

**TOWN OF NORWICH**  
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**Minutes of the Selectboard Meeting of Tuesday, May 13 , 2003 at 6:30 PM**

Members Present: Liz Blum, Chair; Jack Candon, Linda Cook; Nancy Hoggson; Suzanne Stofflet; Dennis Pavlicek, Town Manager, Secretary Tina Moses.

Also Participating: Ed Childs, Fran DeGasta, Adele and Neil Fulton, Lucy Gibson, Ralph Hybels, Dennis Kaufman, Nelson Kasfir, Karen Kayen, Jeff Mathias, Scott McGee, Pat Peat, Sharon Racusin, Pete Richardson, Liz Russell, Henry Scheier, Stanley Teeter, Linda White. There were approximately 25 members in the audience at this meeting.

Blum opened the meeting at 6:30pm.

- 1) Approval of Agenda – Hoggson **moved** to approve (second Stofflet). **Motion passed.**
- 2) Public Comments – Racusin and DeGasta presented a letter to the board with concerns about the contract with Hanover for the sixth graders. She read aloud some points of this letter. Racusin said she is concerned because the school board really doesn't want to listen to them. She said she spoke with Mary Sachsse who said that the Finance Committee is working on the issue but it is so complicated they are having a hard time figuring it out. Blum said she is unsure if the Selectboard can help but thanked them for coming. They asked if the Selectboard could send a letter in support of their letter. Stofflet suggested a joint school/selectboard meeting to discuss this further. Mathias said as a taxpayer he has concerns about the accuracy of the taxes he will be paying. He said he can't help but feel he will have serious questions due to the Interstate Compact. Kaufman asked about his Freedom of Information request. Blum said she has asked the Town Manager to handle this issue. Pavlicek said he contacted VLCT and was told time could be given to produce the documents. Kaufman asked again when the Selectboard will provide this information. He said he feels ignored. Blum said the law does not give a specific date just states "promptly". She also said she disagrees with Kaufman's interpretation of the public access to documents law. McGee gave his interpretation of the law for Kaufman. Blum asked if this could be discussed at a future meeting. McGee said he is concerned about an e-mail he received from Candon using the more comprehensive list used for Selectboard business. McGee said he thinks the list should be limited to only approved documents. Candon explained he didn't intend it to be forwarded to everyone, just the Selectboard. Moses said she thought she had been told to forward to the "world" and did so. McGee said he thought there was a policy regarding the use of the e-mail list. Moses explained there was no policy or motion made with regard to this issue. Fulton said the previous board had a verbal agreement that there would be two lists. One for just agendas and minutes and one for "everything". Moses explained the two lists have been merged together as people were inevitably asking for everything. Blum asked that this be put on the agenda for a future meeting. Stofflet said she is attending a VLCT seminar entitled "Rules of the Game". This seminar deals with the rules surrounding running meetings effectively and she will bring back information for the board to review. Blum said the trails committee will be having a number of workshops in the near future to train people on how to maintain the trails and urged people to attend.
- 3) Town Manager's Report – Pavlicek said Green Up Day was a great success and gave thanks to Tina Moses, Jill Kearney and Suzanne Stofflet for their help. He said the Corridor

Enhancement Plan has been forwarded the State for review. We don't expect any problems and are hoping to have positive news back from them in the near future. He said the request we put into the state for a grant from the Department of Justice was approved and now we have heard we will be receiving more than originally expected. The additional funds will allow us to purchase a Thermal Imaging Camera for the Fire Department. He also said the Town Clerk's Office is changing its hours as of May 24<sup>th</sup> and will not longer be open on Saturdays. Pavlicek said he and Moses have been working with the Marion Cross School on a project to create an official Town Seal. The children in grades one through five have created proposed seals and we now need to figure out which one or ones will be best suited as a seal. He said a committee will be put together using a Selectboard Member, a school board member and three others to wean the group of 200+ seals down to 10 finalists. The final ten will be put up at Dan and Whits, the Post Office and various other local "hot spots" as well as the website so the public can give input. The committee will then review the finalists with all the input provided and hopefully choose our new town seal. This will not be an easy task as all the seals are impressive and very well done. Pavlicek said he will then be asking the Selectboard to ratify. He also read aloud the activities planned by the American Legion for Memorial Day.

