

## Minutes of the Selectboard Meeting of Wednesday, July 8, 2015 at 6:30 PM

Members present: Linda Cook, Chair; Christopher Ashley; Steve Flanders; Dan Goulet (by phone); Mary Layton, Vice-Chair; Neil Fulton, Town Manager and Jonathan Bynum.

There were about 27 people in the audience.

Also participating: Watt Alexander; Phil Dechert; Linda Gray; Jamie Hess; David Hubbard; Cheryl Lindberg; Suzanne Lupien; Lindsay Peard-McClure; Henry Scheier

Cook opened the meeting at 6:31 pm.

1. Approval of Agenda (Action Item). Flanders **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Ashley) to defer discussion of items 11 and 12 on the agenda to a later meeting. **Motion failed 2-3** (yes—Ashley, Flanders; no—Cook, Goulet, Layton). After discussion, Layton **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Cook) to schedule a Special Selectboard Meeting to discuss Project Management (item 11 on the agenda) for a convenient date during the week of July 27<sup>th</sup>. Cook and Goulet said that they supported having a Special Selectboard meeting, but on the subject of capital facilities in general, not just Project Management. Layton then withdrew her motion, and Cook withdrew her second. Cook then **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Layton) that items 14(b) and 14(c) on the agenda be moved up to item 4(a). After discussion, **motion passed 3-2** (yes—Cook, Goulet, Layton; no—Ashley, Flanders).

2. Public Comments. Layton had some questions about the two Accounts Payable warrants she had signed between meetings. She asked the ownership of the island in the Ompompanoosuc River where phragmite removal had taken place. David Hubbard related that the project had been overseen by the Connecticut River Watershed Council, but that he did not know the ownership of the island. Layton asked whether the Dan Clay plowing & sanding route had been bid out. Fulton said that it had not. Cook said that she believes that all five Selectboard members should be looking at all warrants, and suggested that all off-cycle warrants be distributed to all Selectboard members at the time of creation in future. Fulton stated that the process followed was consistent with the procedure adopted by the Selectboard in March. Suzanne Lupien, Watt Alexander and Lindsay Peard-McClure made comments. Henry Scheier reminded everyone that the Norwich Fair runs from July 23<sup>rd</sup> to July 26<sup>th</sup>.

3. Town Manager's Report (Discussion). Fulton's report highlighted the signing of the 2015 Grand List, which showed an increase of about \$2.5 million from the prior year. There were two appeals to the Board of Civil Authority. Fulton also pointed out that as of 7/1/15, it is against State law to place metal, glass, paper, boxboard, cardboard and plastic types 1 and 2 into the trash compactor. There were some further questions.

4. Interview/Reappoint C. Stuart White, Jr. to the Historic Preservation Commission (Discussion/Action Item). C. Stuart White Jr. was not present. Phil Dechert spoke on White's behalf. Flanders then **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Ashley) to reappoint C. Stuart White, Jr. to the Historic Preservation Commission for a three year term. **Motion passed.**

4(a). Town Manager Evaluation Process (Discussion).  
Town Manager Contract (Discussion).

Cook said that she favored a special meeting the week of July 29<sup>th</sup> to discuss the Town Manager evaluation process. Layton said that this could be a very positive exercise. Flanders said that he saw no need for a Special Meeting. Fulton said that he feels no need for a contract, but that since

the subject has become a source of contention, he would be willing to discuss a contract based on the template used for Pete Webster's contract. Layton **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Goulet) to postpone items 14(b) and 14(c) to a Special Selectboard Meeting on July 29<sup>th</sup> based on the availability of the room. **Motion passed 3-2** (yes—Cook, Goulet, Layton; no—Ashley, Flanders).

5. Errors and Omissions - William & Hali Wickner, 1260 Podunk Road (Discussion/Action Item). Lindberg presented this proposed change. Flanders **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Ashley) to approve the Listers' request to correct an error on the 2015 Grand List by applying a \$256,254 deduction for Current Use to Property owned by William and Hali Wickner, Trustees, at 1260 Podunk Road, Parcel ID# 14-001-000, adjusting the taxable value to \$653,246. **Motion passed.**

6. Memo from Norwich Energy Committee re: possible solar project at Exit 13 (Discussion/Possible Action Item). Linda Gray related that the Norwich Energy Committee was in the early stages of investigating siting a solar array in the infield of Exit 13 of Interstate 91. Jamie Hess shared some images of creative positioning of solar panels adjacent to highways. Cook expressed concern about damage to the panels from traffic accidents. She felt that a traffic study should be performed, and that the Norwich citizenry should be consulted. Flanders **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Ashley) to support the Norwich Energy Committee's efforts to pursue installation of a solar project in the land surrounding Exit 13 of Interstate 91, specifically the area bounded by the I-91 southbound entry ramp. **Motion passed 3-2** (yes—Ashley, Flanders, Layton; no—Cook, Goulet).

