

Joint East Montpelier & Calais Selectboards Meeting Minutes

December 11, 2017 at 7pm at the Calais Town Offices

Present: Denise Wheeler (Chair), John Brabant (Vice Chair), Rose Pelchuck (Member), Sharon Winn Fannon (Member), Clif Emmons (Member), Jonathan Williams (Selectboard Administrator), Katie Lane-Karnas (Recording Secretary), Seth Gardner (East Montpelier Selectboard), Gene Troia (East Montpelier Selectboard), Amy Willis (East Montpelier Selectboard), Kim Swasey (East Montpelier Selectboard), Bruce Johnson (Town Administrator for East Montpelier), Jeremy Hansen, Jerry Diamantides, Jim Barlow, John McCullough, Scott Bassage, David Schütz, Tobin Anderson, Toby Talbot, Alfred Larrabee, Donna Fitch, Larry Bush, Jerome Lipani

1. Call to Order: Denise Wheeler called the meeting to order at 7:07 pm.
2. Public Comment: None.
3. Review of Agenda/Correspondence: None.
4. Transportation Items:
 - a) Curb Cut Permit Approval: John Brabant moved and Denise Wheeler seconded to approve the Martin Road curb cut with a 15" x 20' long culvert. The motion passed unanimously.
5. Recurring Items, Presentations, Reports:
 - a) EMFD budget review/requests for FY19: The joint Selectboards reviewed last week's EMFD budget request for FY19, including items outside of Selectboard control: increasing costs for workers' comp, dispatch, and keeping pace with changing technologies. The Selectboards discussed how ambulance revenue is utilized, funding of the capital reserve account and the contingency fund, and their need for detailed information on how unused monies get distributed within the budget. The Selectboards discussed a list of questions regarding the FY19 Combined Services budget proposal from last week's meeting, and called Toby Talbot by phone for clarification.

The joint Selectboards discussed the considerations of the EMFD pursuing a contract to provide ambulance service to the Town of Marshfield, and the current relationship, in which EMFD responds to 50% of Marshfield's calls (billing for the call, but not enjoying the benefit of a contract and sustained financial support). The Selectboards decided they are on board with the potential contract for EMFD with Marshfield, in anticipation of receiving further details.

Rose Pelchuck motioned for the Calais Selectboard to accept the EMFD budget FY19 as proposed, and John Brabant seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Kim Swasey motioned for the East Montpelier Selectboard to accept the EMFD budget FY19 as proposed, and Amy Willis seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

- b) Central Vermont ISP Presentation: Jeremy Hansen and Jerry Diamantides, representing Central Vermont Internet Service Provider, shared their project with the Selectboards. The project is the creation of a community internet service provider, made up of member municipalities. The presenters provided a visual presentation and launched a discussion with the joint Boards, identifying the existing need this project would fill, explaining the technical and logistical details of the proposed project, and asking the Towns to include language on their Town Meeting ballots that would, if approved by the voters, give the district permission to operate inside the Towns. Alternately, the Towns could decide to join the district in May after its creation among towns who have already joined at that time. Vermont law does not allow for towns to pay for this service using tax dollars; this project would be funded by individual accounts. The Washington Electric Coop is aware of and supportive of this project, which is important because in many (most?) cases WEC's utility poles and access points will be leveraged for internet service. The presenters considered Vermont's Telecommunications Plan and the gap in service and speed between the Plan and reality.

The Selectboards and presenters looked at a list of towns that have been included in the conversation and a model that already exists, revenue-positive, in Vermont (EC Fiber, operating from Brookfield to West Windsor).

The presenters said member towns must appoint one person as its representative to the district, and one person as an alternate. Towns must also agree to lease space for network needs, such as putting a router in a town office.

In order to constitute this proposed ISP district, a minimum of two towns need to put language on the 2018 Town Meeting ballot, or join in May, giving the district permission to operate inside the town. A feasibility study will follow, once the district is created.

Denise Wheeler made a motion to add the language "Shall the Town of Calais enter into a communications union district to be known as Central Vermont Internet, under the provision of 30 V.S.A. Ch. 82?" to the ballot for March 2018, and Sharon Winn Fannon seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Seth Gardner made a motion to add the language "Shall the Town of Calais enter into a communications union district to be known as Central Vermont Internet, under the provision of 30 V.S.A. Ch. 82?" to the ballot for March 2018, and Kim Swasey seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Members of the East Montpelier Selectboard adjourned and departed.

