

Minutes of the Selectboard Meeting of Wednesday, August 28, 2013 at 6:30 PM

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

There were about 12 people in the audience.

Also participating: Bill Bender, Alan Berolzheimer, Dan Brake, Mary Fowler, Linda Gray, Bob Sherwin, Jonathan Teller-Elsberg.

Flanders opened the meeting at 6:30 pm.

1. Approval of Agenda (Action Item). By consensus, the Selectboard approved the Agenda.
2. Public Comments. Sherwin spoke in favor of the Town doing a solar project but suggested more diligence was needed on the contract. Brake agreed with Sherwin. Fowler said that due to the resignations of two members of the Norwich Finance Committee the Committee has been reduced to two members. As she sees it, the Town has three choices which she briefly discussed. Fowler submitted her statement to Flanders to share with the Selectboard.

At this point, Cook asked if item #6 the Solar Project could be moved up on the agenda so that interested parties present could participate. After some discussion, the Board agreed by consensus to do so.

6. Solar Project (Discussion/Possible Action Item). Fulton said that this project is a small solar array with Solaflect Energy being the developer and the financing being private. Berolzheimer said the Norwich Energy Committee (NEC) recommends the project with the proposed developer. The NEC solicited proposals, received 5, did due diligence and selected Solaflect Energy. This will reduce the Town's carbon footprint which is in accordance with the current Town Plan. The Town will save a modest amount of money at no financial risk. It would also provide the opportunity for the Norwich Library and/or Marion Cross School to participate down the road. The site chosen is a property off Route 5. This project is also an integral part of the larger 90% renewable energy by 2050 plan for Vermont. Bender spoke about Solaflect having received their second million dollar SunShot award from the U.S. Department of Energy. Solaflect has a close relationship with the Thayer School of Engineering at Dartmouth College. Solaflect will be bearing the risk. The Town would become a Group Net Metering Member in the Agreement and thus be able to take advantage of the net metering credits attributable to the electricity output of the proposed solar project. The Town on its own would not be eligible for these federal tax credits. The option to buy after 8 years is associated with the investors in the project. Questions were asked regarding: the renewable energy credits, review of the agreement by counsel, snow load abilities, backup power, the review process, security and insurance coverage. The Group Net Metering Agreement has been reviewed by an attorney. The system has been tested for wind and snow loads. There will be lights and cameras at the area and adjustments will be made via the internet. The permitting costs and length are shortened due to the smaller array. Many other towns are doing similar projects and the cap established by GMP has almost been reached. Fulton reviewed 6 power purchase agreements and believes this one meets the Town's needs. The project supports the Town Plan, reduces the Town's carbon footprint and protects the Town from rising energy costs. After some further discussion, Ashley **moved** (2nd Childs) to approve the Group Net Metering Agreement and to authorize the Town Manager to sign the Agreement. **Motion passed 3 to 2** (yes – Ashley, Childs and Flanders; no – Cook and Moran).

3. Town Manager's Report (Discussion). The Virginia Close Trust donated \$125,000 to the Norwich Conservation Commission. The gift is greatly appreciated. Regrading of the Green for the ice rink has been completed. Planning is continuing on installing a frost-free hydrant. The Certificate of Public Good for the tower should be issued soon. The Police system has been operating for a week or two and the fire system is in test mode. Bread Loaf is continuing Part 3 of the Facilities Study. Cook announced the Public Forum on September 18th, the Capital Facilities Committee meeting September 19th and the Selectboard meeting on September 25th to review the program for each of the three facilities. ANR officials are continuing to meet to discuss the Norwich Pool Dam. No decision has been made. Problems with the network server continue. Requests for proposals on a new server will go out soon.

4. Paving Bid (Discussion/Action Item). Fulton said only one bid was received and this was from Blaktop. The per ton in place price quote from Blaktop is less than the current AOT price. Paving proposed is: Hopson Road from Pine Tree Lane to Beaver Meadow Road, Brookside Drive from Hopson Road to the first mailbox and Beaver Meadow Road from Brigham Hill Road to 1046 Beaver Meadow Road. The estimated cost is approximately \$292,000. \$275,000 would come from the Paving Reserve Fund and the rest would come from Purchased Services. Concerns were raised by three residents of Brookside Drive and their letter will be received next meeting. Fulton said the paving on Brookside Drive will not extend beyond what is currently paved. Fulton also said that we are approximately halfway through the data collection process for the road management system. Ashley **moved** (2nd Cook) to authorize the expenditure of \$275,000 from the Paving Reserve Fund. **Motion passed.**

