

Minutes of the Selectboard Meeting of Wednesday, October 8, 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 18 people in the audience.

Also participating: Liz Blum, Ernie Ciccotelli, Madeline Dalton, Laura Duncan, Mark Goodwin, Bernard Haskell, Jill Kearney, Steve Lajoie, Cheryl Lindberg, Suzanne Lupien, Doug Robinson, Mimi Simpson, Demo Sofronas, Peter Stanzel, Cynthia Stuart, John Watanabe.

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. Lajoie said he understood from speaking with Judy Powell that the Police Department has been experiencing problems with dispatch communications for the last two weeks. Fulton has discussed the issue with Robinson and they believe it is not a Norwich problem and it is being tested. This issue is with the police portion of dispatch effecting Norwich and Hartford. Blum said that she did not think doing the Town Manager's review in public was a good idea. She also noted that the Listers manage the Grand List. Lindberg inquired how to apply for an open Trustee of Public Funds position. She was told to have the applicant fill out a Town of Norwich application and submit it to Kramer. Cook disclosed that there was a payment to the Leonard H. Cook Marital Trust in the 9/21/14 Warrant.
3. Town Manager's Report (Discussion). The parking lot at Huntley was expanded to provide additional off-street parking. Striping will be evaluated in the spring. Traffic counts are being done on commuter routes for planning purposes. A four-year union contract has been signed. Health insurance premiums for 2015 have been received. The average increase in the two BCBS plans employees are enrolled in now was 5.15%. Work is continuing on implementation of Act 148. There will be a new sign on the compactor soon. The point of contact on the Norwich Pool is ANR. Fieldwork is being done to comply with statutory requirements. The Town may end up in litigation on this project. The Norwich American Legion is looking to add a third monument outside Tracy Hall dedicated to Norwich residents with post-May 1975 military service. Sofronas is the contact person. Telephone: 649-1536. Email: demosofronas@gmail.com. Cook asked questions about the Town-wide windshield survey and the Route 5 South/River Road planning project. The windshield survey will begin late fall and PlaceSense has been contracted with for the planning project. Ashley expressed his continuing frustration with ANR. Fulton said the lawsuit, if the Town goes that route, would be with ANR to contest denial of a permit if that occurs.
5. Investment Policy (Discussion/Possible Action Item). Ashley said that the revised Investment Policy is in front of you and concerns have been raised about conflicts of interest. Lindberg put a copy of the VLCT Model Investment Policy in the Selectboard mailboxes. Lindberg believes the Trustees of Public Funds are a separate entity and do not have to abide by the Selectboard Investment Policy. Lindberg supports the Policy and will work with Ledyard Bank to make sure the Bank complies with the Policy. There followed some discussion of investment procedures and changes in the Policy. Fulton reminded the Treasurer and Selectboard of the disclosure

requirement in the Policy. Moran **moved** (2nd Flanders) to approve the Investment Policy. **Motion passed.**

6. Codification of Ordinances (Discussion/Action Item). Fulton said General Code will go through all ordinances the Town has in place, identify conflicts and statutory problems and then develop editorial and legal analysis that will come to the Selectboard. There followed discussion regarding why the Town is doing this and why changes to the ordinances were not made as needed. Flanders said it is an opportunity for professionals to bring the Town into compliance. Fulton estimates the document will be about 400 pages. Fulton also pointed out that codification of the ordinances has been a Selectboard goal for the Town Manager. Ciccotelli noted that keeping services in town, if possible, should be a consideration. After a change to the original motion, Flanders **moved** (2nd Ashley) to concur in the Town Manager's decision to retain General Code at an estimated cost of \$8,800 to codify the Town's ordinances and \$0 for the first year for online access to the Town Code with the understanding that the Selectboard will approve all changes in ordinances. **Motion passed 4 to 1** (yes – Ashley, Cook, Flanders and Moran; no – Goulet).

7. Animal Control Ordinance (Discussion/Possible Action Item). Ashley said there was an incident at Huntley Meadows that resulted in the Selectboard asking Fulton to revise the Ordinance. Fulton said there were actually two incidents and he has asked the Police Department and Recreation Council for their input. The new language defines a sporting event and prohibits dogs from being present during sporting events at Huntley Meadows. Fulton said there should be time allowed for significant public input before any action on the Ordinance is taken by the Selectboard. Kearney spoke about the two incidents saying that both dogs were on leashes and asking that it be discussed out of respect for the two families. Public comments included: concerns about enforcement, the definition of a sporting event, how the public will be informed about such events and the need for communication and signage. Cook said she felt something needed to be done. Moran pointed out that it is not always the dogs fault. Ashley said that the rights of everyone involved need to be protected and indicated he had a personal problem with some of the language in the Ordinance. After some further discussion, Fulton was asked to make changes to the Ordinance based on what was said at tonight's meeting and to advertise, including a transaction ad in the Valley News, that the Town is working on revising the Ordinance.

