

Minutes of the Selectboard Meeting of Wednesday, October 26, 2011 at 6:30 PM

Members present: Ed Childs, Chair; Roger Blake; Christopher Ashley; Linda Cook; Steve Flanders; Neil Fulton, Interim Town Manager; Nancy Kramer, Assistant to the Town Manager.

There were about 20 people in the audience.

Also participating: Peter Adamczyk, Liz Blum, Margaret Cheney, Phil Dechert, Margo Doscher, Jim Gold, Linda Gray, John Lawe, Bonnie Munday, Sue Pitiger, Jonathan Vincent.

Childs opened the meeting at 6:30 pm.

1. Approval of Agenda (Action Item). After moving item 5 until after item 12, the Selectboard approved the Agenda by consensus.

2. 2nd Public Hearing on Revised Norwich Town Plan (Discussion/Possible Action Item). Childs opened the public hearing. Dechert said this is the second Selectboard public hearing on the new Town Plan and that the process has been going on for six years. Dechert reviewed the major changes which were mostly relevant to suggestions made by Irv Thomae. The Planning Commission is still waiting for 2010 census data to further update data in charts and graphs. A revised final draft with all changes will be made available before the December 14th Selectboard meeting. Lawe thinks the new Town plan is excellent and recommends its adoption. Ashley commented on the projected growth rate in population for the Town, which predicts no significant population growth through 2035, and said he hopes this projection turns out to be inaccurate. Flanders **moved** (2nd Blake) to close the public hearing. **Motion passed.** The Board thanked Dechert and the Planning Commission for their work.

Flanders **moved** (2nd Blake) to request the Clerk of the Planning Commission to prepare a Final Draft of the 2011 Norwich Town Plan including all revisions discussed at tonight's public hearing and meeting along with any additional updates to data in the charts and tables. **Motion passed.** The Final Draft will be distributed to Selectboard members and posted on the Town website by December 2, 2011 for adoption at the December 14, 2011 Selectboard meeting.

3. Public Comments. Pitiger invited all to a thank you celebration for Pete Webster Monday, November 7th at the Norwich Inn from 5-7 pm. RSVPs should go to norwichpartyforpete@gmail.com. Blake has received a thank you note from the Appalachian Trail Conservancy regarding Norwich being designated an Appalachian Trail Community on September 18th. Two signs designating the Trail have been put up in Norwich.

4. Town Manager's Report (Discussion). Fulton is having a meeting tomorrow at 11:00 am with a new person from FEMA. The goal is to get the project sheet signed off on as soon as possible. Fulton has continued work on the FY13 budget. Meetings with Department Heads are occurring this week. Budget will be distributed to the Board for their November 9th meeting. His goal is to prepare a PowerPoint presentation that highlights the major issues. The grant application that the Selectboard approved at their last meeting has been pulled due to the current Town Plan being over five years old. The Town can reapply for the grant next year. Dechert said that other grants may be available and that the Planning Commission still has money left over from the previous grant. The Town's Hazard Mitigation Plan has been approved and will come before the Board at their second meeting in December.

6. Public Works Department Review Committee Final Report (Discussion/Possible Action Item). Fulton said a lot of work has been put in by Committee members and that the survey that was done by the Committee is revealing as to what the community expects from Public Works. Gold has appreciated the opportunity to serve but questioned whether the cost of the survey was justified and why there were two Selectboard members on the Committee. Gold is looking for action on the recommendations listed in the report. Doscher said it was quite an experience and a good group to work with. Doscher would like to see administrative support provided for Hodgdon and for the Town to look into whether equipment maintenance should be done in-house or contracted out. She also believes the survey results are really important. Blake questioned how the DPW feels about the whole process and was told that Hodgdon is comfortable with the recommendations. The Selectboard also discussed the paved roads recommendations of the Committee. Ashley asked if the Committee had attempted to reconcile the reported above median highway expenditure costs (including paving projects) with the recommendation for expeditiously addressing paved roads that are in poor condition. Gold and Doscher both said the Committee agreed that waiting costs more but the Committee gave no recommendation on this topic. Ashley also asked if comparative personnel costs had been made with Lebanon and Hartford. He was curious what the Thetford Selectboard member had meant in the quoted comment about "learning from other towns' Selectboard meetings". The Selectboard thanked all Committee members for serving and asked the Town Manager to compile and review a list of Committee recommendations.

