

## Minutes of the Selectboard Meeting of Wednesday, August 27, 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 9 people in the audience.

Also participating: Van Chesnut, Linda Gray, Don McCabe, Chris Rhim, Doug Robinson, Jennifer Roby, Demo Sofronas, Fran Walz.

Ashley opened the meeting at 6:30 pm.

1. Approval of Agenda (Action Item). The Selectboard, by consensus, approved the Agenda.
2. Public Comments. Ashley briefly reviewed the rules saying he would give people wishing to speak a signal to wrap up after two minutes and to wait for items already on the agenda. Gray read a statement from Lucy Gibson which is attached to the minutes. McCabe spoke about studies showing that bike lanes help guide children and work for safety reasons. Walz said she was thrilled to hear that the Fire/Police Stations are staying where they are. There was some further discussion about Main Street after which Ashley said he will ask the Board if they want to revisit a discussion of Main Street under item # 10 d).
3. Town Manager's Report (Discussion). Fulton said the Main Street paving project was completed Saturday, August 23<sup>rd</sup>. Crosswalk striping was completed before school opened. Additional striping should be done in the next two weeks. The State of Vermont is responsible for doing the double yellow lines. The Town has retained a fish biologist to help with the Pool permitting process. The next meeting on the Pool with ANR is scheduled for September 16<sup>th</sup>. As of this afternoon, there were 15 late homestead filers.
4. Public Input on FY16 Budget (Discussion). Ashley said today is the first day of the FY16 budget season and reviewed the budget schedule. There were no comments from the public.
5. Selectboard Guidelines for FY16 Budget (Discussion/Possible Action Item). Fulton said that the FY14 expenditures were about \$186,000 less than appropriations and that this money was used to reduce the tax rate when it was set in July. The Town Manager worked with Department Heads to keep spending down in FY14. Sand needs replenishing this year. Moran commended the Town Manager for less spending in FY14. Fulton said the Town should be looking at approximately a 6% increase in health insurance for calendar year 2015. Flanders pointed out that the results of the Selectboard Town survey show a strong preference for keeping the same level of services. He would like to see no more than a 3% increase in the FY16 budget. Moran feels the budget can be tighter without any loss of services and suggested a possible 1% cut in the FY16 budget. He would also like to see the nonrecurring expenses eliminated from the budget. There followed some discussion where Fulton pointed out that labor is about 44% of the budget. Cook would like to maintain the status quo while cutting at least \$50,000 from the budget. Cook indicated she was willing to do a motion. After some discussion, Fulton said he had enough information from the Selectboard to go forward with setting guidelines for the Department Heads.

6. Facilities Studies (Discussion/Possible Action Item). Ashley said that Fulton laid out two phased options to the Capital Facilities Committee in his memo proposing modest renovations to the current Fire Station and a new administration building for police and fire. The DPW facility would undergo a modest expansion. Flanders would like to see specific designs so that we can get to costs. Moran suggested \$750,000 for the fire/police building and \$100,000 for DPW renovations, leaving \$100,000 for upgrading the current Fire Station. Cook stated that she does not agree with the Fire Station plans put forth by Fulton and also does not agree with the Capital Facilities Committee. She wants the Selectboard to lead. Cook then outlined what she is looking for saying it is like Option #4b but modified and down scaled without any fluff. Afterwards, Cook **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Goulet) to move forward with modifying the Fire Department apparatus building and building a new administration building for fire and police. **Motion passed 4 to 1** (yes – Cook, Flanders, Goulet and Moran; no –Ashley). There followed some discussion of the need for traffic lights on Main Street at the Fire Station entrance. It was agreed that Fulton would research and get back to the Selectboard. Flanders asked what his colleagues needed to go forward with something for the DPW facilities. Flanders **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Ashley) that a design be brought forward to accommodate equipment storage and office and personnel readiness needs for public works. Moran said he was not willing to commit to that plan and said he is just looking to get a shed for the equipment. Fulton reviewed his proposal for the DPW facilities. After some further discussion, Flanders withdrew his motion.

