

Minutes of the Selectboard Meeting of Wednesday, December 12, 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 10 people in the audience.

Also participating: Phil Dechert, Joshua Durst, Bonnie Munday, Demo Sofronas.

Ashley opened the meeting at 6:30 pm.

1. Approval of Agenda (Action Item). By consensus, the Selectboard approved the Agenda.
2. Public Comments. Ashley said he would indicate to anyone making a public comment when two minutes had passed and stop them at two and a half minutes.
3. Town Manager's Report (Discussion). Bids for replacement of the cruisers and the Fire Chief vehicle were opened last Friday and Gateway was the lowest bidder. Four vehicles were ordered and expected delivery is in 60 days. The Town has received a letter from the Division of Property Valuation and Review stating that the Common Level of Appraisal for the Town will be 99.73% effective January 1, 2013. The Coefficient of Dispersion will be 14.32% which is higher than Fulton would like it to be. Hanover dispatch has completed the transition of all radio systems to narrowband. The radio communications project received two bids on December 7<sup>th</sup>. The goal is to award the project in February. We are still waiting for the FCC license approval for Hurricane Hill. Outstanding litigation is down to two cases. The FY12 audit has been completed. Errors and Omissions all need to be completed by December 31<sup>st</sup>. There may be a special Selectboard meeting needed to get this done. An After Action Report on our preparation and response to Hurricane Sandy has been prepared. An Emergency Management Training session with Town employees took place December 4<sup>th</sup>. Fulton and Dechert have a meeting tomorrow with representatives from the Agency of Natural Resources to discuss issues regarding the Town Pool permit. The Safe Routes to School Public Hearing regarding the Church Street sidewalk is scheduled for tomorrow at 5:30 pm. Questions were asked regarding the insurance payback on equipment lost in the police cruisers fire, an update on the tower permitting process and the unanswered phone calls reported in the After Action Report.
4. Finance – Board to Sign Accounts Payable/Warrants (Action Item). Flanders **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Childs) to approve Check Warrant Report #13-18 for General Fund in the amount of \$103,068.55 and for Town Reappraisal Fund in the amount of \$6,694.20 for the period from 11/29/12 to 12/12/12. **Motion passed.** Childs **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Flanders) to approve Accounts Payable Warrant #13-17 dated December 4, 2012 in the amount of \$5,235.62. **Motion passed.**
5. Errors and Omissions (Discussion/Action Item). After very little discussion regarding this being a straightforward housekeeping item, Flanders **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Moran) to correctly list the owners of the each property as detailed in the memo from the Norwich Board of Listers to the Norwich Selectboard dated December 7, 2012. **Motion passed.**
6. Interview/Appointment of Josh Durst to the Capital Facilities Planning and Budgeting Committee (Discussion/Action Item). Durst was present and was not asked any questions by the Board. Afterwards, Cook **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Childs) to appoint Josh Durst to the Capital Facilities Planning and Budgeting Committee. **Motion passed.**

7. Town Manager Review (Discussion). Ashley spoke about the review process being defined and formal. This document was approved by all five Selectboard members and constitutes Fulton's one year evaluation. The Board is trying to promote a culture of openness. No public comment will be accepted on the document only on the process. Ashley read the commendations that included: demonstrating a high degree of competence, FY12 budget approach and PowerPoint presentation being a significant improvement over prior years' efforts, the Town's response to Tropical Storm Irene and FEMA paperwork and the regional approach to solving the narrowband issues. Goals listed were: working with the Selectboard to developing a system of responding to public comments, implementing strategies to occupy the high ground and finding a way to promote collaboration/consultation between the Board members and the Town Manager that respects the Town Manager role and allows for healthy discussion of agenda items before decisions are reached. Fulton thanked the Selectboard for this discussion in open session stating that his accomplishments were done by a team effort and he appreciates the employees who work with him. Ashley commented that there are lots of ways information comes out and the Board needs to understand what their choices are and discuss at Selectboard meetings. Both Childs and Flanders expressed appreciation for the job done by the Town Manager.

8. Outside Auditor for FY13-15 (Discussion/Action Item). Fulton said the Town went out to bid for outside audit services for fiscal years 2013-2015. This is done every three years. The bids received were close. Roberta Robinson's recommendation, supported by the Town Manager, is to retain AM Peisch. After one question regarding single audit, Flanders **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Childs) to concur in the Town Manager's decision to retain AM Peisch to perform audit services for the Town of Norwich for Fiscal Years 2013, 2014 and 2015. **Motion passed.**

9. Selectboard 4th Budget Work Session FY14 (Discussion/Action Item). Ashley said that the Board is considering a budget for the Public Hearing on January 9<sup>th</sup>. After discussion regarding what items to leave for further discussion, Flanders **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Childs) to approve the budget as presented for the Public Hearing except for the Citizen Assistance Fund, record restoration, salaries, hours for Assistant Town Clerk and paving on Willey Hill and Hawk Pine Roads. **Motion failed 2 to 3** (yes – Childs and Flanders; no – Ashley, Cook and Moran).

