

TOWN OF NORWICH
P.O. Box 376
NORWICH, VERMONT 05055-0376
TEL. (802) 649-0127

Minutes of the Selectboard Meeting Tuesday, February 11, 2003 at 6:30 PM

Members Present: Liz Blum; Linda Cook; Neil Fulton; Douglas Hoffman, Chair; Nancy Hoggson; Dennis Pavlicek, Town Manager, Secretary Tina Moses.

Also Participating: Jay Barrett, Bill Bender, Susan Blum, Ames Byrd, Al Converse, Matt Freeman, Tom Gray, Dennis Kaufman, Bob Leaton, Cheryl Lindberg, Alison May, Liz Russell, Henry Scheier, Suzanne Stofflet, Steve Swett, Irv Thomae, Geoffrey Vitt, Gary Winslow. There were approximately 25 members in the audience at this meeting.

Hoffman opened the meeting at 6:30pm.

- 1) Approval of Agenda – Blum **moved** to approve with additions (second Cook). **Motion passed.**
- 2) Public Comments - None
- 3) Town Manager's Report – Pavlicek said Officer Berry will be attending a Commercial Truck Enforcement School in April to learn the rules and regulations of commercial trucking. He said the Transportation Committee met for their organizational meeting; their future meetings will be on the 3rd Monday of each month at 7:30pm. He reminded the group that the Legislative Meeting will be on February 17th at 5:00pm in Tracy Hall and that the Composting meeting will be on February 18th at 5:00pm. He explained that the new motor and water pump were put in the cardboard compactor at the Transfer Station and appear to be working well. He also said that Pete Richardson has been updating the Emergency Management Plan final copy and hopefully it will be ready by the end of the month. He said that Local government day is tomorrow and that he, Liz Blum, and Nancy Hoggson will be attending. He also reminded everyone that taxes are due by February 14th at 4:30pm.
- 4) Finance
 - a) Legal Bills – There were two legal bills. One to Downs, Rachlin and Martin in the amount of \$33 for personnel issues and one to Spink and Miller in the amount of \$691.78 for the Velco appeal.
 - b) Orders on the General Fund – Fulton **moved** to approve Accounts Payable Warrant # 207 for the General Fund in the amount of \$1,001,131.22 (second Blum). **Motion passed.**
- 5) Coalition of Municipalities (7:00pm) – Hoffman introduced Jay Barrett who is one of the founding members of the Coalition of Municipalities. Barrett explained that their Board of Directors is made up of Selectman and Town Managers of towns throughout the state, and they are not all 'sending' towns. There are 56 towns now part of the Coalition (2/3 receiving towns and 1/3 sending towns). He feels that Act 60 was designed to get the '14' towns (Stowe, Manchester etc.) who for years had been paying a very low tax rate. Fulton asked if it would be possible to join only to be supportive of the work being done on Killington decision or would the town need to participate completely. Barrett said any involvement the town wanted to have would be good for them as it helps to illustrate that there is a problem. Hoggson asked if he could comment on Governor Douglas's current proposal as outlined in his budget address proposal. Barrett said he doesn't believe its getting to the heart of the problem. Hoffman said Norwich's concern is of tax fairness as we are losing residents who can't pay their property tax bill. He asked what the status of the Killington case is. Barrett

said it is yet to be argued in Supreme Court, but that many towns have joined to Coalition in support of the Killington decision. Swett read aloud his reasons why the town should not join. Mathias said it is important not to antagonize our legislative delegation by joining an organization that is controversial and whose goals do not coincide with Norwich's. Barrett said the Coalition's first objective was to get a seat at the table to continue the dialog. Stofflet asked for clarification about the Coalition. She wanted to know if they are in favor of the repeal of Act 60 or if they just want to fix it. Barrett said he is suggesting to fix the pieces of Act 60 which currently do not address equity. Bender said he seconded Steve Swett's comments. He said it is not appropriate for the town to support any lobbying groups. He also finds the Coalition comments on income sensitivity particularly difficult. Susan Blum said she would like us to apply our tax dollars to a solution that is clear. She said it is unclear what the Coalition is lobbying for. Blum said if she chooses not to join the coalition, that in no way means that she is not willing to work on solutions to the problem. She said she is encouraging VLCT to work on this more strongly. Fulton said it is important that the resolution be brought to Montpelier with Hoggson, Blum and Pavlicek tomorrow.

6) Energy Committee

a) Discussion of Bio-Fuels –Byrd said they will have a table set up at Town Meeting to discuss various energy options. He reviewed the handout provided to the Board about utilizing bio-fuels. Blum asked if there were any grants to get this going? She also asked if there were other municipalities who do this. He said Keene, NH uses this and has received a grant to do so. Fulton **moved** to refer this to the Town Manager for further action (second Hoggson). **Motion passed.**

7) Planning

a) Private Highway Specifications – Fulton **moved** to approve the Private Highway Specifications as originally presented by Fulton and without the changes as presented by VLCT (second Blum). **Motion passed.** Fulton **moved** to repeal the Private Highways Specifications Ordinance of 2/99 (second Blum). **Motion passed.**

b) Private Driveway Specifications – Hoffman **moved** to postpone (second Blum). **Motion passed.** Hoffman agreed to work on these specifications and bring back to the Board

8) DRB Committee

a) Receipt and initial discussion of Committee Report – Fulton **moved** to receive (second Blum). **Motion passed.** Complete discussion of this topic will take place at the meeting on February 25th.

9) Correspondence

a) Pierce Letter – Hoffman read aloud the Pierce letter which thanks the road crew for their hard work this year and questioned the need to pave Willey Hill Road.

10) Selectboard

a) Legislative Meeting on February 17 – The local legislators will be here at 5:00pm to speak with the Select/School boards and residents. Fulton asked what position the Board will take on the issue of Act 60 at that meeting. He said the Board should go to the meeting with a general consensus of where they stand. Fulton said he doesn't support Act 60 but he does support the principals of the Brigham decision. Hoffman said funding for education must be income sensitive and we all must be willing to share the burden and the funding mechanism must be corrected. Hoffman suggested a vote as to whether or not the Board is willing to support the Shumlin plan revised. No motion was made, or vote taken.

b) Minutes of Selectboard Meeting

- i) December 10, 2002 – Fulton **moved** to approve with amendments all three sets of minutes presented (second Hoggson). **Motion passed.**
- ii) January 14, 2003
- iii) January 28, 2003

Fulton **moved** to adjourn at 9:50pm (second Hoggson). **Motion passed.**

Next Regular Meeting – February 25, 2003 at 6:30 PM

Approved by the Selectboard on March 11, 2003

By, Kristina Moses
Selectboard Secretary

Douglas W. Hoffman
Selectboard Chair