

Minutes of the Selectboard Meeting of Wednesday, June 22, 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 16 people in the audience.

Also participating: Jake Blum, Liz Blum, Tanya Chambers, Joshua Durst, Neil Fulton, Lindsey Gardner, Andy Hodgdon, Cheryl Lindberg, Brion McMullan, Keith Moran, Chief Robinson, Roberta Robinson, Michael Scruggs, David Sichel.

Childs opened the meeting at 6:31 pm.

1. Approval of Agenda (Action Item). After agreeing to take Jake Blum out of order when he arrived, the Selectboard approved the Agenda as presented.

2. Public Comments. Blake said as part of the 250<sup>th</sup> celebration the Norwich Historic Walking Tour Brochure, made possible by a CLG grant applied for by the Norwich Historic Preservation Commission, will be published soon.

3. Town Manager's Report (Discussion). About 200 of the new windshield stickers for the Transfer Station have been sold so far and everything seems to be going smoothly. Webster thanked Jake Blum for initiating an effort to clear out the area in front of the apple orchard by the Hybels' house. The Milton Frye Nature Area Committee (MFNAC), Conservation Committee and DPW have all been involved in the process. Betsy Maislin is organizing an event to highlight Norwich's designation as an official AT Community on National Appalachian Trail Family Day, September 24<sup>th</sup>. Webster helped out the group spearheaded by Sarah Reeves that has been doing plantings along Blood Brook in Huntley Meadows to help with stabilization. Webster displayed an oil painting of the Ledyard Bridge and Lewiston, Vermont painted by Mike Gish which is available for sale for the asking price of \$2,500. Cook asked the Town Manager how renters are being handled with the new Transfer Station stickers. Webster responded that the one case he has dealt with so far was given a sticker for the property.

6. Chairs for Foley Park (Discussion/Possible Action Item). Childs thanked Jake Blum for his efforts to improve Foley Park. After a short discussion, Flanders **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Blake) to accept the gift to the Town of the chairs, to thank Blum and the Norwich Women's Club and to authorize Webster to send letters of thanks to Blum and the Norwich Women's Club. **Motion passed.** Blum spoke briefly about the effort going on near the Hybel's house saying the area is being pruned so it could be mowed properly and open up the view. It will be maintained in the future by MFNAC. MFNAC marked the trees that they wanted saved.

4. Finance – Board to Sign Accounts Payable/Warrants (Action Item). Ashley **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Flanders) to approve Check Warrant Report #11-25 for General Fund for the period from 6/9/11 to 6/22/11 in the amount of \$35,563.55. **Motion passed.** Flanders **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Blake) to approve Check Warrant Report #11-25 for Town Reappraisal Fund for the period from 6/9/11 to 6/22/11 in the amount of \$1,790.28. **Motion passed.** Blake **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Flanders) to approve Check Warrant Report #12-1 for General Fund for the period from 7/1/11 to 7/1/11 in the amount of \$97,727.12. **Motion passed.**

5. Health Insurance Changes (Discussion/Action Item). Webster recommends making the change to MVP as of August 1, 2011. Tanya Chambers from VLCT spoke about the added benefits of the VLCT wellness programs, Health Advocate and COBRA administration. VLCT has partnered with Hickok & Boardman, Vermont's largest employee benefits firm, that does an annual Vermont employee benefits survey that will enable the Town to see what many other municipalities are doing. Hickok & Boardman has a 98% retention rate, is the broker for UNUM and has considerable leverage with carriers. Chambers went over the plan and rate comparison chart she provided for the Selectboard and Town Manager and then answered questions. Chambers said the CIGNA plans the Town has at present will no longer exist as of January 1, 2012. Prescription copays and out of pocket expenses were discussed. Also discussed was the difference between Health Savings Accounts (HSA), what the Town is currently using, and Health Reimbursement Arrangement, which is what the Town would be switching to with MVP. After this discussion, the Selectboard determined they would like to prorate the employee expected July HSA payment. Scruggs, speaking as the local senior union representative, said union members do not believe the MVP plan is comparable to the CIGNA plan. Union representatives have asked for a meeting next Thursday with the Town Manager to discuss the issues. David Sichel, Deputy Director of VLCT's Risk Management Services, said that all three carriers for Vermont require a 75% enrollment of the Town's covered employees. Sichel also said the premiums for BCBS and CIGNA are not as attractive as MVPs. Ashley said he prefers waiting until September 1<sup>st</sup> and prorating the HSA payment for two months. Cook does not feel the numbers for MVP are compatible with CIGNA and does not support the move to MVP. Scruggs said the union does want to work with the Town but he believes that employees do not understand what they are getting.

