

Minutes of the Selectboard Meeting of Wednesday, March 14, 2012 at 6:30 PM

Members present: Christopher Ashley, Chair; Ed Childs; Linda Cook; Steve Flanders (arrived @ 7:20 pm); Keith Moran; Neil Fulton, Interim Town Manager; Nancy Kramer, Assistant to the Town Manager.

There were about 32 people in the audience.

Also participating: Brooke Adler, Jim Adler, Roger Blake, Liz Blum, Phil Dechert, James Dwinell, Jim Gold, Dodi Hill and numerous Girl Scouts, Nancy Hoggson, Dennis Kaufman, Bob Leaton, Cheryl Lindberg, Alison May, Norman Miller, Nancy Osgood, Arline Rotman, Richard Stucker, Paul Tuhus.

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 briefly spoke about the protocol for public comments. Dwinell said he was disappointed about two things that happened at Town Meeting, most people having left before the school portion was discussed and his not being allowed to comment on the Dresden budget. Tuhus pointed out that the clarification of Town boundaries is not settled and that it is an important matter. Gold said he supports the present Town Manager and the opportunity for those opposed to speak out. Blake thanked the Selectboard for his recognition at Town Meeting and congratulated Moran. Fulton pointed out that Tolman is working on the Town boundaries and it is on the list of Selectboard goals.
 3. Proclamation for Girl Scouts of the United States of America (Discussion/Action Item). Ashley read the Proclamation. Afterwards Hill spoke briefly about the Girl Scouts and what they do and then girl scouts present introduced themselves. Also discussed was the Gold Award and what it stood for. Cook **moved** (2nd Moran) to adopt the Girl Scouts Centennial Proclamation. **Motion passed.** The Board then signed the Proclamation.
 4. Town Manager Retention or Recruitment Process (Discussion). Ashley said the Board is looking for public input on the choices and process for either retaining our current Interim Town Manager or recruiting a Town Manager using a search process. The Selectboard has received some email responses that will be received as correspondence next Selectboard meeting. Several townspeople spoke on the topic and agreed that Fulton is doing a good job, that a search is expensive and unnecessary but that they would like to see an evaluation done. Dechert, speaking for the Town Department Heads, said the consensus was that a search would be disruptive and unnecessary and that Department Heads believe things are going well now. Jim Adler thanked the Board for giving townspeople a chance for input.
- Cook said the Selectboard is just starting discussions now and townspeople should keep the emails coming. Childs spoke about Fulton having the ability to unite the Board and make them a team. Childs is in favor of moving the process forward. Moran talked about Fulton being a treasure trove of information, that he is always respectful and that he was very helpful to the Finance Committee. Moran does not believe the cost of a search is a problem. Ashley spoke about having a strong internal candidate and the problems this can cause if a search is done. Ashley has not been persuaded to do a search at this time. After some discussion, the

Selectboard agreed that they should be able to move forward with the process by their next meeting. Fulton stated that he did not need a contract.

5. Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) Open Positions Interviews/Appointments (Discussion/Action Item). Osgood was present and was interviewed by the Board. Hoggson said that Aldrich, Blake and Brink (Hoggson abstained) had voted to recommend to the Selectboard that Herrmann, Osgood and White be appointed to the HPC following National Park Service guidelines. After some discussion, Cook **moved** (2nd Childs) to appoint Cheryl Herrmann to the Historic Preservation Commission for a one-year term ending in March, 2013 and to appoint Nancy Osgood and Stuart White to the Historic Preservation Commission for three-year terms ending in March, 2015. **Motion passed.**

6. Interview/Appoint Richard Stucker to Capital Facilities Planning and Budgeting Committee (Discussion/Action Item). Stucker was present and was interviewed by the Board. After very little discussion, Childs **moved** (2nd Cook) to appoint Richard Stucker to the Capital Facilities Planning and Budgeting Committee. **Motion passed.**

7. Town Manager's Report (Discussion). The Norwich Fire District is taking bids Thursday on water main work with the goal of finishing before school starts in the fall. The water main work will be followed by drainage improvements on Main Street by the Town if the water main work is completed quickly. There will be a Lebanon Airport Summit Tuesday, March 20th that Fulton will be attending and he invited any interested Selectboard members to attend. Fulton has contacted Peter Adamczyk regarding PACE and will get that agreement with Efficiency Vermont to operate home energy improvement programs for interested Norwich homeowners before the Selectboard soon. Chad Finer has proposed doing portraits of elected officials of Norwich. Fulton asked about Selectboard interest in this. The RFPs for consulting services for repairing or replacing the pool dam and Contract Assessor have been issued. The part-time positions for Assessor and Assessing Clerk have been advertised. Hanover Dispatch received a \$352,000 Assistance to Firefighters grant which will pay for a six tower system including equipment on the tower in Norwich but not the tower. Fulton said this is the worst mud season he has experienced since moving to Town and the roads are in very bad condition. The contract for the code and facilities deficiencies study has been signed and work will start this month. Moran asked why the diesel fuel line item for Public Works is over budget. Fulton explained that the price has gone up from what was budgeted and the Department has had to do a lot of sanding and salting this season.

