

Minutes of the Selectboard Meeting of Wednesday, September 13, 2017 at 6:30 pm

Members present: Mary Layton, Chair; John Pepper, Vice Chair; Linda Cook; Stephen Flanders; John Langhus (via teleconference); Herb Durfee, Town Manager; Miranda Bergmeier, Assistant to the Town Manager.

There were about 9 people in the audience.

Also participating: Cheryl Lindberg, Robert Johnson, Kris Clement, Dennis Kaufman, John Carroll, Ernie Ciccotelli, and Andy Hodgdon.

Layton opened the meeting at 6:30 pm.

1. Approval of Agenda (Action Item). Selectboard agreed to proceed with the agenda after moving items 6d and 7c to the end of the meeting, because those items would possibly require executive session.
2. Public Comments (Discussion Item). Cheryl Lindberg offered to answer any questions regarding her quarterly Town Treasurer report, previously provided to the Selectboard. Lindberg also notified the board that an RFP for banking services was released on September 16, 2017. Linda Cook asked Town Manager, Herb Durfee, to offer a quick report on the town's road repairs and FEMA process. Durfee said that the FEMA process has begun, and a conference call with FEMA and VT State officials had occurred on September 16, 2017. The next step will be a site visit on September 19, 2017. The Town will go out to bid for road repairs as soon as possible. The first priority work is Turnpike Road. Andy Hodgdon, DPW Director, is working continually with the town crew as much as possible, and 70-80% of the road repair work needs to be done by bidding contractors who have the necessary equipment and personnel. The Town wants to rebuild to a higher standard than the VTrans basic standard, so that town roads will be more resilient in the next storm event.
3. Recreation Council Vacancy (Discussion/Action Item). Robert Johnson, applicant for the Recreation Council vacancy, discussed his interest in coaching and helping the community through the Recreation Council. Flanders **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Pepper) to appoint Robert Johnson to the Recreation Council for the remainder of an unexpired term ending March 2019. **Motion passed unanimously.**
4. Lister Vacancy (Discussion/Action Item). Kris Clement, applicant for the Board of Listers vacancy, discussed her efforts to learn about the job of Lister and her interest in becoming a Lister. After some discussion, Cook **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Pepper) to appoint Kris Clement to the Board of Listers for the remainder of an unexpired term ending March 2018. **Motion passed 3 to 2 (Cook, Layton, Pepper-yes; Flanders, Langhus-No).**
5. Board to Sign Accounts Payable/Warrants (Discussion/Action Item). Flanders **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Pepper) to approve Check Warrant Report #18-7 for General Fund in the amount of \$2,059,940.20; and for the Public Safety Facility Fund in the amount of \$354,256.32. **Motion passed unanimously.**
6. Selectboard Vision/Goals (Discussion/Action Item).
  - a. Property Assessment. Flanders summarized his memos and survey results, and the proposed policy – all of which were included in the Selectboard meeting packet. Selectboard

members then discussed options for assessment, including continuing with the current system of having a Board of Listers and a contracted Assessor. Another option would be an assessor-only system, eliminating the Board of Listers, which would have to happen by town-wide vote. Dennis Kaufman spoke about Norwich's history and experience of contracting with an assessor. Ernie Ciccotelli expressed support for continuing the current system of having a Board of Listers and contracted assessors. John Carroll talked about the supervision of contracted assessors. The Board acknowledged that it does not have authority to set policy or determine method for elected officials of the Town, such as the Town Clerk and Board of Listers. Carroll observed that the Town Manager is the Board's agent and the Board cannot delegate to him authority it does not have, so the assessors should report to the Board of Listers, rather than to the Town Manager. Carroll also noted that there were a number of errors in the Flanders survey and questioned the reliability of any conclusions drawn from the survey. Lindberg said that she is confident that the current Board of Listers will be able to work effectively with the current contract assessor. Clement and Kaufman agreed. Durfee said that he will continue to aid this process however possible.

b. Codification of Ordinances status. Selectboard members agreed to defer this topic to a future meeting.

c. Capital Facilities Improvement; Equipment Replacement Funds. Durfee introduced the Capital Facilities Improvement plan. Durfee has started the planning process of developing a six-year capital budget plan; the Equipment Replacement Funds will be a separate process. The capital budget plan will serve as a planning tool.

d. Negotiated Agreement. This item was moved to later in the meeting (per discussion under Approval of Agenda, agenda item #1).