After some further discussion, Flanders **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Blake) to approve changing the Town's health insurance carrier for covered employees to MVP as of August 1, 2011 and to fully fund year 1 annual Medical/Rx/HRA plan costs in a manner consistent with the Town's union agreement with the proviso that no contract will be entered into until after July 6, 2011. **Motion passed 3 to 2** (yes – Childs, Blake and Flanders; no - Ashley and Cook).

Ashley **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Flanders) to prorate the Town's HSA payment to covered employees for one month if implemented August 1<sup>st</sup>. **Motion passed.**

7. Charge for Committee to Review Real Property Assessment Functions (Discussion/Action Item). Flanders provided the Selectboard with the version of the charge he had intended for inclusion in the package that included additional language on page three. Flanders reviewed the changes saying he had gone over them with two of the three Listers. Liz Blum indicated she is good with the charge and added that the Listers are making an effort to put more information on the Town website. Cook asked that the last line in section 4 stop at work and after some discussion the Board agreed with that change.

Ashley **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Flanders) to approve the charge for the Committee to Review Real Property Assessment Functions as amended. **Motion passed.**

8. Banking Services Town of Norwich (Discussion/Possible Action Item). Webster said the Town received five responses to the request for proposals which were reviewed by him and Roberta Robinson and reduced to Merchants Savings Bank and Mascoma Savings Bank. Robinson is recommending the Town choose Merchants primarily based on their fixed interest rate for the first year of .85%. Robinson believes Merchants services are

comparable to Mascoma's. Merchants has a full service bank in White River Junction that Robinson would use for cash deposits. On a daily basis remote capture would be used. Webster asked the Town of Dorset, currently using Merchants Bank, for a recommendation and received it. Durst spoke in favor of banking locally. Lindberg as Treasurer feels the one year rate offered by Merchants is a come on, has concerns about employees driving with cash and believes Mascoma has partnered nicely with the Town of Norwich. Chief Robinson also spoke on behalf of Mascoma and their support of the Police Department's efforts to educate townspeople. Blake is an advocate of doing business locally also. Cook reminded all that Mascoma makes many community grants. Flanders thinks the Board's first duty is to the Town pocketbook.

Flanders **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Ashley) to accept the Merchants Bank proposal for banking and cash management services for the Town of Norwich for a three-year period ending June, 2014. **Motion failed 2 to 3** (yes – Childs and Flanders; no – Ashley, Blake and Cook).

Afterwards, Blake **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Ashley) to accept the Mascoma Savings Bank proposal for banking and cash management services for the Town of Norwich for a three-year period ending June, 2014. **Motion passed 4 to 1** (yes – Childs, Blake, Ashley and Cook; no - Flanders).

9. Request to Expend Designated Funds from Highway Equipment Fund to Purchase a Grader (Discussion/Possible Action Item). The latest round of bids on a grader were opened Friday, June 17<sup>th</sup>. After review, the recommendation is that the Town purchase a new grader on a lease/purchase arrangement. The new grader will take 6 to 8 weeks to come in once ordered. Ashley thanked Flanders for his analysis and hopes this process will be used for future purchases. Additional monies will need to be budgeted and the schedule of equipment replacement will change. Cook also asked that this process be used going forward. After one question regarding the Resolution, Cook **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Ashley) to adopt the Resolution authorizing the purchase of a motor grader (attached). **Motion passed**. Webster said this vote would boost morale in the Department of Public Works.

