

Minutes of the Selectboard Meeting of Wednesday, February 13, 2013 at 6:30 PM

Members present: Christopher Ashley, Chair; Ed Childs; Linda Cook; Keith Moran; Neil Fulton, Town Manager; Nancy Kramer, Assistant to the Town Manager. Absent: Steve Flanders.

There were about 13 people in the audience.

Also participating: Jack Anderson, Peter Brink, Phil Dechert, Tom Gray, Nancy Hoggson, Cheryl Lindberg, Doug Robinson, David Singer, Richard Stucker.

Ashley opened the meeting at 6:30 pm.

1. Approval of Agenda (Action Item).
2. Public Comments. Ashley reviewed the rules and said 2 minutes per person would be allowed. Nobody else spoke during public comments.
7. Finance – Board to Sign Accounts Payable/Warrants (Action Item). Cook questioned the communications study payment and was told by Fulton that this would probably be the last payment to this vendor. Childs **moved** (2nd Moran) to approve Check Warrant Report #13-26 for General Fund in the amount of \$1,552,107.80, for Town Reappraisal Fund in the amount of \$8,775 and for Communications Study Fund in the amount of \$2,606.25 for the period from 2/7/13 to 2/13/13. **Motion passed.**
9. Request to Expend up to \$2,000 from the General Administration Reserve Fund for a Computer Purchase (Discussion/Action Item). Fulton said the Town had moved computer purchases in FY13 from individual departments to a Reserve Fund. The Planning Department needs the computer upgrade in order to run the latest version of our GIS software. The proposed purchase is a laptop with a docking station. Dechert's current laptop will be available for PowerPoint presentations both in the building and outside of Tracy Hall.

Cook **moved** (2nd Childs) to authorize the Town Manager to spend no more than \$2,000 from the General Administration Reserve Fund to purchase a new computer for the Planning Department. **Motion passed.**
11. 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) #11 a). Letter from Town of Lyme Board of Selectmen Re: Wilder Dam Relicensing. Childs **moved** (2nd Moran) to receive a letter from Town of Lyme Board of Selectmen re: Wilder Dam relicensing. **Motion passed.** Ashley said the Board had received a letter from the Lyme Board of Selectmen asking the Town of Norwich to join with Lyme in submitting a request for a study on the effect of drawdowns as part of the process that TransCanada will be undergoing in applying for relicensing of the Wilder Dam. Fulton said he had attended the scoping meeting on January 29th at the Kilton Public Library. Fulton believes that the two issues Norwich would have an interest in are erosion and recreational river access. Fulton will continue to monitor the process and will keep the Selectboard informed.

3. Meeting with Capital Facilities Planning & Budgeting Committee (Discussion). Gray, speaking as Chair of the Committee, said the Committee had worked on Reserve Funds and that work is largely complete. The Committee has also been occupied with the fire, police and public works facilities studies and is working through the process. The Committee has looked at the RFP in item #10 and supports going forward with the process expeditiously as interest rates are at an historic low. The Committee has also been involved with the communications tower process. The Committee reviewed the submitted proposals for consulting services for repair or reconstruction of the Town Pool and supported the selection of DuBois & King. Town sidewalks were also studied. Cook questioned why capital projects have not been prioritized as asked for in the charge for the Committee and also asked why the Committee has not done a report for the Selectboard yet. Childs replied that dealing with the Irene damage and the communications tower explained the delay. Childs also said the Committee is working hard to do things right this time. Fulton pointed out that the Committee cannot prioritize and develop financing strategies without further information. The next logical step is the RFP in item #10. The survey the Committee did early on asking for public input was also briefly discussed. Stucker said the Committee had not had any time to look at long-term projects and stated the Committee considers the tower an urgent matter. The Committee was thanked for their work.

4. Windsor County Budget (Discussion). Jack Anderson and David Singer, Windsor County Assistant Judges, were present. Anderson reviewed the Town assessments saying they now know what it takes and these are realistic. The Windsor County Sheriff is a big part of their budget. The Judges are visiting every Selectboard in Windsor County. The budget and bond package for the Windsor County Courthouse is to address inadequacies in fire and safety. The Courthouse is not handicap accessible now and has no metal detector. The proposed bond for the Courthouse is for \$2 million over 10-years at a total cost of \$2,287,995. The average annual amount would be \$228,800. The Judges believe this is affordable. Fulton pointed out that this would effect next year's tax rate not this year's. After some discussion, the Judges were thanked for coming.

