

Minutes of the Selectboard Meeting of Wednesday, September 14, 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 65 people in the audience.

Also participating: Jim Adler, April Andrews, Richard Blacklow, Jake Blum, Susan Blum, Terry Boone, Nancy Dean, Phil Dechert, Margo Doscher, Joshua Durst, Nancy Hoggson, Karen Kayen, Dennis Kaufman, Norm Miller, Bill Pierce, Sue Pitiger, Arline Rotman, Demo Sofronas, Warren Thayer.

Childs opened the meeting at 6:30 pm.

1. Personnel (Executive Session may be Required). Pursuant to Title 1 VSA § 313(a)(3), Blake **moved** (2nd Ashley) to enter into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing the Town Manager contract. **Motion passed**. The Selectboard moved into Executive Session at 6:31 pm.

At 7:01 pm the Selectboard moved into public session.

2. Approval of Agenda (Action Item). The Selectboard approved the Agenda with one addition.

3. Town Manager Contract. Ashley **moved** (2nd Flanders) to accept the agreement with the Town Manager that was discussed in Executive Session and to authorize the Chair to sign the agreement on behalf of the Selectboard. **Motion passed**. Childs read the statement: "The Selectboard and Pete Webster have reached an agreement that the Town Manager contract will not be renewed when it ends November 4, 2011. Because of the importance of the budgeting process, it is best if the person finishing the process is the same person beginning it. To allow that to occur, Pete will step down effective Monday, September 19. His contract will be honored through November 4, and he will be available for consultation on the budget during that time. Further, he will be paid accumulated vacation and personal days and an amount approximately equal to two months compensation. This has not been an easy or a simple conclusion for any of the involved parties. Ultimately the reason for the decision is that it is important for the Manager and the Selectboard to have an effective working relationship and we do not. It is, simply stated, not a good fit. We understand there are discussions of "Is there something back there we don't know about? An ethical lapse that requires this action?" The answer is a loud and unequivocal "No". Pete is a person of high integrity and accomplishment. We all respect the concerns expressed by the public about the process and will continue to do our best to earn the respect and cooperation of the people of Norwich."

4. Public Comments. Childs read a letter from Betsy Maislin regarding the Norwich AT celebration hike. The Board agreed by consensus that whatever the AT people decided to do it was acceptable to them.

5. Receive Public Input Relative to Town Manager Contract (Discussion). Webster said it was a joint agreement that was difficult for all. Webster also said Norwich is a wonderful town and he has enjoyed working here. Adler read a statement from the public forum Tuesday night. Several townspeople spoke about their disappointment with the Board, accused the Selectboard of micromanaging the Town Manager and a loss of trust in Town government. Some townspeople asked the Board to explain or resign. Durst spoke about the difficulties of the job of serving on a Town board and that people wishing for change should run for the Selectboard.

6. Town Manager's Report (Discussion). Webster said that he and other parties had a one hour conference call with State and FEMA officials. Roberta Robinson and Hodgdon are well aware and working on the documentation needed to receive Norwich's 75% federal disaster funding. The FY11 outside audit of the Town went smoothly and Webster thanked Roberta for her great organizational skills. Gile Mountain trail work continues. Webster participated in the Labor Day Road Race and things went well. The Lister Review Committee had a good meeting with representatives from PV&R. Webster has sent out his budget memo to Department Heads for FY13. Norwich Residents' Day is this Sunday from 4:00 to 7:00 pm. Ashley asked a question about the downed trees cleanup in the brooks in town.

7. Finance – Board to Sign Accounts Payable/Warrants (Action Item). After some discussion the Town Reappraisal warrant was tabled, Ashley **moved** (2nd Blake) to approve Check Warrant Report #12-7 for General Fund for the period from 8/25/11 to 9/14/11 in the amount of \$94,225.77. **Motion passed.**

a) Warrant Number 12-6. Ashley **moved** (2nd Flanders) to approve Accounts Payable Warrant #12-6 dated 9/14/11 in the amount of \$7,900.67. **Motion passed.**

8. Municipal Planning Grant Application (Discussion/Action Item). Deferred due to deadline being extended.

9. Town Plan – Future Meetings/Hearings – Coordination with Planning Commission (Discussion/Action Item). Dechert is keeping a running list of comments on the Town Plan. There will probably be updates to the charts in the Town Plan. Dechert went over the options regarding moving forward with adopting the new Town Plan. After some discussion, the Board set a date of October 26th for the second public hearing.

Ashley **moved** (2nd Flanders) to set the date of September 27, 2011 to meet with the Planning Commission to discuss the new Town Plan. **Motion passed.**

10. Final Approval for Purchase of 2012 Cab and Chassis and Dump Body and Snowplow Equipment (Discussion/Action Item). Webster said the documentation for this purchase was in the Selectboard packets. Cook questioned why the truck being replaced was sent out for repairs and Hodgdon answered that this was because he will not be able to get the new one in until spring now.

Cook **moved** (2nd Flanders) approve the purchase of the 2012 cab and chassis from Freightliner of New Hampshire for \$70,282 and the dump body and snowplow equipment from Tenco New England for \$58,946. **Motion passed.**

11. Town Takeover of Holiday Lights (Discussion/Action Item). Webster said the Town had agreed to take over the electric expense of the lights at a previous Selectboard meeting but not the expense of replacing the lights. There ensued some discussion of preference of townspeople on the lighting. It was agreed that businesses and townspeople would be encouraged to use small white lights this year. Cook will coordinate with Doug Lufkin.