Ashley **moved** (2nd Blake) to receive the Department of Public Works Review Committee's Final Report with our thanks to the Chairs and members of the Committee and to refer the Report to the Town Manager for review and a report back to the Selectboard. **Motion passed.**

7. Amendment to NEMC Reappraisal Contract (Discussion/Action Item). Fulton explained that the proposed amendments make needed changes to the Contract to clarify the definition of project manager, requirements of the Contract and resolve differences between the RFP and NEMC's proposal. Vincent feels the changes are basically housekeeping changes and the Board of Listers supports these changes. Blum said the Listers will have a public meeting to give an update on and to explain the reappraisal process.

After minimum discussion, Flanders **moved** (2nd Blake) to authorize the Interim Town Manager to sign Amendment No. 1 to the Contract between the Town of Norwich and New England Municipal Consultants, Ltd. for Reappraisal Services. **Motion passed.**

8. Appointment with Peter Adamczyk Re: PACE (Discussion). Adamczyk passed out PowerPoint handout slides explaining PACE, how it works and the benefits. The Town can choose to designate itself as a PACE district which requires a Town vote. The cost of the project financed through PACE cannot exceed \$30,000, or 15% of the assessed value of the property, whichever is less. The PACE participation assessment stays with the property, is only eligible to residential properties and is subordinate to property taxes and mortgages. Participating property owners pay into a reserve account which is mandatory. Vermont has created a state-wide loss reserve mechanism and Efficiency Vermont is available to act as the PACE administrator for towns. Thirteen Vermont towns have created a PACE district but the program is not effective until January 1, 2012. Norwich has already provided a letter to be designated as a "quick start community". The language for the article and other PACE information is available at <http://pacevermont.wikispaces.com/>. Also discussed was: how the billing process works, payoff of the assessment without penalties, firms approved to do the work in Vermont and the benefits to Vermont's economy and property owners. Gray said that the Norwich Energy Committee fully supports Norwich's participation in the program and an article on the March Warning. After some further discussion, the Board agreed by consensus for the Town Manager to move forward with the process of enabling Norwich to become a PACE district.

9. Adopt Revised Alcohol Ordinance (Discussion/Action Item). Fulton reviewed the changes to the Alcohol Ordinance that were made to accommodate the Selectboard's requests from the October 12th meeting. Cook is concerned about the narrow wording in 6.1.2 and accordingly cannot support the revised Alcohol Ordinance. Fulton said that Arline Rotman believes the language would stand up in court and he supports the narrow wording. Ashley said the document gets us started in a way that supports our community and thinks the Selectboard should adopt the ordinance.

After some further discussion, pursuant to Title 24 VSA § 1971, Flanders **moved** (2nd Ashley) that the Selectboard adopt the revised Alcohol Ordinance and authorize the Chair to sign. **Motion passed 4 to 1** (yes – Childs, Blake, Flanders and Ashley; no - Cook).

10. Statewide Mutual Aid Agreement (Discussion/Action Item). Fulton explained that the concept came into effect after September 11, 2001, ice storms and major train derailments when a committee determined that there was a need for a state-wide mutual aid network for larger and possibly longer term events where local resources are overwhelmed. The provision of resources is completely voluntary and at the full discretion of the local agency. There was some discussion regarding the renewal option and who makes the request for assistance. Chief Leinoff supports participation.

Afterwards, Ashley **moved** (2nd Flanders) to authorize the Interim Town Manager to sign the Statewide Mutual Aid Agreement on behalf of the Town of Norwich. **Motion passed.**

11. Public Works, Fire and Police Facilities Study (Discussion/Action Item). The Capital Facilities and Budget Committee supports the study being done in order to determine what, if any, improvements are needed to the current facilities. The study would include an evaluation of current conditions and functional deficiencies, determination of current and future needs and development and evaluation of alternatives. The study would be funded from reserve funds and would cost somewhere between \$10,000 to \$12,000.