- c) CHPC proposed grant presentation: The Calais Historic Preservation Committee informed the Selectboard about a grant -- administered by the Advisory Council of Historic Preservation -- which would aim to designate East Calais as a National Historic District. The Board and presenters mentioned that this process has been similarly done in Kent Corner and North Calais; they anticipate moving on to other locations in Calais in the future. The presenters covered the process of hiring a consultant, addressing resident concerns regarding home ownership in a National Historic District, as well as the value to a community in having this recognition. The Board and presenters discussed considerations for how the district boundaries would be established.

John Brabant moved to authorize Denise Wheeler to sign the final grant application when it is prepared by CHPC members; Rose Wheeler seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

- d) Town Hall Update: The Historic Preservation Committee expressed their desire that the Town Hall project be included on the Town Meeting warning, to both continue volunteer motivation and sustain the grant-funded fundraising consultant's ability to apply for and receive grants (with demonstrated Town support). The Committee and Selectboard reviewed (without endorsing) the proposed floor plan, including ADA accessible features, and the site plan (including building moving considerations). The Selectboard and the HPC discussed the need to identify the uses of the building and convert these needs into a space needs plan, around which the design should be completed. Details covered included the downstairs floor plan, clarifying the office space needs balanced with historic preservation considerations, displaying Town historic documents, the cost of a sprinkler system, and an initial "phase one" cost estimate. The group discussed the "phase one" cost items that the warning language may include. The newly formed Town Hall Renovation Committee, in coordination with the fundraising consultant, may in the next two weeks gather the information needed to include it for the Town Meeting warning. The Selectboard discussed the need to keep in mind the cost to voters, and the benefits that voters expect to see.

6. Business Items for Possible Vote

a) Budget Review:

- i) Warning – first draft: The Selectboard Administrator will create; this will be revisited.
- ii) Highways – budget first draft: The Selectboard and the Operations Manager discussed how the manner of accounting for grants affects this year's surplus amount. The Town Treasurer will research and return to the Board regarding the advisable method of grant accounting. The Operations Manager and the Selectboard completed a detailed review of the proposed Highway budget.

The Operations Manager reviewed the Capital Plan, which identifies liabilities and projects future liabilities through FY25-26; the question of owning versus renting a chipper to keep roadsides clear was also discussed, as well as grant opportunities. The Operations Manager reported the Town has sent gravel for sieve analysis to the State and will update the Selectboard upon receipt of findings; he informed the Selectboard of the changes and efforts the department has implemented to improve gravel quality.

- iii) Highway Grants–first draft: The Operations Manager identified the grants the Town has applied for, which are all in-kind contributions on the part of the Town; the Selectboard reviewed a list of grants since 2014.

The Road Commissioner reported on the process of interviewing a new employee. The Selectboard agreed that they would approve a bonus amount of net \$250 for the road crew next meeting.

- iv) VMERS Contribution: The Town Treasurer shared information on VMERS plan options; Calais has a plan in which the Town contributes more than the minimum amount established by state statute. The Selectboard and Treasurer considered communication with the Road Department regarding their VMERS contribution, and intend to speak with employees directly next week.

- v) Other Operating Expenses: The Selectboard and Town Treasurer reviewed Other Operating Expenses in detail.

- 7. Review of Assignments, Minutes, Warrants, Upcoming Meetings:
 - a) Approval of Minutes: This item has been moved to a future meeting.
 - b) Warrants: Invoices and board orders were reviewed and processed for payment.
 - c) Assignments: None.

- 8. Other Business: The Town has an executive interest in a Calais Land Trust property. Sharon Winn Fannon moved to authorize the Selectboard chair to sign the Armstrong E Grant of Executory Interest. John Brabant seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

- 9. Adjournment: Rose Pelchuck made a motion to adjourn at 10:47pm. The motion was seconded, voted on and carried 5-0.

Date: 12/12/2017 Respectfully Submitted, Katie Lane-Karnas, Recording Secretary
Approved by the Selectboard at the 1/8/18 meeting