

Minutes of the Selectboard Meeting of Wednesday, January 23, 2008 at 6:00 PM

Members present: Ed Childs, Chair; Alison May; Jack Candon; Gerard Chapdelaine; Suzanne Lupien; Stephen Soares, Town Manager; Nancy Kramer, Assistant to the Town Manager.

There were about 17 people in the audience.

Also participating: Brooke Adler, Betty Barba, Richard Blacklow, David Cahill, Al Converse, Neil Fulton, Dennis Kaufman, Karen Kayen, Bill Lamb, Cheryl Lindberg, Sarah Nunan, Sharon Racusin, Chief Robinson, Demo Sofronas, Matt Swett, Warren Thayer, Irv Thomaes.

Childs opened the meeting at 6:00 pm.

1. 6:00 pm - Litigation (Executive Session may be Required). Pursuant to Title 1 VSA § 313(a)(1)(3), Candon **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> May) to move into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing litigation and personnel and to invite Steve Soares to join the session. **Motion passed.**

At 6:34 pm the Selectboard moved into public session. May **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Candon) to authorize the Town Manager to sign the settlement agreement on parcel No. 11-050.150. **Motion passed.**

2. Approval of Agenda (Action Item). By consensus, the Selectboard approved the Agenda with some additions.

3. Public Comments (Discussion). Converse acknowledged that Child's statement on Town budgets in the last three year's at last week's meeting were correct.

4. Town Manager's Report (Discussion). Six potential candidates were selected from nineteen applications for phone interviews in the Fire Chief search round three. Two of the six have withdrawn and only one of the three telephoned Tuesday night met the criteria to be invited to the Assessment Center. The Fire Chief, Police Chief and Director of Public Works are working on locating dead spots for communications in Town. Fulton once again explained the process, part of which is running radio propagation studies and locating alternative sites for towers. Fulton has spoken with Stratford and stated that was a different situation. Design work will also have to be done. Grants will be sought to cover some of these costs. The Town Manager is working with Hartford on the dispatch service contract. The Bandstand Committee is meeting regularly. Curtis Johnson is meeting with Chuck Wise at TRORC on January 30<sup>th</sup> at 12:30 pm. The Chair of the Selectboard and the Town Manager have been invited. The Town has been awarded \$10,710 for a Municipal Planning Grant that is a two-phased project to be done by TRORC in May, 2009.

5. Review of Response Activity on Police Services Committee's Recommendations (Discussion). Chief Robinson spoke about his Department's efforts to remain transparent and available, to increase foot patrols and manning the crosswalk. He is attending most Selectboard meetings, having monthly meetings with his staff and monthly public meetings at the library. The Department is also working on revising the mission statement. Officers, on a rotating basis, are attending integrity workshops. The Chief has an open door policy of coming in to see him.

Cahill said it was apparent that the recommendations of the Police Services Committee were taken to heart, especially regarding community policing. He believes it is the Selectboard's responsibility to ensure that after hours response time of the Police Department is adequate.

6. Review of Response Activity on Town Governance Committee's Recommendations (Discussion). Soares stated that he, Childs and Thayer have been meeting regularly. The Selectboard has interviewed employees at Tracy Hall and is working on a report. Soares has enrolled in an accounting class. He is holding monthly Department Head/Staff meetings on a regular basis. The Town Manager is meeting weekly with the Chair, has increased attendance at VLCT sponsored seminars and is working on a policy for the public to ask for action and/or report something.

Adler commends both the Selectboard and the Town Manager on taking the recommendations of the Town Governance Committee to heart.

7. Request to Expend Designated Funds to Replace SCBA Cylinders (Discussion/Action Item). After a brief discussion, Chapdelaine **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Candon) to approve the use of \$14,938 from the Fire Equipment Designated Fund to replace SCBA cylinders. **Motion passed.**

The new Fire Equipment Designated Fund balance will be \$5,416.25.

8. Draft #3 Town Meeting Warning (Discussion). Article 9 – May discussed the history of the Kendall Station Road project. After further conversation, May **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Chapdelaine) to put on the Town Warning "Shall the voters of the Town of Norwich authorize the use of Thirty-Two Thousand Dollars (\$32,000), as originally appropriated in the FY07 budget, from the Town's Undesignated Fund to complete work on the Kendall Station Road project, such funds to be available upon passage of this article?" **Motion passed.**

9. Final Public Hearing FY09 Budget (Discussion/Action). Chapdelaine **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Candon) to open the Public Hearing. Sofronas read a letter from the Norwich Post Office's Postmaster asking the Selectboard to not reduce salting and sanding of Norwich roads as it would be a hardship for the mail delivery people. Thayer read a letter on behalf of his wife asking that the Fire Department equipment budget be restored. Fulton's and Lindberg's correspondence to the Board were discussed at this time. Fulton said that turnout gear is expensive and the Department is only asking for what is needed for safety. Kaufman and Blacklow both spoke in defense of the current proposed Lister budget. May **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Chapdelaine) to close the Public Hearing.