After some discussion, Flanders **moved** (2nd Ashley) to authorize the Interim Town Manager to obtain proposals on consulting services to determine the code and regulation and functional deficiencies of the current Public Works, Fire and Police facilities to be funded from reserve funds. **Motion passed.**

12. Emergency Response Expenses for Tropical Storm Irene (Discussion/Action Item). Estimated expenses for Irene, not including repairs to the Norwich Pool Dam, are approximately \$471,073. Fulton said an after action report will be done and that the goal of the DPW is to restore roads to a good condition before the ground is frozen.

After some discussion, Ashley **moved** (2nd Flanders) to amend the September 27, 2011 motion on emergency expenditures related to repairing and restoring the Norwich road network as a result of Tropical Storm Irene from \$375,000 to \$500,000. **Motion passed.**

5. Finance – Board to Sign Accounts Payable/Warrants (Action Item). Ashley **moved** (2nd Flanders) to approve Check Warrant Report #12-13 for General Fund for the period from 10/13/11 to 10/26/11 in the amount of \$69,580.13. **Motion passed.** Flanders **moved** (2nd Blake) to approve Check Warrant Report #12-13 for Recreation Fund for the period from 10/13/11 to 10/26/11 in the amount of \$83.52. **Motion passed.** Cook **moved** (2nd Flanders) to approve Check Warrant Report #12-13 for Highway Equipment Fund for the period from 10/13/11 to 10/26/11 in the amount of \$150,000. **Motion passed.** Cook **moved** (2nd Flanders) to approve Check Warrant Report #12-13 for Town Reappraisal Fund for the period from 10/13/11 to 10/26/11 in the amount of \$4,820.22. **Motion passed.** Ashley **moved** (2nd Blake) to approve Check Warrant Report #12-13 for Fire Station Fund for the period from 10/13/11 to 10/26/11 in the amount of \$246.44. **Motion passed.** Blake **moved** (2nd Flanders) to approve Accounts Payable Warrant #12-11 dated 10/1/11 in the amount of \$161.50. **Motion passed.**

13. Adopt Revised Vehicle Acquisition and Replacement Policy (Discussion/Action Item). Fulton said the Capital Facilities and Budget Committee has reviewed the document and recommends its adoption.

After very little discussion, Flanders **moved** (2nd Blake) to adopt the Vehicle Acquisition and Replacement Policy and authorize the Chair to sign. **Motion passed.**

14. Selectboard

- a) Approval of the Minutes of the 10/12/11 Meeting. Ashley **moved** (2nd Blake) to approve the minutes of the October 12, 2011 Selectboard meeting. **Motion passed.**
- b) Review of Pending Items. Fulton said that the Town Manager and Selectboard have achieved the goal of reducing the pending items list by 60%. Fulton will review Personnel Policies changes including the grievance process. The Lister Committee report should be done in early December.
- c) Review of Next Agenda (Discussion/Possible Action Item). Fulton encourages Selectboard support of a concentration on the FY13 budget at the November Board meetings. After some discussion, the Selectboard agreed by consensus to change the start time of the November meetings to 6:00 pm and to drop the December 28th scheduled meeting from the Selectboard meeting calendar.
- d) Litigation Appeals of BCA Decisions (Executive Session may be Required). Pursuant to Title 1 VSA § 313(a)(1), Flanders **moved** (2nd Ashley) to enter into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing litigation appeals of BCA decisions and to invite Neil Fulton to join the Session. **Motion passed.** The Selectboard moved into Executive Session at 8:55 pm.

At 9:06 pm the Selectboard moved into public session. Ashley **moved** (2nd Flanders) to approve the settlement agreement with Green Mountain Power. **Motion passed.**

Flanders **moved** (2nd Blake) to adjourn. **Motion passed.** Meeting adjourned at 9:08 pm.

Approved by the Selectboard on November 9, 2011.

By Nancy Kramer
Assistant to the Town Manager

Edwin Childs
Selectboard Chair

Next Regular Meeting – November 9, 2011 at 6:00 PM

Pending Items:

- 1) Budget Work Session (11/9/11)
- 2) Update Finance Committee Statement of Purpose
- 3) Strategic Planning
- 4) Town Boundaries

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