

Minutes of the Selectboard Meeting of Wednesday, August 24, 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: Sandra Bailey, Alan Berolzheimer, Peter Brink, Margaret Cheney, Ernie Ciccotelli, Neil Fulton, Linda Gray, Nancy Hoggson, Jill Kearney, Cheryl Lindberg, Norm Miller, Chief Robinson, Tig Tillinghast.

Childs opened the meeting at 6:31 pm.

1. Approval of Agenda (Action Item). Childs asked if a discussion of the sidewalk process could be added to the agenda. After discussion, the Selectboard decided to put off the discussion until the September 14th meeting. Afterwards, the Selectboard approved the Agenda as presented.
2. Public Comments. Hoggson gave an update on 250th events saying there is a presentation at the Norwich Public Library September 7th at 7:00 pm about using historical artifacts to understand history. Saturday, September 17th is Norwich Charter Day on the Green at 2:00 pm. The Norwich University Color Guard will be present as well as Governor Shumlin and Congressman Welch. There will be anniversary music with the Marion Cross School band and chorus featuring music arranged by Fred Metcalf. Chad Finer will be doing another Town-wide photo. Jack Candon will be the master of ceremonies. Hoggson also spoke about the charter restoration and the importance of taking care of public records. There was some discussion of putting a photo of the restored charter on the Town website. Flanders would like the Selectboard tables back in the tighter v position. Cook warned citizens of the severe thunderstorms forecast for Thursday and hurricane Irene predicted to impact the area Sunday.
3. Town Manager's Report (Discussion). Webster is making good progress on getting the \$1,000 in pledges towards the September 18th Norwich at the Montshire event cookout. The Transportation Enhancement Grant application for \$35,000 to scope out a bike/pedestrian trail that would connect Norwich with Hartford was filed on time thanks to the help of Lucy Gibson and Phil Dechert. All but \$206,452 was collected of the \$7,280,313 due in taxes which is slightly better than last year. Truck bids have been opened and a decision paper will be prepared for the next Selectboard meeting. Approximately \$17,400 has been received so far in windshield sticker sales. Webster thanked Michael Scruggs and Linda Cook for their efforts in saving a life this weekend and was told by Cook that Bonnie Munday was also part of the Fast Squad team that responded to that call. Ashley asked a question about the local solar project being pursued by the Norwich Energy Committee that was described in the Town Manager's report.
4. Finance – Board to Sign Accounts Payable/Warrants (Action Item). Cook questioned if some of the bills paid were FY11 expenses as indicated and if they had been included in the final numbers given to the Board by the Finance Office. Webster indicated he would get back to her on that. Flanders **moved** (2nd Blake) to approve Check Warrant Report #12-5 for General Fund for the period from 8/11/11 to 8/24/11 in the amount of \$4,098,098.52. **Motion passed.** Ashley **moved** (2nd Blake) to approve Check Warrant Report #12-5 for Town Reappraisal Fund for the period from 8/11/11 to 8/24/11 in the amount of \$4,375.08. **Motion passed.**

5. Update on Historic Preservation Commission Activities and Approval of Advertisement for Additional Members (Discussion/Action Item). Hoggson and Brink thanked the Board for their initiative in creating the Commission. Brink said Norwich has a remarkable village center and that retaining the character of the community by preserving old buildings is the ultimate way to recycle and a good way to produce jobs. On an advisory basis only the Commission has worked with the Beaver Meadow School, the Root School District and two major property owners in the village district. There also was a workshop for downtown owners on preservation sponsored by the Norwich Inn and Dan & Whit's. Hoggson spoke about the success of the walking tour brochure that came in under budget and ahead of schedule. The brochures are available in selected Vermont Welcome Centers, Tracy Hall, participating Norwich merchants, Norwich Public Library, Montshire Museum, King Arthur Flour and the Norwich Historical Society. Dartmouth Printing Company printed 10,000 brochures pro bono. More information and a downloadable brochure is available at www.norwichwalkingtour.com.

