

Minutes of the Selectboard Meeting of Wednesday, March 9, 2011 at 6:30 PM

Members present: Ed Childs, Chair; Roger Blake; Christopher Ashley; Steve Flanders; Linda Cook; Pete Webster, Town Manager; Nancy Kramer, Assistant to the Town Manager.

There were about 20 people in the audience.

Also participating: Jean Astley, Alan Berolzheimer, Neil Fulton, Jim Gold, Linda Gray, John Hanchett, Andy Hodgdon, Cheryl Lindberg, Norm Miller, Keith Moran, Arthur Owen, Allen Rowell, Gerry Tolman.

Childs opened the meeting at 6:30 pm.

1. Approval of Agenda (Action Item). Childs asked to add in a review of pending items. Cook pointed out that the new rules said no additions. After some discussion, by consensus the Selectboard approved the Agenda as presented.
2. Public Comments. Gold spoke about waiting on the grader decision until after the two new committees present their reports. Cook asked that townspeople keep an eye on their neighbors and seniors. Cook thanked Scooter Hardy and Paul Betters who have already come to the aid of others.
3. Town Manager's Report (Discussion). Webster said it has been a difficult winter for Public Works. However, they have only used up 72% of overtime, no sand at all yet and 63% of the salt budget has been expended. Webster reminded townspeople to make sure the ice and snow load on their roofs is taken care of. The Listers Department has reorganized and there will be a learning curve for the new members. The Norwich Fire District is having their annual retreat at the Norwich Inn on Wednesday, April 27th and has invited the Town Manager and Selectboard to attend. Green Mountain Power and Efficiency Vermont have teamed up to help towns switch to LED streetlights if the proposed tariff and program are approved by the Vermont Public Service Board. Norwich still has 50+ streetlights to replace. The Safe Routes to School sidewalk project is moving forward with the State doing most of the work due to the Class 1 road transfer. Mud Season registrations for the Recreation Department are way ahead of prior years. Online registration is working out well. Harrison Monahan, who is a senior at Hanover High, is looking for ideas for his Eagle Scout project. The Norwich Women's Club FloriGala at Tracy Hall is March 18th 6-8 pm. There will be food, wine, beer, soft drinks and a silent auction. There will also be music and lots of vendors. The fifth edition of Town Eating Day went off well last Saturday. Ashley asked for information on the PACE program mentioned in the Town Manager's report and also inquired if follow up by the Board was needed on delinquent tax collections.
4. Finance – Board to Sign Accounts Payable/Warrants (Action Item). Ashley said he had noticed several different phone plans on the warrant and suggested the Town look at bundling. After some discussion, Cook **moved** (2nd Flanders) to approve Check Warrant Report #11-18 for the period from 2/24/11 to 3/9/11 in the amount of \$52,828.42; of which \$52,787.29 is General Fund, and \$41.13 is Fire Equipment Fund. **Motion passed.**

5. **7:00 pm** – Appointment with Margaret Cheney to Discuss House Bill H.155 Re: PACE and Other Pending Legislation (Discussion). Dropped from agenda. Cheney and Masland will try to attend the Selectboard's March 23rd meeting.

6. Request to Expend Designated Funds from Highway Equipment Fund to Purchase a Grader (Discussion Only). Webster said that Hodgdon went out to bid last fall to replace the 1983 John Deere grader. Hodgdon received five bids and is proposing to purchase a 2006 John Deere D672 grader. The Town has been escrowing funds in the Highway Equipment Designated Fund. Concerns were raised about this purchase and a debate has been ongoing. Caterpillar is doing a full analysis of the 1983 grader and the report will be out before the March 23rd meeting. Fulton said that in his analysis he accepted Moran's numbers and the assumption that the grader would be replaced based on 10,000 hours of use. In his opinion it comes down to a level of services issue and it appears the most cost-effective solution is for the Town to own two graders. Ashley believes that there is a series of decisions to make and that townspeople have voted for the status quo. Ashley would also like to know what estimates look like with one grader. Childs thinks it is a level of services decision. Blake said the NORCAP Report talked about level of services expected by residents and that this grader was put on the equipment replacement list soon after acquisition. Cook and Flanders said they would defer their comments until after the public has had a chance to speak. Webster supports the replacement.

At this point, Childs asked for public comments asking that they be kept to two minutes each and not repeat what others have said. Astley believes one grader is sufficient and that residents are not happy with the current grading. Moran said the Finance Committee voted 5 to 1 against replacing the grader. He feels that proof of need has not been established, that it is a luxury item, no other towns have two graders, other alternatives have not been explored and that there has been an inexplicable rush to get this thing through. Rowell said spring time is the toughest and otherwise the graders are not used that much. He believes there are good contractors in town and the surrounding area that should be used. Hanchett suggested putting off the purchase, doing an oil analysis and buying a new grader not used. Owen thinks the Town should purchase a shed for equipment instead of spending money on a replacement grader.

