

Minutes of the Selectboard Meeting of Wednesday, July 6, 2011 at 5:30 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 10 people in the audience.

Also participating: Lauren Girard Adams, Phil Dechert, Adele Fulton, Neil Fulton, Tom Gray, Dennis Kaufman, Cheryl Lindberg, Peter Milliken, Keith Moran, William Schaffner, Robert Spottswood, Irv Thomae.

Childs opened the meeting at 5:31 pm.

1. Approval of Agenda (Action Item). The Selectboard approved the Agenda as presented.
2. Set Tax Rate (Discussion/Action Item). Fulton said the municipal Grand List is \$704,881,300. As of June 30, 2011, the fund balance has an increase of \$51,295. To keep the tax rate the same as last year requires the use of \$245,500 from the Undesignated Fund. Other potential savings may result from a reduction in the Windsor County tax, health insurance changes and the result of the 2009 CLA change. On the draft FY12 tax rate sheet for Selectboard review the numbers in the box are set by the State. The Local Agreement Taxes are Town voted exemptions. The proposed Town tax rate is \$.4588. Ashley would like to see the \$72,343 in CLA change revenue go back to the townspeople by including the revenue after the decisions regarding the Undesignated Fund's balance and the tax rate have been made, thus lowering the tax rate. Fulton explained that it is too late for the credit to be applied to taxes since it is a different tax year and the liability for unpaid taxes rests on the Town. The check from the State will come back to the Town. Flanders wants to use \$245,500 from the Undesignated Fund to reduce the tax rate. Childs is content with the current procedure. Blake agrees that all taxpayers benefit from this. Thomae said it is regrettable that all of this information was not available to the public. Thomae does not like the current Selectboard seating arrangement. Thomae advocates a reduction in the Town tax rate. Thomae questioned what was shown in the box on the last page and Fulton responded that these would be the percentages left in the Undesignated Fund for the amounts listed as of June 30, 2011. Moran asked for clarification of the last paragraph of the explanation email and said the Norwich Finance Committee had voted unanimously to support the use of \$245,500 of Undesignated Fund to keep the tax rate level. Ashley again asked if the tax rate could be calculated first and then apply the \$72,343. Kaufman responded that it would be difficult to do considering the Town has not received the check yet.

After some further discussion, Flanders **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Blake) to set the Town Tax Rate for FY12 at \$.4535 and the Local Agreement Rate at \$.0053 for a Total Town Tax Rate of \$.4588. **Motion passed 3 to 2** (yes – Childs, Blake and Flanders; no - Ashley and Cook).

3. Town Plan Process (Discussion). Dechert said the Selectboard has been given the June Town Plan draft with a memo discussing the statutory requirements. The Board can warn a public hearing, discuss changes, if minor, with the Planning Commission, have a 2<sup>nd</sup> public hearing and then adopt. The Selectboard could meet with the Planning Commission first to discuss before the public hearings. Dechert stated that people on the whole are generally happy with the June draft and the Planning Commission would like to move ahead with the adoption process. Dechert is willing to meet individually with Board members to answer questions. After discussion, the Selectboard agreed by consensus to set the first public hearing for August 10<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 pm.
4. Public Comments. The Norwich Fair starts at 6:00 pm July 7<sup>th</sup> and runs through Sunday afternoon. The parade is Saturday and starts at 11:00 am, theme is the Revolutionary era. Kaufman said it is hard to hear the Board members and Town Manager that are seated facing the wall.
5. Town Manager's Report (Discussion). The Transfer Station has been designated a Vermont e-cycle collection site as of July 1, 2011. The Town of Norwich website will be updated soon to describe this expanded recycling program. Approximately \$9,500 in revenue has been received so far on new sticker sales. Webster had a meeting with David Goudy Tuesday to discuss the new pavilion at the Montshire

and the possibility of the Selectboard holding a meeting there. Goudy would still like to sponsor a Norwich family day some Sunday afternoon. Hodgdon has received a \$175,000 bridge grant from the State of Vermont. Norwich is the only town in Windsor County to receive a bridge grant. Restoration work has been completed on the Norwich jail and the Historical Society would like Webster to sign paperwork to start the transfer of the jail to the Historical Society. Kramer will research past Board minutes when this was discussed and email to the Selectboard. The new carpet downstairs in Tracy Hall will be installed July 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup>. Continuing dispatch conversations with Hartford and Hanover are occurring. Fulton briefly went over the background. Webster asked if the Board would approve and sign a letter to taxpayers that he would like to go out with the tax bills. After some discussion, the Selectboard declined to sign the letter since they had not had the opportunity to review earlier.