The Town Manager stated that petitions for appropriations were due at the Town Clerk's Office by 4:30 pm Thursday, January 24<sup>th</sup> and that many were still outstanding. A lengthy discussion followed his statement regarding the pros and cons of the Selectboard having decided to require petitions this year. Several persons in the audience spoke against the decision. Childs said the Board will revisit the decision for next year's appropriations. Chapdelaine **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Lupien) that all those outside agencies who have not to date already filed their petitions will be accepted on the warning. **Motion passed 3 to 2** (yes – Childs, Lupien, Chapdelaine; no – Candon, May). Kayen said the organizations have known about the need for a petition since September and that the Finance Committee supported the Board's decision to ask for petitions.

After a brief discussion, Chapdelaine **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> May) to delete the budgeted amount of \$3,400 from the Recreation Department – Recreation Management System. **Motion passed.**

May **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Chapdelaine) to add \$3,400 to the Fire Tools and Equipment line item in the Fire Department's budget. **Motion passed 4 to 1** (yes – Childs, Lupien, Chapdelaine, May; no – Candon).

After stating that the Town Clerk had not had a raise, other than COLA, in several years, Candon **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> May) to add \$808 to the Town Clerk Wage line item. **Motion passed.**

After some discussion, Lupien **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Chapdelaine) to reduce salt expense by 10% in the Highway Department's budget. **Motion failed 4 to 1** (yes – Lupien; no – Candon, May, Childs, Chapdelaine).

The Selectboard decided to hold off final vote on the budget until Friday, January 25<sup>th</sup> at 4 pm.

10. Correspondence (Please go to [www.norwich.vt.us](http://www.norwich.vt.us), click on Town Offices bullet in left panel, scroll down to Norwich Selectboard section and click on Recent Selectboard Correspondence to view resident correspondence):

a) Nonresident –

- 1) Memo from VLCT Re: Municipal Support for Vermont Coalition of Municipalities' Call for Resolution Regarding Education Finance and Property Tax Reform (Discussion/Action Item). Thomae asked for assurance from the Board that they will ignore this request. He reminded the Board that the Vermont Supreme Court has declared, in its 1997/Brigham/decision, that under the Vermont Constitution public education is a state responsibility.
- 2) 12/12/07 Minutes from TRORC (Discussion Item)

May **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Lupien) to receive correspondence 10 b and c. **Motion passed.**

b) Resident -

- 1) Legal Opinion from Frank Olmstead Re: Encumbered Funds/Kendall Station Road (Discussion/Action Item). May **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Chapdelaine) to receive correspondence from Frank Olmstead Re: Encumbered Funds/Kendall Station Road. **Motion passed.**
- 2) Memo from Cheryl Lindberg Re: FY 2009 Budget (Discussion/Action Item). May **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Candon) to receive correspondence from Cheryl Lindberg Re: FY 2009 Budget. **Motion passed.**
- 3) Memo from Neil Fulton Re: Fire Department Equipment Budget (Discussion/Action Item). May **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Candon) to receive correspondence from Neil Fulton Re: Fire Department Equipment Budget. **Motion passed.**

11. Selectboard

- a) Approval of the Minutes of the 1/9/08 Meeting (Action Item). May **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Lupien) to approve the minutes of the January 9, 2008 Selectboard meeting. **Motion passed.**
- b) January 25, 2008 Special Selectboard Meeting (Discussion/Action). The Selectboard will meet at 4:00 pm January 25<sup>th</sup> to finalize the budget number and approve the Town Meeting Warning.

May **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Lupien) to adjourn. **Motion passed.** Meeting adjourned at 9:13 pm.

Approved by the Selectboard on February 13, 2008.

By Nancy Kramer  
Assistant to the Town Manager

Edwin Childs  
Selectboard Chair

Next Regular Meeting – February 13, 2008 at 6:30 PM

Pending Items:

- 1) Farrell Farm Road Acceptance as Town Highway
- 2) Hartford Dispatch Services Agreement
- 3) Debt Management Policy

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