

Minutes of the Selectboard Meeting of Wednesday, December 7, 2016 at 6:30 pm

Members present: Linda Cook, Chair; Christopher Ashley; Dan Goulet; Mary Layton, Vice-Chair; Stephen Flanders; Dave Ormiston, Interim Town Manager; Miranda Bergmeier, Assistant to the Town Manager.

There were about 12 people in the audience.

Also participating: Steve Leinoff, Lucinda Walker, Van Chestnut, Robert Haynes, Claudette Brochu, Doug Robinson, Roberta Robinson, Marty Lyman

Cook opened the meeting at 6:33 pm.

1. Approval of Agenda (Action Item). Selectboard agreed to proceed with the agenda as drafter with one change: moving the "Finance" item to the third item on the agenda.
 2. Public Comments (Discussion Item). Claudette Brochu expressed concerns about the town budget, particularly about the details of the short-term and long-term disability insurance policies for town employees, employee health insurance, and pay step increases.
 3. Finance – Board to sign accounts payable/warrants (Discussion/Action Item). Ashley **moved** (2nd Flanders) to approve Check Warrant Report #17-13 for General Fund in the amount of \$76,439.85 and for DPW – Paving Fund in the amount of \$16,530.00. **Motion passed.**
 4. Outside Agencies' Appropriation Requests (Discussion/Action Item).
 - a. Norwich Public Library – Lucinda Walker, Director of the Norwich Public Library, spoke about the library's programming and other efforts during the past year. Walker reported that their extended hours on Sundays during September through May have been well-received. The library board has adopted a new strategic plan using private and grant funds. The library is doing more programming in and out of the library, with 57,000 visitors last year. Walker said that the Town appropriation money covers the library's building and grounds costs, plus most of the salary costs. When the library asks for increased Town funding, they also increase their fundraising goal at the same rate.
 - b. Advance Transit – Van Chestnut, Executive Director, reported over the past year they have increased Norwich ridership; their amount requested is about 20% of the costs of service they provide to Norwich. Advance Transit has a new smartphone app for showing where the bus is located in realtime. The rider population is 2/3 commuters.
 - c. Green Mountain Economic Development Corporation (GMEDC) – Robert Haynes, Executive Director, said that GMEDC's mission includes supporting job creation, economic development, job training, brownfield remediation, and can help business expand and navigate state regulations. Norwich has not supported GMEDC since 2010.
- Flanders **moved** (2nd Ashley) that the Norwich Public Library, Advance Transit, and Green Mountain Economic Development Corporation be listed on the town warrant per the article warnings as presented. **Motion passed.**
5. Budget Review (Discussion Item). Ormiston presented a summary of budget changes, including the Tracy Hall Designated Fund to address ongoing maintenance needs. Selectboard members expressed support for maintaining sufficient money in the Tracy Hall fund to address those needs. The Fire Department equipment needs were discussed, as was the Department of Public Works garage building. Ashley **moved** (2nd Flanders) to ask the Interim Town Manager to

draft an item for the warning that allows the Selectboard on a contingency basis to shift funds between the Public Works Building Fund and the Public Works Vehicle Fund to meet our needs for the FEMA Alternative Projects.

6. Public Safety Building Update (Discussion/Action Item). Ormiston talked about options for funding contingency on the public safety building. Flanders suggested reserving the tower funds for exploring the best way to establish redundancy for emergency services communication. Ormiston said that he had consulted with the Fire Chief and Police Chief about communication needs. After discussion about options and needs for communication equipment, Flanders **moved** (2nd Ashley) to have the Interim Town Manager draft an article that creates a Public Safety Building contingency fund that give the town permission to borrow up to \$70,000 if by June 30 the town needs additional funds. **Motion passed 3 to 2** (yes- Ashley, Flanders, Goulet; no- Cook, Layton).

