

SELECTBOARD MEETING

Approved Minutes

January 13, 2014

7:00pm Calais Town Office

Attending: Denise Wheeler, John Brabant, Scott Bassage, Toby Talbot, Rose Pelchuck, Donna Fitch, Alfred Larrabee, Karin McNeill, Catherine Lowther, Tim Maker, Rick Winston, Taylor Ralph, Jessica Edgerly Walsh, Peter Weyrauch, Bill Powell, Lindy Biggs, Tom McKone, Gary Root, Rose Hayes, Pat Finnie, Don Singleton, Jr. and Shaun Fielder.

Actions:

Public Comment - Rick Winston came before the Selectboard to inform the town about the effort to revitalize the Adamant Community Club beginning last fall. Beth Ann Porter, former President, passed the lead on to Rick Winston. There is Preservation Trust money left and they need to leverage funds from other organizations. Rick Winston reported a meeting was held yesterday to generate ideas about what people would like to see happen at the Community Club. Rick asked the Selectboard for a Warning Article to appropriate \$3,000 to \$5000.00. They are also applying for a Vermont Community Development grant for handicap accessibility. Some of the grants will be for in kind match. Denise Wheeler said we would discuss the Warning Articles later in the meeting.

SunCommon Presentation – SunCommon, a Waterbury Center based solar company, asked to come before the Selectboard to let us know more about the company and their efforts to promote solar in Calais. Taylor Ralph is the community organizer in Calais. There are some main things to start her work in the town: getting in touch with groups in town, connecting with organizers of any annual event or festival in town, fundraisers that have a community presence and working with the town's energy committee (coming up with a challenge for the town or brainstorming ideas together). SunCommon began two years ago and their mission is to promote solar power. There is an option to pay monthly and they take care of all the logistics. Peter Weyrauch spoke very favorably to his experience with SunCommon and how he saves money each month. Denise Wheeler encouraged them to contact the Calais Energy Committee. Toby Talbot inquired about how Washington Electric Co-op is not accepting any new solar customers. SunCommon is hoping to have a legislative solution this year. John Brabant encouraged them to meet with the Conservation Commission and Calais Energy Committee jointly.

Road Commissioner Update – Alfred Larrabee reported the town's sand pile is taking a beating since they used a lot in last couple weeks. Ian Voyer from Bliss Pond Road did take the substitute driver position. Ian will ride with Alfred to learn all the plow routes. Dan Durkee took the full time position.

Highway Operations Manager/Assistant (Alternative Proposal) - Toby Talbot came up with an alternate proposal to manage/assist the highway department to be a team of Cy Lamberton and Toby Talbot. Denise Wheeler would like the Selectboard to review the proposal and to be open-minded. Toby Talbot would like to keep the position local (with someone from Calais) and he put together a feasibility to get to the goals the Selectboard is looking for. Denise Wheeler noted this proposal would be reviewed at the January 27th meeting. It does include a performance goal (probationary period). Denise gave Dave Antone from VT Local Roads a copy to review. Toby Talbot said he and Dave Antone have spoken.

Kellogg Hubbard Library – Interim Library Director, Tom McKone, and Lindy Biggs, East Montpelier representative on the library board, came before the Selectboard to provide the annual recap of activities and discuss their funding request for FY 2015. Although the cost of library services has continued to rise, the library is requesting the same amount as last year since the Kellogg Hubbard board knew it was not a good year to ask for more funding. Forty-eight percent of the library funding comes from local town support. Of that 48%, Calais provided 7% of the funding (\$27,950.00). Calais had 792 active registered patrons who borrowed 15,181 items (7.37% of total circulation). Kellogg Hubbard is the second largest library in Vermont in terms of

collection. Some services include: Wi-Fi is available there now, video conferencing capability was provided by a grant from Google, the number of online services increases each year, Calais is fortunate to have a library annex at the Adamant Co-op and a book exchange at the East Calais Store. The former library director left in the fall and a national search for a new director is underway. The interim director is not interested in the permanent position. Marialisa Calta, who served for many years as the Calais representative on the library board, has stepped down. The Selectboard is looking for a new representative on the library board of trustees. If interested, please notify the Selectboard or Town Clerk, Donna Fitch.