4. Strategic Planning. b) Next Steps (Discussion/Possible Action Item). After some discussion, the majority of the Selectboard agreed to postpone this item until after the budget season.

a) Quality of Community Committee Interviews/Appointments (Discussion/Action Item). After a brief interview of Laura Duncan, Flanders **moved** (2nd Moran) to appoint Craig Layne from the Conservation Commission and Laura Duncan from the Recreation Council to the Committee to Develop Strategic Plans Addressing Quality of Community. **Motion passed.**

8. Beaver Meadow and Root District Schoolhouses (Discussion/Possible Action Item). The Norwich School District transferred what rights they had in the Schoolhouses and land to the Town of Norwich via the passed articles on the March 4th Warning. Fulton would like to work out agreements with the two groups and bring it back to the Selectboard for approval. Cook opposes turning over either property and believes the Town should own. Stanzel said the Beaver Meadow Schoolhouse Association owns the Beaver Meadow Schoolhouse and the land is not usable for anything else. After discussion of options, Flanders **moved** (2nd Moran) 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 reverter: (1) the building and property is to be used as a community center or operated for the good of the community, and (2)

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 prepare the requisite documents.

Motion passed 3 to 2 (yes – Ashley, Flanders and Moran; no – Cook and Goulet).

9. Facilities Studies (Discussion/Possible Action Item). a) Report from Liaison to Capital Facilities Committee. Goulet said he has not gotten a response from Tom Gray to his inquiry but had heard from others that a report has been done. Fulton said he is not aware of any reports being done by the Capital Facilities Committee but Reserve Funds have been reviewed. After some further discussion, Goulet was asked to remind the Capital Facilities Committee of their responsibilities as listed in the charge, especially in reference to the final report.

b) Ashley's List of Minimum Requirements for DPW, Police and Fire Facilities. Ashley put together a list of what he feels are minimum requirements for the three facilities that was included in the packet. Cook stated that she wants an article on the March, 2015 Town Warning on the facilities and Fulton said he agreed with that time frame. There followed discussion regarding what Bread Loaf has been told and is working on and the goal of smoothing payments for funding. The Selectboard agreed by consensus to add a special meeting in early November with the only agenda item being a discussion of designs and cost estimates with Bread Loaf.

10. 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) #10 a), b), c), d) and e). Email from Kevin Dorn Re: Property Tax Resolution, Letter from Harry Roberts Re: Input for Town Manager Evaluation, Email from Sarah Reeves Re: What Can We Do to Make Sure Chief Doug Robinson Stays, Email from Beth Phillips-Whitehair Re: Doug Robinson Moving On and Email from Sue and Bob Pitiger Re: Norwich Public Facilities. Flanders **moved** (2nd Moran) to receive an email from Kevin Dorn re: property tax resolution, a letter from Harry Roberts re: input for Town Manager evaluation, emails from Sarah Reeves re: what can we do to make sure Chief Doug Robinson stays, Beth Phillips-Whitehair re: Doug Robinson moving on and Sue and Bob Pitiger re: Norwich public facilities. **Motion passed**. Ashley reviewed the correspondence briefly. Goodwin spoke about the roadside mowing and commented briefly on the Schoolhouses.

11. Selectboard

a) Approval of the Minutes of the 8/27/14 and 9/10/14 Meetings (Action Item). Flanders **moved** (2nd Moran) to approve the minutes of the August 27, 2014 and September 10, 2014 Selectboard meetings, as amended in Selectboard discussions at this meeting. **Motion passed**.

b) Discussion of Support Documents/Items for Agenda in Selectboard Packet (Discussion/Possible Action Item). Ashley suggested that this would be a good item to add to the agenda for the organizational meeting of the Selectboard. At a minimum, he believes members should bring copies for all Board members if it is to be discussed at a meeting and has not been included in the packet. Goulet suggested public documents can be used as reference material. Cook said she believes the Selectboard is not getting all the information they need to make informed decisions.

- c) Review of Next Agendas (Discussion/Possible Action Item). Kramer was asked to email contact list for the Quality of Community Committee to Flanders and Cook. Items on the October 22nd agenda will include: the Animal Ordinance (early on), the Hazard Mitigation Plan, Grange report, an update on the communications system, an update on the Town Pool, an update on the Church Street Sidewalk SRTS Project, capital facilities financing and the email from Kevin Dorn on Property Tax Resolution.
- d) Personnel – Town Manager Review (Executive Session may be Required). Pursuant to Title 1 VSA § 313(a)(3), Moran **moved** (2nd Goulet) to enter into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing the annual performance review of the Town Manager. **Motion passed 3 to 2** (yes – Cook, Goulet and Moran; no – Ashley and Flanders). Before the Selectboard went into Executive Session both Fulton and Flanders said that their preference is to do the review in public. The Selectboard moved into Executive Session at 10:06 pm.

At 10:56 pm, Moran **moved** (2nd Flanders) to move into public session. No action was taken as a result of the Executive Session.

Flanders **moved** (2nd Moran) to adjourn. **Motion passed**. Meeting adjourned at 10:57 pm.

Approved by the Selectboard on November 25, 2014.

By Nancy Kramer
Assistant to the Town Manager

Christopher Ashley
Selectboard Chair

Next Regular Meeting – October 22, 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.