Afterwards the Selectboard discussed paving and cutting \$50,000 from the Public Works budget. Moran and Cook would both like to see a breakdown for the costs of fixing the drainage problems on Willey Hill and Hawk Pine Roads. Moran would like to see all paving funds going into a reserve fund. Ashley once again reviewed the options for Willey Hill and Hawk Pine Roads. Fulton responded that flexibility in the budget for paving is needed and that he and Hodgdon have identified a number of areas they are watching. After some further discussion, paving of Willey Hill and Hawk Pine Roads was tabled until the FY15 budget discussions. Moran stated that he still believes the Public Works budget can be tightened up and maintain the expected level of services. Childs and Flanders both oppose cutting the FY14 Public Works budget at this time. Fulton said if the budget is to be cut by \$50,000 he wants the Board to give him clear direction on where. After some further discussion, this item was tabled until the end of budget discussions.

Salary increases – Ashley and Childs both stated they supported the recommendations make in the Condrey Report. Cook wants to make sure the system used is fair for all; she supports increases for all and cannot support what is being recommended in the proposed budget. Moran said he was suspicious of the report from the beginning. He does not support the towns chosen by Condrey in their report. He also does not agree with the 10 point system used by Condrey. Flanders is reasonably comfortable with the classification and grade developed by Condrey for employees but not the market value. Ashley pointed out once again that the Condrey Report

makes a good case for the changes and believes adjustments need to be made this year. After some further discussion, Flanders **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Childs) that for purposes of the January 9, 2013 public hearing to approve salaries as proposed in the FY14 budget. **Motion passed 3 to 2** (yes – Ashley, Childs and Flanders; no - Cook and Moran).

Town Clerk salary – Fulton said the issue was how do we make sure that we are being fair in rewarding years of service when we are talking about an elected official. Fulton suggested as an option putting \$8,411 in his budget to cover Munday's doing things that are not her statutory responsibility. After discussion regarding Munday giving notice if she was not running again, verifying need for services and Munday's work record; the Selectboard agreed by consensus to add in the \$8,411 under the Town Administration budget.

Assistant Town Clerk – Munday would prefer to have her assistant work for 40 hours a week in order to provide coverage when she is off as well as to keep the Office current and land records going back scanned. After discussion of efficiencies, importance of land records, back up and additional work that needs to be done; the Selectboard agreed by consensus to ask Fulton to include in the FY14 budget monies to have the Assistant Town Clerk at forty hours a week.

Records Restoration – Munday recently received an updated Conservation Proposal from Kofile Preservation at a grand total cost of \$565,693. Munday was stunned by the proposal's numbers. This is work she cannot do, Kofile has a monopoly in this area, this proposal includes things left out of the Brown's River estimate and is a maintenance program for Munday's records. Fulton would like to see Munday triage the records and bid out over a three-year period. After discussion regarding the Grand Lists being critical, needing a plan, the need for preservation and a program to accomplish; the Selectboard agreed by consensus to ask the Town Manager to include \$25,000 in the Town Clerk's budget for records restoration.

Citizen Assistance Fund – The current balance in the Fund is \$2,570.06. After discussion regarding fund raising and adequacy of funds, the Selectboard agreed by consensus to add \$1,000 to the Citizen Assistance Fund in the FY14 budget.

The Board then went back to the discussion of reducing the Public Works budget by \$50,000. After discussion, a majority of the Selectboard did not support removing \$50,000 from the budget.

10. FY13 Budget for Assistant Town Clerk (Discussion). Fulton has estimated that as of December 31, 2012 the balance in the Assistant Town Clerk wage line will be \$1,621.99. Fulton has given the Board estimated additional monies needed for 20, 30 and 40 hours. After discussion of the article needed for the warning, the tax impact and using funds already in the budget from other Departments, Flanders **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Childs) to ask the Town Manager to include in the Town Meeting Warning an article asking for \$23,831 to be added to the Town Clerk's budget for FY13. **Motion passed.**

11. 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) #11 a). Memo from Harry Roberts Re: Follow-Up to Meeting on November 28<sup>th</sup>. Moran moved (2<sup>nd</sup> Childs) to receive a memo from Harry Roberts re: follow-up to meeting on November 28<sup>th</sup>. **Motion passed.**

12. Selectboard

- a) Approval of the Minutes of the 11/14/12 and 11/27/12 Meetings. After some discussion, Childs **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Flanders) to approve the minutes of the November 14, 2012 Selectboard meeting as amended. **Motion passed.** Childs **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Cook) to approve the minutes of the November 27, 2012 Selectboard meeting. **Motion passed.**
- b) Review of Next Agenda (Discussion/Possible Action Item). The Public Hearing for the FY14 budget, FY12 audit, action items for strategic planning and planning a time to have Town committees and boards come before the Board will be agenda items for January 9<sup>th</sup>.

At this point, Sofronas spoke about the Selectboard working together and getting the job done and thanked them.

- c) Personnel (Executive Session may be Required). Pursuant to Title 1 VSA § 313(a)(3), Cook **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Childs) to enter into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing personnel. **Motion passed.** The Selectboard moved into Executive Session at 9:43 pm.

At 10:08 pm the Selectboard moved into public session. No action was taken as a result of the Executive Session.

Cook **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Flanders) to adjourn. **Motion passed.** Meeting adjourned at 10:09 pm.

Approved by the Selectboard on January 9, 2013.

By Nancy Kramer  
Assistant to the Town Manager

Christopher Ashley  
Selectboard Chair

Next Regular Meeting – January 9, 2013 at 6:30 PM

Pending Items:

None

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