12. Financial Impacts of Irene to Town (Discussion Item). Webster said it is not clear that the Town will be grandfathered on rebuilding the pool. It has also been suggested that the Town have a pool at Huntley. Webster gave a handout to the Board from Hodgdon on an Irene update. Sink holes are appearing and Cook cautioned townspeople to be careful on some roads. Cook asked if the Selectboard could blanket approve Irene expenses ahead of time. Webster will review the process with Roberta and have her get back to the Board.

13. Appointment with Nancy Hoggson Re: Norwich Charter Day (Discussion Item). Hoggson passed out an agenda of events to the Board which includes the Norwich University Color Guard, welcome by Margaret Cheney, speeches by Peter Shumlin and Peter Welch, Town charter presentation, Reading of the Charter, a charter from Marion Cross School students and bicentennial music.

14. Establish Selectboard Subcommittee to Review Process for Sidewalk Evaluation (Discussion/Action Item). Childs explained that the timeline and scheduling are up in the air and planning needs to be done on a project of this extent. Hodgdon has done his part. Ashley offered to develop a spreadsheet as a road map. After some further discussion, Flanders **moved** (2nd Blake) to appoint Ashley and Childs as liaisons to review the process for sidewalk evaluation. **Motion passed.**

15. Review Model Alcohol Ordinance (Discussion/Possible Action Item). Ashley read his suggestion for amending the ordinance. Ashley will work with Kramer and amend the current ordinance for Selectboard review. Sue Pitiger spoke about the process for approval from the State to serve alcohol. It was discussed that the Bandstand and Tracy Hall rental agreement will also need to be amended to state that serving alcohol will be permitted after Board approval is given.

16. 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) Resident –

- 1) #16 a). Letter of Apology from Brian Livingston. Flanders **moved** (2nd Blake) to receive a letter of apology from Brian Livingston. **Motion passed.**
- 2) #16 b). Email from Margaret Cheney Re: Town Manager. Blake **moved** (2nd Ashley) to receive an email from Margaret Cheney re: Town Manager. **Motion passed.**
- 3) #16 c). Email from Robert Pitiger Re: Special Meeting Held 8/30/11. Ashley **moved** (2nd Blake) to receive an email from Robert Pitiger re: special meeting held 8/30/11. **Motion passed.**
- 4) #16 d). Email from Deborah Hall Re: Open Letter to the Selectboard. Blake **moved** (2nd Ashley) to receive an email from Deborah Hall re: open letter to the Selectboard. **Motion passed.**
- 5) #16 e). Email from Norman Miller Re: Webster Appointment. Flanders **moved** (2nd Ashley) to receive an email from Norman Miller re: Webster appointment. **Motion passed.**
- 6) #16 f). Email from Brooke and Jim Adler Re: Extraordinary Performance in an Emergency Situation. Ashley **moved** (2nd Flanders) to receive an email from Brooke and Jim Adler re: extraordinary performance in an emergency situation. **Motion passed.**
- 7) #16 g). Email from Max Porter Re: Norwich Pool. Blake **moved** (2nd Ashley) to receive an email from Max Porter re: Norwich Pool. **Motion passed.**
- 8) #16 h). Note from Peter Welch Re: Excellent Work of Highway Crew and Andy Hodgdon. Blake **moved** (2nd Ashley) to receive a note from Peter Welch re: excellent work of Highway crew and Andy Hodgdon. **Motion passed.**
- 9) #16 i). Email from Heidi Lang Moran Re: Irene, Town Government & Lending a Hand. Ashley stated publicly the apology he had made privately to Ms. Moran regarding the email she received. Cook **moved** (2nd Ashley) to receive an email from Heidi Lang Moran re: Irene, Town government and lending a hand. **Motion passed.**
- 10) #16 k). Letter from Terry Boone Re: Handling of Discussion of Town Manager's Contract Renewal. Ashley **moved** (2nd Flanders) to receive a letter from Terry Boone re: handling of discussion of Town Manager's contract renewal. **Motion passed.**
- 11) #16 l). Email from Tom and Linda Gray Re: Town Manager Evaluation. Blake **moved** (2nd Ashley) to receive an email from Tom and Linda Gray Re: Town Manager Evaluation. **Motion passed.**

b) Nonresident –

- 1) #16 j). Letter from TRORC Re: PACE. Cook **moved** (2nd Blake) to receive a letter from TRORC re: PACE. **Motion passed.**

17. Selectboard

- a) Approval of the Minutes of the 8/24/11 Meeting. After some discussion, Ashley **moved** (2nd Flanders) to approve the minutes of the August 24, 2011 Selectboard meeting as amended. **Motion passed.**
- b) Review of Pending Items. Childs will follow up with John Lawe to get a date for item #1. Childs will review pending items with Kramer and try to get dates back on pending items. Recognition for all people who were part of the Irene cleanup was discussed. Cook and Flanders will work on this. Pool Replacement will be added to pending items.
- c) Review of Next Agenda (Discussion/Possible Action Item). FEMA costs report from Roberta, an update from the Listers on the Town reappraisal, alcohol ordinance, rental agreement and a meeting with the Planning Commission to discuss the Town Plan will be on the September 27th agenda. Childs asked for a special Selectboard meeting to be scheduled for Monday.

Ashley **moved** (2nd Blake) to adjourn. **Motion passed.** Meeting adjourned at 9:07 pm.

Approved by the Selectboard on September 27, 2011.

By Nancy Kramer
Assistant to the Town Manager

Edwin Childs
Selectboard Chair

Next Regular Meeting – September 27, 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
- 15) Pool Replacement

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.