6. Finance – Board to Sign Accounts Payable/Warrants (Action Item). Blake **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Flanders) to approve Check Warrant Report #12-2 for General Fund for the period from 7/2/11 to 7/6/11 in the amount of \$33,756.93. **Motion passed.** Blake **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Flanders) to approve Check Warrant Report #12-2 for Police Station Fund for the period from 7/2/11 to 7/6/11 in the amount of \$308.62. **Motion passed.** Blake **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Flanders) to approve Check Warrant Report #12-2 for Tracy Hall Fund for the period from 7/2/11 to 7/6/11 in the amount of \$3,715.00. **Motion passed.**

7. Approval for Purchase Order Greater than \$25,000 (Winter Sand PO) (Action Item). Webster said this request is to put up sand for the coming season and that he supports this purchase. This will restore the Town to its normal amount of sand. After a brief discussion, Flanders **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Blake) to approve PO # 7141087 for the purchase of winter sand for the winter of 2011/2012. **Motion passed.**

8. Request to Expend Designated Funds from Tracy Hall Fund to Purchase a Five Roll Floor Cover Storage Rack (Discussion/Action Item). Webster spoke about needing the new storage rack due to the weight of the new floor cover. After a brief discussion, Ashley **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Cook) to approve the use of \$1,755 from the Tracy Hall Designated Fund for the purchase of a five roll floor cover storage rack. **Motion passed.**

The new Tracy Hall Designated Fund balance will be approximately \$50,618.

9. Update on Health Insurance Changes (Discussion/Possible Action Item). Webster said there was a two hour meeting with the union Thursday, June 30<sup>th</sup>. Michael Scruggs, Chuck Rataj and George Lovell represented the union. Also present were the Town Manager, Childs, Chief Robinson, Tanya Chambers and Dave Sichel. It was agreed that the Town would fund the second half of this year's HSA contribution, plus make a contribution in August and January to fund the new plan for those 13 employees on the high deductible CIGNA plan. Also agreed to was an August and January contribution for the six employees on the 10/20 CIGNA plan. The Town also agreed keep the high deductibles at \$1,500 for single and \$3,000 for family. The rest of the \$2,500/\$5,000 deductible will be paid for through the HRA. After the meeting, the union was in full agreement with the terms but asked for the numbers in writing before a press release went out. Webster is holding off on the press release until Scruggs is back from vacation. Webster said this is a rich plan for employees but still saves the Town money. Webster read Lovell's email stating that the union is on board with the Town proceeding with the changeover. Ashley questioned the late receipt of the information on numbers and wants all employees on board with the switch to MVP. Webster said he will address any specific issues with the six employees currently on the 10/20 plan. Childs and Flanders believe Webster has met union concerns and has the right to move forward with the changeover. Cook has concerns for the people in the 10/20 plan who will be in a shortfall and does not approve of side agreements. Cook also asked that it be made clear that Childs was not representing the Selectboard at the union meeting. Cook would like to wait on the final decision until everyone is back from vacation. Moran asked for and received a quick definition of HSAs and HRAs. After some further discussion, Cook **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Ashley) that the Selectboard revote the health insurance decision of last meeting. **Motion failed 2 to 3** (yes – Ashley and Cook; no –Blake, Childs and Flanders).

10. Revised Charge for Committee to Review Real Property Assessment Functions (Discussion/ Action Item). After discussing what changes were made, the Board agreed to further review the charge in the packet and to approve at their next meeting.

