

Minutes of the Selectboard Meeting of Wednesday, January 8, 2014 at 6:30 PM

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

There were 4 people in the audience.

Also participating: Brock Barton, Cheryl Lindberg, John Tunncliffe.

Flanders opened the meeting at 6:32 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 solar project is now operational and is located on Harrison Avenue in White River Junction. Town crews were called in Sunday and worked through Monday on the latest ice storm. The results of the Property Valuation and Review Division's 2013 equalization study for the Town of Norwich have been received. Fulton defined terms and provided a chart comparing 2012 and 2013 results. The Town did well in all categories. The new skating rink has been completed and is now in use. The communication system upgrade is 95% complete and costs to date were included in Fulton's report. Flanders said he would like to see tracking of the CLA on the Town's website. Questions were asked regarding: tower costs and the recent generator work done at Tracy Hall. Delinquent taxes and its impact were briefly discussed.
4. Finance – Board to Sign Accounts Payable/Warrants (Action Item). Ashley **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Moran) to approve Check Warrant Report #14-17 for General Fund in the amount of \$92,167.65, for Recreation Facility & Improvement Fund in the amount of \$228.74 and for Communications Construction Fund in the amount of \$112,454.51 for the period from 12/25/13 to 1/8/14. **Motion passed.**
5. First/Second Class Liquor License Application for King Arthur Flour Company (Discussion/Action Item). Cook **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Moran) that the Selectboard convene as the Norwich Liquor Commission. **Motion passed.** Barton and Tunncliffe were present from King Arthur and answered questions. Three King Arthur employees have signed up for the required Liquor Control License Education Seminar. The outside consumption of beer/wine will occur on the courtyard patio. The area is enclosed and access will be restricted to event participants. Ashley **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Cook) to approve the First/Second Class Liquor License Application for King Arthur Flour Company. **Motion passed.** Ashley **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Cook) to close the Norwich Liquor Commission session and reconvene as the Selectboard meeting. **Motion passed.**
6. FY15 Town Expenditure Budget – Lessons Learned (Discussion/Possible Action Item). Flanders said he provided the Selectboard with a table summarizing the budgeting process and would like feedback from the Board. Moran and Childs were both happy with the expediency of the process. Cook did not believe there was enough time devoted to public input. Cook also said that she felt the agreement on the salary increases did not occur at a Selectboard meeting. Ashley thought there was enough public input time and believed that salary increases were part of the budget discussions. Moran commented that he thought expediting the outside agencies process was a good idea. There followed a discussion of the outside agencies budget process. Cook commented that some of the agencies felt "they were being grilled", that more instructions

were needed and that this provides an opportunity to let new people to the Town know what these agencies do. Moran and Flanders both said that they felt accountability was needed. Flanders then reviewed his suggested changes to the Selectboard Appropriation Policy. Items discussed were: providing a list to outside agencies of what Statutes were used last year, what the process will be next year and the possibility of having contracts with the outside agencies going forward.

7. Town Meeting Budget Presentation – Review of First Draft (Discussion). Flanders was asked to better define the range in the slide entitled SB guidelines given. After discussion, the Selectboard vote slide was dropped. Flanders was asked to flesh out the TM Presentation slide. After discussion, Flanders was asked to make clearer what stayed in the budget and what was deleted in the Primary Issues Discussed slide. Selectboard members were asked to get any further suggestions to Fulton by Wednesday, January 15<sup>th</sup>. Flanders will then work on a revised presentation for the next Selectboard meeting.

8. Selectboard Resource Manual (Discussion Item). Flanders provided a draft Table of Contents to the Manual for the Selectboard to review. Cook suggested adding Town Manager review to Selectboard responsibilities and including a blank review form in the binder. Cook also questioned performance reviews under item #10 and thought monthly revenue/expense reports for the current budget year should be included.

9. Norwich Strategic Plan (Discussion Item). Flanders asked for Selectboard member's reactions to his outline and said the next step was to contact entities who provided information and ask them to flesh out their responses. Ashley asked if it could be indicated where ideas came from. Questions were asked about the municipal office functions and the assessor function. Flanders will work on restructuring his outline.

10. Root District and Beaver Meadow School Properties (Discussion/Possible Action Item). Fulton provided background information from Jack Candon and suggested warrant articles provided by the School District. The School District has to have a Town Meeting vote to transfer any of its rights to another agency. Most of the previous school houses are now in private ownership. Fulton would like direction from the Selectboard as to what they would like the School District to do. There followed a discussion of making sure the properties continue to be used for community purposes and if not that they revert to the Town. The suggestion was made of having the School District quit claim its rights in the two properties to the Town. Then the Town could transfer ownership to the two organizations with a clause regarding the use.

11. Investment Policy (Discussion/Possible Action Item). Fulton has been working with Moran on the latest changes to the Policy. The intent of the changes is to provide a higher level of security on investments with the Town's money. Reporting requirements have been simplified. If the Selectboard is comfortable with these changes, Fulton will ask local banks for proposals based on these changes. Fulton is not asking the Board to adopt the revised Policy now. Lindberg said she was taking these changes as guidance to the Treasurer and believes Mascoma can follow this Policy. Ashley pointed out that these changes may impact the promised interest earned on the account by the banks. Moran suggested that the Town can be a leader in this. A majority of the Selectboard agreed with the Policy changes.

12. FY13 Audit Report (Discussion/Action Item). In his memo to the Selectboard, Fulton said the General Fund balance decreased by \$169,413, the unassigned fund balance for the General Fund decreased by \$207,812 and fees supported 81% of the Solid Waste Division and 94% of the Recreation Department for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2013. It was a clean audit and the

outside auditors did not have any findings so there was no management letter done for FY13. Fulton said this reflects on the excellent job done by the Finance Department. After very little discussion, Ashley **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Moran) to receive the Management Letter and Audits conducted by A.M. Peisch & Company for Fiscal Year 2013. **Motion passed.**

13. Review of Draft Town Meeting Warning (Discussion Item). Fulton said Article 5 is for the existing appropriation to Advance Transit and Article 6 is new and will go away if the grant is not received. Articles 6, 10, 16 and 17 will need petitions. WISE asked for \$500 less this year. Flanders suggested changes in wording to Articles 9, 10, 14, 15 and 26. He will send his changes to Fulton. Ashley asked that agencies with wording changes be advised.

14. Selectboard

- a) Approval of the Minutes of the 11/20/13 and 11/26/13 Meetings. Approval of these minutes was tabled until the next meeting.
- b) Review of Next Agendas (Discussion/Possible Action Item). The School properties, Town Meeting Warning, strategic planning, the Selectboard Resource Manual, Finance Committee charge and MOU and the Appropriation Policy will be items on the January 22<sup>nd</sup> agenda. There will be a special meeting January 29<sup>th</sup> starting at 6:30 pm to discuss the Facilities Study. There followed a discussion of what concepts were dropped by the Capital Facilities Committee and the format for the special meeting. It was agreed that the first part of the discussion would focus on why the Capital Facilities Committee is recommending that some of the possible options not be considered any further. Fulton said the Bread Loaf schedule has changed and will be revised.

Cook **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Moran) to adjourn. **Motion passed.** Meeting adjourned at 9:18 pm.

Approved by the Selectboard on February 12, 2014.

By Nancy Kramer  
Assistant to the Town Manager

Stephen N. Flanders  
Selectboard Chair

Next Regular Meeting – January 22, 2014 at 6:30 PM

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