

## Selectboard Meeting Minutes

*Monday, July 23, 2018 at 7pm at the Calais Town Office*

**Present:** Denise Wheeler (Chair), John Brabant (Vice Chair), Rose Pelchuck (Member), Sharon Winn Fannon (Member, leaving at 8:40pm), Clif Emmons (Member), Katie Lane-Karnas (Recording Secretary), Jerome Lipani, John McCullough, Donna Fitch, Sandra Ferver, Alfred Larrabee

1. Call to Order: Denise Wheeler called the meeting to order at 7:03 pm.
2. Public Comment: None.
3. Additions/Changes to the Agenda: Donna Fitch requested adding the lift contract to the Town Hall Renovation discussion.
4. Updates:
  - a) Treasurer: The Town Treasurer reported that NEMRC is very efficient, although Windows 10 and NEMRC are having some interface issues; she explained problems and workarounds.
    - i) Audit: The auditors were last in the office on July 13, and a draft management letter should be ready within two weeks of that date. They anticipate needing one additional day in the office, and most of their work is being done in their own office.
    - ii) Set town tax rate: The 2018 final grand list was created the morning of the meeting, and as of this date is calculated to be \$2,13,117.46. The Town Treasurer and Selectboard considered the town tax rate, the local contract tax rate (which considers entities that have been voted on to be exempt from tax, such as the Adamant Coop, and the amount of money these parcels would have contributed to the non-residential education tax rate if they did not have a contract on them) and the veteran's exemption tax rate (Calais permits the full amount allowed by law, \$40,000, while the state only recognizes \$10,000 and the difference needs to be made up by taxes collected). Sandra explained that the tax rate may only be set out four digits, not five. The Selectboard and Town Treasurer considered the amount of money raised by applying slightly different tax rates for each of the three categories and discussed what constitutes a reasonable result, recognizing there's no tax formula that achieves the precise budget needed. Former Clerk Donna Fitch commented the approach set out is consistent with best practice for setting the rates in the Town's past.

The proposed tax rates result is a difference of .0051 between last year and this year (equating to \$5.10 per \$100K of assessed value). The Selectboard thanked the Town Treasurer for her work in gathering and presenting the information, and their appreciation for the spreadsheet documents established by former Town Treasurer Donna Fitch.

Denise Wheeler made a motion to set the 2018 town tax rate at 0.6838; the veteran's exemption, as voted by the town, at 0.0010; and the non-tax contracted properties rate at 0.0047, for a total town tax rate of 0.6895. Rose Pelchuck seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

iii) Misc.: The Town Treasurer discussed having a town credit card for situations where volunteers and employees have to make purchases using their personal funds and then be reimbursed. The Selectboard discussed the need for a clear policy for holding a credit card and making credit card purchases. Sandra added that the Town is down \$12,000 in delinquent taxes due and is enjoying a very low delinquency at this time. She outlined the process for getting the tax bills printed (which she anticipates being Monday, July 30, at which time she will have received the homestead declarations from the state), and the communications and delays from the tax department this year. The Selectboard encouraged the Treasurer to take time off in exchange for her working many days outside of her schedule this summer.

b) Road Commissioner

i) Truck/motor replacement: The Road Commissioner is working with J&B and has located a crate motor (brand new) to replace the broken motor, available this week (\$24,297 with the new motor installed). The truck could be sold privately or traded in (valued at \$45,000); the new truck has been ordered and will be a lease to purchase option from Charlebois. The Selectboard asked the Road Commissioner to buy and install the new motor with J&B, and to confirm warranty on the new motor. The quote on the equipment for the new truck is \$72,000. The Selectboard thanked the RC again for his work and perseverance on this issue.

ii) Jack Hill Rd. Culvert: The culvert company misplaced the contract for the culvert order; the Operations Manager posted on FPF to notify the public that the culvert delivery has been delayed a few weeks as a result of this error on the part of the company. Gravel Construction did not charge the town for the delay in work. The Road Commissioner will communicate with the school bus company about any delays beyond the town's control regarding the culvert work interfering with bus routes.

iii) ROW for E. Calais Church painting project – extend date: The Chair notified the Selectboard that permit number ROW 01-2018, which does not involve closing of the road, and which the Road Commissioner continues to monitor, will be extended a few weeks as a hired contractor finishes the work. The Town will supply orange cones and signage to alert the traveling public.

iv) Reappoint Road Commissioner: The Selectboard complimented the Road Commissioner on his creative thinking in generating a compromise solution to the Hayden Bridge guardrail considerations.

Denise Wheeler made a motion to reappoint Alfred Larrabee to Road Commissioner; Sharon Winn Fannon seconded and the motion passed 4-0 (John Brabant was temporarily not present).

c) Operations Manager: The Operations Manager was not present for an update.

d) Town Clerk: The Chair reminded the Board of the date of the August 14, 2018 Primary Election and the need for volunteers, as well as the time and effort already contributed by a number of people in testing the tabulator, attending trainings and preparing for the election.

5. Town Hall Renovation Committee: Donna Fitch reported that the Town Hall has received a gift of \$200,000; the donor currently remains anonymous, but will be revealed in the future. The building can now receive much detail work in earnest; the committee will continue to

pursue donations through foundations and perhaps create a fund at the end of the project that can be used to maintain the building in the future. Deconstruction Works began work today; part of the old stairway is exposed, and high water marks from various floods were revealed. The addition that is being torn off was built in 1984 and is not part of the historic building.

