

## Minutes of the Selectboard Meeting of Wednesday, November 28, 2012 at 6:00 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: Phil Dechert, W.C. Hardy, Jack Harned, Andy Hodgdon, Dennis Kaufman, Jill Kearney, Nancy LaRowe, Cheryl Lindberg, Bonnie Munday, Harry Roberts, Doug Robinson, Roberta Robinson, Demo Sofronas, Tom Sterling, Irv Thomae.

Ashley opened the meeting at 6:00 pm.

1. Approval of Agenda (Action Item). By consensus, the Selectboard approved the Agenda.
2. Public Comments. Dechert said the Planning Commission is holding a public hearing on December 13<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 pm in Tracy Hall to receive public comment on proposed amendments to the Norwich Subdivision Regulations. There will also be a public hearing regarding the Safe Routes to School Church Street sidewalk project at 5:30 pm December 13<sup>th</sup> in Tracy Hall. Plans for this project are posted in the multipurpose room. Ashley expressed the Town's appreciation for the loaning of equipment from surrounding towns and thanked townspeople for their support of the Police Department after the cruisers fire.
3. Town Manager's Report (Discussion). Fulton echoed the comments of the Chair and said he was in shock Thursday morning when he arrived on the scene. The investigation into the fire is ongoing.
4. Finance – Board to Sign Accounts Payable/Warrants (Action Item). The two biggest items on the warrant are the Beaver Meadow paving and tax refunds. Flanders **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Childs) to approve Check Warrant Report #13-16 for General Fund in the amount of \$277,425.16 for the period from 11/15/12 to 11/28/12. **Motion passed.**
5. 2<sup>nd</sup> Budget Work Session with Department Heads (Discussion/Action Item). Fulton said the three largest budgets were done November 14<sup>th</sup>, December 5<sup>th</sup> would be the Outside Agencies and the budget Public Hearing would be January 9<sup>th</sup>.

Compensation – The Town Manager is responsible for fixing wages and salaries of Town employees except for elected officials and his own. The bargaining unit employees have a grade and step plan. Condrey and Associates have evaluated each Town position using a 10-factor evaluation system and recommended grades for each position. Condrey developed three grade and step plans for non-bargaining unit and contract employees. Fulton has used Plan C adjusted by 2% in the FY14 proposed budget. For 21 employees the change was less than 2% except for 8 positions. The change was more than 10% for 5 positions.

Town Clerk/Board of Civil Authority (BCA)/Statutory Meetings – Town Clerk mission and goals were reviewed. The Town Clerk budget includes funding for a full-time Town Clerk and a 20-hour a week Assistant Town Clerk. Salaries represent 90% of the Town Clerk budget. BCA has been increased because of the Town-wide reappraisal. Statutory Meetings has been decreased because of the nonelection cycle. Increasing the Assistant Town Clerk from 20 to 32 hours was then discussed. Munday said she had cut the hours and now would like to bring them back to 32 hours in order to get her office up to date. Items discussed were: records restoration, digitizing maps, scanning land record documents, recording and Munday's need for more money in her FY13 budget due to her surgery. Flanders asked if Munday could supply the Selectboard with a breakdown of hours needed for different aspects of her office's job. Public comments included support for getting the backlog fixed and that Munday is a dedicated employee. Follow-up items are: costs and history of expenditures for records restoration, Assistant Town Clerk wage and hour information including comparative data from other towns and FY13 Town Clerk budget update.

Recreation – Recreation Department mission and goals were included on the PowerPoint slides and in the budget binder. The Recreation Department represents 5% of the FY14 budget. Wages and instructor fees represent 73% of the Department's budget. There is one full-time employee and one part-time employee budgeted at \$3,000 in the budget. Items discussed: independent contractors, revenues versus expenditures, Marion Cross School rental fee and fees for on-line credit card registration.

Finance – Finance Department mission and goals were included on the PowerPoint slides and in the budget binder. The Finance Department represents 2% of the FY14 budget. There are two full-time employees in the budget. Wages represent 98% of the Finance Department budget. Items discussed: keeping track of hours spent on Public Works administrative work, outside audit services for FY14-16 being on the agenda for December 12<sup>th</sup> and moving Robinson's salary to first item in the Department's budget.

Assessor/Listers – The FY14 budget is \$68,836 less than the FY13 budget. The Assessing Clerk is budgeted for 1 ½ time. Items discussed were: a Lister stipend increase, monthly meetings of Listers, Town-wide reappraisal, cost per parcel numbers, rolling reappraisals and contract Assessor.

Planning – Planning Department mission and goals were included on the PowerPoint slides and in the budget binder. The Department has one full-time employee and one ½ part-time employee. The Planning Department represents 3% of the FY14 budget. Wages are 93% of the Planning Department budget. Items discussed were: fee schedules, tax mapping, Planning Assistant wage increase and part-time employee benefits.