10. Capital Budget Policy (Discussion/Possible Action Item). Flanders said he supports the revisions to the Policy received from the Capital Facilities Planning and Budgeting Committee. Cook questioned where the changes in red came from and was told they were part of the revisions the Committee recommended. Fulton reviewed the project priorities and why they need to be established. After some further discussion, Ashley **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Flanders) to approve the Capital Budget Policy as revised. **Motion passed**.

11. Update Finance Committee Statement of Purpose (SOP) (Discussion/Possible Action Item). Cook would like all entities involved to have input. Childs and Flanders would prefer italicized sentence regarding recommendations stay in the SOP. Moran said the Finance Committee serves at the pleasure of the Selectboard and that we need to move forward with the process one way or another but that he believes Norwich School Board input is inevitable. Ashley asked if the Dresden compact had been reviewed for inconsistencies with the SOP and Flanders said he had reviewed the compact but the compact was drawn up when the Finance Committee membership was all elected and thus did not necessarily apply now. Flanders suggested forming a subcommittee to review comprised of two members of the Selectboard, two members of the Norwich School Board and two members of the Finance Committee. After some discussion, Blake **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Ashley) to appoint Cook and

Flanders to the subcommittee. **Motion passed.** The Norwich School Board and Finance Committee will be contacted for volunteers and dates when they can meet.

12. Finance Committee – Budget Goals and Objectives (Discussion). Moran said the Finance Committee has not yet discussed budget goals and objectives for FY13. This will be added to pending items with a date of July 27<sup>th</sup>.

13. Request to Expend Designated Funds from Tracy Hall Fund to Replace Downstairs Carpet (Discussion/Action Item). After some discussion of what color was being selected, Cook **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Flanders) to approve the use of up to \$6,700 from the Tracy Hall Designated Fund for the purchase of carpeting for the Tracy Hall basement. **Motion passed.**

The new Tracy Hall Designated Fund balance will be approximately \$52,373.

14. Sidewalk Proposal – Fire District to Town Ownership (Discussion/Action Item). Hodgdon and McMullan have discussed a four year staged plan for the transfer of ownership of five additional segments of sidewalk from the Fire District to the Town of Norwich as outlined in Hodgdon's memo dated May 15, 2011. McMullan said these discussions have been going on for a number of years and the Fire District would rather it went forward as a whole and not piecemeal. Improvements need to be completed to the sidewalks before the Town assumes ownership. Blake pointed out that the numbers in the last paragraph of the memo would have to be negotiated. Cook said the cost to the Town needs to be worked out. Ashley agrees that the scope of costs needs to be determined. McMullan said the Fire District is looking for a commitment from the Town. Flanders also sees the need for a strategic plan. Hodgdon would like to do Main Street first and confirmed that granite curbing would be used, drainage would need to be done and marked parking spaces are planned. After some further discussion, it was agreed that as many members of the Selectboard as possible would attend the July 25<sup>th</sup> Prudential Committee meeting to further discuss. Kramer will warn the meeting.

15. 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) #15 a). Letter of Thanks from SEVCA. Ashley **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Cook) to receive a letter of thanks from SEVCA. **Motion passed.**
- 2) #15 b). Letter of Thanks from VNA & Hospice. Blake **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Ashley) to receive a letter of thanks from VNA & Hospice. **Motion passed.**

16. Selectboard

- a) Approval of the Minutes of the 6/8/11 Meeting. After some discussion of changes, Flanders **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Blake) to approve the minutes of the June 8, 2011 Selectboard meeting as amended. **Motion passed.**
- b) First Draft of Minutes Comments (Discussion). Childs would like to see timely responses to draft minutes changes and a deadline set. Cook does not like changes made to the draft minutes in emails. Cook would prefer the discussion to take place in an open meeting. After some further discussion, it was agreed Kramer would place hard copies of the first draft minutes in the Selectboard mailboxes.