5. Meeting with Norwich Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) (Discussion). Hoggson gave a brief history of the Norwich HPC and introduced the members present. In 2010, their first major project was the Walking Tour brochure. In 2011, the project was two National Register nominations for the last two remaining one-room schoolhouses in Norwich and creating an enhanced web presence supporting historic preservation activities in Town. Brink spoke about the National Register of Historic Places saying there are currently 88,000 historic places and districts listed. The Town of Norwich was listed as a district in 1991 and includes 136 contributing structures. This past year the Norwich HPC has supported community efforts to preserve the Beaver Meadow and Root School Houses. The two schoolhouses will be on the front cover of this year's Town Report. The Norwich HPC also worked closely with the Beaver Meadow Chapel Association on a grant application for \$22,500 in order to do repairs that will make the school a fully usable community resource. Other projects included: working with the VT Preservation Trust to have condition assessments done for the Grange and the Norwich Public Library, working with the Congregational Church for a \$20,000 grant to repair their steeple and a new State Historic Marker for the Town of Norwich which will be installed at the Lewis House. Currently, the Commission is working on developing a project that will be an oral history of farming in Norwich. The Norwich HPC thanked the Selectboard for the \$1,000 appropriation in Dechert's budget.

6. Town Manager's Report (Discussion). We have received the final proof for the Town Report and anticipate receipt of the final reports next Wednesday. All police replacement vehicles have been delivered. Paperwork has been completed and payment received from FEMA and AOT on

two of the three large projects to repair damages from Tropical Storm Irene. Negotiations with Burlington Communications Service Center for the radio communications project are almost completed. The Town-wide reappraisal is on schedule. Work is continuing on the permitting process for the replacement of the Town Pool. Potential delays in the system implementation and additional costs if Norwich owns the tower are attached to the Town Manager's report. Questions were asked regarding the grader damage, the balloon test and the definitive agreement with VTel. There was also some discussion of the tax rate in July.

10. Request for Proposals for Planning and Architectural Services for Fire, Police and Public Works Facilities (Discussion). Fulton said that evaluation of current conditions and functional deficiencies has been completed for the public works, fire and police facilities. Part 3 is a functional and space needs program and Part 4 is alternative development and analysis. These two parts would complete the determination of current and future needs, development and evaluation of alternatives and selection of preferred alternative and design. Items discussed were: costs, timing, additional public forums, some grammatical changes needed in the RFP, decision points and timing of bond votes. The Selectboard and Town Manager agreed that the decision of whether to go to a bond vote was the Boards, that the process of getting the information is critical and that townspeople support is needed. After some further discussion, Ashley **moved** (2nd Childs) to concur with the Town Manager's decision to obtain proposals for planning and architectural services to continue the studies of the public works, fire and police facilities to be funded from reserve funds with at least three public meetings occurring between Part 3 and Part 4 of the process. **Motion passed 3 to 1** (yes – Ashley, Childs and Cook; no - Moran). After the vote, Lindberg said that she believes having a voting Selectboard member on the Capital Facilities Committee is an awkward arrangement and that public expectation is that this means a yes vote from that member when things come before the Board.

8. Town Meeting Presentation Strategy (Discussion). Ashley said he had asked Fulton to put this on as part of the Selectboard/Town Manager goals. Fulton has been working on a PowerPoint presentation hitting the high points. Ashley asked the Board if they wanted to take a stand as a whole on either the Classification and Compensation Report or the tower article. It was noted that there was lack of sufficient funds to build the tower in the article and that a special Town Meeting would therefore be required to get sufficient funding if the Town wished to own and build the tower. Also mentioned was that VTel may need to be reimbursed for expenses occurred to date. After further discussion, the Selectboard agreed to make individual statements on the two matters.

12. Selectboard

- a) Approval of the Minutes of the 1/9/13 Meeting. Cook asked for one word change to be looked into, afterwards Childs **moved** (2nd Cook) to approve the minutes of the January 9, 2013 Selectboard meeting. **Motion passed.**
- b) Review of Next Agenda (Discussion/Possible Action Item). The Norwich Energy Committee and Norwich Finance Committee will be invited to come speak to the Board at their February 27th meeting. The Selectboard asked that an ad for the Tree Warden position be posted. Ashley would like to have some discussion of the records restoration on a future agenda. Munday said that she will get back to the Board with her input. Fulton reminded the Selectboard that the Town Manager would need to approve next steps.
- c) Labor Relations Agreement (Executive Session May be Required). Pursuant to Title 1 VSA § 313(a)(1), Childs **moved** (2nd Moran) to enter into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing Labor Relations Agreement and to invite Neil Fulton to join the Session. **Motion passed.** The Selectboard moved into Executive Session at 9:11 pm.

At 9:40 pm the Selectboard moved into public session. No action was taken as a result of the Executive Session.

Cook **moved** (2nd Childs) to adjourn. **Motion passed.** Meeting adjourned at 9:41 pm.

Approved by the Selectboard on March 27, 2013.

By Nancy Kramer
Assistant to the Town Manager

Christopher Ashley
Selectboard Chair

Next Regular Meeting – February 27, 2013 at 6:30 PM

PLEASE NOTE THAT CATV RECORDS ALL REGULAR MEETINGS OF THE NORWICH SELECTBOARD. FOR A MORE DETAILED TRANSCRIPTION PLEASE REFER TO THE DVD. DVDs ARE AVAILABLE ONE WEEK AFTER AIRING AT THE NORWICH PUBLIC LIBRARY.