

## Minutes of the Selectboard Meeting of Wednesday, May 25, 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 13 people in the audience.

Also participating: Liz Blum, Margaret Cheney, Neil Fulton, Nancy Hoggson, Dennis Kaufman, Cheryl Lindberg, Jim Masland, Chief Robinson, Michael Scruggs, Jonathan Vincent.

Childs opened the meeting at 6:30 pm.

1. Approval of Agenda (Action Item). By consensus, the Selectboard approved the Agenda as presented.
2. Public Comments. Cook questioned why the purchase of a second grader was not on the agenda since the Board had agreed it would. Childs told Cook it was not put on the agenda due to no new information to share. Cook asked that items being pulled from the Selectboard agenda would not happen again. Ashley had a conversation with Hodgdon and Webster about his concerns regarding the purchase and will share his email with the Board. Hoggson said there was a nice write up of the 250<sup>th</sup> celebrations in the Upper Valley in the summer edition of the Hanover magazine and shared it with the Selectboard. The banners and website will be up soon. The Town charter is severely degraded but the digitally enhanced photo will be ready by September 1<sup>st</sup>. A Town-wide mailing will be going out listing the 250<sup>th</sup> events in Norwich. The "big event" is September 17<sup>th</sup>. Hoggson has gone over the budget with the Town Manager. Blum said the White River Film Fest will be taking place June 3<sup>rd</sup> through June 5<sup>th</sup>. The film Circus Dreams by Norwich resident Signe Taylor will be one the films. For more information on the events go to [www.wrif.org](http://www.wrif.org).
3. Town Manager's Report (Discussion). The Safe Routes to School project is definitely on hold for this year. It was decided to apply for a Transportation Enhancement Grant to create a bike/pedestrian path along Route 5 South that would eventually connect with the Upper Valley Trails Loop. Jake Blum has received a \$10,000 grant from the Preservation Trust of Vermont for new tree plantings. Webster thanked Hoggson for making the Town aware of this possibility for a grant. Blum also received a grant for chairs for Foley Park from the Norwich Women's Club. A request for proposal for banking and cash management services for the Town of Norwich has gone out to eight banks. Responses are due by June 10<sup>th</sup> and this should be before the Board for a decision at their June 22<sup>nd</sup> meeting. Current tax delinquencies are down from last year. Webster attended the latest TAC meeting in Hartford where there was a discussion of the State take back of the section of Route 132 that runs through Norwich, Thetford, Strafford and Sharon. Webster also attended the DPW Committee forum and the Town-wide Reappraisal forum. Attendance was light at both but both were informative. Cook would like request to come before the Selectboard before chairs are installed at Foley Park.
4. Finance – Board to Sign Accounts Payable/Warrants (Action Item). Flanders **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Blake) to approve Check Warrant Report #11-23 for General Fund for the period from 5/12/11 to 5/25/11 in the amount of \$558,126.72. **Motion passed.**

5. Approve Petition for Redetermination as of April 1, 2010 (Discussion/Action Item). Vincent went over saying that signing this petition will be accepting the recalculated CLA of 90.91% for 2010 on the appeal. Credit will be issued for 2009 also. Vincent hopes the letter requesting an extension on filing the 2011 Grand List will not be necessary but believes it is prudent to do so. Vincent thanked the previous Board of Listers for their good fight on improving the Town's CLA. Fulton reminded the Selectboard that he will need the Grand List filed by June 30<sup>th</sup> in order to do the calculations for setting the tax rate on July 6<sup>th</sup> to be in compliance with the dates set in the article in the Town Warning.

Ashley **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Blake) to authorize the Chair of the Selectboard to sign the Petition for Redetermination: Town of Norwich. **Motion passed.**

Ashley **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Flanders) to authorize the Chair of the Selectboard to sign a letter asking for an extension of the filing date for the 2011 Grant List Abstract on behalf of the Selectboard. **Motion passed.**

6. Wrap Up of FY11 Budget (Discussion). Webster said there is a predicted \$30,949 shortfall in revenues which is mainly in interest and Recreation fees. Expenditures are projected to be under spent by \$98,548. The Town should be able to put approximately \$68,000 back in the Undesignated Fund. Webster said this should enable the Town to keep the Undesignated Fund balance at 14% while still using funds to reduce the tax rate. Department Heads should be congratulated on keeping their expenses down. Flanders thanked Webster for the information.

