

Minutes of the Special Selectboard Meeting of
Wednesday, January 24, 2018 at 6:00 pm

Members present: Mary Layton, Chair; Linda Cook; Stephen Flanders; John Langhus; John Pepper; Herb Durfee, Town Manager.

There were about 16 people in the audience.

Also participating: Dean Seibert, Kris Clement, Lily Trajman, Pam Smith, Colin Calloway, Charlotte Metcalf, Marcia Calloway, Stuart Richards, and Jeff Goodrich.

Layton opened the meeting at 6:02 pm.

1. Call to Order – 6:00 PM. Layton explained that the Selectboard would be going into executive session regarding the union contract, and planned to return to public session at about 6:30 PM.
2. Union Contract: Pending Negotiations (Discussion Item). Flanders **moved** (2nd Langhus) to find that premature public knowledge would clearly place the public body at a substantial disadvantage. **Motion passed unanimously.** Flanders **moved** (2nd Langhus) to enter executive session to discuss the union contract, pursuant to 1 VSA sec. 313(a)(1)(B) and to include the Town Manager and the town's attorney by teleconference. **Motion passed unanimously.** At 6:05 PM, the Selectboard moved into executive session.
Flanders **moved** (2nd Langhus) to enter public session. **Motion passed unanimously.** The Selectboard moved into public session at 6:38 PM.
3. Approval of Agenda (Action Item). Stuart Richards asked the Selectboard to move agenda item #10 to an earlier point in the meeting. The Selectboard decided to move agenda items #6 and #10 so they would occur in that order, following #4 "Public Comments."
4. Public Comments (Discussion Item). Dean Seibert read aloud from written remarks regarding development and the Town Plan. Kris Clement asked if the Town Meeting Warning agenda item would include discussion about holding an advisory vote on the proposed Town Plan. The Selectboard answered that yes, it would.
5. Alcohol Policy Waiver Request – Norwich Women's Club (Discussion/Action Item). Lily Trajman, a member of the Norwich Women's Club, said that the Spring Gala is being held at Tracy Hall and they would like to be able to serve beer and wine, as per usual. This event traditionally has raised a large amount of money for community grants. Flanders **moved** (2nd Langhus) to waive the Town ordinance regulating the possession and consumption of alcohol so that the Norwich Women's Club may serve alcohol via a properly licensed caterer in Tracy Hall on the evening of March 24, 2018 during its Spring Gala. **Motion passed unanimously.**
6. Town Plan: Hearing Follow-up & Next Steps (Discussion/Action Item). Layton said that now the Selectboard has started to hear from the public and the Selectboard needs to decide its next steps. Layton acknowledged there is fear among the public concerning large-scale development. She suggested that perhaps the Planning Commission should come to a Selectboard meeting to explain the Town Plan (TP) draft and have another working session so that the Selectboard can hash out ideas. Langhus suggested that the Town should hold an advisory vote during Town Meeting and have break-out sessions to work on specific sessions of

