

Minutes of the Selectboard Meeting of Wednesday, January 12, 2011 at 6:30 PM

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

There were 14 people in the audience.

Also participating: Linda Cook, Steve Flanders, Neil Fulton, Nancy Hoggson, Dennis Kaufman, Bonnie Munday, Chris Rhim.

Blake opened the meeting at 6:30 pm and asked for a moment of silence for Bagnato.

1. Approval of Agenda (Action Item). After some discussion, the Selectboard approved the Agenda.

2. Public Comments. Lupien wants to know when the plow stopped lifting the wing by the driveways. Lupien says it was standard practice. Would Webster inquire about their policy? Lupien would like us to keep the sign for the SB meeting out in the open after the snow is plowed.

Hoggson would like to know how much the Town is appropriating. Blake said it was \$1500 plus \$1000 (special events) = \$2500.00. \$5000 would be preferable. For instance poll banners are about \$150 apiece. On December 15th we talked about many options 1) to let the Town decide with a separate warning article which can be used for other special events before July and remainder will go back into the general fund 2) line item on the budget. Nancy will pull together a budget. Tabled until next meeting.

Cook spoke to the plowing. Kerwin Hill and Patrell are not passable. Can that area be improved? Webster - Plow crew started at 2 am. We have been down 1 crew member for almost a year but the crew is doing a great job.

3. Town Manager's Report (Discussion). Town of Weathersfield came to study Zero Sort. 2:1 lbs recyclables to trash. We are not controlling the transfer windshield sticker. Color coded and paid each year - \$10 + \$5 for each extra car. We must do flow control and have a gatekeeper and what people are actually doing. This should be discussed.

\$7700 AFG grant for gear to the Norwich Fire Department from Homeland Security.

VLCT \$3073 check for leadership in lifestyle changes. This might be divvied up among the departments.

Fire department roof approved repairs should happen later this month.

Truck traffic pilot expired on December 16th. Webster wrote a letter on behalf of the Town to implore Congress to allow the trucks back on the Interstate. We would like Senator Leahy to help us

4. Finance – Board to Sign Accounts Payable/Warrants (Action Item). After discussion of one item from a previous warrant, Lupien **moved** (2nd Childs) to approve Check Warrant

Report #11-14 for the period from 12/23/10 to 1/8/10 in the amount of \$121,237.61. **Motion passed.**

Warrant Number – 11 B Health Savings Accounts. Lupien **moved** (2nd Childs) to approve Warrant Number – 11 B Health Savings Accounts in the amount of \$9,788. **Motion passed.**

5. **7:00 pm** – Interview/Appointment of Chris Rhim to the Finance Committee (Discussion/Action Item). Childs **moved** (2nd Lupien) to appoint Chris Rhim to the Finance Committee. **Motion passed.** Flanders suggested that we ask if the applicant has read some past minutes and knows what the task entails.

6. Meet with Historic Preservation Commission Re: CLG Grant Application (Discussion/Action Item). Every January there is an opportunity to apply for grants. Hoggson passed out brochures that Hartford has done. Total budget is about \$10,000. There is a distribution plan and these would be at the State welcome centers (12). Norwich history is also an on-going project. Even if the total was decreased, the match would be 40% of the total. Childs **moved** (2nd Lupien) to authorize the Town Manager to sign the CLG grant application. **Motion passed.**

7. Process to Evaluate Public Works Department (PWD) (Discussion/Possible Action Item). This was not a formal charge. It was the result of a brief discussion at the end of the December 15th meeting. Racusin thinks the first three items on the draft that Childs drafted is a well-worded charge for a committee that we might appoint. Lupien thinks we should meet with the Finance Committee first. Lupien thinks the budget is astronomical and that the Board's job is to scrutinize. Webster said the morale in the PWD is not good. They feel singled out. There was a Town survey about the PWD performance a while ago and they wonder where this is going. Flanders suggested the charge be less wordy and that a study should strengthen the PWD's narrative and ability to justify its budget. Such a study helped the Police Department. The charge might be more performance-based: 1. determine whether PWD is delivering services appropriate to the Town, 2. identify whether costs are being apportioned to Town priorities efficiently and 3. decide whether a proper capital equipment schedule should be in this study or within the scope of the NORCAP study. Tabled to the January 26th meeting.

Webster brought up SOLAR BIDS - need to come before the Board and discuss Town Meeting. 3 bids have come in and the project may be scaled back.

8. Public Hearing FY12 Budget (Discussion/Possible Action Item). REAPPRAISAL – Kaufman - overview on 3 proposals. The three proposals were very different. A comparative budget is being prepared. Board will get copies. Listers will give the bidders a list of questions. Range is \$160-200k. Budgets of the past had a line for designated fund/reappraisal and an article can address the additional funds to pay for the appraisal. The software company that also does reappraisals - Vision, decided not to reply. They will have something ready for the Warning and it might be an estimate of what it might cost.

