

SELECTBOARD MEETING  
*Approved Minutes*

December 9, 2013

7:00pm Calais Town Office

**Attending:** Denise Wheeler, John Brabant, Scott Bassage, Toby Talbot, Rose Pelchuck, Alfred Larrabee, John McCullough, Dot Naylor, Guthrie Perry, Rachael Bliss, Candi Smith, Rick Purchase, Doug Lilley, Peter Harvey, Steve Gray, Don Welch, Kim Swasey, Casey Northrup, Bruce Johnson, Seth Gardner, Steve Sparrow and Carl Etnier.

**Actions:**

Approval of the November 25<sup>th</sup> Meeting Minutes – Toby Talbot made a motion to approve the Minutes. The motion was seconded and two changes were made. The motion was voted on and carried 5-0.

Approval of the December 3<sup>rd</sup> Meeting Minutes – Scott Bassage made a motion to approve the Minutes as written. The motion was seconded, voted on and carried 5-0.

Approval of the December 5<sup>th</sup> Joint Meeting Minutes – Toby Talbot made a motion to approve the Minutes. The motion was seconded and one change was made. The motion was voted on and carried 5-0.

Road Commissioner Update:

2013-2014 Highway Department Winter Operations Plan – The Selectboard reviewed the new Winter Operations Plan that outlines the general principals of keeping the roads open during the winter months. Scott Bassage made a motion to adopt the 2013-2014 Winter Operations Plan as amended this evening. The motion was seconded, voted and carried 5-0.

Holiday Bonus - Denise Wheeler asked Selectboard input regarding annual holiday bonuses. After some discussion, Rose Pelchuck made a motion to give each member of the road crew a \$250.00 holiday bonus, as has been an annual tradition. The motion was seconded, voted and carried 5-0.

Town of Calais Snow Removal and Parking Ordinance – The current Snow Removal and Parking Ordinance that was adopted June 30, 1997 was discussed and agreed that it needed only a few changes. The proposed change removes John Rosenblum’s driveway and is replaced by location on the Worcester Road. John Brabant made a motion to approve the revised Snow Removal and Parking Ordinance as presented. The motion was seconded, voted and carried 5-0. The Town Clerk will post the revised ordinance for final adoption.

Weather Watch – Alfred Larrabee would like to get paid four hours extra every day for watching the weather during the winter snowy months. Alfred said, “It’s a matter of timing knowing when to call the guys in.” Years ago under Don Singleton, the crew did try rotating who watches the weather and then notifies everyone else.

Pager – Alfred Larrabee expects everyone to be on call 24/7. Denise Wheeler explained that the road crew does not need to be on call 24/7. Alfred said the state crew gets a stipend for being on call. John Brabant said, “The whole crew is unable to do a lot that we can do in the winter, so the bonus was our way of giving them something for doing this.” The state crew does not get any bonuses. John would favor a one-time stipend. John Brabant would like to table this for further review. Doug Lilley and Candi Smith offered comments. Doug Lilley gave photographs of his and his neighbor’s property showing placement to snow markers.

Road Crew Resignation - Alfred Larrabee provided a letter of resignation from James Corson effective 12/20/13. When asked why Jim was resigning, Alfred Larrabee said, “It was for several reasons, more money and not happy with the highway operations manager position.” Alfred said the Selectboard could call him (Jim) for details.

Substitute Road Crew Driver – Alfred Larrabee informed the Selectboard of a new substitute/weekend driver, Dan Durkee, with a Class A CDL. John Brabant suggested he may be available after Jim Corson leaves to work

with the crew more than just weekends since he will be on lay off from his regular job.

Road Graders Log Reports – Alfred Larrabee provided the CAT and John Deere Grader Logs for hours used this summer and fall. The Selectboard will review the information and it will be discussed at a future meeting.

