



TOWN OF CALAIS

3120 Pekin Brook Road
East Calais, Vermont 05650
802-456-8720
calaisvermont.gov

SPECIAL SELECTBOARD MEETING

Final Minutes - Approved 5/22/23

Monday, April 17, 2023

6:00 pm Calais Town Hall

Attending: Jamie Moorby, Gabrielle Malina, Anne Winchester, Anne Toolan, Jordan Keyes, Barbara Butler, Scott Bassage, Charlotte Hanna Bassage, Teegan Dykeman-Brown and Rose Pelchuck.

Actions:

The meeting was Called to Order by Anne Winchester at 6:02 pm. Jordan made a **motion** to go into Executive Session under 1 V.S.A. subsections 313(a) (1)(A) and (a)(3) to discuss potential contracts and employment options regarding the Curtis Pond Dam reconstruction project. Jordan Keyes made a **motion** to resume the Regular Session at 6:50 pm. The motion was seconded, voted on and carried 5-0.

Gabrielle Malina made a **motion** to retain Thomas Melloni, Esq. from Paul, Frank & Collins P.C. for the remainder of the Curtis Pond Dam reconstruction project. The motion was seconded, voted on and carried 3-1-1. Anne Toolan voted no and Jamie Moorby abstained from the vote.

Changes to the Agenda and Administrative Business

Approval of Meeting Minutes – Jordan Keyes made a motion to approve the Minutes from the April 3, 2023 meeting. The motion was seconded, voted on and carried 5-0.

Appointments for Town Offices, Boards and Commissions:

Curtis Pond Harbor Master – Mark Whitman	Term expires in 2024
Curtis Pond Island Oversight – Jamie Moorby, Heidi Thompson and Dirk VanSusteren	Terms expire in 2024
Delinquent Tax Collector – Sandra Ferver	Term expires in 2024
Gospel Hollow Warden – Andy Felice	Term expires in 2024
Town Health Officer – Jay Copping	Term expires in 2024
Tree Warden Assistant – Drew Lamb	Term expires in 2024
Webmaster – Jamie Moorby	Term expires in 2024
Zoning Administrator – John McCullough	Term expires in 2024
CV Fiber Delegate – David Healy	Term expires in 2024
CV Fiber Alternate – Jared Thomas	Term expires in 2024
CVRPC Alternate – Janice Ohlsson	Term expires in 2024
CVRPC Transportation Advisory Committee Delegate – David Ellenbogen	Term expires in 2024
CVRPC Transportation Advisory Committee Alternate – Karin McNeill	Term expires in 2024
CVRPC Clean Water Advisory Delegate – John Brabant	Term expires in 2024

Gabrielle Malina made a **motion** to approve the above slate to serve in these respective positions for the terms noted. The motion was seconded, voted on and carried 4-0. Anne Toolan abstained from the vote.

Assistant Zoning Administrator – Gabrielle Malina made a **motion** to appoint Jan Ohlsson to a one-year term that expires in 2024. The motion was seconded, voted on and carried 5-0.

Liaison to the Sheriff's Department – Barbara Butler agreed to serve in this capacity since the calls come to the town office as issues arise. Gabrielle Malina made a **motion** to appoint Barbara Butler to a one-year term that expires in 2024. The motion was seconded, voted on and carried 5-0.

Certified Local Government (CLG) Grant - The Selectboard discussed a CLG Grant from David Schutz for \$9,000.00 for an archaeological study that is required by the Army Corp of Engineers for the Curtis Pond Dam reconstruction project. The Curtis Pond Association match is \$9,000.00. Scott Bassage informed the Board that this amount will be reimbursed when the project is complete and receipts with necessary paperwork are provided.

Selectboard Liaison to Curtis Pond Dam Reconstruction Project - At the last meeting the Selectboard appointed Jordan Keyes to serve on the Road Crew Union collective bargaining team. Jordan had previously been appointed as the lead Selectboard member on the Curtis Pond Dam Project. Anne Winchester made a **motion** to appoint Gabrielle Malina instead to be the CPA Selectboard liaison. The motion was seconded, voted on and carried 5-0.

Horse Boarding Contract – Elisabeth Shedd had violated the Ordinance to Regulate Livestock Running at Large and the town impounded her horses some time ago. The person boarding Ms. Shedd's horses on behalf of the town, requests that a current Selectboard member sign the contract that was entered into with the last Selectboard, which detail the costs and conditions for boarding the horses. Anne Winchester made a **motion** that Anne Toolan be authorized to sign the contract with the people who are caring for and boarding these horses. The motion was seconded, voted on and carried 5-0.

Zoom Virtual Meeting App – The town currently pays for two Zoom accounts: one for Committee/Commission use and one for Selectboard use. Now that most meetings are being held in person, there is less concern that two groups will need to use Zoom at the same time. Our Webmaster has renewed one account, the Selectboard account, and asks whether we should let the second one go. The Selectboard was in agreement to have just one Zoom account. Jordan Keyes noted that Office 365 has Teams for meetings that could be used in the future as necessary.

Public Comment – Town Clerk, Teegan Dykeman-Brown, will be at a cyber security training for two full days next week. Gabrielle Malina asks that she bring back knowledge to show the importance of how easily email addresses can get hacked.

