

Minutes of the Selectboard Meeting of Wednesday, December 11, 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 8 people in the audience.

Also participating: Tom Gray, Andy Hodgdon, Jill Kearney, Doug Robinson, Demo Sofronas.

Flanders 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 skating rink project, including a frost free hydrant, has been completed. This project was funded by donations and overseen by a great group of volunteers. The total cost of the truss repairs for Tracy Hall was \$20,495.46. The new server for Tracy Hall has been installed and is working well so far. Public Works has had 13 callouts already. The new fire hydrant on Beaver Meadow Road has been tested and is in service. Fire and Public Works were operational on the new tower as of December 4th. Police were operational as of December 9th. Hodgdon spoke about the improvement in communications for Public Works. The new system provides excellent portable communication. Questions were asked about communication dead spots, the new server, Norwich Pool Dam progress and the proposed beginner mountain biking loop at Huntley Meadow.
4. Finance – Board to Sign Accounts Payable/Warrants (Action Item). Fulton pointed out that an additional warrant and motion had been added in order to make a school tax payment. After one question, Ashley **moved** (2nd Childs) to approve Check Warrant Report #14-13 for General Fund in the amount of \$108,706.87, for Highway Garage Fund in the amount of \$1,090.61, for Police Station Fund in the amount of \$1,090.61, for Town Reappraisal Fund in the amount of \$6,183.75, for Fire Station Fund in the amount of \$1,090.62, for Long Term Facility Study Fund in the amount of \$913.16 and for Land Management Council Fund in the amount of \$2,571.90 for the period from 11/27/13 to 12/11/13. **Motion passed.** Childs **moved** (2nd Ashley) to approve Check Warrant Report #14-14 for General Fund in the amount of \$1,500,000 for the period from 12/11/13 to 12/11/13. **Motion passed.**
5. Interview/Appoint Tom Gray to Two Rivers-Ottawaquechee Regional Commission (TRORC) as an Alternate (Discussion/Action Item). Gray was present and thanked for his willingness to take the position. Childs **moved** (2nd Cook) to appoint Tom Gray to TRORC Board as an Alternate for a term ending in March, 2014. **Motion passed.**
8. Norwich Wood Fuel Assistance Program (Discussion). Fulton said Jake Blum had started the program a long time ago. Hodgdon said there were presently 10-20 cords of wood and most of it was from trimming. Cook asked about the cost to the Town of Highway employees cutting, splitting and stacking the wood that is being absorbed due to some of the wood being donated to people not living in Norwich. In response, Hodgdon said that 90% of the wood goes to Norwich residents and that only 5 cords were donated from a private source last year. Ashley said he was glad the Town provides this service.

9. 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) #9 a). Letter from Norwich Energy Committee Re: Municipal Building Energy Issues. Childs **moved** (2nd Ashley) to receive a letter from the Norwich Energy Committee re: municipal building energy issues. **Motion passed**. A copy of this letter will be provided to the Capital Facilities Committee.

10. Selectboard

- a) Approval of the Minutes of the 11/13/13 Meeting. After one question, Childs **moved** (2nd Ashley) to approve the minutes of the November 13, 2013 Selectboard meeting. **Motion passed**.
- b) Review of Next Agendas (Discussion/Possible Action Item). Fulton will be on vacation December 21st through January 1st and Dechert will be Acting Town Manager. The Investment Policy, Root District and Beaver Meadow School properties and the outside auditors report will be on the agenda for January 8th. Fulton would like to have a special meeting of the Selectboard with the Capital Facilities Committee possibly on January 15th. Huston will be present to review pros and cons of the developed plans so far for the Fire, Police and Public Works facilities. There was some discussion of a letter received from the school district regarding long-range planning. Fulton will respond to the letter. This item will be continued at the end of the meeting.

6. **7:00 pm** – Public Hearing on FY15 Budget (Discussion). Ashley **moved** (2nd Childs) to open the Public Hearing on the FY15 budget. **Motion passed**. Fulton said the Selectboard has a summary of the budget as it now stands together with an overview memo. The majority of the increases in expenditures are a result of the increase in the cost of Workers' Compensation and Property and Casualty insurance, the Lease-Purchase for the Communications System improvements and the Tower bond. These items represent 96.5% of the increases. It is anticipated that some of the outside agencies will petition for increases in their appropriations and those increases are not included in the Public Hearing budget. Fulton reviewed the table and chart on Page 2 of his memo showing the proposed FY15 budget compared to budgets from FY08 through FY14. Fulton also reviewed the table and chart on Page 3 of his memo showing the projected tax rate of the proposed budget while maintaining the Undesignated Fund balance at 16% of the expenditure budget. Sofronas said he respected the decision to not fund the 32 hours a week Police Officer at this time but would like it to be considered for next year. Ashley **moved** (2nd Childs) to close the Public Hearing on the FY15 budget. **Motion passed**.

7. Budget (Discussion/Possible Action Item). Childs **moved** (2nd Ashley) to recommend that Town Meeting approve a gross spending General Town Budget of \$4,141,554. **Motion passed 4 to 1** (yes – Ashley, Childs, Moran and Flanders; no - Cook). Cook mentioned that the public will have no further opportunity to discuss changes to the budget.

10. b) Continued. Ashley asked that a budget briefing be added to the January 8th agenda. Other items on the agenda will be the Resource Manual and a discussion of the strategic plan status.

Flanders thanked Selectboard members for the orderly process of the budget meetings. Childs thanked Fulton and the Department Heads for their work. Fulton wished everyone happy holidays.

Cook **moved** (2nd Childs) to adjourn. **Motion passed.** Meeting adjourned at 7:21 pm.

Approved by the Selectboard on January 22, 2014.

By Nancy Kramer
Assistant to the Town Manager

Stephen N. Flanders
Selectboard Chair

Next Regular Meeting – January 8, 2014 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.