

Minutes of the Selectboard Meeting of Wednesday, April 23, 2014 at 6:30 PM

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

There were about 14 people in the audience.

Also participating: Ernie Ciccotelli, Chris Huston, Ralph Hybels, Dennis Kaufman, Heidi Lang, John Lawe, Steve Leinoff, Jeff Lubell, Evan Pierce, Harry Roberts, Arline Rotman, Barry Rotman, Tom Sterling.

Ashley opened the meeting at 6:30 pm.

1. Approval of Agenda (Action Item). Moran suggested tightening up the scheduled appointments going forward. The Selectboard agreed to move items around if needed to meet the designated time frames. Afterwards, the Selectboard, by consensus, approved the Agenda.

2. Public Comments. None.

3. Town Manager's Report (Discussion). Mud season is almost over and it has been a moderate one so far with only a couple of problem areas. Spring grading has been slowed down due to one Public Works employee being out on medical leave. At the moment, the Recreation Department is trying not to use the Huntley Meadows fields. Fulton, Hodgdon and Dechert met with representatives from AOT to discuss the possible Class 1 change. Fulton is on vacation May 2nd through May 17th. Dechert will be Acting Town Manager in his absence. There was some discussion about the Class 1 change and Fulton said he would like the Selectboard to look at again due to the new information received from AOT. Ashley briefly reviewed the history and the Board agreed to look at again when Fulton returns from vacation.

4. Finance – Board to Sign Accounts Payable/Warrants (Action Item). Flanders **moved** (2nd Moran) to approve Check Warrant Report #14-24 for General Fund in the amount of \$61,659.94 and for Communications Construction Fund in the amount of \$3,257.35 for the period from 4/10/14 to 4/23/14. **Motion passed.**

8. Selectboard

a) Approval of the Minutes of the 3/26/14 Meeting. After making one change, Flanders **moved** (2nd Moran) to approve the minutes, as amended, of the March 26, 2014 Selectboard meeting. **Motion passed.** Ashley abstained.

b) Town Wide Survey (Discussion/Possible Action Item). Moran said he had asked that this item be brought back to the Selectboard for further discussion. Board members indicated that they wanted more Selectboard input. Items questioned were: defining level of services and the importance of where the person responding lives. Cook suggested utilizing Hybels' expertise. Moran **moved** (2nd Flanders) that the Selectboard create a survey to be put out ASAP. **Motion passed 4 to 1** (yes – Ashley, Flanders, Goulet and Moran; no – Cook). Selectboard member input should be given to Kramer by May 8th.

5. Town of Norwich Open Positions Interviews/Appointments (Action Item). Candidates present and interviewed were: Ciccotelli, Lubell and Rotman. Lawe spoke on behalf of all three candidates for reappointment to the DRB and also Stucker. Cook briefly reviewed duties of the Town Service Officer. Fulton said the Town had received a check for the Citizen Assistance Fund this week and Cook reminded townspeople that it is good to build the fund up. Afterwards, Flanders **moved** (2nd Cook) to reappoint Ernie Ciccotelli, Arline Rotman and Folger Tuggle to the Development Review Board for three-year terms ending in April, 2017, to appoint Richard Stucker as an alternate to the Development Review Board for a three-year term ending in April, 2017 and to appoint Jeffrey Lubell to the Planning Commission for a four-year term ending in April, 2018. **Motion passed.** Flanders **moved** (2nd Moran) to appoint Linda Cook as the Town Service Officer for the period April, 2014 through April, 2015. **Motion passed.** Cook abstained.

8. Selectboard

- a) Review of Next Agendas (Discussion/Possible Action Item). The survey, Selectboard goals and appointment to the Capital Facilities Committee will be on the next agenda. There was some discussion regarding inviting the Cemetery Commission to a Selectboard meeting.

6. Joint Meeting with Capital Facilities Planning & Budgeting Committee to Discuss Review of Preliminary Cost Estimates and Options for Fire, Police and Public Works Facilities (Discussion/Possible Action Item). Ashley invited Capital Facilities Committee members present and Steve Leinoff, Andy Hodgdon and Doug Robinson to sit at the table in front of the Selectboard. Pierce said that much of this morning's Capital Facilities Committee meeting discussion focused on public reaction to what was presented at the public forum and changing and/or narrowing the options. The Committee also discussed Flanders charts which were provided to the Selectboard at this meeting. Fulton said the discussion of options at the Committee meeting included Option 5 on the current site including doing the Police Station first and delaying the rest, ABC site Option 1 including doing the Police first and Fire later and DPW Option 2. Pierce said that for him Page 4 of the Capital Facilities Options is the key. What do we want the Town to look like? Discuss affordable housing, Town-owned solar energy space, meeting energy goals and the costs associated with. Not just choosing locations. Pierce also indicated that there were a lot of questions about and some confusion on the tax rate sheet provided at the public forum. Goulet spoke about wanting to simplify the process and that the Police Station is in dire need. Rotman agreed with Goulet but thought that if the Town is building on the current site a two-story building is needed. Rotman said other points raised at the public forum were: having open houses at the Police and Fire Stations and DPW and the current difficulties recruiting for the Fire Department. Sterling thanked Gray for his notes from the public forum and noted that he feels the Town does not know for sure what they want. Sterling suggests give them more options. Lawe said he listened carefully to the public and when asked for an opinion they did not respond. Huston said the process to date has been methodical and thoughtful. Multiple public forums are scheduled to keep the residents informed and he believes that recording the public forum was important. Huston then reviewed the three options discussed above on a PowerPoint presentation. Option 5 requires an apparatus bay with an appropriate apron; it is a two-story building, parking wraps around three sides of the building and has three bays for the Fire Department. It is a very tight and constrained site. Huston said there would be some logistical challenges with doing only Police. ABC Dairy would be one story with four bays and doing the Police Station first would be simple. DPW Option 2 has a new building with the existing building being used for cold storage. Ashley asked that people remember that other options are still being talked about. Cook asked why the current Fire Station could not be kept in service and why there is a space for the Fire Chief's car in the new design. She does not see the

