

Minutes of the Selectboard Meeting of Wednesday, July 8, 2009 at 6:30 PM

Members present: Sarah Nunan, Chair; Ed Childs; Suzanne Lupien; Sharon Racusin; Roger Blake; Pete Webster, Town Manager; Nancy Kramer, Assistant to the Town Manager.

There were about 38 people in the audience.

Also participating: Betty Barba, Margaret Cheney, Richard Comi, Onita Connington, Anne Day, Nancy Dean, Neil Fulton, Alma Gray, Linda Gray, Scooter Hardy, Jamie Hess, Dennis Kaufman, Steve Lajoie, Chris Leazier, Cheryl Lindberg, Dennis McCullough, Arthur Owen, Phil Phillips, Miriam Richards, Chief Robinson, Allen Rowell, Jon Teller-Elsberg, Gerry Tolman, Dan Weintraub.

Nunan opened the meeting at 6:30 pm.

1. Approval of Agenda (Action Item). By consensus, the Selectboard approved the Agenda with one addition.
2. Set Tax Rate (Discussion/Action Item). Nunan reviewed the process and went over the numbers. The Finance Committee on a split vote recommended using \$231,147 of the Undesignated Fund. Lajoie spoke about the use of this Fund stating that it still leaves a 15% balance. Weintraub discussed the minority opinion which wanted to take more from the Fund in these hard times. Lupien put forth the concept of the Board putting out a letter to the Town and School asking for a 5% cut in expenses. After much discussion, this was deferred until the Selectboard could receive Finance Committee input.

Childs **moved** (2nd Racusin) to set the Town Tax Rate for FY10 at .4610, plus the Local Agreement Rate of .0048, for a Total Town Tax Rate of .4658. **Motion passed.**

3. Follow Up from Last Meeting (Discussion/Action Item). The Board discussed Irv Thomae's email asking the Selectboard to include a summary of topics to be considered under "Follow Up from Last Meeting" on the agenda. It was agreed by consensus to leave this item on the agenda for one more meeting and then reconsider its usefulness. Blake talked about his surprise at the last meeting of the request for funds by the Energy Committee.
4. Public Comments (Discussion). Hardy spoke about highway expenditures and asked that consideration be given to not replacing Better's who has left employment with the Town. Webster will speak with Hodgdon and get back to the Selectboard on this. Dunk tank participation was discussed and Blake volunteered to participate.
5. Town Manager's Report (Discussion). Webster had numerous meetings with Hodgdon, Pike Industries representatives and AOT representatives regarding the Route 5 paving project. The leveling course of asphalt will be going down next week. The Town Manager had meetings with the Landfill Advisory Committee, Munday and Olmstead, Robinson and Olmstead, TRORC, Upper Valley transportation, Hodgdon and Roberts and Kaufman and Fulton. Webster also handled a complaint from a resident at Senior Housing with help from Blake.

Webster talked about an incident that happened at Huntley Meadow recently and Kearney's request for an AED at Huntley. After some discussion of cost and security issues, the Board decided to put off making a decision on this.

6. Finance – Board to Sign Accounts Payable/Warrants (Action Item). After discussion of several items, Lupien **moved** (2nd Racusin) to approve Check Warrant Report #10-01 for the period from 6/25/2009 to 7/9/2009 in the amount of \$191,886.70; of which \$161,106.71 is 09-10 General Fund and \$30,779.99 is 08-09 General Fund. **Motion passed.** The Town Manager was asked to follow up on several items for the next Selectboard meeting.

7. Energy Committee – Solar Project Next Steps (Discussion/Action Item). Hess spoke about the solar project once again. The Energy Committee is asking the Board to authorize the Town Manager to sign the two applications. Numbers have been further checked and still stand. Funds from the Town will no longer be required as several residents have agreed to cover any costs involved with the applications. This will be done via a legal contract with the Town. Also discussed were the benefits to residents and that there is no penalty for the Town if the project does not go forward. After some discussion, the Selectboard asked the Energy Committee for regular written updates on the project.