7. Town Manager Report (Discussion/Action Item). Durfee said that the Town will post Turnpike Road as closed to all but local traffic as soon as the ordered signs are delivered. DPW staff have worked to keep the road in as good shape as possible.

a. DPW Garage Addition Status. Durfee reported that the DPW garage project should break ground on September 18, 2017. FEMA has granted an extension for completion of the project; DPW staff have moved necessary items to make space for the construction work; costs of the building continue to be cut as much as possible.

b. Durfee summarized the DPW purchase request. Cook questioned the lack of additional bids as required in the Purchasing Policy. After some discussion, Flanders **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Pepper) to authorize the expenditure of \$91,321.00 from the DPW Equipment designated fund for the purchase of a 2017 Ford F-550 truck with dump body and snowplow equipment. **Motion passed 4 to 1 (Cook-no).**

c. Personnel. This item was moved to later in the meeting (per discussion under Approval of Agenda, agenda item #1).

8. Correspondence (Discussion/Action Item). Flanders **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Pepper) to receive correspondence from David Sargent regarding outdoor storage of junk and junk vehicles; from Claudette Brochu regarding major issues facing the town; from John Carroll regarding property assessment models; and from Ernie Ciccotelli regarding the Norwich office of Listers. **Motion passed unanimously.**

9. Pepper's "End of Meeting Debriefing" (Discussion Item). Selectboard members agreed to debrief after other business was concluded.

10. a. Approval of the minutes of the 8/23/2017 Selectboard meeting (Action Item). Flanders

**moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Pepper) to approve the minutes of the August 23, 2017 Selectboard meeting, with revisions put forward. **Motion passed unanimously.**

6d. Negotiated Agreement. (Discussion/Action Item). This agenda item was moved, per earlier agreement of the Selectboard. Flanders **moved** that the Selectboard finds that premature public knowledge would clearly place the Town of Norwich at a substantial disadvantage under 1 VSA §313(a)(1)(B). **Motion passed unanimously.** Flanders then **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Pepper) to enter executive session to discuss the negotiated agreement and personnel policies. **Motion passed unanimously.**

The Selectboard moved into executive session at 9:38 pm.

Flanders **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Pepper) to enter public session. **Motion passed unanimously.**

The Selectboard moved into public session at 10:06 pm. No action taken.

7c. Personnel (Discussion/Action Item). This agenda item was moved, per earlier agreement of the Selectboard. Flanders **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Pepper) to enter executive session to discuss a personnel matter. **Motion passed unanimously.**

The Selectboard moved into executive session at 10:06 pm.

Flanders **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Pepper) to enter public session. **Motion passed unanimously.**

The Selectboard moved into public session at 10:15 pm. No action taken.

9. Pepper's "End of Meeting Debriefing" (Discussion Item). Selectboard members offered ideas and thoughts about what had worked well in the meeting and suggestions for moving forward.

10. Selectboard (Discussion/Action Item).

b. Review of Next Agendas. The Selectboard agreed on the following items for the September 13, 2017 agenda:

Church Street Sidewalk

Selectboard Vision/Goals – Codification of Ordinances

Banking Services RFP

Quarterly Town Treasurer Report

Trails Committee Report to Selectboard

Meeting Debrief Discussion

At 10:24 pm, Cook **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Flanders) to adjourn. **Motion passed unanimously.**

Meeting adjourned at 10:24 pm.

by Miranda Bergmeier, Assistant to the Town Manager

Approved by the Selectboard on September 27, 2017.

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Mary Layton, Selectboard Chair

Next Meeting –September 27, 2017 at 6:30 PM

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