

Minutes of the Selectboard Meeting of Wednesday, January 11, 2012 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 9 people in the audience.

Also participating: Alan Berolzheimer, George Clark, David Goudy, Linda Gray, John Hanchett, Cheryl Lindberg, Keith Moran, Frank Olmstead.

Childs opened the meeting at 6:30 pm.

1. Approval of Agenda (Action Item). By consensus, the Selectboard approved the Agenda.
2. Public Comments. None.
3. Town Manager's Report (Discussion). The Town has received a \$28,000 Enhancement Grant that requires a 20% match. The assessment from Greater Upper Valley Solid Waste Management District (GUVSWD) has been reduced from an estimate of \$45,404 to \$43,187.10. Fulton is recommending using these funds for a portion of the hard match for the grant. GUVSWD Board has created a committee to look at options for the landfill. Fulton will be on this committee. The Board briefly discussed the bond votes on this issue and the history. Fulton is continuing to work with FEMA on reimbursements for repairs needed on six bridges and the Norwich Pool Dam from Tropical Storm Irene. A recommendation for the code and facilities deficiencies study for Public Works, Police and Fire will come before the Selectboard at their January 25th meeting. The Board then had some discussion of the communications tower. Repairs to make Tracy Hall more energy efficient are ongoing and a long-term plan to deal with major maintenance items is being developed. Delinquent taxes are up from a year ago. Fulton and Roberta Robinson are in the process of reviewing and updating the delinquent tax policy. The CLA for the Town for 2012 has gone up to 93.04%.
4. Finance – Board to Sign Accounts Payable/Warrants (Action Item). Flanders **moved** (2nd Ashley) to approve Check Warrant Report #12-24 for General Fund for the period from 12/29/11 to 1/11/12 in the amount of \$92,554.60. **Motion passed.**
9. Review and Readopt Town of Norwich Sexual Harassment Policy, Drug-Free Workplace Policy, Smoking & Tobacco Policy, Workplace Violence Policy, and Safety Policy Mission Statement for 2011 Leader Program (Discussion/Action Item). Flanders has some suggestions for improving the clarity and inclusiveness of the Town policies when the Town Personnel Policies are updated. Fulton said he plans to have the Policies updated by the end of June. Selectboard members should email suggested changes to the Town Manager. Ashley suggested that employees be reminded of the Smoking Policy restrictions regarding the back porch of Tracy Hall. Cook asked that VLCT information on the Leader Program be included in their packets going forward. Afterwards, Flanders **moved** (2nd Blake) to readopt the Town of Norwich Sexual Harassment Policy, Drug-Free Workplace Policy, Smoking & Tobacco Policy, Workplace Violence Policy, and Safety Policy Mission Statement. **Motion passed.**

5. Public Hearing on FY13 Budget (Discussion/Possible Action Item). Flanders **moved** (2nd Ashley) to open the public hearing. **Motion passed.** Fulton said that the budget basically maintains the current level of services. Items that impact costs are the increased costs of wages and benefits and oil based commodities. Changes in services are: one seasonal employee in Buildings and Grounds instead of two, Finance Assistant changed to full time, a seasonal assistant for Recreation, money for a compensation study, digitizing of land records for the Town Clerk and Listers changing to a stipend. The proposed FY13 Town budget represents a 2.13% increase over the adopted FY12 budget. There was some discussion of tax rate changes. Cook pointed out that the FY12 numbers were not the same on the summary page as the last page of the full expenditure budget. Fulton believes the correct numbers are the ones shown in the full expenditure budget. Moran spoke about the Finance Committee unanimously supporting the budget and thanked Fulton and Town employees for their efforts. Lindberg asked about the dollar amount left in the undesignated fund maintaining 10%, 12% or 14%. Fulton said those numbers would be provided for the January 25th Selectboard meeting. Hanchett asked about the use of six wheel dump trucks. Blake thanked the Finance Committee for their work. Cook spoke about the total tax increase and her preference for level funding of the Town budget. Fulton briefly explained the grant match. Ashley said Town employees had no pay increase in prior years and health insurance has changed. Ashley also said the proposed budget incorporates recommendations from the committees and is worthy to adopt because it moves us forward. Ashley **moved** (2nd Blake) to close the public hearing. **Motion passed.**

Ashley **moved** (2nd Flanders) to reduce the line item for the GUVSWMD Assessment from \$45,404 to \$43,187 and to add a line item for Grants to Town Administration in the amount of \$2,217. **Motion passed.**

Ashley **moved** (2nd Flanders) to recommend that Town Meeting approve a gross spending General Town Budget of \$3,936,364. **Motion passed 4 to 1** (yes – Childs, Blake, Flanders and Ashley; no - Cook).