Flanders **moved** that: 1. **\$27,500** of the remaining balance of the Tower Bond unspent principal account be applied to pay debt service on the Tower Bond in FY18;

2. The Debt Service on the Tower Bond line item be reduced by **\$27,500** in the FY18 budget;

3. The remaining balance of the Tower Bond unspent principal account be applied to pay debt service on the Tower Bond in FY19;

4. The Communications Study Fund balance of **\$28,212** be redirected to a new *Communications Equipment Reserve Fund*; and

5. The *Communications Equipment Reserve Fund* be augmented by **\$27,500** to create a total balance of **\$55,712**, so that this amount may be applied toward Emergency Operations Center and other, future communications equipment.

Following discussion, **motion failed 3 to 2** (yes- Flanders, Ashley; no- Cook, Goulet, Layton)

Ormiston reported information about the federal Rural Development (RD) loan program. The lower interest rates in the RD program would lead to \$208,000 in savings, and the town can still pursue a contract with Jay White. The town can pursue the VT Bond Bank lending option and RD program at the same time, and can pull out of the RD program if it becomes too burdensome. Ashley **moved** (2nd Flanders) to advise the Interim Town Manager to proceed with application for Police and Fire building funding with both the VT Bond Bank and USDA Rural Development. **Motion passed 3 to 2** (yes- Ashley, Flanders, Goulet; no- Cook, Layton)

7. Illsley Road (Discussion Item). Ormiston reported that town officials asked the resident who had dug water bar ditches on Illsley Road to remedy those ditches by filling them in. The resident complied. Ashley clarified that the Selectboard took no action regarding activities on Illsley Road. Marty Lyman with the Hurricane Riders Snowmobile Club expressed concern about the presence of rocks on Illsley Road. Ashley noted that the police have authority to enforce the law, not the Selectboard. The activity on Illsley Road is not within the purview of the Selectboard's powers.

8. Patchen's Point Pull-off (Discussion/Action Item). Ormiston reported that the Vermont State Dept. of Transportation has notified the town that they would like to close the Patchen's Point pull-off from the state highway in order to curb unwanted behavior at the pull-off location. The Selectboard members concurred that this is the state's decision to make, as it is a state road. The Selectboard took no action.

9. Correspondence – Claudette Brochu (Discussion/Action Item). Flanders **moved** (2nd

Ashley) to receive correspondence from Claudette Brochu concerning the proposed town budget.

The Selectboard agreed to defer action on agenda items “Draft Provisions of Town Manager Contract” and “Selectboard Approval of the Minutes of the 11/16/16, 11/21/16, 11/22/16, and 11/28 Selectboard Meetings” until the Selectboard meeting on December 14, 2016.

The Selectboard agreed that agenda items for the next Selectboard meeting on December 7, 2016 will include:

1. Errors & Omissions
 2. Budget Presentation
 3. Town Manager Search – executive session may be needed
 4. Public Safety Building update
 5. Approval of Minutes
 6. Correspondence – Claudette Brochu
 7. Provisions of the Town Manager contract
10. Town Manager Search – executive session may be needed (Discussion/Action Item).
Flanders **moved** (2nd Ashley) to find that discussing the application materials and status of applicants for the position of Town Manager in public session would violate the applicants’ rights to confidentiality. **Motion passed.**
Flanders **moved** (2nd Ashley) to enter executive session to discuss applicants for the position of Town Manager, pursuant to Title 1 VSA § 313(a)(3) of the Vermont Statutes and to invite members of the Advisory Town Manager Search Committee to join the Selectboard.
Motion passed.

The Selectboard moved into executive session at 9:29 pm.

Goulet **moved** (2nd Ashley) to enter public session. **Motion passed.** The Selectboard moved into public session at 10:18 pm.

At this point, Goulet **moved** (2nd Ashley) to adjourn. **Motion passed.** Meeting adjourned at 10:19 pm.

By Miranda Bergmeier
Assistant to the Town Manager

Approved by the Selectboard on January 11, 2017

Linda Cook
Selectboard Chair

Next Meeting – December 14, 2016 at 6:30 PM

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