

Minutes of the East Montpelier Selectboard

December 7, 2015 Meeting

SB Attendance: Chair Seth Gardner, Casey Northrup, Gene Troia, and Kim Swasey; Town Administrator Bruce Johnson

Calais SB Attendance: Chair Denise Wheeler, John Brabant, Scott Bassage, and Rose Pelchuck; Recording Secretary Lou Cherry

Public Attendance: Town Treasurer Don Welch; Delinquent Tax Collector Karen Gramer; Steve Justis, Janice Waterman, and Charles Waterman

Chair Gardner called the meeting to order at 6:36 p.m.

Additions to Agenda:

- Potential Appointment to Planning Commission for Troia Seat Vacancy
- 2016 Municipal Planning Grant

Public Comment: None

Delinquent Tax Collector Report: Karen Gramer

- **Update on Delinquent Taxes:**
 - The latest numbers on delinquent tax outstanding:
 - As of December 7, 2015 there remains \$83,499.27 in past taxes owed on 32 properties
 - Last year as of December 16, 2014 there was \$90,963.92 owed on 37 properties
 - Of the 32 properties with delinquent taxes, 18 are in some form of payment plan
- **Update on Caldwell Tax Sale:**
 - Jack & Marcia Pauly purchased the Caldwell property on County Road at the December 1st tax sale. Mr. Caldwell has one year to redeem the property before it is formally transferred to the Paulys.
- **Discussion on Potential Laundry Tax Sale:**
 - The board agreed to move forward with the Laundry (2726 Horn of the Moon Road) tax sale despite some procedural difficulties. Ms. Gramer will work with Attorney John Riley to develop a projected cost schedule for the various elements that will need to be dealt with due to the requirement that the town open a probate estate. Despite the added cost for this tax sale, which will likely eat up any delinquent tax revenue, the board felt strongly that a failure to act in this case, with 4 years of delinquent taxes and additional late current taxes, was unacceptable.

Discussion of, and Possible Presentation of Petition for, Center Road Speed Limit Reduction

Ms. Gramer, who is an East Montpelier Center resident, presented a petition containing 22 signatures that stated the following:

Petition to Reduce Speed Limit

We, the residents of Center Road, East Montpelier, request the Town to take into consideration a reduction of the speed limit on Center Road from 35 miles per hour to 25 miles per hour. This road has seen increased traffic in recent years and is in a family neighborhood where many residents enjoy walking. Cars travelling at high rates of speed on Center Road cause a dangerous situation and safety issue.

Ms. Gramer provided the board with a list of safety concerns she developed after discussions with neighbors. Mr. Justis, also a Center resident, described his concerns with speeding and out-of-control vehicles, emphasizing the variety of impediments that make speed control a necessity. Ms. Waterman, another Center resident, placed special focus on the multi-modal use of the road by the neighborhood residents, especially the children.

The board had already arranged for a traffic analysis (speed, vehicle usage, vehicle type, etc.) by the Central VT Regional Planning Commission. Counters are already in place and a report should be available by the board's December 21st meeting. Chair Gardner thanked Ms. Gramer, Mr. Justis, and the Watermans for bringing forth the neighborhood concerns and assured them that the board would continue to examine the speed limit issue at its next meeting.

Special Joint Meeting with Town of Calais Selectboard: Discussion of the FY2017 Ambulance & Emergency Services Budget Request by the East Montpelier Fire Department

At the annual budget presentation on December 2nd, EMFD made the following funding request to the towns:

Service	Calais		East Montpelier		Total	
	FY2017 Request	% Increase over FY16	FY2017 Request	% Increase over FY16	FY2017 Request	% Increase over FY16
Fire	\$ 52,520.00	-1.2%	\$105,040.00	-1.2%	\$157,560.00	-1.2%
Ambulance	\$ 60,689.34	10.3%	\$121,378.66	10.3%	\$182,068.00	10.3%
Total	\$113,209.34	4.7%	\$226,418.66	4.7%	\$339,628.00	4.7%

Total EMFD FY2017 ambulance budget of \$243,325 includes contracted Plainfield payment of \$46,257 and \$15,000 from EMFD contingency fund for a total combined services budget of \$400,885, up 4.2% from FY2016.

