

Minutes of the Selectboard Meeting of Wednesday, May 23, 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 3 people in the audience.

Also participating: W.C. Hardy.

Ashley opened the meeting at 6:31 pm.

1. Approval of Agenda (Action Item). By consensus, the Selectboard approved the Agenda.
2. Public Comments. Hardy asked whether the study being done by the Town was looking at health insurance, particularly for part-time employees working close to 40 hours a week. Fulton responded that the Town has contracted with an independent consultant to review and revise the Town's classification and compensation system for a fee of \$15,000. The consultant will be reviewing all benefits and updating job descriptions as part of this study. Ashley said the Selectboard felt it was important to have an unbiased independent review. Hardy also said he believes there are too many full-time employees working for the Department of Public Works and that their budget was high in comparison to surrounding towns. Flanders answered that the Town of Norwich does more paving than surrounding towns. Fulton brought up the report done by the Department of Public Works Review Committee and pointed out that three current Board members had served on that Committee. After some discussion, it was agreed that a copy of the report would be provided to Hardy.
3. Finance – Board to Sign Accounts Payable/Warrants (Action Item). Fulton explained that the motion provided for the Selectboard can be broken out by the motion of one Board member if so desired. Cook pointed out that a \$289,228 final payment of taxes for the Norwich School District was included on the General Fund warrant. Fulton said adjustments may need to be made when he does the final reconciliation. Cook initiated a discussion regarding the purchase of the dump body and plow from Tenco for \$58,946 that was approved by the Selectboard at their September 14, 2011 meeting. After some discussion, Fulton said he would get back to the Board on the total cost. Flanders **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Childs) to approve Check Warrant Report #12-41 for General Fund in the amount of \$753,978.44, Recreation Facility & Improvement Fund in the amount of \$40.00, Highway Equipment Fund in the amount of \$58,946.00 and Town Reappraisal Fund in the amount of \$2,955.60 for the period from 5/10/12 to 5/23/12. **Motion passed.**
4. Selectboard Strategic Planning Roundtable Followed by Public Comments. Ashley said the Board is trying this new format in order to allow a longer time frame for discussion of an important item. Public comments on strategic planning will be taken at the end of the Selectboard discussion if time allows. Fulton spoke about strategic planning being on the pending list for the Selectboard since 2007. Fulton has provided as background information for the Board: a strategic planning discussion document, a strategic planning PowerPoint presentation put together by Flanders, the Draft Charge for a Strategic Planning Committee approved by the Board July 11, 2007, a strategic planning guide for public managers from ICMA, the City of Lebanon guiding principles and the Norwich Community Profile 2001 from the predecessor to Vital Communities. Flanders then reviewed his PowerPoint slides adding that he believes in a minimalist strategic plan. Flanders believes a strategic plan should get you from where you are to where you want to be. The Town Plan has the beginning elements but you should add priorities and a roadmap plus

go beyond the Town Plan. The scale and stakeholders need to be identified. A common tool is to use a Strength, Weakness, Opportunity and Threat (SWOT) analysis. A SWOT example for Norwich was provided in one of the slides. Flanders believes goals should be established by consensus and briefly went over the difference between goals and ideas. The roadmap would provide an execution plan which measures results against goals and monitors progress. Flanders also provided examples from the Town Plan on goals, objectives and actions. Fulton then reviewed his strategic planning discussion document stating that the five main benefits of conducting a strategic plan are: it is a management tool, it promotes strategic thought and action, it focuses attention on critical issues, it enhances a town's organizational responsiveness and performance and policy makers and decision makers are better able to fulfill their roles and the teamwork of Town staff is strengthened. The six basic steps in preparing a strategic plan are: getting organized, clarifying values and mission, assessing the situation, developing the strategic plan, formulating the implementation process and adopting the strategic plan. Fulton plans on walking through the process slowly with the Department Heads. The Board also discussed: that there are no metrics in the Town Plan, having better data for paving once the paving software is in place, accepting Town Plan goals, mining the information already in place and doing the work themselves. Fulton suggested taking 6-12 months to define the guiding principles and then identifying external threats. The Selectboard asked that the Norwich Community Profile be reprinted as a single page, no back-to-back, document. Fulton said he would provide. The Board also asked if they could all have a copy of the TRORC review of the Town Plan. After some further discussion, Ashley asked that each Selectboard member come up with 5 areas to focus on and 10 or less guiding principles and provide them to the Town Manager's Office before June 8<sup>th</sup> for the Selectboard packet for their June 27<sup>th</sup> meeting.

5. Review of Next Agenda (Discussion/Possible Action Item). The Continuity of Government Plan – Successor List and nominating members to the Upper Valley Local River Subcommittee will be agenda items for the June 13<sup>th</sup> meeting. Kramer was asked to advertize the two open positions for the Subcommittee.

Flanders **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Cook) to adjourn. **Motion passed.** Meeting adjourned at 8:00 pm.

Approved by the Selectboard on June 13, 2012.

By Nancy Kramer  
Assistant to the Town Manager

Christopher Ashley  
Selectboard Chair

Next Regular Meeting – June 13, 2012 at 6:30 PM

Pending Items:  
None

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