

SELECTBOARD MEETING

Approved Minutes

October 14, 2013

7:00pm Calais Town Hall

Attending: Denise Wheeler, John Brabant, Scott Bassage, Toby Talbot, Rose Pelchuck, Donna Fitch, Rolf Mueller, Will Walters, Alfred Larrabee, Peter Harvey, Grant Orenstein, Betsy Parah, Gail Graham, Geraldine Gilman, Warner Shedd and John McCullough.

Actions:

Approval of the September 23rd Meeting Minutes – Scott Bassage made a motion to approve the Minutes. Denise Wheeler offered one amendment. The motion was seconded, voted on and carried 5-0.

Town Invoices and Road Commissioner's Orders of the Day - The Selectboard reviewed and processed the invoices and orders of the day as per usual protocol.

Road Commissioner Update – Alfred Larrabee reported Marshfield Road is open after repairing it to get rid of clay boils. The old, underground fuel storage tanks at the town garage are out and ground contamination was found. The contaminated soil was loaded on a town truck and was taken by Alfred Larrabee to Loudon, NH for proper disposal. Alfred said a new concrete slab will be poured tomorrow and then the new, above ground tanks (3,000 gal diesel fuel tank and 1,000 gasoline tank) will be set on the slab. The Selectboard talked with Alfred about securing the tanks so nobody can steal fuel. Alfred said another motion detector light would be installed over the tanks.

Spoke about someone who wants to run power under Dugar Brook Road. They need a permit and Denise Wheeler will put it on the next agenda.

Alfred reported someone on Bliss Road that had rocks in the town's right of way, now have erected a fence, too. The Selectboard will send them a notice informing them they need a permit.

Computer at town garage is not printing. Tom Frost will be in touch with Alfred.

Curb Cut Permit Application – The Selectboard reviewed the Curb Cut permit application from Brian & Linda Emmons on George Road. The curb cut was an existing logging road and will be changed to residential use. John Brabant made a motion to approve the Curb Cut permit application with the following conditions: no culvert is needed, no cutting ornamental maple trees, install a ditch on lower side of driveway so no water runoff goes into the road (drainage towards Leonard Road) and consult with the Road Commissioner prior to beginning the work. The motion was seconded, voted and carried 5-0.

Update on Consolidation CVRPC & CVEDC -Rolf Mueller reported the vote to proceed with the consolidation of the Regional Planning Commission and the Economic Development Corporation was voted down.

Budget Update – Donna Fitch, Town Treasurer, would like to invest the \$48,000.00 in the town's reappraisal fund that is just sitting there. Donna will discuss this with the Trustee of Public Funds.

Public comment – Warner Shed noted a tree is on the power line on Hayden Road. WEC will be notified.

Groundwater Mapping Resolution in support of the grant – Grant Orenstein, newest member of the Conservation Commission, came before the Selectboard to obtain support for applying for a grant for mapping groundwater resources in town. There is a \$6,000.00 match to the grant, some of which may be in kind. Grant Orenstein was not certain about that. "If we don't have the money for the match this year or if we don't get the grant this year," Grant Orenstein said, "We can try again next year." Scott Bassage made a motion to approve the resolution in support of the grant for groundwater mapping as presented. The motion was seconded, voted

and carried 5-0.

Changing the Calais Zoning Fee Schedule – John McCullough spoke about the guidelines and wording for Kent's Corner – Old West Church Historic District and the present Zoning Fee Schedule. Traditionally, fees for proposals within this district have been waived since 1989. The waiver language was inadvertently omitted from the Historic District Guidelines revision in 2008. John McCullough co-authored those guidelines noting the unintentional oversight. Any/all proposals (changing paint color or siding types for example) in the Historic District require a DRB hearing. John McCullough proposes the following language be added to the Zoning Fee Schedule for the Town of Calais:

A Zoning Application Permit Fee is not required for proposals in the Historic District that would not otherwise be levied for like proposals within the underlying Rural Residential Zoning District. No DRB Hearing Fee is required for proposals, which require the review of the Design Advisory Board.

Denise Wheeler suggested that the DRB should be consulted as a courtesy. John McCullough agreed to notify the DRB and John will report back at the next Selectboard meeting.

Investing the Cemetery Funds – Per Rod Buck, Trustee of Public Funds, the cemetery funds will be taken out of Vanguard Funds and moved into various investments to make a better return. Scott Bassage made a motion to authorize the investments of the Calais, Vermont Cemetery Funds into T. Rowe Price Funds as recommended by Rod Buck, Trustee of Public Funds. The motion was seconded, voted and carried 5-0.

Authorize Calais Roads Advisory Committee Expenditures - Scott Bassage made a motion to approve \$400.00 for the Calais Roads Advisory Committee for studies, maps, copies and reports, etc. The motion was seconded, voted and carried 4-0-1. Toby Talbot abstained from the vote. Denise Wheeler cautioned it should be used for expenditures within their scope of work.