7. Review Draft Appropriation Policy (Discussion/Possible Action Item). Ashley said the draft in the packet has been vetted by all the outside agencies and most have said they can work with it. Cook, after asking some questions and wondering why outside agencies were not being asked to come to Town Meeting, said she still thought the Policy was cumbersome. Gray said that the billing system would not work for SERG. Chesnut asked some questions about parts of the Policy. Rhim questioned 5.1. Afterwards, Flanders **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Moran) to adopt the Selectboard Appropriation Request and Disbursement Policy effective September 1, 2014. **Motion passed 3 to 2** (yes – Ashley, Flanders and Moran; no – Cook and Goulet).

8. Follow Up on Solid Waste Meeting (Discussion). Fulton and others are investigating how to comply with the new law. Fulton will keep the Selectboard apprised.

9. Correspondence (Please go to [www.norwich.vt.us](http://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 Ellen Gnaedinger Re: Ballard Trail Head. Flanders **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Moran) to receive a letter from Ellen Gnaedinger re: Ballard Trail Head. **Motion passed.**

10. Selectboard

a) Town Manager Review Process (Discussion). Ashley will distribute forms to Selectboard members to use as guidance for their review. After discussion in which the Town Manager asked for the review to be done in public session, Ashley, Cook, Goulet and Moran agreed to have an Executive Session to discuss at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Selectboard meeting in September, Flanders said he preferred it be done in open session.

- b) Approval of the Minutes of the 5/28/14, 6/11/14, 6/18/14, 6/25/14 and 7/9/14 Meetings (Action Item). After some discussion, Flanders **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Moran) to approve the minutes of May 28, 2014, June 11, 2014, June 18, 2014, June 25, 2014 and July 9, 2014 Selectboard meetings, as amended in Selectboard discussions at this meeting. **Motion passed**. Revisions to the May 14<sup>th</sup> Selectboard meeting will be discussed September 10<sup>th</sup>.
- c) Appoint Voting Delegates to the VLCT Annual Business Meeting (Action Item). Goulet **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Ashley) to designate Stephen Flanders as the voting delegate for the Town of Norwich at the VLCT 2014 Annual Business Meeting. **Motion passed**.
- d) Review of Next Agendas (Discussion/Possible Action Item). A discussion of safety measures for Main Street at the Fire Station entrance, facilities studies, year-end financials, strategic planning – energy and an Executive Session on labor negotiations will be items on the agenda for September 10<sup>th</sup>. Future agenda items will be: dogs at Huntley and codification of ordinances.

11. Possible Executive Session – Personnel (Town Manager). Cook **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Moran) to enter into Executive Session per Title 1 VSA § 313(a)(4) to discuss disciplinary or dismissal action against a public officer or employee. **Motion passed 3 to 2** (yes – Cook, Goulet and Moran; no – Ashley and Flanders). Before the vote was taken, Fulton demanded that the discussion of disciplinary or dismissal action be done in open session. After discussion and a brief recess, Cook **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Moran) to rescind their previous motion. After further discussion, Moran **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Goulet) to seek the legal opinion of the Town Attorney regarding having an Executive Session to discuss Title 1 VSA § 313(a)(4) at the beginning of the next Selectboard meeting. **Motion passed 4 to 1** (yes – Ashley, Cook, Goulet and Moran; no – Flanders).

Moran **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Goulet) to adjourn. **Motion passed**. Meeting adjourned at 9:34 pm.

Approved by the Selectboard on October 8, 2014.

By Nancy Kramer  
Assistant to the Town Manager

Christopher Ashley  
Selectboard Chair

Next Regular Meeting – September 10, 2014 at 6:30 PM

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Statement of Lucy Gibson, read by Linda Gray.

Before making any changes to Main Street, I urge the selectboard to carefully consider what the best way is to make this street safer for bicyclists and encourage more people to ride bicycles. While bicycle lanes are appropriate for adult commuters on busy roads, such as Route 120 leading to DHMC, they are not the right solution for young riders, nor for the less confident occasional riders. Current research shows that these less confident riders are interested in riding bikes if they are on paths that are separated from traffic, but are not comfortable in bicycle lanes. Main Street north of Beaver Meadow Road has traffic volumes that are much lower than Route 120 and other major corridors in the region, and the average adult commuter or fitness rider does not need a bicycle lane here. I urge you to consider other possibilities to make Main Street safer for those people who currently do not feel safe riding on Main Street. Several concepts were put forth by the defunct transportation committee, of which I was a member, before the public meeting several months ago. These could be starting point for a selectboard-appointed committee to look at this issue carefully. Thank you for considering this.