

CALAIS SELECTBOARD MINUTES

LOCATION: Calais Town Office

MONDAY, MARCH 27, 2017 @ 7:00 P.M.

Approved 4-10-17

Present: Selectboard Members Denise Wheeler, Rob Richert, John Brabant, Sharon Winn Fannon

Others Present: Lisa Stoudt, Board Recording Secretary; Judith Robert, Town Clerk; Toby Talbot, Scott Bassage, Alfred Larrabee, Greg Pelchuck, Mike Garand

Denise Wheeler called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

● **Public Comment on Non-Agenda Items:** Scott Bassage asked that the Selectboard consider adding the Town Hall culvert to the list of Structure Grant projects. He shared some of the history of this issue, including the effect of the 1984 flood. He suggested that the town ask Doug Newton to complete a survey of the area and to provide information to consider. Rob Richert asked that Scott share some of the related documents electronically. Toby Talbot noted that the Structure Grant is due on April 15th. He reported that another culvert is also being considered for this grant. Toby explained that the town road crew would provide 10% “in kind” toward projects under this grant. John Brabant stated that the culvert project near the Town Hall might more appropriately be a bridge structure project. Some discussion followed around whether a culvert or a bridge might be more appropriate. After discussion the consensus was that a culvert would be sufficient. Scott Bassage explained that this issue has been studied by engineers; he will share information with Rob Richert.

● **Review & Sign Town Invoices, Highway Orders and Budget Update:** Invoices and Board Orders were circulated and signed by Board members.

● **Appointments and reappointments:** Sharon Winn Fannon moved to appoint Denise Wheeler as alternate to the Development Review Board. Seconded by Rob Richert, this motion carried unanimously. Denise Wheeler moved to approve the appointments as presented on the document: 2017 Appointments/ Reappointments: March 27, 2017 , including Toby Talbot for one year as Emergency Planning Coordinator. Seconded by John Brabant, this motion carried unanimously. Denise Wheeler asked Selectboard members to share with community members about some of the vacancies on the appointments list. Rob Richert shared some names of community members he had pursued; Denise Wheeler invited them to call her if they would like to discuss any of the appointed positions.

● **Approve Minutes:** John Brabant moved to approve the minutes of March 13, 2017. Seconded by Rob Richert. Discussion: Sharon Winn Fannon shared some suggested edits. This motion carried unanimously, with noted edits.

● **Road Commissioner update:** Alfred Larrabee shared an update from the Road Crew. He shared information about some necessary truck repairs. Discussion followed around whether these repairs would be covered by the warranty. He stated that this year the crew has used twice the sand as what was used last year. He shared that recent weather has made for difficult work.

● **Operations Manager update:** Toby Talbot shared that the excavator loan application through the Vermont Municipal Loan Fund (for municipal heavy equipment) is due on April 15th. He will complete this application; if this is not approved, then a loan will be sought through a traditional bank.

He noted that Shawna Clifford from the Agency of Transportation will be at the Town Office Tuesday March 28 to discuss Road Operations issues.

Toby Talbot stated that he is still willing to serve on the Vermont State Police Advisory Board, and that he will serve as the emergency plan coordinator for another year.

● **Greg Pelchuck – plowing during snow storms:** Mr. Pelchuck noted the town now has a road policy, which he supports. He shared concerns about road conditions on Lightening Ridge Road after a recent storm. He understood the concerns around providing opportunities for road crew members to rest during storms; he asked the Operations Manager to plan accordingly with some flexibility around scheduling. Some discussion followed around substitute road crew schedules. Mr. Pelchuck stated that the crew had done a great job, but that there were some gaps in the plowing service, and he expressed concerns with safety, specifically, ambulance accessibility. He suggested planning for a night shift during storms as needed.

Some discussion followed around challenges such as lack of cell service, if, for instance, one person is working the plow overnight (alone) and runs into trouble. John Brabant asked whether Alfred would consider having a radio at his house to be accessible. Alfred said he is open to that idea.

John Brabant expressed that there are instances when living on a back road/ dirt road in rural Vermont results in these types of situations: a temporarily impassable road during an extreme storm.

Some discussion followed around having an on-call staff list for such circumstances. The topic of “on call” staff was discussed. Sharon Winn Fannon asked whether there is a shared understanding of which roads are considered “main arteries” during these circumstances. Toby Talbot referred to the roads policy and roads classification.

Alfred Larrabee noted that the over-time budget this year is overspent. Toby Talbot shared his experience with emergency vehicles accessing locations during all weather. Toby noted emergency vehicles are equipped to access remote areas during extreme conditions, so that concern doesn’t need to weigh heavily in the discussion. Some discussion followed around the town crew routes and assignments during storms.

Sharon Winn Fannon suggested that, since this is the end of the season, and given the storm that created these circumstances (the fifth largest in Vermont history), a solution need not be found tonight. The Selectboard and road commissioner have time to reflect on all the issues raised before next year's winter season.

Mike Garand spoke about his experience as road foreman in East Montpelier. He suggested that having two separate part time road staff would be ideal. Discussion followed around the difficulty of hiring part time road crew.

- **Town Clerk report:** Judith Robert shared briefly about happenings at the Town Office.

- **Review and discuss VLCT Rules of Procedure for Municipal Boards, Commissions and Committees:** Denise Wheeler has shared this with Board members via email.

- **Review and discuss proposed Guidelines for Selectboard Conduct:** Board members considered this document. They agreed to discuss this at a later meeting date.

- **"Google docs" drop box presentation and discussion:** Rob Richert shared how to use Google Drive. Some discussion followed around sharing documents amongst Board members and sharing documents with the public. Denise Wheeler asked Board members to continue to let her know if items need to be included on the agenda. Board members discussed logistics around sharing documents using Google Drive.

The Board discussed open meeting law issues. Rob Richert shared that the topic of open meeting law was discussed at length at the Selectboard training. Denise Wheeler stated that the Selectboard tries to the best of its ability to be productive and transparent.

The Board will continue to work out logistics around this new initiative for sharing and organizing documents.

Rob Richert considered the position of delegate to the Central Vermont Solid Waste Management District. John Brabant is currently the alternate. The Board will discuss this at a later date.

- **Long range planning and future agenda items? Goals for the new year?**

Denise Wheeler shared some of the long range planning items for the Selectboard. She gave new Board members Rob Richert and Sharon Winn Fannon a preview of some of the upcoming issues that the Board will address in the coming year, including road and culvert projects, employee benefits, relocating the Veterans Monument (currently located on the grounds of Memorial Hall), Memorial Hall, GAR Rd. and sharing fire department and rescue services with neighboring towns.

Some discussion followed around town employee benefits and wages/ pay schedule.

Denise Wheeler stated that when the charter gets passed by the legislature, the Board will need to appoint positions such as auditor and Selectboard assistant. She also noted that the

town is facing turnover of listers; she suggested the idea of hiring an intern to help with the transition. The idea of hiring a town appraiser in place of listers was briefly discussed.

Rob Richert suggested the idea of looking at town ballots to see names of “write ins” to reach out to invite community members to serve on town committees.

Rob Richert asked for the Board to consider long term capital planning on future agendas. The topics of property taxes, population trends, and property development were discussed.

Upcoming Event: Armstrong Farm fundraising event on Friday, March 31, 2017. Denise Wheeler will warn this as a Selectboard special meeting since a quorum will attend.

Adjourn/continue meeting: The meeting adjourned by consensus at 9:38.

Respectfully submitted,
Lisa Stoudt, Board Recording Secretary

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