

SELECTBOARD MEETING
Approved Minutes

February 2, 2013

10:15am Calais Town Office

Attending: Denise Wheeler, John Brabant, Scott Bassage, Toby Talbot, Donna Fitch, Rolf Mueller, Alfred Larrabee, Chris Cochran and Rose Pelchuck.

Absent: Mike Garand

Actions:

Denise Wheeler, Selectboard Chair, called the Continued Meeting from January 28, 2013 to order.

Warning Articles Review of Final Draft – Denise Wheeler reported Gus Seelig would be moderator again. A public address system will be borrowed from the school with a wireless microphone. It needs to be tested a few days prior to town meeting. Two vacancies on the Cemetery Commission will be elected from the floor on Town Meeting Day. Discussion turned to road projects for the coming year.

Scott Bassage said the first priority is the North Calais culvert and was in favor of just applying for one state grant to fund it to be sure the town received the funding and completed the project this year. Alfred Larrabee said the town could apply for multiple projects. Toby Talbot said the state AOT will make the priorities and they are more concerned about the infrastructure. John Brabant reviewed the state transportation budget noting a huge gap between what funds are available and requests for funding; money is short and John thinks the state local district is going to pick one (project). Scott is in favor of putting in for just one grant to be sure that our intention is 100% clear. Denise noted state money is going to be very tight. Alfred said if we only apply for one that is all your going to get. Rose Pelchuck suggested putting a cover letter with the grant applications outlining the Selectboard's priority list of culvert projects.

Town Clerk, Donna Fitch, was able to reach Tom Anderson, AOT District 6 Manager, to talk to the Selectboard by speakerphone. Tom said the town could prioritize the projects; the state tries to get the best bang for the buck. Tom would give out money for a failed pipe (culvert); he would rather see funds go to the critical projects. District 6 staff comes out to evaluate proposed projects. Tom Anderson said he doesn't understand why you would not want to fix the worse projects first. Scott Bassage agrees AOT money should go to the one closest to failing. While discussing the North Calais Retaining Wall Project, Tom Anderson admitted he couldn't remember the details of the project in North Calais. Denise Wheeler asked about funding sources. Tom Anderson said about 20 towns in District 6 apply for State Highway Grants. The State Grant Program has been level funded for some years. The deadline for the initial round of grants is April 15th at which time he awards as much as he can. While the town can combine culvert pipe replacement on an application, Tom Anderson suggested doing it on a single grant. This way if he has a smaller amount remaining in the grant fund program, he can award it just for that one project. Tom Anderson suggested writing a cover letter detailing the town's top three priorities and submit it to him by April 15th. Tom Anderson continues to give state grant funds out to municipalities, if other projects come in less than originally projected to cost, until the funds are spent. Tom reiterated to send a list of priorities in when you submit the grant application. John Brabant said the Selectboard would make the priority list so questions should be directed to the Selectboard. Denise Wheeler will be sure to do a cover letter listing the priorities that will accompany the State Structures Grant Program application prior to April 15, 2013. The Selectboard thanked Tom Anderson for his time by phone on a Saturday.

The Selectboard agreed to apply to the State Structures Grant Program for the following three projects in the following order of importance:

| | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------|
| North Calais retaining wall project | \$122,789.00 |
| Martin Road culvert project | \$ 41,000.00 |
| Center Road culvert project | \$ 76,000.00 |

A Warning Article will ask the voters to approve a 10% match to the 90% grant from the state.

The Selectboard came to a consensus on this part of the warning.

Other Warning Articles Review – John Brabant pointed out language from the VLCT Delinquent Tax

Collector Handbook and presented some specific language for inclusion in the Warning. This came after some discussion with Sharon Fannon, Town Auditor. No fee will be charged on taxes until after the final payment is due. The Selectboard agreed to include the text as presented regarding tax collection and arranged the order of the articles. The Selectboard needs to put together a Capital Spending Plan; perhaps a simple version could be available at town meeting (to be determined). Judith Robert, Assistant Town Clerk, will lead the committee that reviews the nonprofit organizations requests for appropriations from the town. CVRPC did not yet merge with Central Vermont Economic Development Corporation. Denise Wheeler will ask someone to come after town meeting to discuss the status of the merger and how it will affect Calais.

Alfred Larrabee, Road Commissioner, asked if there would be an article for funds to remove the underground fuel tanks at the town garage. Alfred provided a quote for \$27,993.00 that includes a 3,000-gallon diesel fuel tank, a 1,000-gallon gasoline tank with two pumps and includes a \$10,000.00 deductible for any insurance claim. The other quote for \$31,960.00 total price from _____ to remove old tanks, set new double-walled tanks, clean out the old tanks and should include hiring an engineer to assess the area for any contamination. The Selectboard agreed to increase the highway budget line item for highway garage maintenance by \$30,000.00 instead of having a separate Warning Article since the tanks should be removed this year.

FY '14 Final Budget Review – The Selectboard reviewed the proposed budget line by line. The Cemetery Commission will come to the next Selectboard meeting to discuss finances. The Selectboard added 3% to the highway wages line just for budget purposes, not a guarantee that everyone is getting a 3% raise. This will be determined later. Donna Fitch read what expenditures were put into the miscellaneous line item in the highway budget (grass seed, work boots, trainings, logging chaps just to name some). The board agreed to keep the miscellaneous line item.

The proposed Selectboard Budget was reviewed. John Brabant asked that \$1,000.00 be added to the budget for a laptop computer for the Selectboard Chair to use for official Selectboard business. The budget totals were determined to be 5% higher than the current fiscal year. This year's tax rate is \$0.64 and the figure to support the proposed budget would be \$0.68. This year's school rate is \$1.55, Scott Bassage reported.

The Selectboard has done what they can do to hold down costs and the rest is discretionary, up to the voters. Donna Fitch will put the final number to be raised by taxes to equal the bottom line in the budget. The Selectboard agreed to continue this meeting to 4:00pm on Sunday, February 3, 2013 to review the final budget and sign the Warning.

Other Business - No news on the Small Claims Court appeal by Doug Lilley. The Selectboard has a Notice of Appeal for party status in Unadilla Theatre Notice of Violation to Environmental Court. The town will file for party status. Alfred Larrabee asked Donna Fitch to look at the invoices from DeWolfe Engineering Associates for the North Calais retaining wall job. Donna pulled the file and reported Rick DeWolfe gave the town a 50% discount off the engineering work done thus far. Alfred said the town was already billed and there is engineering in the revised quote. Toby Talbot will check to determine what engineering has been billed to date and what engineering, if any still needs to be done.

At 1:00pm, the Selectboard agreed to continue the meeting to Sunday, February 3, 2013 at 4:00pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Rose Pelchuck
Administrative Assistant

Denise Wheeler, Selectboard Chair, reported the Selectboard met on Sunday, February 3, 2013 at 4:00pm to complete the Warning and budget for the annual report. Attendance: Scott Bassage, Toby Talbot, Donna Fitch and Denise Wheeler by speakerphone. The meeting adjourned at 4:25pm.