Both the Calais and EM boards were pleased with the basic budgets. The bulk of the increase in the ambulance service budget was due to a bump in the salary line as EMFD tries to find a balance between paid staff and volunteers in an era of dwindling volunteerism.

The use of the EMFD contingency fund as a regular revenue source engendered quite a bit of discussion as board members debated the concept of actually increasing the town appropriations in order to eliminate reliance on the contingency fund, allowing the fund to revert to its original purpose as a source of funds for unforeseen expenses. The boards settled on a formula whereby the towns would absorb 80% (\$12,000) of the \$15,000 contingency fund revenue line while

directing in return that EMFD find savings in the ambulance &/or fire service budgets to cover the remaining 20% (\$3,000). In accordance with the normal cost split (1/3 Calais; 2/3 East Montpelier), the revised budget figures are:

Service	Calais		East Montpelier		Total	
	FY2017 Request	% Increase over FY16	FY2017 Request	% Increase over FY16	FY2017 Request	% Increase over FY16
Fire	\$ 52,520.00	-1.2%	\$105,040.00	-1.2%	\$157,560.00	-1.2%
Ambulance	\$ 64,689.34	17.5%	\$129,378.66	17.5%	\$194,068.00	17.5%
Total	\$117,209.34	8.4%	\$234,418.66	8.4%	\$351,628.00	8.4%

Motion: To set the FY2017 EMFD general fund budget lines at a total of \$234,418.66 on the condition that EMFD remove \$3,000 total from its FY2017 ambulance and fire service budgets. Made by Mr. Northrup; second by Ms. Swasey. Passed unanimously.

The Calais Selectboard approved a similar motion for a total of \$117,209.34.

Another topic of interest to both boards was the possibility of EMFD expanding its ambulance service area to include additional towns. EMFD already provides service to Plainfield under a contract arrangement. Both boards expressed concern regarding the potential dilution of service to the core towns (Calais & EM), the additional wear & tear on the equipment and the volunteers, and the apparent disparity between the funding from the core towns and the value of the added contracts. The boards want to ensure that these issues are carefully explored before any further expansion of the ambulance service. TA Johnson will draft a letter to EMFD regarding these concerns for consideration by both boards.

East Montpelier Gully Jumpers Snowmobile Club Request for Designated Town Road Usage for Trail Crossings

Annually the Gully Jumpers present a request for use of designated, short stretches of town roads to allow snowmobiles to traverse difficult areas in town where direct road crossings are unavailable/unadvisable.

Motion: To allow the East Montpelier Gully Jumpers Snowmobile Club use of town roads as requested. Made by Ms. Swasey; second by Mr. Northrup. Passed unanimously.

Discussion on Proposed Change to Regular Selectboard Meeting Time/Dates

Board member Carl Etnier was recently elected to the Hunger Mountain Co-op's board of directors. The Co-op's board meets on the first Monday of each month, creating a conflict for Mr. Etnier with the Selectboard's regular schedule. Mr. Etnier requested that the Co-op's board consider a timing change, but the request was denied. After learning of the Co-op's decision, Mr. Etnier requested that the SB consider changing its schedule. SB members discussed the possibility of amending its 2015 Rules of Transaction to allow such a change, but decided the change wasn't warranted at this time. The board will consider the issue as part of the standard Rules of Transaction adoption process at its organizational meeting after 2016 Town Meeting

Preliminary Discussion on FY2017 Budget Development

The board reviewed the preliminary FY2017 budget. Development of the budget will continue during upcoming board meetings with an expected final budget adoption at the January 18, 2016 meeting.

Potential Appointment to Planning Commission for Troia Seat Vacancy

Mr. Troia resigned his elected Planning Commission seat soon after his appointment to the Selectboard. The board advertised to fill the seat through 2016 Town Meeting Day. The final year of the position's 3-year term will be up for election at 2016 Town Meeting.