Cook has looked at reports and believes the Town should keep the grader another four years and then purchase a new one. Cook suggested the Town contract out the roads to Rowell in the area he lives. Flanders said there are three bases for decision: (1) two graders are not needed; (2) two are needed to maintain the current level of services, which is what the Town expects and has voted for as part of the equipment replacement plan in past budgets; and (3) the decision is substantial enough to wait for the Committee to Evaluate Public Works Department report. Also discussed were: time-frame for replacing the grader, using a regional approach, smaller budgets and what the numbers would look like if purchase was delayed and a new grader is bought. Childs said if the Board thinks of any other information they want to pass it on to Webster and thanked people for their comments.

7. Wrap Up of Solar Project (Discussion). Berolzheimer said the Norwich Energy Committee has to shelve the project because the numbers did not work out. The main problems were: higher costs for site work, the buy American requirement and the cost of financing. The Committee is still interested in looking at other sites, using other models and partnering with others. They will keep the Board informed. They are also interested in the PACE bill and believe there are opportunities to conserve in the Town buildings. Gray said they have turned the money back in and that people who paid initial costs have been notified. Flanders thanked the Committee for all their efforts and **moved** (2nd Blake) that the Town Manager draft a letter of thanks for the Selectboard to sign at their next meeting. **Motion passed.** There was a round of applause.

At this point, Miller spoke about his disappointment and asked for an analysis of what happened. Fulton said initial bids did not include full cost of site work, the buy American clause and interest rates went up. Tolman briefly spoke about his models and was thanked for his work also.

8. Selectboard

- a) Approval of the Minutes of the 2/23/11 Meeting. Flanders **moved** (2nd Blake) to approve the minutes of the February 23, 2011 Selectboard meeting. **Motion passed.** Cook and Ashley abstained from voting.
- b) Review of Selectboard Goals/Objectives (Discussion). Flanders believes items should be scored. Cook has a list she is working on and will have done soon.
- c) Set Date for Interviews and Appointments for Committee to Evaluate Public Works Department and Capital Facilities Planning and Budgeting Committee and Review Questions for Candidates (Action Item). After some discussion about Board membership in the Committee, Flanders **moved** (2nd Ashley) that the wording in the Committee to Evaluate Public Works Department charge be changed to "up to two Selectboard members". **Motion passed.** Interviews and appointments to the Committee to Evaluate Public Works Department will be done March 23rd. Applications will need to be in by March 17th. Childs said there is a need to encourage people to apply for the Capital Facilities Planning and Budgeting Committee. He will work on drafting a request for applicants to go out on the Norwich Digest and Town Email List. Flanders went over his questions and the Selectboard discussed. Flanders will revise his questions and circulate for comment.
- d) Review Questions for Candidates for Open Positions (Discussion). After a discussion about time commitments, Flanders volunteered to draft and circulate questions. Finance Committee makeup was discussed and Flanders pointed out that it is a Selectboard Committee now.
- e) Schedule Special Selectboard Meeting (Discussion). Done before 8. b). After a brief discussion, Ashley **moved** (2nd Cook) that the Board have a working session to discuss goals and objectives March 30th at 4:30 pm. **Motion passed.**
- f) Review Agenda Items for Next Meeting (Discussion). Grader, review of pending items, interviews/appointments for open positions, interviews/appointments for Committee to Evaluate Public Works Department, Cheney and Masland will be present, letter of thanks to Norwich Energy Committee and a discussion of email policy. Childs will do a draft agenda and forward to Kramer.

- g) Personnel (Executive Session may be Required). A discussion of actions possibly being decided upon in emails regarding the Town Manager evaluation form was initiated by Cook regarding the current Selectboard review of the Town Manager. The Selectboard agreed to decide future changes at a regular meeting. Pursuant to Title 1 VSA § 313(a)(3), Flanders **moved** (2nd Ashley) to enter into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing personnel. **Motion passed 4 to 1** (yes – Childs, Blake, Ashley and Flanders; no - Cook). The Selectboard moved into Executive Session at 9:10 pm.

At 10:10 pm the Selectboard moved into public session. No action was taken as a result of the Executive Session.

Cook **moved** (2nd Ashley) to adjourn. **Motion passed**. Meeting adjourned at 10:11 pm.

Approved by the Selectboard on March 23, 2011.

By Nancy Kramer
Assistant to the Town Manager

Edwin Childs
Selectboard Chair

Next Regular Meeting – March 23, 2011 at 6:30 PM

Special Selectboard Meeting – March 30, 2011 at 4:30 PM

Pending Items:

- 1) Tour of Fire/Police Facilities
- 2) Schedule Annual Review of Selectboard Approved Policies (4/13/11)
- 3) Review and Address Request for Grader Acquisition (4/27/11)
- 4) Review/Revise Town Manager Evaluation Form (4/27/11) Flanders/Ashley
- 5) Code of Conduct Policy for Town Manager and Selectboard (4/27/11)
- 6) Discussion with Board of Listers - Consider Formation of Committee to Evaluate Lister Department (4/27/11)
- 7) Select Representative for 250th Anniversary Overview
- 8) Charge for Committee Reviewing Junk Policies
- 9) Review Recommendations for Facilities Improvements at the Fire/Police Facility (8/24/11)
- 10) Evaluate Report from Capital Facilities Planning and Budgeting Committee (9/27/11)
- 11) Evaluate Report from Committee to Evaluate Public Works Department (9/27/11)
- 12) Town Boundaries

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