

Selectboard Meeting Minutes

August 10, 2015

Approved

Present: Selectboard members Scott Bassage, John Brabant, Rose Pelchuck, Denise Wheeler (Toby Talbot absent); Donna Fitch, clerk; Gail Graham, Rick Purchase, Diane Cleary, Rachael Bliss, Mary Vanvegthen, Scot C. Richards, Geraldine Gilman, Doug Lilley, Bill Powell, Rod Buck, Stephen Duke, Margaret Bowen, Gus Seelig.

Selectboard Chair Denise Wheeler called the meeting to order at 7pm.

Public Comment on Non-agenda Items

Painting Town Office - Donna Fitch called the references given by painter Robert Harris, who submitted a bid to paint the town office. Donna will ask him to attend a future meeting to review the scope of services to ensure his estimate covers all expenses.

HPC Task Force - Scott Bassage reported that Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) met with Lisa Ryan of Arc and Arrow Consulting who has been hired to work on a plan for preserving the Town Hall. A task force has been formed to work with her with the first meeting on August 12 at 7pm at the town hall. Meetings are open to the public.

NCNC and VTel - Scot Richards, representing North Calais Neighborhood Coalition (NCNC), presented the board with a letter consolidating the issues raised by Calais residents in opposition to the proposed construction of a wifi tower on Bayne Comolli Road. He thanked the Board for its support and urged them to continue the legal appeal, saying the money is well spent and affects all people, not just residents on Bayne Comolli Road. NCNC has party status but can only address aesthetic issues while the Selectboard's status allows it to address additional issues. Mary Vanvegthen also encouraged the Board to continue the process. Scott Bassage asked if NCNC was willing to be financially involved and to what extent. The response was yes. John Brabant asked that the group bring back their commitment to paying legal fees, saying the Board had hired legal counsel in order to seek party status but had to look at legal costs in the context of other town expenses. Geraldine Gilman questioned whether the expense was actually on behalf of all neighbors. John explained that the board represents the whole town and sometimes that means citizens in one of the villages.

Town Hall Task Force Members

Denise made a motion to appoint the following people to the HPC Task Force: Larry Bush, Gail Graham, Curtis Johnson (with Curtis possibly being replaced by another person from North Calais), Cy Lamberton, John McCullough, Jan Ohlsson. The task force will meet from August through December. Scott seconded the motion. Motion passed 4-0.

Minutes of July 27, 2015

Rose made a motion to approve the minutes of July 27, 2015. Scott seconded the motion. Motion passed 4-0.

Operations Manager Update

Denise read an email update from Operations Manager Toby Talbot who was not at the meeting. Road Commissioner Alfred Larrabee is on vacation for two weeks. The road crew has a list of projects and Toby will supervise. The County Road paving is done and the road crew is working on rebuilding the shoulders. Better Back Roads grants have been submitted for projects on Mirror Lake and Singleton Roads. The brush dump at the recycling/trash depot is closed. Rose asked if RFPs had gone out for the Center Road culvert.

Petition to Hold Special Meeting to Vote Kellogg Hubbard Library (KHL) Appropriation by Australian Ballot

Denise listed the chronology of past votes on Australian ballot petitions pertaining to KHL: Town Meeting, March 4, 2014; Town Meeting, March 3, 2015; Special Town Meeting, Nov. 8, 2015. She asked the petitioners to hold the petition for a vote at Town Meeting 2016. John and Rose expressed support for a vote at town meeting. Doug Lilley and Gail Graham spoke to Australian ballot allowing everyone the opportunity to vote. John Brabant acknowledged that Calais is a diverse community and town meeting doesn't represent that diversity, but KHL is only a small part of the picture. Denise suggested the petitioners meet with Selectboard members to discuss alternatives. Doug refused, saying he couldn't turn his back on the petitioners. Scott suggested a citizen budget committee. Donna pointed out that bigger monetary issues are discussed when planning the town budget. With the meetings held at night, people who work during the day could attend. Rose stated she was not in favor of revisiting the Australian ballot issue for KHL. Diane Cleary said that if KHL is being petitioned for Australian ballot shouldn't all the nonprofits be included? Town meeting gives everyone a chance to speak and if people really want to attend they can make it happen.

Scott made a motion to hold a special town meeting on September 26, 2015 to discuss and vote on "Shall the town of Calais adopt the appropriation for the Kellogg Hubbard Library annually at Town Meeting Day by Australian ballot," contingent upon the Calais Elementary School Board holding a meeting that same day in response to a petition to vote the school budget by Australian ballot. John seconded the motion. Motion passed, 3-1, with Rose voting no.

Denise requested the minutes state she is not happy with this outcome and she asked if Doug would work with the board on seeking alternatives. Doug stated that, yes, he would commit to working with the Board.