The Planning Commission interviewed candidates for the vacancy and recommended Ray Stout, an East Montpelier Village resident. The SB discussed the possibility of appointing Mr. Stout, who had also been a candidate for the recent board vacancy and was interviewed at that time by the SB.

Motion: To appoint Ray Stout to the Planning Commission for a term ending on 2016 Town Meeting Day, March 1, 2016. Made by Ms. Swasey; second by Mr. Northrup. Passed unanimously.

2016 Municipal Planning Grant

The town, on behalf of the Planning Commission, submitted a 2016 Municipal Planning Grant application in the amount of \$22,435 (state funding of \$17,623; town match of \$4,812) to create a master plan for East Montpelier Village. The town was recently notified that that the state awarded the 2016 MPG grant for the full amount requested. The board reviewed the grant agreement.

Motion: To accept the 2016 Municipal Planning Grant and authorize TA Johnson to sign the agreement. Made by Mr. Troia; second by Ms. Swasey. Passed unanimously.

Appointments

➤ Zoning Administrator:

- TA Johnson also serves as the town's zoning administrator and is under contract for both duties through June 30, 2018. The zoning administrator position, unlike the town administrator position, is an appointed position for a specific term. Mr. Johnson's 3-year term recently expired. Under the town's charter adopted in 2014 the ZA position now has a 1-year term.
- **Motion: To appoint Bruce Johnson as the town's zoning administrator for a term ending December 7, 2016.** Made by Mr. Troia; second by Ms. Swasey. Passed unanimously.

➤ Acting Zoning Administrator:

- The acting zoning administrator serves when the town's ZA is absent or has a conflict of interest. The appointment is for a 1-year term. Mr. Troia has served as

the acting ZA for a number of years. His current term expires December 31, 2015 and he is willing to serve another term.

- **Motion: To appoint Gene Troia as the town's acting zoning administrator for a term ending December 31, 2016.** Made by Ms. Swasey; second by Mr. Northrup. Passed unanimously 3-0 (Mr. Troia recused himself).

Warrants

Members reviewed and signed the warrant.

Minutes

The Chair presented the minutes of the November 16, 2015 Selectboard meeting for consideration.

Motion: To approve the November 16, 2015 Selectboard meeting minutes as presented. Made by Mr. Northrup; second by Ms. Swasey. Passed unanimously.

The Chair presented the minutes of the November 30, 2015 Selectboard public hearing and meeting for consideration.

Motion: To approve the November 30, 2015 Selectboard hearing & meeting minutes as presented. Made by Mr. Troia; second by Mr. Northrup. Passed unanimously.

The Chair presented the minutes of the December 2, 2015 Selectboard meeting for consideration.

Motion: To approve the December 2, 2015 Selectboard meeting minutes as amended. Made by Mr. Northrup; second by Mr. Troia. Passed unanimously.

Other Business

Town Administrator Report:

- 2016 Town Meeting Warning Article Discussion:
 - Representatives from GMTA and Kellogg-Hubbard Library will be at the December 21st SB meeting to discuss 2016 Town Meeting Warning article requests
 - The board decided that, at this point, there was no need for other groups that regularly have funding articles on Town Meeting warnings to send representatives
- Central VT Solid Waste Management District's Proposed Facility on VT Rte. 14 S:
 - The board decided there was no reason to meet with the town's CVSWMD representative, Ginny Callan, until plans for the proposed facility were more fully developed
- Mike Bald Report on Hogweed in Village Cemetery:
 - The board reviewed the 2015 update on the ling-running Village Cemetery hogweed eradication effort; things are looking good

➤ Upcoming Meeting Schedule

- December 17th 5:00 pm Town party at town office
- December 21st 6:30 pm Regular SB meeting
- January 4th 6:30 pm Regular SB meeting

Zoning Administrator Report:

- 2 permit applications since the November 16th board meeting
- No DRB meeting is currently scheduled

Motion: To adjourn. Made by Mr. Northrup; second by Mr. Troia. Passed unanimously.
Meeting adjourned 9:49 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Bruce Johnson, Town Administrator

Approved: December 21, 2015 East Montpelier Selectboard meeting