Town Administration – There are two full-time employees in this Department. Wages represent 73% of the Town Administration budget. Items discussed: Town Manager salary and benefits and citizen assistance fund. The item for follow-up is contributions to and amount in the Citizen Assistance Reserve Fund which is no longer part of this Department's budget.

Tracy Hall – This budget was increased \$325 for FY14.

Cook thanked all Department Heads and employees for their time and effort put in for these budget discussions.

Follow-Up Items from November 14<sup>th</sup> Meeting – The maintenance costs for Truck 2, Truck 3, Truck 11 and Truck 13 amounted to \$1,092.67 for FY12, not including Public Works labor. Maintenance costs for the portions of Willey Hill and Hawk Pine Roads that are being considered for paving were approximately \$35,000 for FY12. The costs to pave Willey Hill Road would be \$55,321 and the cost to pave Hawk Pine would be \$56,196. Paving these sections in FY14 is not being recommended by either the Town Manager or the Director of Public Works. After some discussion, the Board agreed to postpone the paving discussion until the FY15 budget season.

Salaries – Roberts said he was counting on the Selectboard to look at the numbers and represent the townspeople. Flanders responded that he was looking for cost effectiveness, sustainability and that no individuals are harmed before he will vote for a budget. Flanders then talked about the salary charts he had put together for the Board. His charts show a scatter gram result for population versus salary for the positions of Zoning Administrator, Director of Parks, Finance Director, Town Clerk and Planning Director and where Norwich falls on the charts. Flanders reviewed each slide. Items discussed were: the towns chosen on the slides, updating the charts for current salaries and population, other communities paying more and having more assistants, towns chosen by Condrey for study and internal equity. After some discussion, Flanders agreed to update his charts and show comparisons. After some further discussion, the Selectboard agreed to table the salary discussion until the December 12<sup>th</sup> meeting.

At this point, Thomae gave an update on ECFiber. 1.4 million dollars was raised in the last round of fundraising. Norwich residents represented 1/3 of this number. There have been delays but most portions of Norwich should be up and running in late February or early March. Delays have mainly been due to pole licensing. The hub at Marion Cross School will be built and turned on by Christmas. There will be another fundraiser in February.

6. Replacement Vehicles and Equipment Purchases (Discussion/Action Item). The Police Department lost three vehicles in an early morning fire Thanksgiving Day. VLCT has been very cooperative and our insurance with them will cover the depreciated book value of the vehicles and the full value of the contents. The Town has received support from other towns and loaned vehicles from the Windsor County Sheriff and Hartford. A bid package was distributed November 23<sup>rd</sup> with a due date of December 7<sup>th</sup>. The package included a request to replace Car 1 of the Fire Department. The estimated Town of Norwich cost to replace the vehicles is \$35,675. The Police Cruiser Reserve Fund has a balance of \$52,220. The Fire Apparatus Reserve Fund has a current balance of \$228,731. Fulton wants to minimize the time the Town is using loaned vehicles and is asking for emergency authority to sign the necessary purchase orders. Ashley said he would draft letters of thanks for the loaned vehicles and send to the Town Manager's Office for review.

Flanders **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Cook) to authorize the Town Manager to make the necessary expenditures from the Police Cruiser, Police Special Equipment and Fire Apparatus Reserve Funds to replace three police vehicles and contents and Car 1 of the Fire Department. **Motion passed.**

## 7. Selectboard

- a) Tree Warden. Since Jake Blum has moved to Hanover and the Tree Warden needs to be a Norwich resident, Fulton has assumed the responsibilities of the position. Fulton would like the Board to formally appoint him as Tree Warden until after March Town Meeting. Cook would like the Selectboard to wait on this appointment until more research of the applicable Statutes has been done. After some further discussion, Flanders **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Moran) to appoint Fulton as Tree Warden until the Selectboard organizational meeting in March, 2013. **Motion passed 4 to 1** (yes – Ashley, Childs, Flanders and Moran; no - Cook).
- b) Review of Next Agenda (Discussion/Possible Action Item). Outside agencies will be the main agenda item for December 5<sup>th</sup>.
- c) Town Manager Review (Discussion – Possible Executive Session). Ashley said that Fulton had asked for a review in public. The Board just did commendations and goals to work on with the Selectboard. Board members had not done this review as a public document, but are willing to give it a shot. Fulton said there was great community discomfort regarding the previous Town Manager's review and he would like it to be a public document. After some discussion, Childs **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Cook) to postpone the review until the December 12<sup>th</sup> meeting. **Motion passed 3 to 2** (yes – Ashley, Childs and Cook; no - Flanders and Moran).

Cook **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Moran) to adjourn. **Motion passed.** Meeting adjourned at 10:13 pm.

Approved by the Selectboard on January 9, 2013.

By Nancy Kramer  
Assistant to the Town Manager

Christopher Ashley  
Selectboard Chair

Special Selectboard Meeting – December 5, 2012 at 6:30 PM

Next Regular Meeting – December 12, 2012 at 6:30 PM

Pending Items:  
None

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