Finances – The Selectboard met with Town Treasurer, Sandra Ferver, to discuss overall financial situation, long term financial planning, delinquent taxes, current practices and situations, and the current Delinquent Tax Policy via speakerphone.

Delinquent Taxes – Sandra Ferver has collected close to \$170,000 this fiscal year. Four parcels in particular have outstanding taxes from 2021 and 2022. None of these parcel owners have payment agreements with the Town. Once it goes to the attorney for tax sale, the parcel owner no longer can work with the delinquent tax collector for payment arrangements. Jordan Keyes made a **motion** to authorize Sandra Ferver to send the following three delinquent tax parcels: Mazza, Rogers, and Waiter to town tax attorney, Gloria Rice, for collection. The motion was seconded, voted on and carried 5-0.

Jordan Keyes made a **motion** to allow Mr. Harris more time to comply since he made a payment today and has said that he will make a final payment in mid-June and that if he misses the June payment, the parcel be sent to Gloria Rice, Esq. for collection. The motion was seconded, voted and carried 5-0.

Authorize revision of the Delinquent Tax Policy – Sandra Ferver proposes to shorten and revise the current Delinquent Tax Policy. Sandra is working on desired text that she believes is more effective and will communicate to taxpayers in a more dignified way in order to get the taxes paid. The Selectboard agreed that Sandra Ferver will draft a revision for the Selectboard to review.

The town holds escrow money in the amount of 40,000.00 plus for the Robinson's property. There are competing interest for this money. Sandra just wanted to inform the Selectboard that the funds should not be released until various claims have been settled. Gloria Rice is handling this matter.

Annual Audit and Single Audit - The Selectboard reviewed the contract for an annual financial audit with Sullivan and Powers for FY 2023. They do have some time in July to do the audit; historically the town had a three-year contract with this firm, which included a discount. The contract will be signed at next meeting. Sandra Ferver explained the different meaning of the term “audit”.

Town audit is reconciliation services from NEMRC.

Professional audit is the Sullivan & Powers annual audit.

Single audit is a federally required audit when you spend more than \$750,000 in federal grant money in a single fiscal year. This type of audit has to go out to bid and the town can't use our regular accounting firms. Hopefully the town can avoid having to do this kind of audit by staying under the grant money threshold.

Internal controls - NEMRC will still balance the checkbook but will no longer be writing checks.

Current Financial Situation - Sandra Ferver reported the town is in good fiscal shape, with a healthy fund balance and no worry of financial danger. Some budget line items are very high such as legal fees \$88,000 to date (budgeted 10,000) and general office contracts line \$57,000 (budgeted 8,400). The Highway Budget has a surplus of \$290,000 due to vacant positions with no wages spent for the last quarter and the insurance line item needs to be re-coded since some of the expense comes out of the highway budget side. By statute the general government and highway funds are separate. The budget is only a guide but you hope you get in the ball park, Sandra said. Any loan for more than a year needs voter approval. Expenditure side is top heavy this year. Some legal expenses were unforeseen and others may be able to be lowered due to policies. Parcel owners with delinquent taxes have to pay the tax collection fee, not the town. Prior Selectboard approval for expenses to be paid is needed; those expenses are reviewed on the warrants and signed off by the Selectboard.

Explanation of large East Calais Community Trust check to be drawn on next board order – for April 24th it will be on the warrant that night.

Status of Grants and Reserve Funds – Sandra Ferver reported that all grants in play have been identified and she now has a good idea of what is going on.

Services the Treasurer can provide to the Selectboard – Sandra Ferver outlined the tasks she will provide to the town as follows: continue to provide a monthly financial report to the Selectboard, provide a weekly update on numbers, archival services of payroll, do the bond application for the Curtis Pond Dam project for the town, advising the Board of upcoming deadlines for setting the town tax rate that will include a review of the process to set the tax rate. (Sandra will provide a spreadsheet and explain what goes into setting the tax rate.) Donna Fitch organized the grants spreadsheet but doesn't want to do the administrator part. Sandra said that Toby Talbott manages the highway grants and that leaves only 4 non-highway grants. Gabrielle manages the ARPA grants Nick Emlen manages the emergency management grant, and we have two CLG grants, one of which is essentially finished and the other Sandra offered to manage. Sandra will keep a close eye on the federal grant funds to not hit the \$750,000 ceiling. The Selectboard praised Sandra for her clarity and level of detail given to the treasurer position and thanked her for coming to the meeting.

Potential for creating a Finance Advisory Committee – Sandra Ferver stands by her commitment to be part of a Finance Advisory Committee. Charlotte Hanna Bassage explained what a finance committee can do such as come up with information to base decisions on for example, wages and salaries. Jordan Keyes agreed to visit what the scope of a Finance Advisory Committee would be and then be able to determine what would be helpful for the Board. Anne Toolan asked how many people would be on the committee, what kind of expertise would they have? Trustees of public funds could be a fabulous resource, as well as Ed Clodfelter. Rose Pelchuck mentioned the resources available through VLCT. Sandra Ferver noted we have a capital plan for highway equipment replacement. Anne Winchester said we will continue to have this discussion. Jordan Keyes asked Charlotte to outline the scope of items and name who would be participating. Charlotte will provide a draft to get the Board thinking.

Jordan Keyes called for adjournment at 9:00 pm.

Rose Pelchuck
Interim Recording Secretary