

Minutes of the Selectboard Meeting of Wednesday, June 27, 2012 at 6:30 PM

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

There were about 10 people in the audience.

Also participating: Andy Hodgdon, John Lawe, Cheryl Lindberg, Rick Otto, Alan Schned, Jim Tobin.

Ashley opened the meeting at 6:31 pm.

1. Approval of Agenda (Action Item). By consensus, the Selectboard approved the Agenda.
2. Public Comments. Fulton said the new Town of Norwich website went live today and that more pictures will be added to the slide show on the home page. Cook said this year's Norwich Fair on the Green will open Thursday, July 12th at 6:00 pm and the Rummage Sale opens for business Friday, July 13th at 11:00 am.
3. Finance – Board to Sign Accounts Payable/Warrants (Action Item). Ashley said the payment to The Family Place was the voter approved appropriation of \$3,000. Cook asked Fulton if he would find out what part of the Greater Upper Valley Solid Waste District membership dues was for the bond debt. Childs **moved** (2nd Flanders) to approve Check Warrant Report #12-45 for General Fund in the amount of \$22,265.96 for the period from 6/21/12 to 6/27/12. **Motion passed.** Flanders **moved** (2nd Childs) to approve Check Warrant Report #13-1 for General Fund in the amount of \$132,649.31 for the period from 7/1/12 to 7/1/12. **Motion passed.**
4. Selectboard Communications Plan and Tower Roundtable Followed by Public Comments. Ashley reviewed the process briefly and spoke about the financial information on costs and bonding as well as the PowerPoint presentation from the Capital Facilities Committee Radio Communications Plan Public Forum being in the Selectboard packet. Fulton said the Public Works site for the tower was selected using expert advice and that several other sites were looked at. Critical coverage was discussed with a goal of 95%/95%. Excellent mobile coverage and adequate portable coverage will be provided to 95% of the Town. The proposed system is a 7 tower simulcast system. This will be a regional system paid for by all the towns that are served. At this point, Fulton has estimated the total cost to the Town at about \$400,000. Fulton also gave a brief update on the Act 250 process. Cook asked about the possibility of doing a second balloon test at an earlier time in the morning. Fulton stated that Department Heads have been aggressive in getting grants and upgrading equipment for years. Moran asked if Fulton could provide the Board with an estimate of grant funds received to date for radio communication equipment. Flanders, Ashley, Childs and Moran all expressed the opinion that there is a need to do something to address the problem. Townspeople present asked if there was data on other sites for the tower, questioned coverage in some areas and would like more data before a decision is made. Ashley said the Selectboard would make a decision on the vote for August 28th at their July 11th meeting and that there would be the DRB review process and a public hearing before the vote. Lawe said questions about radiation from a tower have not been proven and at least one other committee has addressed this. Fulton said he was not satisfied with the balloon test and asked the Board what their support for another test was at a cost of \$4-10,000. Childs and Flanders said they did not support another balloon test being done. Fulton will prepare a warning for Selectboard approval at their July 11th meeting.

5. Selectboard Strategic Planning Roundtable Followed by Public Comments. Ashley spoke about the Selectboard engaging in discussion and that compiled strategic plan focus and guiding principles and a strategic planning PowerPoint presentation from Flanders had been provided in their packets. Flanders reviewed his slides which focused on population, budgets, residential taxes and housing values at sale trends; growth determinants; indicators of attractiveness from both a social access and economic viewpoint; governmental effects; no growth and growth option trees and choices. The Board then discussed growth and whether or not this was a Selectboard decision. The Town Plan takes the position of controlled growth with higher densities closer to downtown. The Selectboard then reviewed their individual strategic planning focuses. Childs said his were high speed internet access, capital planning and budgeting strategies and affordable housing. Cook said hers were prioritized as listed: Route 5 south development, diverse economic base, renewable energy resources, capital project strategies and high speed internet. Moran wants lower cost housing for seniors, reduction of municipal fleet size, high speed internet and a plan for the VMERS problem. Ashley wants to maximize the Village Center, housing for various income levels and ages, environmental stewardship, fiber optics and common gathering places to bring people together. Flanders wants to look at the natural focal points like Dan & Whit's, the Transfer Station and the Post Office and develop a trail system. After some further discussion, the Selectboard agreed that each member of the Board would pick two focus points and develop them further for the next discussion of strategic planning.

6. Review of Next Agenda (Discussion/Possible Action Item). After some discussion, the Selectboard agreed to start the July 11th meeting at 6:00 pm and accept the email from Alexander as correspondence. Items on the agenda will be setting the tax rate, the tower bond vote decision and Planning Commission appointment. The Board also agreed to have a long range planning roundtable at their July 25th meeting. Flanders noted that budget discussions for FY14 would start in August and asked that the Town Manager evaluation form and process be on the agenda for the Selectboard's August 22nd meeting. Again, after discussion, it was agreed to ask for input from the Capital Facilities Committee on the tower for the July 11th meeting.

Cook **moved** (2nd Moran) to adjourn. **Motion passed.** Meeting adjourned at 9:05 pm.

Approved by the Selectboard on August 22, 2012.

By Nancy Kramer
Assistant to the Town Manager

Christopher Ashley
Selectboard Chair

Next Regular Meeting – July 11, 2012 at 6:00 PM

Pending Items:
None

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