11. Appointments to Committee to Review Real Property Assessment Functions (Discussion/Action Item). Candidates present: Lauren Girard Adams, Adele Fulton, Dennis Kaufman, Peter Milliken, William Schaffner and Robert Spottswood were interviewed. Kaufman was asked if he had a conflict of interest. Kaufman said no and that he has not made up his mind as to what is best for the Lister Office. Candidates were thanked for their willingness to serve on the Committee. After some further discussion, Ashley **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Blake) to appoint Lauren Girard Adams, Mike Cahoon, Adele Fulton, Dennis Kaufman, Bruce McLaughry, Peter Milliken, William Schaffner, Dwight Sperry and Robert Spottswood to the Committee to Review Real Property Assessment Functions. **Motion passed 4 to 1** (yes – Childs, Blake, Ashley and Flanders; no - Cook).

12. Budget Presentation Format (Discussion/Possible Action Item). Flanders is looking for what kind of services the department is providing and at what cost. Flanders went over the slides: proposed budget, report, staffing, primary activities, non-labor input, nontax income, trend and increment/decrement. Flanders believes the last slide is the most important where narratives would be provided showing benefits gained or lost. Webster thinks this process is logical and will give it a try if that is what the Board wants. The Selectboard discussed who should do this version, picking a guinea pig, doing a test drive with last year's budget and timing. It was agreed the Town Manager should do and he will run this format by the Department Heads for comment.

13. Conflict of Interest Policy (Discussion/Possible Action Item). Ashley reviewed the changes and why they were needed. It was pointed out that the Selectboard may not remove elected officials. Changes to the Policy were discussed. Ashley will make agreed upon changes and circulate to the Board for comments.

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) #14 a). Letter of Thanks from Windsor County Partners. Flanders **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Ashley) to receive a letter of thanks from Windsor County Partners. **Motion passed.**

15. Selectboard

- a) Approval of the Minutes of the 6/22/11 Meeting. After some discussion, Flanders **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Ashley) to approve the minutes of the June 22, 2011 Selectboard meeting as amended. **Motion passed.**
- b) Approve Resolution to Honor 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary (Action Item). After a discussion of changes, Ashley **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Blake) to approve the Resolution to Honor 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary as amended. **Motion passed.**
- c) Review of Pending Items. Moran questioned what the Board is looking for from the Finance Committee regarding budget goals and objectives. Webster will contact VLCT regarding a model email policy. A tour of Police and Fire facilities was discussed and the Selectboard asked that a tour of DPW be added to pending items. Fulton briefly reviewed where the Capital Facilities Committee's plans are at.
- d) Review of Next Agenda (Discussion/Possible Action Item). The Selectboard discussed the seating format and agreed to try a tighter V. Kramer will email latest Lister Review charge to the Board. Participation in the July 25<sup>th</sup> Prudential Committee meeting was discussed. A discussion of information dissemination will be an agenda item for the next meeting. Feedback from the Department Heads on the suggested budget presentation will also be on the agenda.
- e) Personnel (Executive Session may be Required). Pursuant to Title 1 VSA § 313(a)(3), Flanders **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Ashley) to enter into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing personnel and to invite Pete Webster to join the Session. **Motion passed.** The Selectboard moved into Executive Session at 8:32 pm.

At 9:54 pm the Selectboard moved into public session. No action was taken as a result of the Executive Session.

Ashley **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Blake) to adjourn. **Motion passed.** Meeting adjourned at 9:55 pm.

Approved by the Selectboard on July 27, 2011.

By Nancy Kramer  
Assistant to the Town Manager

Edwin Childs  
Selectboard Chair

Next Regular Meeting – July 27, 2011 at 6:30 PM

Pending Items:

- 1) Finance Committee – Budget Goals and Objectives (7/27/11)
- 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 (8/10/11)
- 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
- 12) Tour of DPW Facilities
- 13) Review Recommendations for Facilities Improvements at the Fire/Police Facility
- 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) State of Vermont PACE Initiative
- 18) 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.