

Approved 9-12-16

Calais Selectboard Meeting Minutes
Monday, August 22, 2016

Present: Selectboard Members Denise Wheeler, John Brabant, Rose Pelchuck (arrived at 7:14 p.m.), Toby Talbot, Scott Bassage

Others Present: Donna Fitch, Town Clerk; Alfred Larrabee, Road Commissioner; Mary Ellen Mooney, Peg Bowen.

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

- The amendment to the traffic ordinance (stop signs on Back Street) will be effective August 27th.
- The Town Office now has a flag pole! A flag, or flags, will be purchased and hung.
- Donna received an inquiry about renting the Town Hall space. Toby suggested they contact the East Montpelier Fire Station – they have a community gathering room.
- Donna Fitch said she has received complaints about GAR road (notes left on cars, swimmers being asked to leave beach).
- Signage has been requested for the (private) roads around Curtis Pond. Alfred reminded the Board that in the past the town has been responsible for putting up signs for safety on roads, whether they are private or not. The Board agreed to the purchase and installation of the signs. The Board will approve action at the next meeting, since this action was not warned on tonight's agenda.

Appointed Officials: Denise moved to appoint Eileen Simpson to a vacant three-year-term on the Development Review Board (expires 2019). Seconded by Toby Talbot, this motion carried unanimously. Eileen briefly introduced herself and explained her volunteer experiences to date; for instance, serving on the Montpelier Planning Commission. The Board thanked Eileen for volunteering.

Review and Approve Minutes: Scott Bassage moved to approve the minutes of August 8, 2016. Seconded by John Brabant. Denise suggested a minor edit for clarity. This motion carried unanimously. Scott Bassage moved to approve the minutes of August 15, 2016. Seconded by John Brabant, this motion carried unanimously.

Road Commissioner update: Alfred Larrabee briefly updated the Board about projects on Calais roads. He noted that some of the trees that are being thinned out around the Town Office are on a steep bank and he suggested hiring Joe Bayne to do the work as it needs more expert attention than the road crew can provide. Discussion followed around insurance requirements. Alfred stated that in the past Joe has provided evidence of liability insurance. Some discussion followed around workers' compensation insurance requirements. Donna will follow up as to whether he is required to have workers'

compensation insurance to be hired by the town for a job such as this. Alfred will check that Joe's liability insurance is current before hiring him.

Some discussion followed around the newly installed STOP sign on Back Street. Alfred stated that he has gotten some negative feedback about the sign. Rose suggested that a "stop ahead" sign on the road might increase the effectiveness of the new sign. Peg Bowen noted that when a lower-to-the-ground vehicle is stopped at the sign, one cannot see oncoming traffic from Back Street. The Board discussed trimming a bush in the way of the line of vision. Denise will contact the property owner to talk about the bush.

Denise thanked Toby for the Front Porch Forum post about road work and closures on Upper Road to accommodate work on the retaining wall. Denise asked whether Alfred had been able to secure a substitute road crew member. Alfred continues to pursue this. John suggested that the road crew tidy the property that was affected when the Lamberti crew removed an excavator upon completion of their latest job.

Alfred said he is awaiting the permit to start the stream alteration project on Apple Hill. Toby stated the size of the culvert required for this project is still being determined.

Operations Manager update: Toby shared the plans for Calais Town Garage addition. Toby has been working with architect John McCullough on a bid specification packet; he expects to invite some local contractors to bid on the project. John expressed concern about inviting only a few and not publicizing the bid in local posting places. The Board agreed that the bid will be advertised in the Times Argus and the Hardwick Gazette as opposed to invitation-only bids. The Board is in agreement that a local contractor is preferred for this project.

Review site visit and training schedule by Dave Antone, Municipal Public Works Consulting, LLC: Toby stated that Dave Antone had commented that the roads in Calais were in the best shape of those he's seen lately.

James Barlow, Esq. of Vermont Local Government Law – discussion of available services: Mr. Barlow explained that until recently he had been working as an attorney for the City of South Burlington. Previous to that he was with the VT League of Cities and Towns. He explained his models for providing services in his new practice: an hourly rate that is negotiable or an annual fee. The Board discussed with Mr. Barlow the challenge of addressing legal issues while managing spending. Mr. Barlow will present a proposal to the Selectboard, a fixed amount of money for a certain number of hours. Denise stated that a training for town committees would be useful, for example, around the open meeting law. Some discussion followed around town meeting. Mr. Barlow believes there is value in a presentation to the community to more clearly explain the logistics of Town Meeting Day in Vermont.

Scott stated that he believes the fee model as discussed offers the Board more control over spending than in the past. On the other hand, the Board discussed unexpected legal expenses. The issues of litigation, mediation and negotiation were discussed.

Other Business: Peg Bowen expressed concerns about the Board’s discussions about GAR road. She asked to have an opportunity to discuss this with Toby. She asked the board about its June 2016 meeting when signage was discussed, especially the issue of weight limits. Peg shared concerns she has heard from a group of community members in East Calais. Denise assured Peg that the Board has not taken any action around weight limits.

Memorial Hall was discussed. Peg Bowen explained that Memorial Hall is in need of repairs, much like the Calais Town Hall, at a cost estimate of between \$175,000 to \$275,000. Land on Foster Hill Road is for sale to fund the repairs, but she has also had people express interest in purchasing Memorial Hall. She explained the history behind the “no parking” ordinance on GAR road which stems from litigation in the 1990s.

Zoning revisions update: The Planning Commission sent the Selectboard a draft of proposed changes to the zoning regulations. Denise suggested the vote on the changes be on the ballot in November, and suggested Jan Ohlsson from the Planning Commission work together Donna to prepare this for November. Rose stated that some of the edits in the document are confusing and some of the terminology continues to change. Opportunities will be available for suggesting edits to this document.

Review and approve FY 2017 Washington County Sheriff’s Department annual contract renewal: Toby Talbot moved to approve the contract in the amount of \$3,000. Seconded by John Brabant, this motion carried unanimously. Alfred suggested that the Board increase the hours that the sheriff’s services the town.

Firewood from trees cut at Town Office: The firewood will be offered to Mr. DeBlois who lives across from the town office.

Bookkeeper position: Denise discussed with Donna logistics around training a new employee. There has been little interest to date. Denise suggested a due date, but Donna said that a decision can be made in a couple weeks if resumes come in.

Executive Session: John moved to go into executive session at 9pm in accordance with 1 V.S.A subsection 313 (a) (3) for the purpose of discussing personnel issues. Seconded by Denise, this motion carried unanimously. At 9:20, the Board came out of Executive Session by consensus. No action was taken.

The board adjourned by consensus at 9:20.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Stoudt, Selectboard Recording Secretary