

Minutes of the Selectboard Meeting of Wednesday, February 12, 2014 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 10 people in the audience.

Also participating: Andy Hodgdon, Nancy Hoggson, Mary Layton, Steve Leinoff, Peter Stanzel.

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). Fulton read an invitation from the Norwich Fire Company to the Selectboard to attend the Company's annual supper March 1<sup>st</sup> at 6:00 pm at the Montshire Museum. RSVPs should be directed to Kramer. Leinoff spoke briefly about the event. The inverter for the solar project was down for about 20 days but is now operational. Much needed maintenance work is being done in Tracy Hall. The final layout for the Town Report was sent to the printer February 4<sup>th</sup>. Fire, Police and Public Works Departments are in the process of completing a draft job hazard analysis. These Departments have also begun work on a six-year plan for their Departments. Vermont has changed its requirements for receiving monies for emergency relief such as the damage from Tropical Storm Irene. The Town already meets four of the requirements and is working on two others. The tower is completed and radio coverage has met or exceeded expectations. Hodgdon commented on his crews' ability to communicate from their trucks. The Town plans on milling and repaving Main Street from the intersection with Church Street to the north intersection with Hazen Street this summer. Fulton is getting an update on the Pool from the General Counsel at ANR every other week. The monies for the Pool replacement need to be spent by September, 2015. Questions were asked about the solar project, radio communications on Chapel Hill, the community rating system and the six-year plans.
4. Fire, Police and Public Works Facilities Studies (Discussion/Possible Action Item). Fulton commented that Bread Loaf is proceeding with its work based on the reduced set of options. A new tentative schedule has been provided by Bread Loaf in the packet. This schedule includes two tentative joint Selectboard and Capital Facilities Committee meetings on April 16<sup>th</sup> and June 25<sup>th</sup> and two public forums on April 2<sup>nd</sup> and June 4<sup>th</sup>. Selectboard guidance on next steps will be solicited in late June or early July. There followed discussion regarding potential sites, the Grange and the public forums. Afterwards, Ashley asked if there were suggestions for options other than Layouts #1, #4B and #5 for the existing Fire/Police site; ABC Dairy site Layouts #1 and #2 and the Department of Public Works existing site Layouts #2, #3 and #4 that a Selectboard member wanted to be considered and no additions were raised. Ashley also asked if a valuation of the current Police/Fire site could be done. Fulton will look into this. The Bread Loaf comparison of current potential sites will be put on the Town website.

8. Root District and Beaver Meadow School Properties (Discussion/Possible Action Item). Fulton provided the Selectboard with a memo outlining the background of the two articles regarding the Schoolhouses on the school portion of the warning for Town Meeting. The two Schoolhouses have both been recognized as places of historic interest. Fulton is recommending that once the School District conveys its rights in the properties to the Town that the Town convey its rights to the two entities with the restrictions listed on Page 4 of his memo. Stanzel, speaking on behalf of the Beaver Meadow Schoolhouse Association, felt Fulton's recommendation would meet their objectives. He also discussed the grants received for the Schoolhouse. Layton, speaking on behalf of the Root District Game Club, said the foundation for the Root Schoolhouse is not adequate for public events at present and they are having fund raisers to address this problem. Layton believes the issue is confusing for the general public. Both organizations are working on obtaining nonprofit tax status for the Schoolhouses. Hoggson said the Selectboard should facilitate what these two groups want to happen. Cook said that she believes the decision should be made by townspeople and not the Selectboard. She would like additional information on the options for the Town. After some further discussion, Ashley **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Childs) that once the School District conveys whatever interests it has in the properties to the Town that the Town convey its rights to the Beaver Meadow Chapel Association or Beaver Meadow Schoolhouse Association and the Root District Game Club with the following restrictions and revert: the building and property is to be used as a community center or operated for the good of the community, and that any transfer of ownership or any rights related to the properties or buildings have the prior approval of the Selectboard; and ask the Town Manager to research the requirements of a petition for reconsideration of a decision of the Selectboard at a Town Meeting. **Motion passed 3 to 2** (yes – Ashley, Childs and Flanders; no – Cook and Moran). Afterwards there was some discussion of what next steps would be.

5. Outside Agencies Appropriation Policy (Discussion Item). Flanders said there are statutory constraints on how appropriated monies are spent. The key change in the Appropriation Policy is the requirement that agencies provide a log of services provided with a cost per unit in order to be reimbursed. Flanders has included three examples of draft letters explaining the process to a service agency, an historic celebrant and a recreation provider. He is asking for feedback by July 31<sup>st</sup> in the draft letters. Moran said he supports the new process. Cook asked if petitions would mean the agency did not have to do a contract. Fulton said that the Selectboard can require a contract even with a petition and that case law supports this. Ashley said the changes represent the Board's discussions. He also spoke about the Selectboard putting this out for feedback and receiving no better ideas. Hoggson said she is blown away by this, that the form is too detailed and onerous and that the whole process is insulting.

6. Town Meeting Budget Presentation (Discussion/Possible Action Item). Flanders has included the Town Manager's first draft of his presentation in this version. Flanders asked for and received no comments except that Childs and Ashley are good with it.

7. Budgetary Lessons Learned (Discussion/Possible Action Item). Flanders said that this version incorporates changes suggested at the last discussion. Cook asked that the first sentence in comments under Budget Adoption be changed. After discussion the Selectboard agreed to leave the comment at "Low public participation at public hearing." The Board then discussed Background discussions. It was agreed that Town Manager and elected officials would be added.

9. Norwich Strategic Planning (Discussion). Flanders asked the Selectboard if they preferred focusing on energy or if they wanted to go through the strategic plan he presented at the January 22<sup>nd</sup> meeting and identify where we are and where we want to be. After discussion regarding the process and what has been done on the energy front so far, the Board agreed to invite the Norwich Energy Committee (NEC) to their next meeting and work on defining goals.

10. Selectboard

- a) Approval of the Minutes of the 1/8/14 Meeting. After some discussion, Cook **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Moran) to drop the last sentence of item #10 in the minutes. **Motion passed 3 to 2** (yes – Ashley, Cook and Moran; no – Childs and Flanders). Afterwards, Childs **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Ashley) to approve the minutes, as amended, of the January 8, 2014 Selectboard meeting. **Motion passed.**

At this point, Cook questioned the payments to Daniel Clay for plowing and sanding on the interim 14-19 Warrant. Ashley asked if Fulton would provide a report on plowing and sanding for the Board.

- b) Review of Next Agendas (Discussion/Possible Action Item). Strategic planning with the NEC and a discussion of the Organizational Meeting Agenda will be on the February 26<sup>th</sup> meeting agenda.
- c) Bargaining Unit Contract (Executive Session may be Required). Pursuant to Title 1 VSA § 313(a)(1), Ashley **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Childs) to enter into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing the bargaining unit contract and to invite Neil Fulton to join the Session. **Motion passed.** The Selectboard moved into Executive Session at 8:53 pm.

At 9:05 pm the Selectboard moved into public session. Childs **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Ashley) to authorize the Town Manager to sign Amendment Number Two to the Collective Bargaining Agreement between the Town of Norwich, Vermont and the New England Police Benevolent Association for the period from July 1, 2013 to June 30, 2014. **Motion passed**

Cook **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Ashley) to adjourn. **Motion passed.** Meeting adjourned at 9:07 pm.

Approved by the Selectboard on March 12, 2014.

By Nancy Kramer  
Assistant to the Town Manager

Stephen N. Flanders  
Selectboard Chair

Next Regular Meeting – February 26, 2014 at 6:30 PM

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