

Minutes of the East Montpelier Selectboard

December 11, 2017 Special Joint Meeting with the Calais Selectboard

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

Calais SB Attendance: Chair Denise Wheeler, Sharon Winn Fannon, Clif Emmons, John Brabant, and Rose Pelchuck

Public Attendance (from East Montpelier): None

Chair Gardner called the meeting to order at 7:15 p.m.

Additions to Agenda: None

Public Comment: None

Calais Selectboard Chair Denise Wheeler opened the joint meeting at 7:16 p.m.

Discussion of the FY2019 Ambulance & Emergency Services Budget Request by the East Montpelier Fire Department

At the annual budget presentation on December 7th, EMFD made the following funding request to the towns:

Service	Calais		East Montpelier		Total	
	FY2019 Request	% Increase over FY18	FY2019 Request	% Increase over FY18	FY2019 Request	% Increase over FY18
Fire	\$ 56,784.67	6.4%	\$113,569.33	6.4%	\$170,354.00	6.4%
Ambulance	\$ 76,399.00	5.1%	\$152,798.00	5.1%	\$229,197.00	5.1%
Total	\$133,183.67	5.7%	\$266,367.33	5.7%	\$399,551.00	5.7%

Total EMFD FY2019 ambulance budget of \$278,271 includes a contracted Plainfield payment of \$49,074 for a total combined services budget of \$448,625, up 5.4% from FY2018.

Board members discussed staffing costs for the ambulance service, which is going up \$10,000 (5.9%) under the proposed budget. Last year the boards authorized the use of up to \$15,000 of gross ambulance service revenue for staff expense. Questions arose as to whether that was occurring. EMFD President Toby Talbot was called, and by speaker phone stated that EMFD intends to use the funds, but has not yet done so due to the difficulty of finding staff for the available shifts. The boards expect to see better reporting of the ambulance service revenue, from receipt through the dissemination of net proceeds to the EMFD contingency and capital reserve funds.

The other main topic of discussion was the possible expansion of ambulance service contracted coverage to Marshfield. Both boards are generally in support of the move on the proposed terms provided on December 7th by EMFD Chief Ty Rolland: \$40,000 for the first year of a three-year contract with 3% increases annually. Despite the general recognition of the need to expand the service

to manage the ever-increasing costs of operation, concerns remain regarding the dilution of service capability and the long-term repercussions of expansion.

The Calais board agreed to put the requested \$133,183.67 in its FY2019 budget.

Motion: To include an appropriation of \$266,367.33 in the FY2019 general Selectboard budget for the provision of ambulance and emergency services by EMFD. Made by Ms. Swasey; second by Ms. Willis. Passed unanimously.

Presentation by Berlin Selectboard Member Jeremy Hansen Regarding a Potential Central Vermont Community Consortium to Provide Internet Service

Berlin Selectboard member and Norwich professor Jeremy Hansen, along with Jerry Diamantides, gave a presentation on a proposed 30 V.S.A. Chapter 82 “Communications Union District” to provide internet service for the central Vermont area. The district, to be known as Central Vermont Internet, would be a statutory municipality under Vermont law set up to provide competitively-priced, hard-wired, locally serviced, very high-speed internet service to its member towns at no cost, by law, to the towns. The district would use fiber-optic cable, strung along the existing pole network, which has the potential to provide up to 1,000 Mbps (megabits per second) symmetrical speed (both download and upload). Central Vermont town & city governing boards are being asked to place an article on 2018 Town Meeting warnings that would enable voters to decide whether the various communities would join the proposed district. Both boards were excited by the opportunity to provide high-speed internet, to all areas of Calais and East Montpelier, as most of both towns have limited-to-no such access.

Motion: To place the following article on the 2018 East Montpelier Town Meeting Warning:

Shall the Town of East Montpelier enter into a communications union district to be known as Central Vermont Internet, under the provisions of 30 V.S.A. Chapter 82.

Made by Mr. Troia; second by Ms. Swasey. Passed unanimously.

The Calais board passed an equivalent motion.

Meeting adjourned by consensus at 8:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Bruce Johnson, Town Administrator

Approved: December 18, 2017 East Montpelier Selectboard meeting