Minor changes to the budget were proposed. The cost drivers are the health benefits and salaries. Town Manager reduction in salary and reduction in Town Manager assistant will reduce hours. Lupien **moved** (2nd Racusin) to restore Webster's salary and restore the hours of the Town Manager assistant from 35 to 40 hours. **Motion failed 2 to 2** (yes –

Lupien and Racusin; no – Blake and Childs). Childs **moved** (2nd Lupien) to restore Town Manager salary cut. **Motion passed 3 to 1** (yes – Childs, Lupien and Blake; no – Racusin).

Munday says there is a substantial increase in microfilming the books. This requires \$1000 increase to send the annual volumes allotment. That would bring the total Town expenditures up to \$3,801,075.00.

Lupien would like to trim further. Reduce YIA to \$2k and redistribute the appropriation to VNA and SEVCA. Lupien **moved** (2nd Childs) to reduce YIA to \$2k and increase SEVCA appropriation to \$2750 and VNA increases to \$15600. **Motion passed.**

Communication Study - Fulton suggests we increase the line from \$5000 to \$15000 to increase the local match. \$600,000 might be the total cost. January 2013 is the deadline which leaves 2 cycles to cover this. PSIC 80/20 (local). The undesignated fund balance would still remain above 16%. Lupien **moved** (2nd Childs) to add \$10000 to the Emergency Management fund. **Motion passed.**

\$13317 net increase in budget. Need to recalculate the benefit.

Lupien **moved** (2nd Childs) to approve the budget with the amendments discussed and the specific number to approve for the Town Warning. **Motion passed.**

Cook noticed that there is no buffer for the 4% wage increase if the volume of calls is very high. She also noticed that the wage increases are not clearly 4% increases. Why are some of the wages listed as 4% and other wages are not? Webster said this is built into the wage line. We may run over on some lines and under on others but we will meet the 4% wage increase. Cook questioned the PWD bridge work matching grant.

Childs reminded the Board that we have to review the designated fund balance #2.

9. 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 –

1) #9 a). Letter from Town Eating Day Committee Re: Meeting with Selectboard to Discuss Broader Participation by Townspeople in Town Boards and Committees. Childs **moved** (2nd Racusin) to receive a letter from Town Eating Day Committee re: meeting with Selectboard to discuss broader participation by townspeople in Town Boards and Committees. **Motion passed.** Discussion about whether the Department Heads need to attend.

b) Nonresident –

1) #9 b). Letter from State of Vermont Department of Taxes Division of Property Valuation and Review Re: Certified Equalized Education Property Value. Childs **moved** (2nd Lupien) to receive a letter from State of Vermont Department of Taxes Division of Property Valuation and Review re: Certified Equalized Education Property Value. **Motion passed.** CLA under appeal.

10. Selectboard

- a) Approval of the Minutes of the 11/30/10, 12/8/10 and 12/15/10 Meetings. Lupien **moved** (2nd Childs) to approve the minutes of the November 30, 2010, December 8, 2010 and December 15, 2010 Selectboard meetings. **Motion passed.**
- b) Receive Lupien's Letter of Resignation and Appoint to Selectboard until 3/1/11 (Discussion/Action Item). Childs **moved** (2nd Blake) to accept Lupien's letter of resignation and appoint Lupien to a temporary seat on the Board until March 1, 2011. **Motion passed.**
- c) Receive Blacklow's Letter of Resignation and Appoint to Listers until 3/1/11 (Discussion/Action Item). Lupien **moved** (2nd Childs) to accept Blacklow's resignation from the Listers Department and appoint Blacklow to a temporary seat in the Listers Department until March 1, 2011. **Motion passed.**

FOLLOW UP:

Draft of PWD review January 26th

250th budget - Hoggson January 26th

Reappraisal proposals - January 19th

Recalculate the benefits for the increase in the Town Manager wages

Review the Designated Fund Balance #2 January 26th

Town Eating Day coordinator meeting January 26th

Meeting adjourned at 9:26 pm.

Approved by the Selectboard on January 26, 2011.

By Sharon Racusin

Roger Blake
Selectboard Chair

Special Selectboard Meeting – January 19, 2011 at 6:30 PM

Next Regular Meeting – January 26, 2011 at 6:30 PM

Pending Items:

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

PLEASE NOTE THAT CATV RECORDS ALL REGULAR MEETINGS OF THE NORWICH SELECTBOARD. FOR A MORE DETAILED TRANSCRIPTION PLEASE REFER TO THE DVD. DVDs ARE AVAILABLE ONE WEEK AFTER AIRING AT THE NORWICH PUBLIC LIBRARY.