VLCT Town Fair Conference - Denise Wheeler and Scott Bassage recently attended a VLCT Conference. Denise Wheeler said Calais is to be commended for the work we are doing with respect to the Roads Advisory Committee, noting one size doesn't fit all with regards to road standards. AOT is aware of our work and awaiting our RAC standards report. VLCT has given Denise Wheeler their full support in these efforts. Scott Bassage commented how much he has learned by attending these workshops, especially about municipal finances, and encouraged other Selectboard members to avail themselves to upcoming workshops.

Roads Advisory Committee Update – Peter Harvey reported the next meeting would be 10/24/13 at 8:30pm at the town office. Scott Bassage said they are close to having a report to present to the Selectboard. Road and bridge standards and speed limits are things they are working on.

Bicycle Lane Continued Discussion – Denise and John met with John Kaplan from VTrans about putting in a bicycle lane on the County Road, which we would need to make the shoulders wider. John Brabant noted you need to reduce the speed limit in order to widen the shoulders and go through the whole public hearing process to reduce the posted speed limit. Denise Wheeler said it won't happen this year but the Selectboard will need to consider this next year. Discussion ensued about other road/traffic issues and ways to control speed.

Other Business - Warner Shed spoke about three specific dealings with the Road Commissioner about road issues. Warner stated that in each situation, Alfred Larrabee treated him very well and with great respect. Warner approves the notion of road standards making them for our rural town but disapproves of the notion of using GPS to know how much the road crew is working on or where they are working. Warner believes this would amount to micromanaging. Warner went on to say he applauds the work of the town to look at the state standards and thinks this might need a legislative solution. Warner has many contacts at the state level. John Brabant clarified the 2013 State Road & Bridge Standards was a collaborative effort between ANR and AOT but they didn't think about the implementation/impact, especially on rural towns. This was a legislative directive they were following. Warner Shed offered his further assistance to the Selectboard in this matter.

Written Response to questions about the new highway operations manager – Scott Bassage distributed documents explaining, “Why the Selectboard decided we need a Highway Operations Manager to oversee highway operations in Calais”. Scott Bassage read from the document in full. Gail Graham commented on the new position, is not in favor of it and asked questions. Geraldine Gilman strongly opposed the idea of hiring to fill the new position. Betsy Parrah also inquired about why the position was made and if the townspeople would have a vote at town meeting about it. The Selectboard has the authority to create a new position and lay out the duties of that position. Denise Wheeler further explained that the needs of the 21st century require more accurate record keeping and technological changes are available to meet the needs of our town. The town needs someone to meet that skill set. John Brabant said we need to develop a long-range plan, a short-range plan and very short term plans; this keeps the roads maintained the way we want them to be maintained. Rose Pelchuck cited the analogy of Donna Fitch, Town Clerk, needing a part-time Assistant Town Clerk, to meet the needs of the town to bring all the town record keeping up to electronic format and maintaining a high level of data tracking. Toby Talbot noted he does not believe in this approach. Toby Talbot reported that if the town goes ahead with this hiring that Alfred Larrabee will be leaving. Denise Wheeler said, “We are not looking for Alfred to quit and hope that Alfred doesn't leave”. Denise Wheeler reiterated this is not what she wants for Alfred to leave. Peter Harvey said, “Do what's best for the town, above personal issues.”

PACE (Property Assessed Clean Energy) Documents – Bill Powell said we would have to sign more papers and he was right. John Brabant made a motion to authorize Denise Wheeler to sign the interlocal contract and resolution for PACE as presented by Donna Fitch. The motion was seconded, voted on and carried 5-0.

PACIF Insurance Renewal (for general municipal insurance vehicles and buildings) – No changes were made to the coverage for the upcoming year.

Healthcare Insurance for Town Employees – Donna Fitch costed out the two top plans to choose from. Donna Fitch recommends the town go with the BC/BS Standard Platinum Plan. Scott Bassage would like to hold the employee for the least amount of change during this first year of transition. Toby Talbot noted we would be saving a little bit of money by going with this plan. Donna Fitch said all the town employees love the current plan, which is no longer available. Denise Wheeler made a motion to approve the town's participation in the BC/BS Standard Platinum Plan, furthermore Donna Fitch will do the online registration and the town is going to pay the coinsurance and deductible. The motion was seconded, voted and carried 5-0.

Other Business - Scott Bassage made a motion that Scott Bassage and Denise Wheeler finish the document on why the Selectboard decided we need a Highway Operations Manager to oversee highway operations in Calais and release publicly. The motion was seconded, voted and carried 4-1. Toby Talbot voted against the motion.

Tentative Agenda for the October 28th Meeting

- Changes to Zoning Fee Schedule re: Historic District
- Violation Draft Notice for work in the Town's Right-of-Way
- Highway Operations Manager position re: next step

Toby Talbot made a motion at 10:10pm to continue the meeting to Thursday, October 17th for a joint meeting with the East Montpelier Selectboard and East Montpelier Fire Department for the quarterly financial review. The motion was seconded, voted and carried 5-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Rose Pelchuck
Selectboard Member and Administrative Assistant