

**East Montpelier Selectboard Meeting APPROVED (03/05/18) MINUTES
February 19, 2018 at the Town Office**

Selectboard (SB) members present: Carl Etnier (recording secretary), Seth Gardner, Kim Swasey, Gene Troia; Bruce Johnson (town and zoning administrator).

Others present: Calais Selectboard: John Brabant, Rose Pelchuck, Denise Wheeler (chair); Town Treasurer Don Welch; State Rep. Kimberly Jessup.

A. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Gardner called the meeting to order at 6:35 p.m.

Additions to the agenda

None

Public comment

None.

Review of minutes

Motion: I move to approve the minutes of February 5, 2018 as amended. Made: Mr. Troia. Second: Ms. Swasey. 4-0.

B. SPECIAL JOINT MEETING WITH TOWN OF CALAIS SELECTBOARD

Members of the East Montpelier Capital Improvement Committee have begun working with the East Montpelier Fire Department (EMFD) to improve the transparency of financial reports from the fire department. Mr. Troia reported on that work in a letter.

The two Selectboards discussed a proposed letter to EMFD from the boards. The letter praises the recent joint work on financial reports and encourages further work in that area. Some amendments to the draft letter were proposed and adopted by unanimous consent.

Motion: I move to authorize chair Seth Gardner to sign the revised letter to the East Montpelier Fire Department re: EMFD Ambulance Revenue Accounting and Capital Plan. Made: Mr. Etnier. Second: Ms. Swasey. 4-0.

A corresponding motion was made and passed by the Calais Selectboard.

C. CONVERSATION WITH STATE REPRESENTATIVE KIMBERLY JESSUP

Representative Jessup provided a legislative session update in advance of Town Meeting Day.

Ms. Jessup was interested in the board's thoughts on fluid discussions in the State House around possible new funding streams for state education spending, which some proponents were advocating be in place for Fiscal Year 2019 (beginning July 1, 2018). She noted there is a public hearing about the ideas by the House Ways and Means committee in Room 11 this Wednesday, February 21, 4-6 pm.

The board had no firm recommendations on what taxes should fund education spending. A clear message from the board was to take the discussion slowly, for two primary reasons: 1) school boards have already made and warned budgets for FY2019 based on the existing formula, and it would create chaos to change the formula now; and 2) any changes would have winners and losers, and thoughtful discussion is needed about what is desired.

The board was also clear that the discussion needs to be about spending levels, as well as means of financing education. Ms. Jessup said she's conscious during those discussions that East Montpelier has among the highest

per-pupil spending levels in the state. Mr. Gardner and Mr. Etnier called for a wide-ranging, open discussion of ways to reduce spending while maintaining or increasing the quality of education—and they acknowledged that the sort of ideas they'd like to see discussed would create a lot of pushback.

Other themes included taxation fairness and progressive taxes, and the need both to have non-volatile revenue streams for education while matching taxes to taxpayers' ability to pay, which can vary with economic cycles.

Mr. Etnier asked about use of a carbon pollution tax to fund education (or any other) spending, and Ms. Jessup noted she's on the Climate Caucus. She said the caucus is supporting a bill for this session to study the way to implement a carbon pollution tax in Vermont.

In response to a question, Ms. Jessup also said there's been renewed talk about gun safety in the State House. A bill in the Senate reducing gun availability in domestic violence situations may get passed this session. SB members expressed support for gun rights balanced with increased common-sense safety measures.

D. CONSIDERATION OF CAI CONTRACT FOR TAX MAP MAINTENANCE

This is the Town's standard agreement for tax map updates, at the same cost as last year.

Motion: I move to approve the CAI agreement for tax map updates for \$1,950. Made: Mr. Etnier. Second: Mr. Troia. 4-0.

E. WORK SESSION FOR 2018 TOWN MEETING

The SB discussed how to prepare for Town Forum (9:30 am on Saturday, March 3) and Town Meeting (9:30 am on Tuesday, March 6).

F. PRELIMINARY REVIEW OF DRAFT 2018 TOWN PLAN

The Planning Commission (PC) has set its formal hearing on the draft plan for March 22. The PC is asking that the SB review the draft in advance of the hearing and provide comments/concerns in a timely fashion so that they can be dealt with during the final update process before the PC hands the plan off to the SB; the desire is to hand off a plan that the SB can deal with expeditiously (fully understanding that things can come up that could derail the process), with a targeted adoption date of June 4.

G. WARRANTS

Signed

H. OTHER BUSINESS

PACE (Property Assessed Clean Energy) Update

Efficiency Vermont is putting together an information packet for PACE communities to facilitate town discussions on what to do with the program in light of the upcoming Efficiency VT withdrawal as PACE plan administrator in mid-March.

Park 'n Ride Facility's Level II EV Station

We have the ability to make it a "public" station -- i.e., make it visible on services that handle such things. Of the 5 stations funded through Washington Electric Cooperative, only the one at the VTrans Middlesex Park 'n Ride is listed – the others (at Harwood Union, Rumney, and Cabot Creamery) are not. If the SB does not make it public on one commonly used site (plugshare.com) another user may do so. The SB decided by unanimous consent to publicize the station and its free charges and after 6 months to decide how much to charge.

Friends of Coburn Pond

The group has asked if the town will allow a group presence on the town website, similar to the pages for EMSLI (East Montpelier Senior Living Initiative) and Four Corners Schoolhouse Association. The SB decided by unanimous consent to try it.

Better Roads Grant Application Update

The town received a \$20,000 Better Roads grant for the planned Snow Hill Road erosion control/drainage ditch work. Actual work can't begin until July 1 at the earliest. A formal grant agreement, which will need review/approval by the SB, will likely arrive by the end of May.

Meeting Schedule

Currently the meetings in April are scheduled for the 2nd & 16th, the second of which is during school spring break. We are almost certain to need a special meeting on April 9 to receive the draft town plan. A simple resolution is to shift both regular meetings, one to the 9th and the other to the 23rd. The board decided by unanimous consent to make the change.

February 21	6:30 pm	BCA (board of civil authority) meeting
March 3	9:30 am	Town Forum at EMES
March 5	6:30 pm	Regular Selectboard meeting
March 6	9:30 am	Town Meeting at EMES
March 19	6:30 pm	Regular Selectboard meeting
April 9	6:30 pm	Special Selectboard meeting (in lieu of April 2)
April 23	6:30 pm	Special Selectboard meeting (in lieu of April 16)

Zoning Administrator Report

Just one application in 2018 to this point.

No upcoming Development Review Board meeting scheduled as yet.

I. ADJOURNMENT

Motion: I move to adjourn. Made: Mr. Troia. Second: Ms. Swasey. 4-0. 9:27 pm.