8. Windshield Sticker Policy for Transfer Station (Discussion/Action Item). Webster spoke about the current policy of no expiration date for windshield stickers and its shortcomings. The proposal is to have an annual windshield sticker, starting July 1<sup>st</sup>, with a fee of \$15 for the first vehicle and \$5 for subsequent stickers. All sales of stickers will be recorded on a form. Webster believes most surrounding towns sell annual stickers, color coded by year, for \$20 or more. Cooks thinks this action is premature and that the Town should wait for the DPW Committee's report in September. Ashley said there are actually two changes being discussed: (1) annual stickers and (2) fees for the stickers. He cautioned that the Town do some research and pick a color not used by surrounding towns. Flanders pointed out that the FY12 budget expects these increased fees. He also suggested letting Webster speak with the DPW Committee and come back to the Board with real numbers from other towns. Blake spoke about the cost of fuel going up and how that effects everything. After some further discussion, Ashley suggested the Town institute the sticker for a start of October 1<sup>st</sup> for a 15-month interval. Afterward, Ashley **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Flanders) to approve a change in the windshield sticker policy to an annual renewal with a start date of October 1, 2011 with fees to be determined. **Motion passed.** The Selectboard will continue the discussion of fees at their June 8<sup>th</sup> meeting. After the vote, Lindberg questioned how the sticker sales would be monitored and was told they would be recorded by name and plate number.

7. **7:15 pm** - Appointment with Margaret Cheney and Jim Masland to Discuss House Bill H.155 Re: PACE and Other Legislation (Discussion). Masland said the main accomplishments of this legislation were the single payor bill, the balanced budget amendment and the Omnibus energy bill and PACE legislation. Some progress has been made on restructuring revenues by increasing taxes on cigarettes and a provider and internet tax. Masland will go forward on the Route 132 legislation if that is what the towns want. He also suggested that in lieu of a State-wide permit for overweight trucks that towns

work together to have one permit that is good for several towns. Cook asked about State licensing for bicycles with an identification number. Ashley introduced a discussion of broadband and why it is not universal stating that what we have now is a two class society. Masland said it is a complicated issue. Municipal funds cannot be used for this purpose. ECFiber is working for every town to have broadband. Cheney spoke about the PACE program being a big opportunity for Norwich. They have tightened up the legislation passed last year so that the lien stays with the property and is a net cash benefit every year. Loans are guaranteed, Efficiency Vermont is partnering loans and the costs are borne by the participating property owners. Cheney and Masland were thanked for taking the time to come before the Board and invited back anytime.

9. Review Appropriation Request and Process (Discussion/Possible Action Item). Flanders went over the criteria stating that Jim Barlow from VLCT says there is wiggle room in the Statute due to the phrase “include, but are not limited to”. Flanders is good with the revised form. Ashley and Cook asked for changes in 1., 8. and 9. It was suggested that a Town Report submission be required. The Selectboard also had some discussion about developing an Appropriation Policy. After some discussion, it was agreed Kramer would make the agreed upon changes and Webster would go forward with putting the letter out in early September.

10. Request to Expend Designated Funds from Tracy Hall Fund to Purchase a New Floor Covering for the Gym (Discussion/Action Item). Webster said \$1,900 of the monies needed would be coming from a grant from the Norwich Women’s Club. The new floor covering will be reversible blue/beige in color and a high torque electric power winder is included in the estimate.

After some discussion, Ashley **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Flanders) to approve the use of up to \$1,900 from the Tracy Hall Designated Fund for the purchase of a new gym floor cover and electric power winch. **Motion passed.**

The new Tracy Hall Designated Fund balance will be approximately \$59,073.

11. Approve Revised Cash Management Services Master Agreement (Discussion/Action Item). Lindberg said the cover letter from Mascoma Saving Bank explains why the revisions are needed. Selectboard members questioned some of the signatures needed in the document. Lindberg was asked if she saw any conflict of interest in her signing the document and she said she did not.

Flanders **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Blake) to approve the revised Cash Management Services Master Agreement with Mascoma Savings Bank and to authorize Cheryl A. Lindberg as Company Administrator. **Motion passed.**

12. Discussion of Health Insurance Plan (Discussion). Webster said our current plans have an aging/shrinking group. With the proposed MVP plan there would be savings for both employees and the Town. Webster is also in favor of changing our health insurance year to match the Town’s instead of the calendar year basis we are on now for health insurance. A consultant from BGNE, which is now a company of Digital Insurance, will be coming down June 7<sup>th</sup> to do a presentation and have a question and answer period for covered employees. MVP rates for this quarter were just approved and would allow the Town to enjoy savings in the coming fiscal year. Webster believes MVP will provide reasonably

comparable coverage to CIGNA so union issues are covered. The network of physicians is broad and we will be dealing with a healthier pool. The plan is to change from Health Savings Accounts to Health Reimbursement Arrangements. Cook said the Selectboard wants to support the employees and asked if wellness programs would be continued. Ashley spoke about the Board not wanting to do anything that negatively affects the employees and also said he wants employee feedback before a decision is made. Webster has a meeting with our district representative from VLCT May 31<sup>st</sup> and should have an update on what VLCT will be doing after that. Scruggs said he has done some research and urges caution. He believes the July 1<sup>st</sup> deadline should be extended and he would like more information. After some further discussion, the Selectboard agreed to pass their questions to Webster and/or Kramer and continue this discussion at their June 8<sup>th</sup> meeting.