Racusin **moved** (2nd Childs) to approve the Norwich Energy Commission going forward with applying for CREB funding mechanism and authorizing the Town Manager to sign the application with appreciation to the Norwich Energy Commission. **Motion passed.**

Racusin **moved** (2nd Blake) to approve the Norwich Energy Commission going forward with applying for a CEDF grant application and authorizing the Town Manager to sign the application with appreciation to the Norwich Energy Commission. **Motion passed.**

11. Church Street Petition (Discussion/Action Item). McCullough explained why the residents have done the petition asking the Board to request the State to lower the speed limit back to 25 mph. Webster read his latest letter to Amy Gamble requesting this be done. Cheney spoke about her conversations with Gamble. Many residents spoke on the topic. After considerable discussion, it was agreed Chief Robinson and Fulton would work on collecting statistics and a strong letter would be drafted for the Chair to sign.

Racusin **moved** (2nd Childs) to accept the Church Street Petition with thanks to the residents who signed. **Motion passed.** After some discussion, the Selectboard asked and received permission from the residents to have the wording in the fifth paragraph of the petition changed from “racing trucks” to “all vehicles”.

8. Norwich Open Meeting Policy (Discussion/Action Item). Racusin said that she feels the Board is attempting to rewrite Vermont Statutes and that she would like to simply state that public meetings in the Town of Norwich must be conducted in accordance with Vermont Statutes Title 1 VSA § 310-314 and that the Selectboard should enforce it. Nunan would like to add a statement regarding the electronic distribution of agendas and minutes. Blake said the Selectboard has put a lot of time into this document and feels discouraged. Kaufman expressed concerns over “deliberative sessions”. The Board agreed by consensus to rewrite this new policy and bring it to the next meeting.

9. Town Report FY09 Process (Discussion/Action Item). After a brief discussion, Kramer was authorized to go forward with advertising for the three group suggestion from Kayen.

10. Review Truck Ordinance (Discussion/Action Item). Nunan went over the history and said the 16,000 lb limit can be enforced without use of the scales. Nunan has spoken with Hodgdon and Chief Robinson regarding changes to the Ordinance. The Selectboard discussed the proposed changes which were to Articles 3 and 4. Childs believes current Ordinance language is sufficient. After further discussion, the Board tabled the changes until the Town Manager has a chance to further discuss with Hodgdon.

12. Correspondence (Please go to 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) Resident –
 - a) Email from Nancy Dean Re: Foley Park. Childs **moved** (2nd Lupien) to receive an email from Nancy Dean re: Foley Park. **Motion passed.** Nunan summarized.
- b) Nonresident –
 - a) TRORC 5/27/09 Minutes and Letter from Windsor County Partners Re: Town Donation. Racusin **moved** (2nd Lupien) to receive TRORC 5/27/09 minutes and a letter from Windsor County Partners re: Town donation. **Motion passed.**

13. Selectboard

- a) Approval of the Minutes of the 6/24/09 Meeting. Childs **moved** (2nd Lupien) to approve the minutes of the June 24, 2009 Selectboard meeting. **Motion passed.**
- b) Approval of the Fire Chief Contract (Action Item). Webster explained that Leinoff has agreed to a 30-hour a week position, keeping his benefits, at a salary of \$51,000. Childs **moved** (2nd Blake) to authorize the Town Manager to sign the Fire Chief Employment Agreement dated June 30, 2009. **Motion passed.**

Racusin **moved** (2nd Lupien) to adjourn. **Motion passed.** Meeting adjourned at 9:22 pm.

Approved by the Selectboard on August 12, 2009.

By Nancy Kramer
Assistant to the Town Manager

Sarah Nunan
Selectboard Chair

Next Regular Meeting – August 12, 2009 at 6:30 PM

Pending Items:

- 1) Vehicle Acquisition and Replacement Policy/NORCAP Report/Strategic Planning
- 2) Strategic Planning Committee Organization
- 3) Municipal Enforcement of the VT Fire Prevention and Building Code
- 4) Class 1 Road Designation
- 5) Town Report FY09
- 6) Listening Posts
- 7) Lister Roundtable
- 8) Electronic Selectboard Packets on Website
- 9) Code of Conduct for Town Officials/Employees
- 10) "Aging in Place"
- 11) Bulletin Board at Transfer Station for Outreach (8/12/09)
- 12) No Through Union Village Road
- 13) AED at Huntley Meadow