

Minutes of the Selectboard Meeting of Wednesday, November 10, 2010 at 5:30 PM

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

There were about 18 people in the audience.

Also participating: Jean Astley, Alan Berolzheimer, Richard Blacklow, Linda Cook, Phil Dechert, Jim Gold, Scooter Hardy, Andy Hodgdon, Nancy Hoggson, Dennis Kaufman, Cheryl Lindberg, Doris Roberts, Raymond Roberts, Roberta Robinson, Ray Royce, Ann Sargent, Jonathan Vincent.

Blake opened the meeting at 5:32 pm.

1. Approval of Agenda (Action Item). By consensus, the Selectboard approved the Agenda with one deletion.

2. Discussion with the Listers Re: Summaries of Town-wide Reappraisal RFP and CAMA Software RFP (Discussion/Possible Action Item). Kaufman said the Listers and Assessor have put in about 250 man hours so far working on the Town-wide reappraisal RFP and CAMA software reviews. They have interviewed three vendors so far and will interview a fourth next week. All vendors must have the capability to input data into NEMRC. The MicroSolve CAMA 2000 software is State supported, NEMRC owned and is used in approximately 200 Vermont towns. However, by reputation, it is weak on calculating commercial property values. The Listers are working on a separate budget for the reappraisal. SIGMA, the software the Town uses now, is not interested in doing the reappraisal. Every attempt will be made to enter and properly assess all 1,543 Town properties. The goal is to have a fair market value appraisal. The Listers are reviewing software packages first, then they will rewrite the Town-wide Reappraisal RFP and bring it before the Board for approval at their November 23rd meeting. The Listers will make final timeline decisions after the March 1st vote.

9. Lister Department Budget Review. In the 5% cut budget the office would be open less, equipment could not be replaced and the tax map maintenance would be suspended. Other items discussed were: COLA raises, Lister stipends, putting tax data online and funds in the Town Reappraisal Designated Fund.

3. Public Comments (Discussion). The comment was made that townspeople would like to see the same raise for all Town employees. It was also suggested that a list be produced of all articles that will affect the tax rate. Hardy spoke about the Parsonage vote showing that now is not the time to spend money and that he hopes the Selectboard will vote no when the grader designated fund use comes before them. Later on Lupien reminded people that the Remembrance Day celebration is November 20th and Hoggson said there would be a 250th celebration meeting at the Historical Society on November 17th at 3:00 pm.

6. **7: pm** – Appointment with Representatives from The University Grange, the Root District Game Club, the Beaver Meadow Union Chapel and Two Parcels of Land Owned by the Norwich Fire District (Discussion/Possible Action Item). Doris and Raymond Roberts spoke on behalf of the Grange, Lupien and Sargent for the Root District, Ray Royce for Beaver Meadow and Vincent for the Fire District. Blake thanked all for coming and said the benefit to the Town was priceless.

4. Town Manager's Report (Discussion). Webster had a budget work session meeting with Department Heads at which he also discussed the close down of Tracy Hall between Christmas and New Year's. Webster still supports the mountain bike path around the perimeter of Huntley Field. Friday is the field trip to view Zero-Sort and how it works on site. The Parsonage is under contract with a closing set for January.

5. Finance – Board to Sign Accounts Payable/Warrants (Action Item). Childs **moved** (2nd Lupien) to approve Check Warrant Report #11-10 for the period from 10/28/10 to 11/10/10 in the amount of \$43,371.37; all of which is General Fund. **Motion passed.**

7. Solar Project RFP (Discussion/Action Item). Berolzheimer said the Energy Committee is seeking approval to send out their RFB. The RFB will be sent to a list of contractors and vendors who have expressed an interest in receiving the RFB. Once the bids are received the Energy Committee will present their proposal to the Finance Committee and then the Selectboard. The goal is to put forward a proposal that is beneficial to the Town, saves the Town money and reduces the Town's carbon footprint. It is a three phase project and an independent consultant will help review the bids. Site location for the project was discussed as well as the possibility of having a separate warning and special Town Meeting.

After some discussion, Racusin **moved** (2nd Childs) to approve the Norwich Solar Project Request for Bids and to authorize the Town Manager to sign the document. **Motion passed.**

8. Revised Code of Conduct Policy for Town Manager and Selectboard (Discussion/Action Item). Put back on pending items until further review by Board members.

9. 1st Budget Work Session with Department Heads (Discussion/Action Item). Webster said that his goal is to match benefits for union and nonunion employees. A 4% raise for all Town employees is shown in the level services budget. During the four years from FY07 budget to the FY11 budget, after grant expenses have been backed out, there has only been a 2.22% increase for the entire period.

Public Works Department – Hodgdon's level services budget includes \$430,000 for paving. Other increases are Class 1 highway expenses, Highway Equipment Designated Fund and matching money for a grant expense. Minus grant expenses, Public Works level services budget is up 4.2%. Hodgdon would take the -5% from paving for his reduction budget. There was discussion regarding the high cost of the Public Works budget and making a distinction between necessary and cosmetic services. Lupien would like to see a comparison between Norwich and comparable road mileage towns. Also discussed were: traffic counts being high in Norwich, the need to keep a lid on expenses and prior Public Works budgets.

At this point there was a discussion regarding public comments.

Solid Waste – Most of the increase in this budget, outside of wages, is in the Solid Waste Designated Fund. The level services budget is showing a 1.98% increase. The 5% reduced budget would reduce the hours of operation at the Transfer Station. There was some discussion regarding traffic flow at the Transfer Station.

Planning Department – The level services budget includes an \$1,000 match for a Town Plan grant. Dechert is working towards web-based mapping services. The 5% reduced budget would be accomplished by reducing Dechert's office hours. Also discussed was that the Historic Preservation Committee is not funded at present.

DRB – Monies needed are dependent upon activity. The reduced budget would come out of Dues/Meetings.

Town Administration/General Administration/Tracy Hall – Items discussed were: wages and benefits, professional services, postage, electric and heat expenses.

At the end of these budget discussions Lindberg asked for reconsideration of the Town's employee HSA contributions and employee only paid for coverage. Also, Webster said he will be looking at and evaluating the total employee compensation package.

10. Selectboard

- a) Approval of the Minutes of the 10/20/10 and 10/27/10 Meetings. Racusin **moved** (2nd Lupien) to approve the minutes of the October 20, 2010 and October 27, 2010 Selectboard meetings. **Motion passed.**

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

Approved by the Selectboard on November 23, 2010.

By Nancy Kramer
Assistant to the Town Manager

Roger Blake
Selectboard Chair

Special Selectboard Meeting – November 17, 2010 at 6:30 PM

Next Regular Meeting – November 23, 2010 at 6:30 PM

Pending Items:

- 1) Vehicle Acquisition and Replacement Policy/NORCAP Report/Strategic Planning
- 2) Joint Meeting with Norwich School Board
- 3) Code of Conduct Policy for Town Manager and Selectboard
- 4) Charge for Committee Reviewing Junk Policies
- 5) 250th Celebration Plans
- 6) Town Eating Day Participation
- 7) Town Boundaries

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