

Minutes of the Selectboard Meeting of Wednesday, July 12, 2017 at 6:30 pm

Members present: Mary Layton, Chair; John Pepper, Vice Chair; Linda Cook; Stephen Flanders; John Langhus (via voice conferencing); Phil Dechert, Acting Town Manager; Miranda Bergmeier, Assistant to the Town Manager.

There were about 11 people in the audience.

Also participating: Roberta Robinson, Claudette Brochu, Stuart Richards, Marcia Calloway, Dennis Kaufman, and Cheryl Lindberg.

Layton opened the meeting at 6:34 pm.

1. Approval of Agenda (Action Item). Selectboard agreed to re-order the agenda, renumbering item 8 (Special Town Meeting for Town Plan Vote) to earlier in the agenda, #4a, immediately following item 4.
2. Set Tax Rate (Discussion/Action Item). Phil Dechert, Acting Town Manager, gave an explanation of the figures supporting the proposed FY18 tax rate. Following discussion about how much additional money should be held in the Town "undesignated" fund to offset costs to repair damages caused by the July 2017 storm, Flanders **moved** (2nd Pepper) to set the Town tax rate at \$0.4900 and the Local Agreement rate at \$0.0053, for a total Town tax rate of \$0.4953. **Motion passed 3 to 2 (no: Cook and Pepper).**
3. Public Comments (Discussion Item). Claudette Brochu said that she was greatly impressed by how quickly the work crews – both Town and private contractors – made the roads passable following the July 1, 2017 storm. Cook thanked Town police, fire department, Phil Dechert, and citizens for helping the Town recover. Flanders thanked Cook for her help in coordinating emergency response during and after the storm.
4. Board to sign accounts payable/warrants (Discussion/Action Item). Flanders **moved** (2nd Pepper) to approve Check Warrant Report #18-2 for General Fund in the amount of \$15,406.69; for Highway Equipment Fund in the amount of \$157,500.00; for Recreation Fund – Tennis Courts in the amount of \$21,175.66; and for the Public Safety Facility Fund in the amount of \$37,907.83. **Motion passed unanimously.**
- 4a. Special Meeting for Town Plan Vote (Discussion/Action Item). Layton said that considering the controversy around this new town plan, she thinks that getting input via a town-wide vote is a good idea for this plan, but does not like the idea of locking the Town into having such votes for every subsequent plan. Layton suggested the Selectboard call a town-wide advisory vote. After further discussion, the Selectboard agreed to take up this issue during its next meeting, scheduled for August 23, 2017.
5. RFP for Town Banking Services (Discussion/Action Item). Cheryl Lindberg, Norwich Treasurer, reviewed the draft RFP with the Selectboard, and gave updated figures to fill in blanks on the draft RFP. After brief discussion, Flanders **moved** (2nd Cook) to authorize the RFP as drafted by the Treasurer, with editorial changes discussed. **Motion passed unanimously.**
6. Board Authorization of Spending Funds Directly Related to Repairing and Restoring the

Norwich Road Network as a Result of the July 1, 2017 Storm (Discussion/Action Item). Dechert explained the need for the Selectboard to pay the emergency contractors' work, hence the Selectboard needs to give retroactive authorization to pay for the work. This is the way the Town handled this after Hurricane Irene. After brief discussion, Flanders **moved** (2nd Pepper) to retroactively waive the requirements contained in paragraphs 3.6 and 3.7 of Selectboard Financial Policy #1 for expenditures directly related to repairing and restoring the Norwich road network as a result of the July 1, 2017 severe storm with total aggregate expenditures not to exceed \$350,000. **Motion passed unanimously.**

7. a.1. Conflict of Interest Policy (Discussion/Action Item). Langhus said that he would like to submit to the Selectboard a clean copy of the policy for a vote at the next Selectboard meeting. Selectboard members agreed.

9. Town Manager Report (Discussion Item). Dechert provided to the Selectboard a verbal report on the damage to Norwich roads as a result of the July 1, 2017 storm. Dechert explained that he will put this into writing and submit it to the Selectboard. Contractors hired by the Town to work on the roads temporarily have stopped work for now. The Town will put out remaining work to bid, in accordance with Town policy. Norwich DPW crews continue to work in the meantime. All public roads are passable now, if only one lane in some places. Upper Valley Strong is an organization that may be able to help landowners with repair work. Dechert reported that work on the new Public Safety Building is ongoing. The footings have been poured, septic tank is in place, and a groundbreaking ceremony was held onsite July 6, 2017. Dechert further reported that ground breaking on the DPW garage is expected in early August and that FEMA extension of funding reimbursement for that project and for stream restoration is still pending.

10. Correspondence (Discussion/Action Item). Flanders **moved** (2nd Pepper) to receive correspondence from Stuart Richards regarding the Planning Commission; from Lee Michaelides regarding his resignation; from David Sargent regarding a tax grievance; and from Steve Flanders regarding comparison of property assessment models. **Motion passed unanimously (4 yes; Langhus was not available electronically for this vote).** The Selectboard asked that Town Manager Durfee follow up on the Sargent correspondence after Durfee returns to the office.

11a. Approval of Minutes: 6/21/2017 Selectboard Meeting (Action Item). Flanders **moved** (2nd Pepper) to approve the minutes of the June 21, 2017 Selectboard meeting. **Motion passed unanimously (4 yes; Langhus was not available electronically for this vote).**

11b. Review of Next Agendas (Discussion/Action Item). The following items were listed for the Selectboard's August 23, 2017 agenda:

- Special Meeting for Town Plan Vote
- Conflict of Interest Policy
- Budgetary Guidance
- Lister/Assessor Model
- FEMA Update
- Report regarding Sargent Correspondence

At this point, Cook **moved** (2nd Pepper) to adjourn. **Motion passed unanimously.**

by Miranda Bergmeier, Assistant to the Town Manager

Approved by the Selectboard on August 23, 2017.

Mary Layton, Selectboard Chair

Next Meeting –August 23, 2017 at 6:30 PM

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