Geddes is coming August 1 to lift the building, which is anticipated to take 2 days. An RFP is being created to seek a contractor for the concrete work. Internet and phone are being moved to the telephone pole; power will be moved to a new pedestal, which John McCullough built. John specked out the electrical details and is working with people on fire and mechanical requirements. The Chair shared that John McCullough has worked day and night on this project and should be compensated for some amount of his hard work.

Rose Pelchuck motioned to authorize the Selectboard Chair to sign the Accessibility Systems lift contract; Clif Emmons seconded and the motion passed 5-0. The Committee is awaiting results of a Vermont Arts Council grant for accessibility.

The Chair reported on the Town Hall permit application to the DRB, and the need to divide the project in to two phases, the first being the raising and moving of the building, the second phase being decisions around the use of the building (which historically has included municipal and community uses). Sharon Winn Fannon moved to give the Chair permission to sign, present and speak to a letter on behalf of the Selectboard to the DRB to separate the project into two distinct phases. Rose Pelchuck seconded and the motion passed 5-0.

The Board discussed the DRB's members requiring appointment by the Selectboard, not the DRB itself, and thanked John McCullough for his work responding to extensive DRB questions.

6. Consideration of request for Special Events Ordinance: Sharon Winn Fannon shared sentiments regarding the differences between the towns of Berlin and Calais in terms of activities that would be affected by a required ordinance, and Calais' strength in solving problems as they present themselves in the spirit of a small community. (The Town of Berlin's special events permit was before the board as an example of what is used by another town.) The Board discussed the challenges of enforcement of an ordinance. Pat Finnie, who had expressed interest in the ordinance, was not present although the Chair had sent him the agenda. Rose Pelchuck commented that she received public feedback in alignment with Sharon Winn Fannon's comments; a special ordinance and enforcement are not needed in a town of this size. The Chair will look into what state regulations already exist in terms of size of the event and permitting or reporting, etc. John Brabant communicated with his neighbor Pat Finnie regarding moving a watering stop for a bicycle race to his house (creating a solution for Mr. Finney's concern) and discussed the potential that creating standards for an event ordinance actually could generate further liability for the Town and additional work for office staff. Clif Emmons and the Selectboard Chair echoed the comments shared, emphasizing the population size difference between Calais and Berlin and having not had a compelling reason to create an ordinance over the last many years. The Board unanimously agreed not to pursue a special events ordinance.
7. Discuss options for public access to "Google" folders and document: A concerned citizen raised the issue of the public gaining access to Google folders. The Chair suggested that she, Clif Emmons and Katie Lane-Karnas work with Scott Bassage to pursue a way to create a folder for members of the public to access. This group will get back to the Board with a suggestion.

8. Discuss EMFD quarterly meeting dates and missed meeting on 7/19/18: Bruce Johnson from East Montpelier electronically shared copies of documents discussed at a meeting that was not attended by any East Montpelier or Calais Selectboard members, and the Board discussed their disappointment that the EMFD did not communicate with the Boards in advance of the meeting. Rose Pelchuck (who served as administrative assistant for the EMFD for many years) will draft a letter from the Selectboard requesting exact dates of meetings, communication in advance of future meetings, and meeting with the Calais Selectboard to provide a summarized version of what was missed.
9. Appointments/Reappointments:
  - John Brabant moved to appoint Karin McNeill as TAC alternate. Clif Emmons seconded and the motion passed unanimously.
  - Clif Emmons moved and Rose Pelchuck seconded to reappoint Gail Graham & Charlotte Hannah Bassage to the Trails Committee, and the motion passed unanimously.
  - Rose Pelchuck moved and Clif Emmons seconded to appoint Judy Roberts, Katie Lane-Karnas & Scott Bassage as webmasters, and the motion passed unanimously.
10. Chair update, projects, etc.: Nelson Pond had a boat that caught fire and disintegrated into the pond; the event was reported to the State of Vermont HAZMAT Team.
  - Elisabeth Shedd has posted on FPF to purchase a draft horse; Board members continue to get phone calls (Alan and Susan Spaulding on Collar Hill have property on which Shedd has built a fence for her horses to graze). The Board discussed drafting a letter regarding not grazing horses and parking a wagon in the right of way.
  - The Board discussed their thoughts on media distribution of Calais' Act 46 resolution.
11. Review and approve minutes, warrants: The Board reviewed the invoices and orders were processed for payment. Approval of the minutes was tabled until a subsequent meeting.
12. Executive Session: John Brabant made a motion to go into Executive Session at 9:04 pm for the purpose of discussing legal matters in accordance with Title 1 V.S.A. § 313 (a)(1). The motion was seconded, voted on and carried 4-0. The Regular Session resumed at 9:20 pm. Denise Wheeler had nothing to report publicly.
13. Adjournment: Rose Pelchuck made a motion to adjourn at 9:21 pm. The motion was seconded, voted on and carried 4-0.

Date: 7/24/2018 Respectfully Submitted, Katie Lane-Karnas, Recording Secretary  
*Approved by the Selectboard at the 8/27/2018 meeting*