7. FY16 Tax Rate Setting (Discussion/Action Item). Fulton pointed out the impact of the increase in the Grand List from last year, and the higher than anticipated Hold Harmless payment from the State. Flanders expressed the desire to maintain a 17% reserve in the Undesignated Fund Balance, and **moved** to set the Town Tax Rate at \$0.5319, the local agreement rate at \$0.0056, for a total Town Tax Rate of \$0.5375. No second. Ashley then **moved** to set the Town tax rate at \$0.5202, the Local Agreement rate at \$0.0056 for a total Town tax rate of \$0.5258. This would result in a FY16 tax rate that is 0.52% more than FY15 Town tax rate. After some questions, Fulton said that Ashley's motion would remove \$180,536 from the Undesignated Fund Balance, while maintaining a 16% reserve. Ashley's **motion passed 3-2** (yes—Ashley, Flanders, Layton; no—Cook, Goulet).

8. FY16 Paving Program—Expenditure of \$275,000 from the Paving Reserve Fund (Discussion/Action Item). Fulton presented the FY16 Paving priorities as proposed by Andy Hodgdon. Flanders **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Ashley) to authorize the expenditure of \$275,000 from the Paving Reserve Fund. After discussion, **motion passed.**

At this point, Goulet left the meeting (by telephone).

9. Committee on Town Communications (Discussion/Possible Action Item). Flanders presented the draft Charge for the Committee on Town Communications. Cook said that she would prefer that the Committee include a Selectboard liaison, and that the stated purpose of the Committee be to improve communications between "townspeople and the Selectboard" (rather than "townspeople and their government"). After discussion, Ashley **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Flanders) to approve the Norwich Town Communications Committee Charge as included in the Selectboard packet. **Motion passed 3-1** (yes—Ashley, Flanders, Layton; no—Cook).

10. Norwich Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan (Discussion/Action Item). There was discussion of what has changed in the Plan, whether disassembly of the prospective Town Pool dam should be included, and whether future zoning changes might have an impact. Flanders **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Ashley)

to approve a Resolution Adopting the Norwich, Vermont 2015 Local Hazard Mitigation Plan and authorizing the Chair to sign. **Motion passed 3-1** (yes—Ashley, Flanders, Layton; no—Cook).

11. Project Management (Discussion/Possible Action Item)

a. Opinion from Paul Gillies.

After discussion, Cook **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Layton) to postpone action on item 11, Project Management—Opinion of Paul Gillies, and add an item on Capital Facilities to the agenda for the Special Selectboard Meeting of 29 July. **Motion passed 3-1** (yes—Ashley, Cook, Layton; no—Flanders).

12. Senior Action Council (Discussion/Possible Action Item). Cook **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Layton) to postpone this item to the meeting of August 26<sup>th</sup>. **Motion passed.**

13. Correspondence (Discussion/Possible Action Item)

a) Email from David Hubbard re: Conservation Easements

b) Email from D. Rodman Thomas re: Turnpike Road Speed Limit.

Ashley **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Flanders) to receive an email from David Hubbard re: Conservation Easements and an email from D. Rodman Thomas re: Turnpike Road Speed. **Motion passed.** Ashley concurred with Mr. Thomas' concern about Turnpike Road speed limits, and suggested that this item might be on a future agenda. Lindberg asked a question to clarify the procedure for submitting correspondence to the Selectboard.

14. Selectboard

a) Follow-up from VLCT Forum (Discussion/Possible Action Item).

Brief discussion, no action.

d) Approval of the Minutes of the 6/10/15 Selectboard Meeting, 6/17/15 Special Selectboard Meeting, 6/23/15 Special Selectboard Meeting and 6/24/15 Selectboard Meeting (Action Item).

Cook said that the minutes as submitted failed to give the whole context. After discussion, Flanders **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Ashley) to approve the minutes of the 6/10/15 Selectboard meeting, 6/17/15 Special Selectboard Meeting, 6/23/15 Special Selectboard Meeting and 6/24/15 Selectboard Meeting. **Motion passed.** Lindberg said that in the 6/24/15 Minutes, there was no discussion of Item 11, and the need that she expressed for public participation on the Finance Committee or Budget Advisory Committee. It was suggested that Lindberg re-send an e-mail she had earlier sent to Nancy Kramer to the Selectboard, so that it could be received as correspondence next meeting, and then her thoughts would be on record.

e) Review of Next Agendas (Discussion/Possible Action Item) 5 minutes.

Agenda items for Special Selectboard Meeting of 7/29/15:

- Town Manager Evaluation Process
- Town Manager Contract
- Project Management—Paul Gillies Letter
- Capital Facilities

Agenda items for Selectboard Meeting of 8/26/15

- Turnpike Road Speed Limits
- Sidewalks
- Senior Action Council
- Correspondence from Cheryl Lindberg
- Selectboard Goals

--FY17 Budget Guidance

Flanders **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Ashley) to adjourn. **Motion passed.** Meeting adjourned at 9:12 pm.

Approved by the Selectboard on August 26, 2015.

Jonathan Bynum

Linda Cook  
Selectboard Chair  
Next Regular Meeting – August 26, 2015 at 6:30 PM

PLEASE NOTE THAT CATV RECORDS ALL REGULAR MEETINGS OF THE NORWICH  
SELECTBOARD.