- c) Review of Pending Items (Discussion/Possible Action Item). 7/27 Finance Committee input added and Cook will check on status of VLCT model email policy.
- d) Review of Next Agenda (Discussion/Possible Action Item). Budget presentation format, review of Conflict of Interest Policy, setting the tax rate and an update on health insurance changes will be agenda items for July 6<sup>th</sup>.
- e) Personnel (Executive Session may be Required). Pursuant to Title 1 VSA § 313(a)(3), Ashley **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Cook) to enter into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing personnel. **Motion passed**. The Selectboard moved into Executive Session at 9:38 pm.

At 9:59 pm the Selectboard moved into public session. No action was taken as a result of the Executive Session.

Ashley **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Flanders) to adjourn. **Motion passed**. Meeting adjourned at 10:00 pm.

Approved by the Selectboard on July 6, 2011.

By Nancy Kramer  
Assistant to the Town Manager

Edwin Childs  
Selectboard Chair

Next Regular Meeting – July 6, 2011 at 5:30 PM

Pending Items:

- 1) Finance Committee – Budget Goals and Objectives
- 2) Conflict of Interest Policy (7/27/11)
- 3) Review Policy for Response to Appeals of DRB Decisions
- 4) Review Appropriation Request Policy
- 5) Update Finance Committee Statement of Purpose
- 6) Review of Town Plan Document
- 7) Budget Development
- 8) Vehicle Acquisition and Replacement Policy
- 9) Strategic Planning (8/10/11)
- 10) Develop Email Policy (7/27/11)
- 11) Tour of Fire/Police Facilities (8/24/11)
- 12) Review Recommendations for Facilities Improvements at the Fire/Police Facility (8/24/11)
- 13) Evaluate Report from Capital Facilities Planning and Budgeting Committee (9/27/11)
- 14) Evaluate Report from Committee to Evaluate Public Works Department (9/27/11)
- 15) Permits – Interior Building Improvements
- 16) State of Vermont PACE Initiative
- 17) Town Boundaries

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**Resolution  
Town of Norwich Selectboard  
Authorizing Purchase of Motor Grader**

WHEREAS, the Town of Norwich (Town) has determined it is necessary to replace the 1983 John Deere 670A motor grader and dispose of the 1984 Koehring T744 Gradall; and

WHEREAS, public bids were received and opened on June 17, 2011 in accordance with the Town of Norwich Financial Management (Purchasing) Policy; and

WHEREAS, bids were received on both used motor graders and new motor graders from two qualified suppliers; and

WHEREAS, the most cost effective replacement of the 1983 John Deere 670A motor grader is to purchase a new motor grader; and

WHEREAS, Nortrax, Inc. of Springfield, Vermont submitted the lowest bid which fully complies with the Town's Specifications; and

WHEREAS, the Town is desirous of entering into a five year Master Lease-Purchase Agreement with Deere Credit, Inc. to pay for the motor grader.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Norwich Town Manager is authorized to execute on behalf of the Town a purchase order with Nortrax, Inc. in the amount of \$221,500 for a new 2011 John Deere 672G motor grader in accordance with the Town's specifications; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Norwich Town Manager is authorized to execute a five year Master Lease-Purchase Agreement and other necessary documents with Deere Credit, Inc. based on the following payment schedule:

First Year Payment	\$150,000.00
Second Through Fifth Year Payments	\$19,042.39

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the first year payment will be made from the Highway Equipment Reserve/Designated Fund.

ADOPTED BY the Norwich Selectboard on JUNE 22, 2011.

By Ed Childs, Chair: \_\_\_\_\_