Curb Cut Permit Application – The Selectboard again reviewed the application from Rick Purchase on the County Road. The measured sight distance is 1100 feet north and 470 feet south. Rick Purchase said “They are guidelines and even the state doesn't stick to that; I can't move it north due to a ravine.” Fairpoint Communications has a fiber optic line that they said they would be willing to work with Rick to move if necessary. Toby Talbot suggested a warning sign for south approach and Alfred Larrabee said cones on the yellow line during the operation would slow traffic. John Brabant made a motion to approve the Curb Cut Permit for Rick Purchase with the following conditions: a warning sign on south approach needs to be installed, reflective highway cones on the yellow line when trucks will be coming and going and the installation of a 15-inch culvert where the driveway meets the County Road. The motion was seconded, voted and carried 5-0.

Annual Authorization Request for Plowed Highways to be used by Snowmobiles – Steve Gray from Mountain Tamers Snowmobile Club and Calais resident presented the Selectboard with a list for permission to use parts of town roads for snowmobiles from December 15<sup>th</sup> to April 15th. Steve stated the list is the exact same list from last year. Denise Wheeler disclosed that her son is building a house and the trail crosses his land. Steve reported the published notice in FPF to ask for financial support has had a good response. Toby Talbot made a motion to approve the list to use some town roads for snowmobile trail access as presented. The motion was seconded, voted on and carried 4-0.

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JOINT MEETING WITH EAST MONTPELIER SELECTBOARD 8:05pm

The East Montpelier Fire Department requested Selectboard approval to expend EMFD Capital Reserve Funds for the purchase of a replacement ambulance. Two EMFD members test drove an ambulance in Pennsylvania recently that had an engine replacement in February 2011 and only has 29,000 miles on it. Discussion ensued about the truck and similar vehicles with these same specs. It is heavier duty than F-550 and is the same as the Montpelier Ambulance (spoke to Greg Pelchuck by phone about specific details). Scott Bassage and Denise Wheeler value Greg’s opinion regarding this vehicle. This purchase is consistent with the EMFD Capital Plan. Denise Wheeler made a motion to approve the capital expenditure line item to purchase a used 2009 International Ambulance not to exceed \$55,000.00 to include new tires. The motion was seconded, voted and carried 3-0-2. Rose Pelchuck and Toby Talbot recused themselves.

Casey Northrup, East Montpelier Selectboard member, made a motion to authorize EMFD to take up to \$55,000.00 from the EMFD Capital Reserve Fund to purchase the 2009 International Ambulance with new tires. The motion was seconded, voted and carried 5-0.

Revised EMFD FY 2015 Budget – Denise Wheeler informed the public about the Joint Selectboard Meeting held last week. Denise Wheeler reminded everyone that the towns agreed to change their funding contribution percentage from 75%-25% split to 67%-33% per the Interlocal Agreement with the Town of East Montpelier and is seeing a higher amount due to that (Calais has an 8% increase due to the formula change agreed upon in the Interlocal Agreement).

Bruce Johnson, East Montpelier Town Administrator, said the East Montpelier Capital Fund is still there but their Selectboard has changed the East Montpelier capital plan over time. Bruce Johnson reported that the \$104,500.00 originally set aside in prior town votes for EMFD will not be expended for the fire department without going back before the townspeople. (Calais would have to match one-third of the amount to leverage those funds since Calais has a one-third interest in the assets of EMFD.)

Toby Talbot said it is unfortunate that the new formula and the end of the 4-year level funded budget converge all in this next budget year. The EMFD Board of Directors have met since the joint meeting last week and have offered to contribute \$15,000.00 from the Contingency Fund to soften the impact. Furthermore, they suggested that Calais not contribute \$5,000.00 to the EMFD truck replacement fund for this year. Denise Wheeler said the Selectboard plans to look really hard at keeping the rest of our budget level funded, including

the highway budget. The school budget is going up 3.8%, Denise reported. Carl Etnier said the folks in East Montpelier have been subsidizing this over all these many years. Denise Wheeler intends to have a one page explanation in the town report. Denise went on to say, of course the town is pleased with the \$15,000.00 contribution from the department. Seth Gardner noted incremental increases each year are easier; level funded budgets don't work. Denise Wheeler appreciates EMFD efforts to reduce costs to taxpayers, the process they went thru to get these figures, and for coming up with the \$15,000.00.

