

Minutes of the Selectboard Meeting of Wednesday, July 11, 2012 at 6:00 PM

Members present: Christopher Ashley, Chair; Ed Childs (left @ 7 pm; returned 8:15 pm); Linda Cook; Steve Flanders; Keith Moran; Neil Fulton, Town Manager; Nancy Kramer, Assistant to the Town Manager.

There were about 27 people in the audience.

Also participating: Watt Alexander, Susan Brink, Carey Callaghan, Becky Dabora, Nancy Dean, Phil Dechert, Margo Doscher, Joshua Durst, Mary Fowler, Tom Gray, Joseph Helble, Cheryl Lindberg, Norm Miller, Arline Rotman, Greg Royce, Alan Schned, Larry Smith, Jim Tobin.

Ashley opened the meeting at 6:00 pm.

1. Approval of Agenda (Action Item). By consensus, the Selectboard approved the Agenda.
2. Public Comments. Problems with communication in the Chapel Hill area were mentioned. A dry hydrant issue was also discussed and the Town Manager will get back to people involved. Childs reminded townspeople that the Norwich Fair is this weekend.
3. Set Tax Rate (Discussion/Action Item). Fulton is recommending a tax rate of \$0.4689 which represents an increase of 2.20% over the FY12 tax rate. This would leave an estimated Undesignated Fund balance of 14%. The proposed tax rate is less than the actual FY09 tax rate. The \$95,000 appropriation for Tropical Storm Irene expenses has a tax impact of \$0.0134. After some discussion of level funding and the Undesignated Fund balance, Childs **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Flanders) to set the Town tax rate at \$0.4636, the Local Agreement rate at \$0.0053 for a total Town tax rate of \$0.4689. **Motion passed 4 to 1** (yes – Ashley, Childs, Flanders and Moran; no - Cook).
4. Set Date for Communications Tower Bond Vote and Approve Warning (Discussion/Action Item). Fulton reviewed with the Selectboard the latest proposal from the President of VTel saying that they have offered to build the tower at no cost to the Town. VTel would own the tower, provide the Town with talk space on the tower and provide backup and maintenance. The Town would save approximately \$225,000 in expenses. VTel would have to go through the Act 248 process. The profile of the tower would be increased. Fulton is looking for direction from the Board on how to proceed. After some discussion, the Selectboard asked Fulton to follow through with the process and provide the Board with more information.

Fulton then discussed his memorandum to the Selectboard on the communications bond vote. Fulton is recommending that a Special Town Meeting be warned for August 28<sup>th</sup> to seek voter approval for a 20-year \$275,000 bond. Fulton also provided updated estimated costs for the communications system upgrades and bond principle and interest costs. The Fire/EMS non-tower costs will be funded through an Assistance to Firefighters grant that will fund a six-tower simulcast system. In addition, the Town of Hartford has received a grant for one more simulcast site in Hartford. The Capital Facilities Committee concurs with Fulton's recommendation. Townspeople present asked questions regarding the site chosen, grants sought, the visual impact, the tax impact on homeowners, the height of the tower and the balloon test. Flanders urged people to take pictures of the second balloon test taking place the next day. After some discussion of the language in the warning and changing the number to match Fulton's memo, Flanders **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Moran) to warn a special Town Meeting for August 28, 2012 and approve the warning for the

Special Town Meeting as amended. **Motion passed 3 to 1** (yes – Ashley, Flanders and Moran; no - Cook).

5. Waiver under Section 6 of the Alcohol Ordinance for the Preview Party for the Annual Gingerbread Festival (Discussion/Action Item). Ashley stepped down as Chair and Cook took over the meeting as Vice-Chair. Rotman explained that The Family Place would like to have a preview party the night before the Gingerbread Festival and silent auction in Tracy Hall and would like to serve wine and beer and are therefore asking for a waiver of the Alcohol Ordinance. After some discussion, Flanders **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Moran) to approve a waiver in accordance with Section 6 of “An Ordinance to Regulate the Possession and Consumption of Alcohol on Town of Norwich Property” (Ordinance) to allow the possession and consumption of alcohol in accordance with the Ordinance at the Preview Party for the Annual Gingerbread Festival to be held on December 7, 2012 in Tracy Hall. **Motion passed 3 to 0 (Ashley abstained).**