growth in the community to justify the current options. Huston answered that the current Fire Station could be used but it would not save much money and that it restricts operations. Fulton briefly reviewed the Fire Department fleet and their dimensions.

At this point, Moran spoke about this process going on for 22 years and nothing has been done. Money is an issue and people are feeling the pinch. Moran then talked about the Town's inability to maintain its current infrastructure citing examples of the bandstand, public records and maintaining paved roads. He wondered why if fire walls are a problem it has not been addressed at the current facilities. Moran stated that he is willing to write off the Police Station at this point but feels the DPW facilities should be way down on the list of priorities. He has proactively sought out and provided to the Selectboard a list of Town-owned properties and wants the Board to consider other potential sites. Moran concluded that he is not close to looking at just three choices and believes the general public agrees with him. In response, Huston briefly reviewed the process so far. Flanders said that buildings can last forever but typically they transform. He breaks it down into two dimensions: the physical health and the functional health. Flanders used a car analogy as an example. He sees the Selectboard as being presented with four options: (1) saying no to everything, (2) sticking with the current site, (3) going for more elbow room with the example of ABC Dairy and (4) splitting out the Police Station. Last time Flanders asked Bread Loaf to modularize each issue and he feels that the information Bread Loaf has presented does that. Now he would like to move forward with looking at both the current site and ABC Dairy. Flanders would like cost estimates for both a bare bones approach and one using energy efficient options or "full boat". He also stated that he feels the DPW building is in the worse shape physically but understands the public is probably not aware of this.

Ashley then asked for public comments. Items brought up were: what has been spent on the process to date, income sensitivity reductions in taxes, the perceived disrespect for voters, the Town vote to not outsource police functions, keeping the Fire Department local and equipment storage for Police and Fire. Leinoff reviewed the process his Department went through to develop the current program saying compromises were made for the current site and that water is a problem for some sites. Ashley spoke about serving on the committee to outsource the Police Department saying everything was done in open session and that the Selectboard will continue that way with the final decision being up to the voters. The Board has tried to do a careful planning process recognizing that our current facilities are deficient. Ashley wants an open and thorough discussion with a democratic decision at the end.

After a brief intermission, Fulton asked if the Selectboard would provide guidance for Bread Loaf regarding going forward with information for the next public forum. After considerable discussion, Flanders **moved** (2nd Moran) that Bread Loaf continue their work in such a manner that provides for police and fire facilities that allow both for them to be designed to be built separately in stages or designed to be built at the same time. For the ABC Dairy site, the two scenarios would be costing a single-story police facility with a separate cost for the Fire Station to follow at a later date, versus building the complete facility at once. For the village site, the two scenarios would be costing a two-story combined police and fire administrative building (leaving the current equipment bay in place) with a separate cost for an updated equipment bay to follow at a later date, versus building the complete facility at once. Additionally, Bread Loaf would supply a cost for a split option with a Police Station at the Event Center site (or some other site), rendered so that building costs are presented apart from site costs, with a separate cost for a replacement for the Fire Station at the village site. **Motion passed.** Fulton will provide the Selectboard with a list of monies spent to date. Ashley asked the Board to put in writing any questions they wish Fulton to explore for the Selectboard to discuss at their May 14th meeting.

7. Long-Range Strategic Planning. a) Energy Goal “X Value” (Discussion/Possible Action Item). Flanders feels it is appropriate to survey the public on this to get a sense of what the Town would support. Moran and Goulet both believe it is important to focus on what will be saved in the future. Ashley said that a majority of townspeople support a Selectboard subcommittee talking this through with the Norwich Energy Committee.

b) Next Topic/Goal to Add to Strategic Plan (Discussion/Possible Action Item). Ashley said that transportation had been suggested as the second topic earlier and suggested putting off further discussion on this item until the next meeting. Cook mentioned that the draft plan in is the Selectboard Resource Manual. Fulton added that the Town has received a couple of grants one of which is from Vital Communities to participate in a new Smart Commute program. A traffic count may be done this summer as part of this program.

Cook **moved** (2nd Flanders) to adjourn. **Motion passed.** Meeting adjourned at 9:03 pm.

Approved by the Selectboard on May 28, 2014.

By Nancy Kramer
Assistant to the Town Manager

Christopher Ashley
Selectboard Chair

Next Regular Meeting – May 14, 2014 at 6:30 PM

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