5. PACE Interlocal Agreement (Discussion/Action Item). The PACE District for the Town of Norwich was authorized by the Town Meeting vote of March 6, 2012. In April of 2012 the Selectboard approved the Resolution adopting the PACE program description and guidelines and authorized the Town Manager to execute the agreement with Efficiency Vermont. Subsequent to that vote the Resolution and Agreement have been revised and the Interlocal Contract has been developed. Fulton strongly supports the PACE program. Efficiency Vermont will assume responsibility for billing and collecting monies due and the Town is responsible for keeping records. After some discussion, Ashley **moved** (2nd Cook) to adopt the Resolution titled Resolution re Adoption of Pace Program Description and Guidelines and approve and authorize the Town Manager to execute the Program Administrator Agreement and the Interlocal Contract. **Motion passed.**

7. Public Input on FY15 Budget (Discussion). There was no input offered from the public on the FY15 budget.

8. Selectboard Guidelines for FY15 Budget (Discussion/Possible Action Item). Flanders said he would like to see the current level of services continue but have the operating budget capped at a 3% increase. Childs asked for the Town to hold the line as tight as we can. Cook is in favor of zero based budgeting and asked for some budgets to be reduced this year. Fulton stated that he has asked the Police and Fire Departments to do a zero based budget this year with the Public Works Department following up next year. When asked, Fulton said he believed he had a collective sense of what the Selectboard wanted.

9. Lessons Learned (Discussion/Possible Action Item). Flanders reviewed his memo outlining the budgeting process, communication at Town Meeting and communication on the Listserv as issues needing further discussion. Ashley and Cook both have notes they will put in written form for the next Board meeting. After discussion, it was agreed to add the budgeting process and communication on the Listserv to the Selectboard agenda for September 11th.

10. Review Responses on Strategic Planning (Discussion/Possible Action Item). After some discussion of responses received, the Board agreed to review further at the next meeting.

11. Correspondence (Please go to www.norwich.vt.us, click on Boards & Committees from the blue banner, click on Selectboard and click on Recent Selectboard Correspondence in the middle section to view resident correspondence):

a) Resident –

1) #11 a) b) and c). Emails from Nathan Stearns Re: Resignation from the Norwich Finance Committee, James Dwinell Re: Resignation from the Norwich Finance Committee and George Loveland Re: Resignation from the Development Review Board. Childs **moved** (2nd Ashley) to receive an email from Nathan Stearns re: resignation from the Norwich Finance Committee. **Motion passed.** Cook asked if he was still on the Capital Facilities Committee and was told no. Cook **moved** (2nd Ashley) to receive emails from James Dwinell re: resignation from the Norwich Finance Committee and George Loveland re: resignation from the Development Review Board. **Motion passed.** Thank you letters will be sent and open positions will be advertised.

b) Nonresident –

1) #11 d) and e). Email from Brittany Kirvan Re: Establishing an Annual Recovery Day in Norwich and Memo from VLCT Re: Voting Delegates at the VLCT Annual Business Meeting. Childs **moved** (2nd Ashley) to receive an email from Brittany Kirvan re: establishing an Annual Recovery Day in Norwich and a memo from VLCT re: voting delegates at the VLCT Annual Business Meeting. **Motion passed.** After some discussion the Selectboard decided to pass on establishing an Annual Recovery Day in Norwich. Flanders volunteered to serve as the voting delegate. Afterwards, Childs **moved** (2nd Cook) to designate Steve Flanders as the voting delegate for the VLCT 2013 Annual Business Meeting. **Motion passed.**

12. Selectboard

- a) Approval of the Minutes of the 6/26/13 and 7/15/13 Meetings. Childs **moved** (2nd Ashley) to approve the minutes of the June 26, 2013 Selectboard meeting. **Motion passed.** Childs **moved** (2nd Ashley) to approve the minutes of the July 15, 2013 Selectboard meeting. **Motion passed.**
- b) Review of Next Agendas (Discussion/Possible Action Item). Items on the next agenda will be: zoning fees, purchase of a replacement AED, errors and omissions, Investment Policy, Beaver Meadow Chapel land transfer, Town records, Finance Committee, budgeting process and communication on the Listserv.
- c) Litigation and Bargaining Unit Negotiations Update (Executive Session may be Required). Pursuant to Title 1 VSA § 313(a)(1), Cook **moved** (2nd Ashley) to enter into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing litigation and bargaining unit negotiations and to invite Neil Fulton to join the Session. **Motion passed.** The Selectboard moved into Executive Session at 8:53 pm.

At 9:09 pm the Selectboard moved into public session. No action was taken as a result of the Executive Session.

Ashley **moved** (2nd Childs) to adjourn. **Motion passed.** Meeting adjourned at 9:10 pm.

Approved by the Selectboard on September 25, 2013.

By Nancy Kramer
Assistant to the Town Manager

Stephen N. Flanders
Selectboard Chair

Next Regular Meeting – September 11, 2013 at 6:30 PM

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