13. Review Town Manager List of Department Projects/Goals (Discussion/Possible Action Item). The Town Clerk's major project is records restoration. The Planning Department is looking to move forward with the Town Plan adoption process, revise permit and map fees and update all forms and applications. The Police Department plans to continue updating the interior of the Police Station, continuing with their up to date and well maintained fleet of vehicles, continue best training available for officers and would like to see the Department go back to a full staff of five full-time officers. The Department of Public Works would like to complete the Main Street drainage project, fully fund the pavement management plan, set up a designated bridge fund, complete the culvert inventory, continue updating guardrails, continue work on the Master Site Plan, increase revenues from the Transfer Station and establish a designated fund for buildings and grounds. The Fire Department would like to continue improving the energy efficiency of the Firehouse, begin planning process for addition and train additional drivers and operators. The Recreation Department is continuing to master the online registration system with a goal of assuming full responsibility, doing an annual online survey to receive feedback and working on rebuilding the dam. The Board asked if Webster or Kramer would forward to them any electronic submissions by Department Heads.

14. Correspondence (Please go to [www.norwich.vt.us](http://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) Nonresident –

- 1) #10 a). Minutes from 3/30/11 TRORC Board Meeting. Flanders **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Ashley) to receive minutes from the 3/30/11 TRORC Board meeting. **Motion passed.**

15. Selectboard

- a) Approval of the Minutes of the 5/4/11 and 5/11/11 Meetings. Blake **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Ashley) to approve the minutes of the May 4, 2011 and May 11, 2011 Selectboard meetings. **Motion passed.**
- b) Approve Triathlon Utilizing Parts of Route 5 in Norwich (Discussion/Action Item). After some discussion of the route, traffic controls and responsibility of the Board, Ashley **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Blake) to table the decision until the next Selectboard meeting. **Motion passed.**
- c) Review of Pending Items (Discussion/Possible Action Item). Date has been removed from item #7 until Dechert updates, the ad for the Historic Preservation Commission is being drafted and a policy for appropriation requests will be added to pending items.

- d) Review of Next Agenda (Discussion/Possible Action Item). After some discussion, it was agreed that the equipment acquisition process in regard to the grader would be on the agenda for June 8<sup>th</sup>. Questions should be submitted to Kramer by the end of the day June 2<sup>nd</sup> for the packet. Fulton will provide Kramer with an updated charge for committee to review real property assessment functions and it will be on the June 8<sup>th</sup> agenda. After some discussion, all items except strategic planning, now dated August 10<sup>th</sup>, dated 6/8 will be put on the agenda for discussion. Going forward, items agreed to for the next meeting agenda will not be removed.

Cook **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Flanders) to adjourn. **Motion passed.** Meeting adjourned at 9:15 pm.

Approved by the Selectboard on June 8, 2011.

By Nancy Kramer  
Assistant to the Town Manager

Edwin Childs  
Selectboard Chair

Next Regular Meeting – June 8, 2011 at 6:30 PM

Pending Items:

- 1) Capital Budget Policy (6/22/11)
- 2) Conflict of Interest Policy (6/8/11)
- 3) Review Policy for Response to Appeals of DRB Decisions
- 4) Charge for Committee to Review Real Property Assessment Functions (6/8/11)
- 5) Review Appropriation Request Policy
- 6) Update Finance Committee Statement of Purpose (6/8/11)
- 7) Review of Town Plan Document
- 8) Budget Development (6/8/11)
- 9) Vehicle Acquisition and Replacement Policy (6/8/11)
- 10) Strategic Planning (8/10/11)
- 11) Develop Email Policy (7/27/11)
- 12) Tour of Fire/Police Facilities (8/24/11)
- 13) Review Recommendations for Facilities Improvements at the Fire/Police Facility (8/24/11)
- 14) Evaluate Report from Capital Facilities Planning and Budgeting Committee (9/27/11)
- 15) Evaluate Report from Committee to Evaluate Public Works Department (9/27/11)
- 16) Permits – Interior Building Improvements
- 17) Code of Conduct Policy for Town Manager and Selectboard
- 18) Charge for Committee Reviewing Junk Policies
- 19) Town Boundaries

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