After a brief discussion, Blake **moved** (2nd Flanders) to approve the advertisement for additional members to the Historic Preservation Commission. **Motion passed.**

6. **7:15 pm** - Appointment with Margaret Cheney to Discuss PACE Program Updates (Discussion Item). Cheney distributed her notes on the program to the Selectboard and Town Manager. PACE was enacted into law in May, 2011 and is an improvement on the original 2009 legislation. PACE allows individuals to take out loans with return on investment, as it stays with the property, at no risk to towns. A Town-wide vote is required to create a PACE district. Only residents may participate, no commercial loans. Borrowers must meet strict eligibility requirements and projects must meet strict eligibility criteria. All costs are borne by participating residents, all risks are insured by two State-wide loan loss reserve funds and all administrative details are handled by VEIC. Administrative and technical assistance for towns is provided by Efficiency Vermont (contact is Peter Adamczyk). Cheney is proud of the law because it provides help to residents in energy savings at no risk or cost to the Town. Cheney would like to see the article on Norwich's March Town Warning. After some discussion of funding, Cheney said the next step would be for the Town to contact Adamczyk. Gray said there is a workshop on PACE September 15th at 7 pm at the Bugbee Senior Center. Tug Tillinghast offered to share any information Thetford, who has already gone forward with the program, has acquired. Also discussed were possible tax increases to homeowners due to improvements and educating the public.

7. Errors & Omissions (Discussion/Action Item). Ciccotelli said the amount was erroneously set and explained the calculation errors. Sandra Bailey concurred and passed out to the Board a letter containing her thoughts.

After a brief discussion, Cook **moved** (2nd Ashley) to accept the Listers' Errors and Omissions and decrease the taxable assessment of Parcel #11-133.000 from \$521,000 to \$471,100. **Motion passed.**

8. Public Input on FY13 Town Budget (Discussion). None.

9. Selectboard Discussion of FY13 Budget Guidelines (Discussion/Possible Action Item). Webster said the position paper from the Norwich Finance Committee (NFC) was not very specific. Webster would like to maintain the current staff level and keep the tax rate flat. He is waiting for the reports from the committees, especially the DPW Review Committee, before suggesting a percentage. However, the Town Manager would like to increase the paving line item and still supports a three-year paving budget. In general, the cost of doing business for municipalities has increased 4.9%. Ashley would like to look at the level of spending, needs and the actuals spent. He would like the Selectboard to be forceful advocates of the budget presented to townspeople. Flanders would like the NFC to provide more focused information, based on three scenarios: a) a prediction of how to predict the cost of the current level of services, using the Consumer Price Index or Municipal Price

Index, b) what adjustments to current services a level expenditure budget would entail and c) what adjustments to current services a level tax rate would entail. For planning the upcoming budget, he prefers the approach in (a) combined with waiting for results from the DPW and Capital Budget committees. Cook would like a summary sheet and believes more information gathering is needed before a percentage is set. Also discussed was that 80% of voters vote in favor of the budget no matter what and that the budget should deliver good value.

10. Review Alcohol Ordinance and Tracy Hall and Bandstand Alcohol Policy (Discussion/Possible Action Item). Flanders feels the alcohol policy is overly restrictive and should be amended to allow alcohol with a limit and insurance required if the Town Manager approves. Webster said item 5. in the Ordinance and item 9. in the Tracy Hall and Bandstand Rental Agreement would need to change. Blake believes the Selectboard should approve all exceptions. Ashley suggested a waiver to Section 4. of the Ordinance could be allowed if approved by the majority of the Board. Fulton said there are specific Statutes governing changes to an ordinance that must be followed and that a specific procedure for a waiver should be drafted. After some discussion, Flanders **moved** (2nd Ashley) to rescind the previous meetings motion to approve the request from the Norwich Women's Club (NWC) to serve alcohol at their March Floribunda fundraising event. **Motion passed.** The Selectboard made it clear that support for the NWC event has not changed. Webster will check with VLCT on language for a model Alcohol Ordinance.