Recycling Center Violation

The town received a Notice of Alleged Violation from the Agency of Natural Resources (ANR) for the recycling depot on Moscow Woods Road for unauthorized brush dumping, storing solid waste outside a certified facility and failure to submit annual reports. Toby followed up with ANR and reported via Donna that the area where the brush was being dumped needs to be closed up and reseeded. He will work with the road crew on this. The tonnage of recyclables that Brian Perry & Sons have collected needs to be reported. Toby will look into this. The annual recycling facility report needs to be submitted for 2013 and 2014. These actions need to be taken by August 19. Bill Powell, the town's representative to Central VT Solid Waste Management District, offered to help. Denise made a motion for she and John to respond to the notice in writing and to sign the letter on behalf of the Selectboard. Scott seconded the motion. Motion passed 4-0. The shed, which had non-recyclables in it, has now been emptied, Scott reported. John said he thought that the town was exempt from the reporting requirement. He will look into that.

Memorial Hall Tax Status

Peg Bowen spoke briefly about Memorial Hall's tax exempt status. Donna will copy the handout she provided showing the legislative act from 1988 that exempts the property from taxes. Denise apologized for the confusion about Memorial Hall being on a proposed agenda list; it is not on the agenda for tonight. Peg said the building may have to be sold.

Hudson Cemetery

It was agreed that the listers should assign Hudson Cemetery (George Road) its own parcel number and separate it from Shortt Cemetery on the grand list. (The Hudson cemetery deed is in Book 36 page 510.)

Investment of Cemetery Funds

Diane Sherman, attorney with Stitzel, Page and Fletcher, wrote a legal opinion regarding whether the town could invest cemetery funds in the Vermont Community Foundation (VCF). State statutes do not currently allow this type of investment. Rod Buck, Trustee of Public Funds, explained the law was written 60 years ago (18 V.S.A. § 5384). Rod spoke with Sarah Jarvis, attorney with VT League of Cities and Towns (VLCT), who agreed the law needs updating to reflect modern investment strategies and that funds other than cemetery funds should be included. Karen Horn, VLCT legislative liaison, said the House Ways and Means Committee is aware of this need. Rod said he would write a letter to Representative Janet Ancel expressing VLCT's support of such legislation and he will also enlist VCF's support. He noted that being able to invest in VCF would provide the town of Calais with a permanent solution for investment that is not dependent on one trustee of public funds. It was agreed that:

- 1) Rod will write a letter to Karen Horn.
- 2) The Trustees of Public Funds will meet next.
- 3) Rod will draft a letter to Janet Ancel for the Selectboard to review and sign.

Outside Auditor

The three town auditor positions are currently vacant. \$9,000 is budgeted to hire an outside auditor. Denise asked Mike Segale of Fothergill, Segale and Valley to give the town an estimate for auditing services. Donna will provide him with a Quickbooks file and the equipment inventory capital plan.

Computer

Scott will acquire a refurbished laptop for Denise from Tom Frost.

Zoning Administrator Salary

John made a motion to advertise the zoning administrator position at a salary of \$400/month plus expenses. The motion was seconded. Motion passed 4-0.

Town Plan

Saying "we are almost there," Denise said Gary Root has updated the Town Plan to date. The Planning Commission has a couple more changes as does Denise. The Plan will come back to the Selectboard soon.

Web Site

The board voted to renew the .gov domain name and reimburse Rose for the expense.

Land Containing Elementary School Septic System

The school has an easement on Cadorette's land for its septic system. John had agreed to write a letter to the school board regarding researching reimbursement to the Cadorettes for this easement. John said he would call the school board chair.

Executive session

At 9:15 pm Denise made a motion to go into executive session in accordance with Title 1 V.S.A. § 313 (a)(1) for the purpose of discussing a legal matter. The motion was seconded, voted and carried 4-0. At 10:30 pm, the Board came out of executive session with nothing to report. The meeting adjourned at 10:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted

Donna Fitch, Clerk

Action items:

- ✓ Donna – call Robert Harris; send items to M. Segale
- ✓ John – contact Chauntelle Eckhaus re: Cadorette land; find out about ANR reporting requirements for recycle facility
- ✓ Denise and Doug Lilley & etc. – meet re: voting access, Australian ballot
- ✓ Denise & John – write a response letter to ANR re: recycle violation
- ✓ Toby – block off/reseed area at recycle center; inquire about recycle tonnage
- ✓ Denise – town plan updates; ZA job description
- ✓ Scott – laptop for Denise
- ✓ Listers – parcel i.d. for Hudson Cemetery
- ✓ Rod – contact Karen Horn; draft letter to Janet Ancel

Future Agenda Items:

- Paying clerk for special town meeting
- Center Road culvert bid status
- Permit application for Curtis Pond Dam construction
- Forming a budget committee
- Curb cut application for Emlen on Kent Hill Rd
- Update on Fellows property tax sale matter
- Discuss and decide Dodge Rd. discontinuance matter
- VLCT model policy discussion for DRB alternates
- Continue curb cuts and driveways discussion
- ZA hiring process and revised job description
- GAR Road
- VLCT Act Relating to Constables
- Memorial Hall History