

Minutes of July 27, 2009 Selectboard Policy Roundtable

Present: Sarah Nunan, Chair, Roger Blake, Sharon Racusin, and Ed Childs. Audience: Virginia Close, Anne Garrigue and Robert Mitchell.

Nunan commenced the meeting at 6:36PM stating that the purpose was to review the list of existing Town policies and the list of existing Town ordinances to determine when they were last updated and create a list of the Board's priorities in reviewing them. It was stated the purpose was also to determine if there were any policies or ordinances that the Board would like to see written that do not currently exist.

The Board agreed by consensus it wanted the minutes to reflect that while inquiries with the Town Manager or Department Heads might be made into certain topics as a result of this meeting, policy and ordinance review or writing will take place during regularly scheduled meetings.

Racusin expressed the desire to have the input of the Town Clerk, Bonnie Munday and Police Chief Doug Robinson in these discussions.

The discussion began with non-existing and existing ordinances.

1. Burning trash was listed as a non-existing Norwich ordinance, although it was discussed that since there was a state law that banned the practice creating a Norwich ordinance would be unnecessary. It was felt that Fire Department regulations might cover this. A check with the Town Manager and Fire Chief would be appropriate.
2. Truck weights was also listed as a non-existing ordinance, but Childs stated that there **was** an ordinance which had last been updated in June of 2006 and the Board by consensus agreed this also did not need to be reviewed at present.
3. Blake raised the issue of finding out what existed in terms of an alcohol policy amongst Town volunteers, especially in connection to "on call" individuals. Blake is interested in a "zero tolerance" policy instead of leaving the decision up to the individual's discretion, to protect the liability of the Town. The Board by consensus agreed to ask the Town Manager, Pete Webster to look into and discuss this with the pertinent Departments and report back to the Board.
4. Scenic Roads was listed as an existing ordinance that was last reviewed in June of 2001. The Board agreed by consensus this policy should be placed on the list to be reviewed in a regular meeting. It was suggested that we check with Phil Dechert to coordinate possible revisions if necessary.
5. The Parking ordinance was last updated in December, 2008 to address a parking space in front of Ledyard Bank. By consensus the Board did not feel review of this was necessary.
6. Racusin stated there was not an ordinance to address traffic and speeding and felt it was reasonable to look at enforcing the actual speed limits, that there was a serious need in this area. Nunan stated that the Police Committee had reviewed and made recommendations two years ago regarding this issue. There was a brief discussion on what could actually be done and it was agreed by consensus to simply get Doug Robinson's input on the status of speeding in Norwich.

7. Road Signage was mentioned as an item that should be reviewed in the zoning ordinances. By consensus the Board agreed to review this at a future date.
8. Fire arms and target practice was listed as a non-existing ordinance. Blake mentioned areas in Norwich that are affected daily by this practice. Racusin mentioned successful implementation in Hartland. Nunan mentioned reluctance to deal with any regulation on a local level, Childs agreed. The only consensus that was reached was to ask Doug Robinson what the current firearm regulation is in the Fire District and also the Hawk Pine area and his opinion on the subject. This was not listed as a subject to be put on the regular schedule immediately.
9. Noise was listed as a non-existing ordinance, by consensus this also was a subject on which the Board would like Doug Robinson's input.

To summarize the Board's ordinance priorities to be reviewed/written:

1. Alcohol/ Zero Tolerance
2. Scenic Roads
3. Road Signage

Child stated that many of the existing Town Policies are not on the website. Racusin mentioned the total volume of policies takes up three large binders. The Board would like to see these policies added to the website **as** they are updated in regular meetings. A statement from Suzanne Lupien was read in her absence. It stated that the Board's energy should be focused on the upcoming budget season, not on policies. After discussion the Board agreed the first priority was the budget, but felt there was a window of time before that began to prioritize and then review top picks at regularly scheduled meetings before budget season began.

#### Existing Policies

1. Financial Policies. It was agreed by consensus that the Board would ask Pete to take the three Selectboard financial policies to the Finance Committee for review and then bring them back the Selectboard.
2. Class 4 Highways. This was adopted July 28, 2004. The Board by consensus agreed to ask Phil Dechert to give his input in writing to the Board on any revisions and then the Board will review and update.
3. Tax Delinquency. Town Manager, Pete Webster has recently reviewed this and the Board agreed by consensus this is not on the Board's priority list.
4. Personnel Policies. It was discussed that there were four revisions made and adopted in 2008, those changes can be tracked in the Selectboard minutes, as they required a vote. No revisions needed as of right now.

5. Code of Conduct or Code of Ethics. There is no existing Norwich Policy or section within the Personnel Policies. Racusin reported that Town Clerk, Bonnie Munday believed that there needed to be a commission to handle this issue, there was disagreement on this point and it was agreed by consensus that Nunan would contact VLCT to find out. The Board is interested in creating such a policy. Racusin mentioned Town Manager, Pete Webster had sent the Board a model policy from the ICMA, Nunan will find and redistribute to the Board.
6. Tracy Hall Rental Policy. Childs and Blake feel this needs to be revised regarding scheduling and fees charged. The Board agreed by consensus to add this to the review list.
7. Town Email List Policy. The Policy was adopted April 27 2005 and the Board agreed by consensus that the policy should be briefly reviewed again.
8. Open Meeting Policy. Already pending for the next Selectboard meeting.

To summarize the Board's policy priorities to be reviewed/written:

1. Code of Conduct or Code of Ethics
2. Class 4 Highways
3. Tracy Hall
4. Town E-mail List Policy
5. Personnel Policy

The meeting was then opened up to the three members of the audience for comments or questions. Virginia Close stated that speeding was an issue she thought needed to be addressed again. Anne Garrigue questioned if the Selectboard could write a policy regarding CATV and some regulation of it, a brief discussion concluded this was not within the Selectboard's jurisdiction. Anne Garrigue also asked for the definition and difference between a policy and an ordinance and the response was that an ordinance is a local written law that can be enforced and policies are written guidelines for governance.

At 7:35 there was a motion to adjourn made by Blake and seconded by Racusin which passed 4-0.

Minutes taken and respectfully submitted by Sarah Nunan.

Approved by the Selectboard on August 12, 2009.

Sarah Nunan  
Selectboard Chair