Denise Wheeler made a motion to support the final figures for the EMFD FY 2015 Budget as presented with Calais' contribution of \$98,541.67. The motion was seconded voted and carried 3-0-2. Rose Pelchuck and Toby Talbot recused themselves. Candi Smith asked the Minutes reflect that the amount increase first proposed was \$23,071.92 over the current budget and now it is \$18,071.92 minus another \$5,000.00 the town isn't putting in the truck replacement fund.

Carl Etnier made a motion to include \$197,083.33 in the East Montpelier Selectboard budget for FY 2015 for emergency services for EMFD. The motion was seconded, voted and carried 5-0.

Casey Northrup made a motion for the East Montpelier Selectboard to adjourn at 9:05pm. The motion was seconded, voted and carried 5-0.

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Highway Operations Manager – Denise Wheeler and Scott Bassage are going to meet with Dave Antoine from Vermont Local Roads to review the Highway Operations Manager's job description and discuss wage ranges. They also would like to get an idea of how many other towns have operation managers doing this type of work. Candi Smith asked if VLCT had been consulted and Denise Wheeler replied she has been in touch with Abby Friedman, VLCT Staff Attorney. Denise noted we are getting there step by step and she will report back to the Selectboard after meeting with Dave Antoine.

Annual Generator Maintenance Service Contract – The Selectboard reviewed the annual preventative maintenance contract from Brookfield Service on the two generators in town for the 2014 calendar year. The Selectboard agreed to the twice per year service (every six months) at the annual cost of \$736.00. The practice has been that the school pays for one visit of the service contract and the town pays for the other service visit on the generator at the school. John Brabant made a motion to approve the twice a year service contract and pay ahead to get the discount (\$700.00 discounted cost). The motion was seconded, voted on and carried 5-0.

Zoning Fees Schedule – Dot Naylor, former Zoning Administrator, came before the Selectboard to explain the rationale behind the zoning fees. The town never had zoning fees before the major zoning rewrite in 2005. Dot explained the fees were intended to pay for the Lister's time, Zoning Administrator's pay, advertising costs for hearing notices and money set aside to make the tax map revisions. Dot said in reality, the fees cover the ZA pay/FICA and postage stamps but does not include the costs of the Listers. The Planning Commission met and reviewed the draft Zoning Fee Schedule that Donna Fitch devised. Donna will make a second draft and circulate it to the Planning Commission and Selectboard.

Zoning Regulations Public Hearing – The Selectboard will hold a public hearing to discuss the proposed changes to the zoning regulations on Monday, January 13, 2014. Donna Fitch will publish the notice.

Delinquent Tax Collector – Toby Talbot noted the town needs to have a job description for this position. "We need to get more information about this from VLCT if we can hire a Delinquent Tax Collector or does it have to be elected position per state law," Toby Talbot said.

Review Draft Warning Articles – The Selectboard continued to review the draft Warning Articles for Town Meeting beginning with Article 13 as presented by Town Clerk, Donna Fitch. Donna does think there are a few petitions circulating around town. Scott Bassage asked about publishing the deadlines for petitions.

Other Business

- Alfred Larrabee asked if the Selectboard is going to accept the Better Back Roads Grant for Singleton Road since he received correspondence asking if we were going to take it. Scott Bassage said, "If it has to be

right now, then the answer is no.”

- Denise Wheeler reported that our attorney, Joe McLean, Esq., is scheduled to get together with the other attorneys and their clients about the McCullough pit and how to proceed.
- Denise Wheeler reported that Paul Scheckel is trying to obtain grant funds to purchase energy efficient bulbs from Green Mountain Power for the streetlights in East Calais Village.
- Scott Bassage would like to have a Special Selectboard Meeting in February to learn more about budget improvement strategies from Bill Hall at VLCT.

Tentative Agenda for the December 23<sup>rd</sup> Meeting

- Weather watch and pager pay
- Meet new substitute driver
- Miller-Nogieura R-O-W Permit Application
- Woodbury Fire Department annual budget request
- Review Road Grader hours and usage for the year

Toby Talbot made a motion to adjourn at 10:15pm. The motion was seconded, voted and carried 5-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Rose Pelchuck  
Selectboard Member and Administrative Assistant