

Minutes of the Special Selectboard Meeting of Wednesday, February 17, 2016 at 6:30 PM

Members present: Linda Cook, Chair; Christopher Ashley; Steve Flanders; Dan Goulet; Mary Layton, Vice-Chair; Neil Fulton, Town Manager; Jonathan Bynum.

There were about 15 people in the audience.

Also participating: Doug Barba, Ernie Ciccotelli, Kris Clement, Dana Ireland, Corlan Johnson, Suzanne Lupien, Demo Sofronas.

Cook opened the meeting at 6:31 pm.

1. Town Manager Evaluation (Discussion/Possible Action Item). Flanders **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Ashley) to find that premature general public knowledge of the terms for the exit document for the Town Manager would clearly place the Selectboard at a disadvantage. **Motion passed 3 to 2** (yes – Ashley, Cook and Flanders; no – Goulet and Layton). Pursuant to Title 1 VSA § 313(a)(1)(A), Flanders **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Ashley) to enter Executive Session for purposes of discussing the Town Manager exit document. **Motion passed**. The Selectboard moved into Executive Session at 6:37 pm. At 7:00 pm, Ashley **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Goulet) to move into public session. **Motion passed**.

Ashley **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Flanders) that for purposes of computing back pay, Fulton be granted a performance appraisal of “satisfactory” for the period October 1, 2014 to September 30, 2015 that entitles him to a step increase at his most recent hiring anniversary. After discussion, Cook **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Layton) to postpone this question until after discussion of agenda item #3. **Motion passed 4 to 1** (yes – Cook, Flanders, Goulet, Layton; no – Ashley).

2. Receive Information from Municipal Resources Inc. (MRI) and Vermont League of Cities and Towns (VLCT) regarding possible Interim Town Manager Candidates (Discussion/Possible Action Item). Cook reported that she had been in touch with both organizations. MRI had one person available. It would be possible for the Selectboard to negotiate directly with that person, or the Selectboard could contract with MRI, in which case the rate would be around \$85/hour. VLCT had 4-5 people potentially available, any of whom would have to be negotiated with directly.

There was extensive discussion of process, including whether the terms of the contract (pay scale, hours/week, exit situation) should be decided in advance of the interview process, and whether the Selectboard should seek legal help in drafting a contract immediately, or whether the Selectboard should first select a desirable candidate and then negotiate the terms in light of that candidate’s qualifications and situation. There was agreement that it was important to establish Selectboard expectations of the Interim Town Manager. Flanders pointed out that the demands on the Interim Town Manger will depend greatly on whether Articles 5, 6 and 7 pass at Town Meeting. Flanders **moved** that Linda Cook and Neil Fulton meet and outline discussion points for Selectboard consideration at the next meeting. No second. Given the short time frame before Fulton’s departure, there was discussion of asking Dechert to be Interim Town Manager on a short-term basis until the search process was completed.

3. Review Prorated Pay and Benefits for Town Manager Neil Fulton through February 26 (Discussion/Possible Action Item). After discussion, Cook suggested a friendly amendment to Ashley’s motion of earlier in the meeting, which was still on the table, such that the motion would now be that “for the purposes of computing back pay, Fulton be granted a step increase at his

most recent hiring anniversary.” Both Ashley and Flanders agreed to this amendment. **Motion passed.**

Ashley left the meeting at 8:45 pm, and the Chair called a break at this time. The meeting reconvened at 8:52 pm.

4. Review Town Manager Job Description and Vermont Statutes Title 24 Chapter 37 that Pertain to the Duties and Responsibilities of a Town Manager (Discussion/Possible Action Item). It was agreed that Cook and Fulton would meet and specify the duties in preparation for tomorrow’s meeting.

5. Retaining Legal Counsel (Discussion/Possible Action Item). No action at this time.

Flanders **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Goulet) to continue the Selectboard meeting of February 17, 2016 until February 18, 2016 in the multipurpose room of Tracy Hall at 6:30 pm. **Motion passed.** Meeting disbanded at 9:00 pm.

Approved by the Selectboard on March 9, 2016.

By Jonathan Bynum

Linda Cook  
Selectboard Chair

Next Regular Meeting – February 24, 2016 at 6:30 PM

PLEASE NOTE THAT CATV RECORDS ALL REGULAR MEETINGS OF THE NORWICH SELECTBOARD.