8. Finance – Board to Sign Accounts Payable/Warrants (Action Item). Childs **moved** (2nd Flanders) to approve Check Warrant Report #12-33 for General Fund for the period from 3/8/12 to 3/14/12 in the amount of \$97,600.90. **Motion passed.** Childs **moved** (2nd Flanders) to approve Check Warrant Report #12-33 for Town Reappraisal Fund for the period from 3/8/12 to 3/14/12 in the amount of \$2,942.10. **Motion passed.**

9. Town of Norwich Municipal Streetlighting Initiative Grant (Discussion). Efficiency Vermont is offering to fund upgrading the street lights that we lease from Green Mountain Power (GMP) that have not already been converted to LED lights as part of a GMP demonstration program to energy efficient LED lights. Feedback from the public is positive on the ones already installed, they will reduce energy costs and the Town's carbon footprint. Fulton will make the decision but is interested in the Selectboard's thoughts. Cook asked questions regarding the reduced costs and the costs involved with the Class 1 road reclassification. Fulton said all costs would be provided to the Board once he has the data.

10. Revised Delinquent Tax Collection Policy (Discussion). Fulton and Roberta Robinson have revised the Policy to clarify it and make it consistent. The personal statement from the Town Manager has been removed. The process and consequences have been laid out. Changing tax laws was briefly discussed. Cook suggested that paragraph 1.1.2 say 4:30 pm instead of at the close of business.

11. Finance Committee Statement of Purpose (Discussion/Possible Action Item). Fulton said he spoke with Anne Day and the Norwich School Board has asked that their input be sought before the SOP is finalized. Cook feels the SOP is very limiting and restrictive and would like to see it simplified. Moran also believes it could be simplified but he does want to see people on the Committee who at least have some exposure to technical knowledge. Ashley suggested letting Finance Committee members decide on appendices usage and making the second paragraph more specific. The Selectboard discussed the auditors reference in paragraph one and the RFP reference in paragraph two. Afterwards it was agreed that Ashley will forward his recommendations to the Board and Flanders will meet with others and work out revisions.

12. Selectboard and Town Manager Goals (Discussion). Fulton said he has nothing to add to the goals and objectives and would like to keep it on the agenda until the Selectboard is comfortable with. The goals and objectives are broad in scope but not too detailed. Moran said he would like more opportunity to review before he comments but did question item #5 on Town Administration goals and objectives. There was a brief discussion of who reports to whom and Fulton pointed out that the Town's Personnel Policies make this clear.

13. 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) Nonresident –

1) #13 a). Letter from TRORC Re: Town Plan Approval. Childs **moved** (2nd Moran) to receive a letter from TRORC re: Town Plan Approval and to express appreciation to Phil Dechert and the Planning Commission. **Motion passed.**

14. Selectboard

a) Approval of the Minutes of the 12/8/12 and 2/22/12 Meetings. After some discussion, Cook **moved** (2nd Flanders) to approve the minutes of the February 8, 2012 Selectboard meeting, as amended. **Motion passed.** Ashley abstained. Childs **moved** (2nd Moran) to approve the minutes of the February 22, 2012 Selectboard meeting. **Motion passed.**

b) Review of Pending Items (Discussion/Possible Action Item). c) Review of Next Agenda (Discussion/Possible Action Item). Goals and objectives, the Finance Committee SOP, Contract Assessor recommendations, appointments, Town Manager process and receiving letters of comments from townspeople will be agenda items for the next meeting. Also discussed were getting the Article 28 letters out and Ashley composing something about the open positions for the Norwich Digest.

15. Personnel (Executive Session may be Required). Pursuant to Title 1 VSA § 313(a)(3), Moran **moved** (2nd Childs) to enter into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing personnel and to invite Neil Fulton to join the Session for a portion of the Session. **Motion passed.** The Selectboard moved into Executive Session at 8:37 pm.

At 9:41 pm the Selectboard moved into public session. No action was taken as a result of the Executive Session.

Flanders **moved** (2nd Cook) to adjourn. **Motion passed.** Meeting adjourned at 9:42 pm.

Approved by the Selectboard on March 28, 2012.

By Nancy Kramer
Assistant to the Town Manager

Christopher Ashley
Selectboard Chair

Next Regular Meeting – March 28, 2012 at 6:30 PM

Pending Items:

- 1) Update Finance Committee Statement of Purpose

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