6. Town Manager’s Report (Discussion). The new Town website is up and running and more pictures will be added to the slider. The website is a work in progress. The 2012 Grand List has been lodged and amounts to \$710,004,800. AOT has retained RSG to complete the design of the Safe Route to School sidewalk. RSG has submitted a scope of work to AOT and is awaiting their approval. The consultant is continuing work on the pool project and three alternatives have been proposed. Condrey & Associates have interviewed employees and are working on revising job descriptions as part of the Classification and Compensation Study. FY13 paving has gone out for bid. The Town Manager is working on developing costs to replace and maintain sidewalks. Fulton has retained an attorney to review the outside agency appropriation policy. A request for bids on gravel and sand will be going out soon.

7. Finance – Board to Sign Accounts Payable/Warrants (Action Item). After some discussion, Flanders **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Moran) to approve Check Warrant Report #13-2 for General Fund for the period from 7/12/12 to 7/12/12 in the amount of \$36,044.67, Check Warrant Report #12-46 for General Fund for the period from 6/30/12 to 6/30/12 in the amount of \$32,824, Check Warrant Report #12-46 for Highway Equipment Fund for the period from 6/30/12 to 6/30/12 in the amount of \$70,282 and Accounts Payable Warrant #12-47 dated June 30, 2012 in the amount of \$2,573.82. **Motion passed.**

8. Interviews/Appointment to the Planning Commission (Discussion/Action Item). Both Brink and Fowler were present and interviewed. Flanders pointed out that since there was only one open position for the Planning Commission that the other candidate consider applying for the Finance Committee that has three openings. After some discussion, Cook **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Moran) to appoint Susan Brink to the Planning Commission for a four-year term ending in April, 2016. **Motion passed.**

9. Appointment with Sharon Racusin Re: Advance Transit Update (Discussion). Withdrawn.

10. Change in Health Insurance Carriers (Discussion/Action Item). Fulton asked VLCT to explore alternatives that would be easier for the employees, would not increase employee or employer costs and would preserve the Health Savings Accounts. Fulton, after discussions with employees and the union, is proposing changing to a Blue Cross Blue Shield plan with \$2,500/\$5,000 deductibles for employee only or two-person/family. After some discussion of the process, Flanders **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Cook) to concur in the Town Manager’s decision to change insurance carriers from MVP to BCBS effective August 1, 201. **Motion passed.**

11. Grand List Errors and Omissions – 713 US Route 5 North (Discussion/Action Item). Lindberg, representing the Norwich Board of Listers, stated that the Listers erred in not changing the tax status of the property to taxable when Norwich Waterworks purchased the property. After a brief discussion, Flanders **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Cook) to change the designation of Parcel ID 11-106-000 from exempt to taxable on the April 1, 2012 Grand List. **Motion passed.**

12. 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) Resident –

1) #12 a), b), c) and d). Letter from Watt Alexander Re: Public Comment on Proposed Emergency Communications Tower, Emails from Rick Otto Re: Communications Tower, Nancy Dean Re: Current Discussion of the Proposed Communications Tower and Watt Alexander Re: Proposed Communications Tower. Flanders **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Moran) to receive a letter from Watt Alexander re: public comment on proposed emergency communications tower, emails from Rick Otto re: communications tower, Nancy Dean re: current discussion of the proposed communications tower and Watt Alexander re: proposed communications tower. **Motion passed.**

13. Selectboard

a) Approval of the Minutes of the 6/13/12 Meeting. Flanders **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Moran) to approve the minutes of the June 13, 2012 Selectboard meeting. **Motion passed.**

b) Review of Next Agenda (Discussion/Possible Action Item). It was agreed that each Selectboard member would flesh out two of their strategic planning projects for the July 25<sup>th</sup> meeting. Other agenda items would include email communications among Board members and the paving contract award. There was a brief discussion of the Selectboard calendar and the special meeting to discuss the VTel tower possibilities.

Cook **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Moran) to adjourn. **Motion passed.** Meeting adjourned at 8:29 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 25, 2012 at 6:30 PM

Pending Items:

None

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