At this point in the meeting, Lindberg asked the Selectboard if they had made a decision regarding the upcoming holiday season lights. After some discussion, the Board agreed to put this on the agenda for the next meeting.

11. Review of Recreation Department Budget Using New Format (Discussion). Flanders observed that the subject of the discussion is actually "Review of New Format Using Recreation Department Budget". Webster said Kearney worked with real numbers for her spreadsheet and slides and pointed out that revenues are a big part of the Recreation budget development. Flanders is looking for the net effect, what would I give up if I had to and what would I do with this budget if approved. Ashley wants future budget presentation to be more professional and to have more credibility. On the Primary Activities slide he would like to see more detail, possibly fully describe one program. Cook asked Kearney for an estimate of the time she spent doing the slides. Kearney said not much more than she usually spends doing her budget and questioned what the Selectboard was looking for on the Trend slide. Kearney would like more clarity on what the Board expects from Department Heads on these slides. After discussion, it was agreed that you probably cannot use the same formula for all departments. Lindberg asked if any goals on fees were being set. The Selectboard agreed that this was up to the Recreation Council and Kearney in order to best serve all. After some further discussion, it was agreed that this format should work with a majority of the departments budgets. Flanders will provide any support needed to Department Heads.

12. 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) Nonresident –

- 1) #12 a). Letter from TRORC Re: FY12 Annual Dues. Ashley **moved** (2nd Flanders) to receive a letter from TRORC re: FY12 annual dues. **Motion passed.**
- 2) #12 b). Letter of Thanks from Green Mountain RSVP. Blake **moved** (2nd Flanders) to receive a letter of thanks from Green Mountain RSVP. **Motion passed.**

13. Selectboard

- a) Approval of the Minutes of the 7/27/11 and 8/10/11 Meetings. Ashley **moved** (2nd Flanders) to approve the minutes of the July 27, 2011 Selectboard meeting. **Motion passed.** After some discussion, Ashley **moved** (2nd Flanders) to approve the minutes of the August 10, 2011 Selectboard meeting, as amended. **Motion passed.**

- b) Select Voting Delegate for VLCT Annual Business Meeting (Action Item). After some discussion, Blake **moved** (2nd Ashley) to designate Pete Webster as the voting delegate for the VLCT 2011 Annual Business Meeting. **Motion passed.**
- c) Review of Pending Items. Item #1 on pending needs to be on the agenda when John Lawe can attend. Item #13 was discussed.
- d) Review of Next Agenda (Discussion/Possible Action Item). Holiday lights, truck #8 replacement package (step 2) and the alcohol ordinance will be on the agenda for September 14th.
- e) Personnel (Executive Session may be Required). Pursuant to Title 1 VSA § 313(a)(3), Ashley **moved** (2nd Flanders) 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 9:09 pm.

At 10:19 pm the Selectboard moved into public session. No action was taken as a result of the Executive Session.

Ashley **moved** (2nd Flanders) to adjourn. **Motion passed.** Meeting adjourned at 10:20 pm.

Approved by the Selectboard on September 14, 2011.

By Nancy Kramer
Assistant to the Town Manager

Edwin Childs
Selectboard Chair

Next Regular Meeting – September 14, 2011 at 6:30 PM

Pending Items:

- 1) Review Policy for Response to Appeals of DRB Decisions
- 2) Review Appropriation Request Policy
- 3) Update Finance Committee Statement of Purpose
- 4) Review of Town Plan Document
- 5) Budget Development
- 6) Strategic Planning
- 7) Develop Email Policy
- 8) Tour of Fire/Police Facilities
- 9) Tour of DPW Facilities
- 10) Review Recommendations for Facilities Improvements at the Fire/Police Facility
- 11) Evaluate Report from Capital Facilities Planning and Budgeting Committee
- 12) Evaluate Report from Committee to Evaluate Public Works Department (10/12/11)
- 13) State of Vermont PACE Initiative
- 14) 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.