4) Finance

- a) Legal bills – Pavlicek said there was one legal expense to Spink and Miller for professional services related to the VELCO appeal in the amount of \$239.12
- b) Orders on the General Fund: Hoggson **moved** to approve the Payroll Warrant dated 5/10/03 in the amount of \$32,836.11, Accounts Payable Warrant #219 in the amount of \$1,548.99 and Accounts Payable Warrant #218 in the amount of \$54,285.42 (second Stofflet). **Motion passed.**

5) Roads

- a) Continued discussion of the Final Report of the Committee to Identify Specific Class 4 Roads for Possible Reclassification as Trails – Hybels said the report should speak for itself and he hopes we can move directly to the roads in question for discussion (pieces of Dutton Hill, Parkhurst and Tigertown). He reviewed the roads by name beginning with Dutton Hill road and then reviewed the comments provided by abutters for each road. Pavlicek will work with Hybels to find out if we need a survey to discontinue these roads. Richardson explained the difficulty with the lost road. Fulton said he believes attorney Gilles or Giuliani told the Town previously that as long as the area was clearly defined and reclassified to a trail then a survey was not necessary. He believes it may be different for discontinuation. Gibson said that Stockbridge had a fairly controversial issue with discontinuation of some old roads. A historian found that some of the old roads were actually old town rights of way. Cook **moved** to postpone to a date certain (6/24/03) and ask the Town Manager to find the answers to the questions at hand (second Candon). Cook asked the Town Manager to get the process needed for reclassification or discontinuation of any of these roads. Teeter said he would like some historical background done on these roads. Russell said in the case of reclassification we would not lose roads but gain trails. **Motion passed.**
- b) Connecticut River Joint Commissions Representative - Richardson explained the background behind the Connecticut River Joint Commissions. He said they also have a local rivers subcommittee. These committees meet 5-6 times a year and do a variety of things. Cook **moved** to authorize the Town Manager to advertise for two slots on the

committees (second Hoggson). **Motion passed.**

Blum announced the vote count from tonight's vote on Act 144 (652 yes, 156 no)

6) Discussion and vote of changing Regional Planning Commissions – Blum briefly reviewed the history in the past year with the Norwich Selectboard and the Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Regional Planning Commission. She then said the procedure is that if a Town decides to leave an RPC and the RPC protests, then the Town will need to do a study (paid for by the town) to see if the state will permit the Town leaving. Hoggson said she has wanted to have this discussion for some time. She said we have heard from both RPC's, Norwich residents, the Planning Commissions from Norwich and Hanover as well as others. She said she has worked with both RPC's due to her job in Randolph. She said she has been very impressed with the work done by Two Rivers Regional Planning. She said she doesn't feel that making a switch would hinder any relationships with surrounding communities in NH and VT. She said with Hartford leaving it gives us a chance to review our relationship with UVLSRPC. Candon said he is against leaving until he is shown how another choice is a better choice. He said Hartford has not left UVLSRPC yet and cannot until approved by the state. He asked what personnel staffing and topic focus does Two Rivers have that UVLSRPC doesn't. Stofflet said she is new to the topic but has done a lot of research on it. She said it is not a clear-cut issue. She said there are pros and cons on both sides. She said she would strongly recommend that no matter what decision is come to, that after 3-5 years an evaluation is done to make sure we made the right decision, and that we pledge to expend the same amount of time, energy and cooperation to get the most value from whoever we choose. Fulton provided a prospective as a town appointed commissioner from Norwich. He updated the board on the recent activates with UVLSRPC. He said he believes some members of the Conservation Commission have said they are satisfied with UVLSRPC. He said the Planning Coordinator and the Road Foreman have told him that they believe the UVLSRPC has done a fine job. He then reviewed many other services provided by the UVLSRPC through the George D. Aiken Council. Fulton suggested the board meet with the Hanover Selectboard also to have the same discussion that we did with Hartford. He said as you face this you look at the overwhelming support for the current RPC and look at the benefits and dollars to the town both directly and indirectly. He said he believes if you do a fair comparison you will find support of the UVLSRPC. Childs said he forwarded an e-mail in support of UVLSRPC and asked if it could be included in the record. He said the Planning Commission has voted more than once to stay with UVLSRPC. They also offered to help the Board study the possibility of making this difficult decision. Kaufman said there is not enough information in order to make an informed decision. He said he hoped a vote would be put off until a public hearing could take place. Kayen said she is stunned that it is on the agenda for a vote as it seems premature and there is nothing comprehensive or concrete as to why we should change. Hoggson said Hartford's decision to change and Bamford saying that she will recommend Norwich and Hartland leave if Hartford is granted the switch moved it to the forefront. Kasfir asked why Thetford left; Hoggson read Jim Masland's letter aloud to the group. Scheier said we need to start thinking as a valley and working on both sides of the river. He asked if it was possible to be members of both. Stofflet said she spoke with Sarah Reeves who said the Conservation Commission has used UVLSRPC extensively for mapping purposes and would recommend staying. Adele Fulton said the Planning Commission has voted twice on this issue and in favor of remaining with UVLSRPC. She said we should wait and see what the study shows before we