6. PACE Update (Discussion). Fulton said the PACE program may be administered in-house or by contracting with Efficiency Vermont. Fulton recommends contracting with Efficiency Vermont. Margaret Cheney offered to come down and further explain but Berolzheimer and Gray said they would answer questions. Gray said there is no cost to the Town for contracting with Efficiency Vermont. Berolzheimer and Gray feel it is a good idea to have a public forum to educate the public on PACE. The Norwich Energy Committee will take the lead on this. Cook asked that ways be found to get the information out to townspeople without computers. There was some further discussion of education and a Valley News article. Fulton's recommendation of not issuing bonds and contracting with Efficiency Vermont is included in the draft Town Meeting warning.

7. Review Draft 2012 Town Meeting Warning (Discussion). The 2012 Town Meeting Warning will come before the Selectboard for adoption at their January 25th meeting. There are new articles for PACE, road paving, FEMA match and Affordable Housing. Possible outstanding petitions were discussed. Fulton also pointed out the August 17th due date for the first tax installment due to the 4th of July being on a Wednesday. The Affordable Housing articles wording was also discussed. The Board left the articles as presented for now with one grammatical change.

8. Hazen Trail License Agreement (Discussion/Action Item). Olmstead spoke about the need to relocate a portion of the trail due to the Montshire closing a section of the trail on their property. Dartmouth College has given permission to relocate the bulk of the closed portion on their property. Goudy has contacted the other abutters and all are expected to agree. The Trails Committee will be responsible for maintenance of the relocated section. After some discussion regarding the Town's responsibility and liability, Flanders **moved** (2nd Ashley) to approve the Revocable License Agreement with the Trustees of Dartmouth College and to authorize the Town Manager to sign the Agreement. **Motion passed.**

10. Outside Audit Report (Discussion/Action Item). Fulton said the audit confirmed the June 30, 2011 General Fund balance of \$1,081,049 and that it was a very clean audit. The Town Manager has put into place a process for him to review and approve journal entries and Department Head reimbursements. Ashley asked why the Trustees of Public Funds accounts were not reconciled by the time of the audit and Lindberg explained. The reconciliations for the Trustees of Public Funds accounts for the current fiscal year are being completed on a monthly basis. Lindberg thanked Fulton for putting the management letter on the agenda and for initiating review and approval of Department Head reimbursements.

Flanders **moved** (2nd Ashley) to receive the outside auditor's report and management letter. **Motion passed.**

11. Emergency Response Expenses for Tropical Storm Irene (Discussion/Action Item). Due to further expenditures for repairs and restoration as a result of Tropical Storm Irene, Fulton is asking that the emergency expenditure amounts be increased to \$550,000. After some discussion, Flanders **moved** (2nd Ashley) to amend the September 27, 2011 motion as amended on October 26, 2011 on emergency expenditures related to repairing and restoring the Norwich road network as a result of Tropical Storm Irene from \$500,000 to \$550,000. **Motion passed.**

12. Correspondence (Please go to 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). Email from Carl Tracy Re: Norwich Pool Rebuild. Blake **moved** (2nd Ashley) to receive an email from Carl Tracy re: Norwich Pool rebuild. **Motion passed.**

13. Selectboard

- a) Approval of the Minutes of the 12/7/11 and 12/14/11 Meetings. Ashley **moved** (2nd Flanders) to approve the minutes of the December 7, 2011 and December 14, 2011 Selectboard meetings. **Motion passed.** After some discussion, Blake asked that these minutes state that he abstained from voting on the waiver for the Norwich Women's Club of the Alcohol Ordinance at the December 14th meeting.
- b) Review of Pending Items (Discussion/Possible Action Item). c) Review of Next Agenda (Discussion/Possible Action Item). Items 1) and 2) on the pending list will be on the January 25th agenda. Also on the agenda for January 25 will be approval of the Town's portion of the Town Meeting Warning and review of the tax rate calculation for the Town Report. The Board discussed the Lister Office and progress on replacing the Assessor and work on the Grand List. Fulton says the process is moving along. Childs asked that item 3) on the pending list be placed on the February 8th agenda. Lindberg stated that there has been another resignation from the Finance Committee. This will come before the Selectboard at their January 25th meeting.

Cook **moved** (2nd Flanders) to adjourn. **Motion passed.** Meeting adjourned at 8:28 pm.

Approved by the Selectboard on January 25, 2012.

By Nancy Kramer
Assistant to the Town Manager

Edwin Childs
Selectboard Chair

Next Regular Meeting – January 25, 2012 at 6:30 PM

Pending Items:

- 1) Recommendation for Facilities Codes and Needs Assessment Study (1/25/12)
- 2) Selectboard and Town Manager Goals (1/25/12)
- 3) Update Finance Committee Statement of Purpose
- 4) Strategic Planning
- 5) Town Boundaries

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