tax collection. Ms. Martin shared a Delinquent Tax Payment Agreement form which she asked for the Select board's support to enforce.

Toby Talbot moved to approve an update to the 2016-17 Policy for Collection of Delinquent Taxes for Town of Calais. Seconded by Scott Bassage, this motion carried unanimously.

Nedene Martin stated that the Adamant Music School, which owns five pieces of property, is delinquent in property tax payments.

Ms. Martin stated her opinion that something needs to change with property taxes; people are having real difficulties staying on top of tax payments. She asked the Selectboard to advocate to the Legislature to find a solution to increasingly high property taxes. Denise Wheeler indicated that she reminds the Legislators whenever the opportunity arises.

- Better Connections Grant update: Jan Ohlsson reported that, after further discussion and inquiry, the park and ride proposal should be a separate issue than this grant. The Better Connections Grant will be written to hire a consultant to write a plan - a sort of revitalization master plan - and an implementation scheme, to include but not limited to parking management, traffic calming, connectivity. She stated that the town would be asked to match around \$1750 each year for two years. Denise Wheeler asked about the grant management; she does not want to add to the Town Clerk's workload. Ms. Ohlsson and Ms. McNeill expect to speak with Eric Vorwald tomorrow at Central Vermont Regional Planning, about this. Denise Wheeler asked for information to include in the warning for Town Meeting Day.

- Continue discussion for development of FY 2018 Budget: The board considered the Proposed Highway Budget. Some discussion followed around employee benefits. Scott Bassage stated that the biggest part of the budget is gravel, sand, chloride and salt.

Scott Bassage moved to increase the work boot allowance to \$200. Seconded by John Brabant, this motion carried unanimously.

The Board agreed to increase the education line by \$1K, to include payment for services to Dave Antone.

The board considered “Salaries and Related” budget. The Board briefly discussed the possibility of including a stipend for the Planning Commission, and for the Town Constable and Animal Control. Denise Wheeler suggested \$1K each for Town Constable and Animal Control.

The Board would like to find out from Ed Clodfelter when the next town-wide reappraisal will be.

The Board agreed to designate \$6K to the “auditor” line, to anticipate hiring a person to do such work, as suggested in the charter discussions.

Scott Bassage asked to consider putting Article 15 from last year’s warning into the budget rather than a separate article for vote. The Board is in agreement to do so.

- Continue discussion for development of FY 2018 Town Meeting Warning and sharing of duties/responsibilities: The Board reviewed the warning. The Board discussed the Article related to heavy equipment purchase : to include excavator and trailer.

- Continue discussion of Charter adoption and timeline:

Scott Bassage moved that the selectboard approve the proposed town charter and set public hearings on the proposed charter for Monday, January 9, 2017 at 7 PM and Monday, January 16, 2017 at 7PM. Seconded by John Brabant, this motion carried. Toby Talbot abstained.

- Financial policies - we have adopted some of the VLCT recommended financial policies. Are there are others we should consider adopting? Reports/Updates (as needed or as time permits)

Other/New/Old Business that may come before the Board
Jan 12 - last day to submit items for Town Report.

As needed: Zoning enforcement issue(s) Legal/litigation updates

Executive Session

Adjourn/continue meeting: The board adjourned by consensus at 9:58 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Lisa Stoudt, Board Recording Secretary