PUBLIC HEARING ON PROPOSED CHANGES TO ZONING

Denise Wheeler invited any public comments on the proposed changes to the Land Use & Development Regulations that will be voted on at town meeting. Planning Commission member, Gary Root has not heard a word of public comment on the proposed changes to zoning. There was no public comment given regarding the proposed changes. The Chair concluded this public hearing portion of the meeting.

Other Business - Shawn Fielder spoke about the DRB hearing held January 2nd. He wanted to be sure the Selectboard was getting the same information as the DRB and especially thanked Scott Bassage for taking the time to be at the DRB hearing.

Approval of Selectboard Minutes from January 9th – Toby Talbot made a motion to approve the Minutes as written. The motion was seconded, voted and carried 5-0.

Approval of Selectboard Minutes from December 9th – Toby Talbot made a motion to approve the Minutes as written. The motion was seconded, voted on and carried 5-0.

Approval of Selectboard Minutes from December 23rd – Scott Bassage made motion to approve the Minutes as written. The motion was seconded, voted on and carried 5-0.

Central Vermont Humane Society Contract –The new contract is charging per animal instead of a set contract fee. They offer a 15-minute training for Animal Control Officers and Selectboard members. Toby Talbot made a motion to approve the contract for calendar year 2014 for \$100.00 per canine and \$60.00 per feline and authorized Denise Wheeler to sign the contract on behalf of the town. The motion was seconded, voted and carried 5-0.

Budget Review for FY 2015 – Toby Talbot reported that Calais had 22% of the EMFD call volume for calendar year 2013. The Selectboard agreed with Toby that it would behoove us to ask for a change in the cost allocation. This data provides a strong case for decreasing our percentage of contribution to EMFD. In 2011, the Calais call volume was 32% and in 2012, it was 22%. The Selectboard has the EMFD Quarterly Financial Review with the East Montpelier Selectboard on Thursday, January 16, 2014 at 7:00pm.

Scott Bassage pointed out the proposed Calais Elementary School budget went down from the current fiscal year's budget. The overall combined school tax rate it is 0.22 cents higher for FY'15 due to the U-32 budget increase of 0.4 and the town's common level appraisal (CLA). The last town wide reappraisal was in 2001 and a partial reappraisal was done in 2007. It costs \$80.00 per parcel for a full appraisal and Donna Fitch recommends doing a full town wide appraisal. We have \$46,000.00 in the reappraisal fund. Scott Bassage reported John McCullough has been working hard learning the Lister position and if the town paid more, we would attract more competent people willing to be a Lister. Listers get \$15.00 per hour and Scott Bassage suggested paying \$20.00 per hour for the Listers.

The Selectboard continued the review of the proposed budget for FY 2015. In discussing the highway budget, Scott Bassage would like to add \$20,000.00 for the new Highway Operations Manager position at \$20.00 per hour for 15 hours per week. The Selectboard was in agreement with that. Scott Bassage provided a handout to explain his position in favor of reducing the Highway Budget with the goal of getting the budget figures much closer to actual figures, whereby not having an annual surplus. Scott Bassage believes the town should sell the road grader we bought last year and put the money back in the highway budget, although Scott is amiable other ideas. Scott strongly recommends the Selectboard spend a few meetings during the year thinking

about and learning more about municipal budgeting. John Brabant would like to send out a firm expectation that our roads be better than Woodbury's; have a one-year test run, with managerial oversight, to fully run the grader, if no improvement in operational time and better road conditions, then that road grader is gone.

Denise Wheeler asked Toby Talbot, who did not agree with the ops manager and now does, to explain his change in position. Toby Talbot said, "He sees it more as an advisor rather than manager, someone who works with Road Commissioner rather than tells him what to do". This will be discussed in detail at the meeting on January 27th.

Other items the Selectboard discussed were that there is too much crown on the road in some places and cars are just sliding off. Scott Bassage suggested getting a construction trailer for an office at the town garage, where clean records and office equipment can be kept. Maybe we could solicit a donation.

Toby Talbot made a motion at 10:15pm to continue the meeting to next Monday, January 20, 2014 at 7:00pm. The motion was seconded, voted and carried 5-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Rose Pelchuck
Selectboard Member and Administrative Assistant