

Minutes

Town of Norwich Finance Committee Meeting Tuesday, September 15, 2009 Tracy Hall, Norwich, Vermont

Members present: Stephen Lajoie (Chair), Stephen Flanders (Secretary), Keith Moran (arrived 4:55 PM), Dan Weintraub, Robert Mitchell, Ann Sargent (arrived at 4:40.)

Members absent: Cheryl A. Lindberg (Vice Chair)

Also Present:

Chairperson Lajoie called the meeting to order at 4:30 PM.

Agenda Items Discussed

1. Review/Approval of Agenda:

Lajoie reviewed the agenda. Flanders offered adding a discussion of his “Commentary on Norwich Expenditure Budget History.” Lajoie mentioned the upcoming schedule for school-related meetings. Sargent mentioned that Norwich should have input on the SAU budget.

2. Review/Approval of Minutes:

Lajoie asked for comments minutes of the meeting of 2 September, 2009.

Motion: Sargent moved and Moran seconded that the 2 September 2009 minutes circulated to the NFC be accepted as presented.

The motion passed unanimously.

3. Public Comments:

No members of the public were present to volunteer a comment in this segment.

4. Financial Report – Robertson:

The Town Manager Webster was out of town at a Town Managers’ Conference and the Norwich Financial Officer, Roberta Robertson, was unavailable, so NFC members noted that expenditures and income appeared to be on schedule, according to an August 09 set of reports that Robinson had circulated on 10 September. In her e-mail of transmission, she stated, “There really is not much else to report at this time in the fiscal year. Please feel free to call me with questions.”

5. NFC Narrative for FY2009 Town Report:

Lajoie circulated the schedule for submitting the NFC narrative for the FY 2009 Norwich Town Report. Some editorial corrections were noted to the draft NFC narrative.

Action: Lajoie to submit report to Town Manager’s office.

The question arose whether the NFC should continue to be a mixture of elected and appointed positions. Hearing no disagreement that it should transition to an all-elected body, Flanders suggested that Lajoie draft a motion for discussion at the next meeting to make the NFC an all-elected body.

Action: Lajoie to draft a motion for the Selectboard to make the NFC an all-elected body.

6. Data and Charts for Town Report:

Lajoie noted that prior to last year, town reports incorporated charts and graphs from a database, developed by Bill Bender. Last year, there wasn't enough time to update the data in the database for the FY 2008 Town Report. He asked whether the tradition should be continued. A discussion ensued:

- NFC members discussed the role of graphics in presenting information about Norwich finances. Members noted that both narrative and graphics can help convey the message. Sargent suggested that the NFC write-up be descriptive, analytical and graphic. For example, a given topic might include what is being funded, how it is funded, why it is being funded, what the alternatives are and what the funding history is.
- Sargent proposed a handbook that would serve as a primer both for the NFC and for taxpayers trying to understand the mechanics of town finances. The handbook would cover the various entities for which there are budgets, how they are funded and how they are governed. The primary entities would be the Norwich town government, the Norwich School District, and the Dresden School District.
- Flanders suggested that each NFC member propose items that they would like to see covered in NFC information presented in the town report and on the web. At the next meeting, the NFC can review the items and decide which to present and how to present them.

Action: Before the next meeting, each NFC member is invited to suggest what the NFC should explain in the town report and website.

Action: Flanders to upgrade the Expenditure History spreadsheet to reflect income, as well.

7. Other Topics:

Sargent requested that the SAU budget be itemized. She is especially interested in seeing what happened to the office space rental line item of the SAU and professional services, a line-item funded by three school districts that adds up to \$0.7M, but currently contains little detail.

Action: Lajoie to contact Aubin about providing more details for the SAU budget.

8. Adjournment

Motion: Flanders moved and Moran seconded that the committee adjourn.

The vote was unanimous.

Adjourned at 6:05 PM.

Upcoming meeting dates (4:30 PM in Tracy Hall):

Tuesday, October 20, 2009

Tuesday, November 17, 2009

Tuesday, December 15, 2009