make any hasty decisions. Peat said she doesn't believe you could be a member of both due to boundary constrictions. She said it is really not about joining or not joining but where the boundaries are. Fulton suggested that if anyone feels there are weaknesses to the commission they need to let both Fulton and Titus know so that they can be dealt with. Fulton suggested putting together a committee to review this question in detail and not rush into a vote. Mathias said on the planning commission vote he abstained as he didn't have enough information to make an informed decision. He said he still believes there may be advantages to belonging to both. Gibson was on the Norwich Planning Commission and worked for Two Rivers Commission for several years. Her observation in working with both is that NH Planning Commissions are starved for money. She said UVLSRPC has young inexperienced people and that is why the Norwich Planning Commission didn't use them. She said it seemed as if they didn't have much to offer. She said she believes Two Rivers is a young healthy organization full of ideas. She said she believed the original vote taken by the Planning Commission was to not take any action for the year and look at it again as they hadn't worked enough with the Regional Commissions to make a decision. Russell urged the Town to bring this open with public hearings so everyone can be involved. White said any vote taken at this point is extremely premature. She said it makes sense to stay with a RPC that works both sides of the river. Blum said that she understood from Hartford that they met with UVLSRPC to discuss leaving. Peat interrupted the Chair to say that UVLSRPC was invited to an illegal meeting with Hartford under the guise of "contract negotiations". She said when UVLSRPC asked specific questions to the Hartford board they would not answer. Hoggson **moved** that we vote to join Hartford with the study as required by the state and to proceed with the states requirement to change regional boundaries (second Stofflet). Candon asked if she intends for us to share in the cost of the study. Hoggson said yes. Blum said she has heard that Two Rivers is highly regarded and has an experienced mature staff. Candon **moved** the question (second Stofflet). **Motion passed** (4-1). Cook-No. Stofflet **moved** to notify the secretary of Agency of Commerce and Community Development that if a study needs to be done that Norwich be added its inclusion (second Hoggson). Candon said it is inappropriate to try to steer a commissioner. **Motion withdrawn** (second Hoggson). Kasfir said the one thing we are in agreement to do is to study this further. He said the board should vote to control its own process and further study. Hoggson **moved** to form a study committee to look at which Regional Planning Commission will be the best fit for Norwich. **Motion died for lack of second**. This will be placed on the next agenda for continued discussion.

6) Correspondence

- a) Peter Batson – The letter from Peter Batson of the American Legion was noted as being received by the board regarding the Memorial Day parade activities.
- b) Letter from Nancy Dean - Two notes were accepted as received by the selectboard. One related to Dean's desire to be on the DRB committee. The other was her thought that we should stay with the UVLSRPC.

7) Selectboard

- a) Appointments
  - i) ZBA – Candon **moved** to re-appoint Bill Aldrich to the ZBA until the DRB takes affect (second Stofflet). **Motion passed**.
- b) Update on DRB
  - i) MAPA Committee – Candon said the committee has met several times. He said Adele Fulton created a series of questions and sent to towns that have a DRB in place. They have been asked to respond by May 20<sup>th</sup>.

- ii) Training and Support Committee – Stofflet said they are progressing and plan to have a report ready by the June deadline
- c) Review of goals from retreat – postponed to next meeting
- d) Minutes of Selectboard Meeting
  - i. April 22, 2003 – Hoggson **moved** to approve as amended (second Stofflet). **Motion passed.**
  - ii. May 1, 2003 – Candon **moved** to accept as amended (second Stofflet). **Motion passed.**

Stofflet **moved** to adjourn (second Cook). **Motion passed.**

**Next Regular Meeting – May 27, 2003 at 6:30pm**

Approved by the Selectboard on \_\_\_\_\_

By, Kristina Moses  
Selectboard Secretary

Liz Blum  
Selectboard Chair