

Minutes of the Selectboard Meeting of Wednesday, January 12, 2005 at 6:30pm

Members present: Liz Blum, Chair; Jack Candon; Alison May, Ben Ptashnik, Suzanne Stofflet; Stephen Soares, Town Manager

Also participating: John Lamperti, Kathleen Shepherd, Lynn McGrew, Joe Cassidy, James Barrett, Frank Olmstead, Susan Blum, Shelby Grantham, Dennis Kaufman, Paul Tierney, Liz Russell, Adele Fulton, Douglas Hoffman, Nancy Hoggson, Cheryl Lindberg, Jeff Mathias. There were about 20 people in the audience.

Blum opened the meeting at 6:35pm.

1. Approval of the agenda. Stofflet **moved** to approve (2nd Patshnik.) **Motion passed.**
2. Public comments. None
3. Town Manager's report. Soares has hired Nancy Kramer to be his new Administrative Assistant, effective January 18, 2005. He thanked Nicole Griffin for her assistance during the transition. He noted that petitions for articles to be placed on the Town Meeting ballot are due on January 20. There will be a public forum on the proposed Zoning Regulations on January 19 at 7pm. Copies of the proposed Regulations are available at the Town Clerk's office, also at Dan & Whit's (near the office.)
4. Finance. Payroll and payable warrants were signed last week in the Finance Office. There were no legal bills.
5. Listers. Kaufman asked for an informal reaction to the idea of an article on the Town Meeting ballot that would appropriate \$42,000 for Ortho Mapping. There was not apparent support for such an article.
6. National Guard Resolution. John Lamperti explained why he is asking the Selectboard to place a non-binding article on the Town Meeting warning. Ptashnik **moved** (2nd Candon) to place on the ballot the following non-binding (advisory) article:
"Shall the voters adopt the following Resolution? The Town of Norwich (1) calls on the Legislature to investigate and discuss Vermont's role in the governance of its National Guard, and to set up a commission to study how Guard deployments affect readiness to perform its mission here in Vermont; (2) requests the Congressional Delegation to work to restore a proper balance between the powers of the States and that of the federal government over state National Guard units; and (3) implores the president and the Congress to take steps to withdraw American troops from Iraq, consistently with the mandate of international humanitarian law." **Motion passed**, 4-1 (Stofflet)
7. Advisory Article Regarding Universal Health Care. Blum explained her support for the proposed article. Ptashnik **moved** (2nd Stofflett) moved that the following non-binding (advisory) article be placed on the Town Meeting Warning:

“Shall the voters of the Town of Norwich advise the Selectboard, the Schoolboard, the Governor and our State Legislators of the following: Whereas the rising cost of health insurance is placing an increasingly unsupportable burden on town and school budgets, the voters of the Town of Norwich call upon the Selectboard, the Schoolboard, the Governor and our State Legislators to support and actively work for the creation of a UNIVERSAL AND COMPREHENSIVE HEALTH INSURANCE SYSTEM which is publicly financed and accountable to the citizens of Vermont, and which will reduce costs by eliminating most current administrative expenses?” **Motion passed.**

Blum asked Soares to set up a meeting with our legislators within the next two weeks.

8. Public Hearing to consider reclassification of a portion of Waterman Hill Road from Class 4 to Class 3 pursuant to 19VSA ' 708. 7pm. **Ptashnik moved**, (2nd Candon) to move into the public hearing regarding this issue. All Selectboard members indicated they have visited the site. Joe Cassidy, the maker of this request, explained briefly his reasons. A lengthy discussion followed, concerning a) the proposed cost of plowing this section of Waterman Hill; (b) whether this proposed reclassification could result in larger density; (c) whether the Town could plow this section if it is not reclassified (Olmstead said yes, the Selectboard has discretion on whether to plow a particular Class 4 Road); (d) whether other Class 4 Road abutters will want to be plowed by the Town and (e) whether other abutters of Class R roads will be asking for reclassification. **May moved** (2nd Stofflet) to close the public hearing. **Motion passed.**

The Board discussed points made in the public hearing. **May moved** (2nd Candon) to reclassify 1807' of Waterman Hill Road beginning at the east end of the Class 3 portion of Waterman Hill Road from Class 4 to Class 3 pursuant to 19VSA ' 708 and that the abutting owners (Joseph and Emily Cassidy) bring, at their cost, the 1807' up to Class 3 standards. **Motion failed** 2-3(yes - May, Candon; no - Blum, Ptashnik, Stofflet.)

Ptashnik moved (2nd Stofflet) to authorize the Town to plow 1807' of Waterman Hill Road (Class 4) beginning at the east end of the Class 3 portion of Waterman Hill Road for the purpose of allowing the snowplow to utilize the turnaround at the end. **Motion passed** 3-2 (yes - Candon, Ptashnik, Stofflet; no – Blum, May.)

9. First Public Hearing Regarding the FY2006 Budget

Soares noted that the Town has had a surplus in the past, that has been used to help reduce the tax rate. The surplus is no longer available. If grants were not listed as expenditures, the expenditure budget would show approximately an 8% increase. With grants, the proposed increase is 12.8%.

Questions were raised from the audience regarding the Highway designated fund; an earlier employee health care study; the Windsor County tax assessment; accreditation of the Police Department; the Emergency Operation Center; the level of taxes; Norwich Fire District hydrant rental assessment; and \$8,000 proposed funding for the Town Plan (Planning Department.) Soares noted that the estimated Town tax rate will be \$.46 vs \$.41 for this current year. Lindberg noted that the proposed increase vs projected spending for this current year is approximately 3.8%. **May moved**, (2nd Candon) to direct the Town Manager to remove \$8,000 for the Town Plan from the proposed Planning Department budget. **Motion passed.**

10. Regulating Solid Waste Ordinance. **May moved**, (2nd Stofflet) to receive, and place on the January 26, 2005 agenda. **Motion passed.**

11. Re-Adopt Willey Hill Ordinance. Fulton raised questions concerning the math calculations on the speed survey and suggested a second one be performed. **Ptashnik moved** (2nd Stofflet) to approve ordinance. **Motion passed.**

12. Draft Sewage Ordinance. **May moved** to receive (2nd Candon) and place on the agenda for February 9 meeting. **Motion passed.**

13. Request approval of increased fees for Transfer Coupons from \$20 to \$25, \$2.50/bag to \$3.00/bag. **Ptashnik moved** (2nd Candon) to approve. **Motion passed.**

14. Correspondence

- a) Wilderness First Responder Certification & Re-certification
- b) UVLT Monitoring of the "Bill Ballard" and "Melendy" properties
- c) Ompompanoosuc Watershed Meeting
- d) Sewer Committee Request

May moved (2nd Candon) to receive all correspondence. **Motion passed.**

15. Selectboard

- a) Approval of the Minutes of the 12/22/04 & 1/6/05 meetings. **Ptashnik moved** (2nd Candon) to approve. **Motion passed.**
- b) Roger Berry letter of appreciation. Noted
- c) Town Meeting Tune-Up Workshop Registration (Moderators). Noted

Stofflet **moved** (2nd Candon) to adjourn. **Motion passed.** Meeting adjourned at 10:15pm.

Approved by the Selectboard on January 26, 2005.

By Alison May
Selectboard Clerk

Liz Blum
Selectboard Chair

Next Regular Meeting - January 26, 2005 at 6:30 PM

Pending Items:

- 1) Village Center Designation
- 2) Final report of the Sewer Committee
- 3) Set joint meeting with School Board to discuss Budgets
- 4) Set meeting with State Representatives and Senators regarding Health Care.