

Selectboard Meeting Minutes

December 15, 2014

Approved

Present: Selectboard members Scott Bassage, John Brabant, Rose Pelchuck, Denise Wheeler. Toby Talbot was at a fire call and not present. Donna Fitch, Clerk. Others present: Gus Seelig, Craig Line.

The continuation of the meeting of December 8 was called to order at 7:08 pm at the Town Office by Denise Wheeler, Chair.

Storm and Road Conditions: Discussion of the severe snowstorm and Calais roads with praise for the road crew. The Selectboard received a letter from Peg Bowen describing very bad road conditions, unplowed roads, as she traveled home during last week's storm. Rose Pelchuck expressed concern about the condition of the Adamant Road the night of Tuesday or Wednesday, December 9th or 10th, at 7:15pm. County Road and Haggett Roads in E. Montpelier were plowed but Calais roads in that area had 6 to 8 inches of snow and were very slippery. Rose suggested staggering hours for the road crew during a storm to ensure the roads are plowed and sanded not only for the traveling public but also emergency vehicle access. Untrimmed trees and brush, laden with heavy, wet snow also poses a danger to all those using our roads. Denise Wheeler suggested creating a storm plan to address these issues.

Hazard Mitigation Plan: Several changes were made to the Plan. Scott Bassage made a motion to adopt the Plan with the changes. Rose seconded the motion and the motion passed, 4-0. Denise will send the changes to Kim McPhee at Central VT Regional Planning.

Town and School Meetings: The March 3, 2015 town and school meetings will take place at the Calais Elementary School with the school meeting beginning at 8:30am and the town meeting at 10:15am. Moderators Gus Seelig and Craig Line and Election Presiding Officer Donna Fitch discussed with the Selectboard the set-up at the school and possibilities for future town meetings.

Town Meeting 2015:

- People have more energy in the morning and more time is put into the first warning items. Therefore, "big ticket" items (budgets and purchases) should be at the beginning of the warning.
- Additional chairs are available, ie., more than were put out at the special town meeting in November.
- Metal folding chairs are uncomfortable if sitting for a long time; may want to consider new chairs if town/school meetings continue to be held at school.
- Set up chairs and bleachers facing the long wall in a semi-circle.
- Lunch: Are there enough tables? Should tables be set up in a different room? The Board of Civil Authority should coordinate with the school and Historic Kents Corner. Scott reported that Linda Schutz had already met with school board chair Charlotte Bassage. Scott will ask Charlotte (Justice of the Peace) if she is willing to coordinate the logistics with Historic Kents Corner.
- The Justices of the Peace, as members of the Board of Civil Authority, will need to be actively involved in helping with the meetings. An organizational meeting of the BCA will be held in February 2015.
- A BCA members needs to take responsibility for overall coordination and supervision during the meetings. The clerk and assistant clerk are unable to do this during the meeting.
- Gus' daughter will take a look at the sound system at the school over Christmas break. Craig reported the sound system was good at the school meeting on December 4. If necessary a sound system can be rented from Buch Speiler.

- Suggestion to have 4 mic runners. Currently, there are 3 mics.
- The town clerk will set up two check-in tables, dividing the alphabet, to move people through the line faster.
- BCA members should hand voters a voter card, ie., not allow them to take from a pile.

Discussion of future meetings:

- Mingling town and school meetings, ie., putting on the same warning.
- Switching year to year which meeting is first.
- Should a charter be initiated to change town meeting to “as late as the Saturday after town meeting day”? Therefore, town meeting could be held on the first Tuesday in March or any day or night through the following Saturday.

John expressed concern about not using the town hall and all agreed that the town hall should be used as much as possible.

Delinquent Tax Collector: Brief discussion about creating a charter for Selectboard to hire the delinquent tax collector rather than having the position filled by vote from the floor at town meeting.

Sand Hill Road Discontinuance Proceedings: Denise reported, per John Klesch lawyer at Stitzel Page and Fletcher, the Selectboard cannot turn Sand Hill Road into a pent road in its decision. A separate document can be created that states “based on discussion during the Sand Hill Road discontinuance hearing it was requested to have a pent road.” The decision needs to be written within 60 days and the next selectboard meeting of December 22, is 56 days. Abutters should be notified that the public hearing is being reopened to explain this change. Denise will send wording to Donna so she can send letters.

The Fiscal Year 2016 Budget: Capital West’s dispatching charges are going up from \$417 a quarter to \$952 a quarter in 2015. Rose said a letter should be sent to Capital West regarding the increase. John expressed concern that Capital West can make this increase without speaking to the town first. Denise requested the selectboard send her their input which she will consolidate into a letter essentially saying that invoices will not be paid until there is communication between the town and Cap West. Denise praised the town clerk/treasurer for the long hours she works, the tasks she takes on for the selectboard and suggested a raise of 3%. Other than one cost of living raise, the clerk/treasurer has not had a raise since she started in the position four years ago. Benefits were added to the position of assistant clerk/treasurer as the number of hours worked constitutes full time per the town’s personnel manual. A tablet and/or small laptop for the selectboard chair was added to the budget. Microsoft office software was included in the zoning budget. Donna will check the statutes regarding whether the selectboard can make the decision as to how to compensate the delinquent tax collector.

Executive Session: Denise made a motion to go into executive session in accordance with 1 V.S.A. § 313 (a)(3) for the purpose of discussing a personnel matter. The motion was seconded by Scott, voted and carried 4-0. After coming out of executive session at 9:25pm, Denise said there was nothing to report.

The meeting adjourned at 9:30pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Donna Fitch, Clerk