the plan. Flanders said he has looked at the proposed TP and doesn't find anything in it that would make large-scale development happen. Pepper said that he has been listening to people's concerns about mega-development happening in Norwich, and he thinks there is not sufficient reason here in Norwich to bring in big development. Pepper thanked residents for putting time and effort into their input about the TP. Cook wants to organize the questions and comments from the public in order to set up further break-out sessions to work on the TP. Cooks suggested that we need to make sure Norwich is affordable for everyone. Langhus said that he thinks that things from outside the TP document have come into the TP discussion. Langhus appreciates all of the work and input by residents. Langhus said the TP is a framework for the town to address issue that come before the town. Without a TP, we can't do any zoning – with or without any development. Also, the Village Center designation is to allow a town greater local control. Langhus said he takes due process very seriously and he doesn't see any fatal flaws in this TP. The Selectboard is not planning to stop conversations about the TP, even if they decide to have an advisory vote. Layton asked the Selectboard if they'd like to proceed with organizing the comments coming from the public and answering the questions that have been raised. Flanders suggested a list of written questions from the public, with answers provided by the Selectboard. Langhus suggested that a two-person committee from the Selectboard could draft answers and then at the next meeting the Selectboard could approve those. The Selectboard members agreed that Cook and Pepper will sort and compile all the public's questions, then Langhus and Flanders will draft FAQs and answers. At the February 14, 2018 Selectboard meeting, the Selectboard will review the proposed FAQs and vote. Selectboard members then discussed options for informing the public about the upcoming break-out session meetings and FAQs. The Selectboard agreed to schedule information sessions (aka break-out sessions) on Saturday, February 3, 2018 3:00-5:00 PM and Tuesday, February 6, 2018 7:00-9:00 PM. At these sessions, Affordable Housing and Land Use will be discussed. Flanders then read a proposal for a town warning article that would call for an advisory vote on the proposed TP. Langhus asked if it is possible to edit the TP after the Selectboard votes to approve the warning article. Durfee said that yes, it is possible, but he does not advise putting the TP question on the Town Meeting warning. Pam Smith said that a survey is a better way to gauge the voters' support for the proposed TP, rather an advisory vote. Colin Calloway said that this has been an eye-opening process and he is concerned about development on Route 5 South. Charlotte Metcalf said she has been talking about 150 units being built because a study was done at some point showing a possible plan for building 150 units on Route 5 South. Metcalf read from her letter posted to the listserv and said she is concerned that TP process will be skewed. Marcia Calloway reiterated her previous comments expressing concern with due process in forming the proposed TP, referenced Map 11. Kris Clement said that the public is concerned about what is not in the TP, not only what is in the TP. Clement asked the Selectboard to bridge the divide between the public by incorporating the public's suggestions. Dean Seibert said that this town is resilient and has weathered a lot of controversy, and we will be OK. Seibert spoke about the town-wide survey and said that the regional planning commission may have suggested parameters for a survey. Seibert said he wants impact assessment included in the TP. Stuart Richards said that he is submitting written edits to the proposed TP and he wants the Selectboard to put out a survey. Richards is concerned about his taxes going up, commercialization, suburbanization, municipal sewer, and village character. Jeff Goodrich said the Planning Commission has had open discussions on multiple occasions. Goodrich expressed dismay with the ad hominem attacks he has seen in public discussion about the TP. Cook stated that she has no ownership interest in the Route 5 South property. Flanders said that it is true that the Planning Commission's initial proposal was upsetting, but that proposal is dead; one option is to put the proposed TP up for an advisory vote and get public input that way.

7. Town Meeting Warning / Sign Warning (Discussion/Action Item). Durfee said that the

Selectboard needs only to approve the town portion of the warning. The amounts for the school are not yet determined. Durfee said that the July 1 storm damage is now estimated at \$4.3 million and borrowing of \$4.0 million is proposed in order to cover expenses before the anticipated FEMA reimbursement is made to the town. Langhus questioned the amount of borrowing. Durfee said that borrowing that amount keeps the storm cost separate from ordinary budget expenses. Durfee explained that Article 30 of the warning is a requested appropriation for a new organization, and RSVP is not requesting an appropriation in this year's warning. Article 11 is asking about an alternate method of distributing the Town Report. The Selectboard members agreed not to include an article calling for an advisory vote on the Town Plan. Flanders **moved** (2nd Langhus) to approve the Town portion of the 2018 Town Meeting Warning, excluding any article referring to a Town Plan advisory vote. **Motion passed unanimously.**

8. Selectboard Town Report (Discussion/Action Item). Flanders **moved** (2nd Pepper) to approve the draft FY17 Selectboard submission for publication in the FY17 Town Report. **Motion passed unanimously.**

9. Board to Sign Accounts Payable/Warrants (Discussion/Action Item). Flanders **moved** (2nd Langhus) to approve check warrant #18-16 for Police Station Fund in the amount of \$504.25; for Police Special Equipment Fund in the amount of \$6,613.80; for Fire Station Fund in the amount of \$1,239.45; for Public Safety Facility Fund in the amount of \$110.00; and for General Fund in the amount of \$116,305.02. **Motion passed unanimously.**

10. Town Manager Report (Discussion Item). Durfee said that the audit report should be received by Roberta Robinson tomorrow. Union contract negotiations will begin very soon. Construction will be restarting on the DPW garage project, and the Public Safety Building (PSB) interior is being finished, with a Certificate of Occupancy visit by the Fire Marshall next Tuesday. The PSB exterior is finished and the apparatus building exterior construction work has been suspended while budget concerns regarding the Grange water line and fees for permitting and engineering are addressed. If the project continues to be over budget, then Durfee would probably ask the Selectboard to pay that overage – expected to be less than \$20,000 – from the fund balance. Durfee is looking for cost cuts where possible. The PSB is on schedule to open at the beginning of February; an official grand opening will happen in Spring 2018 when the weather is better. The second February Selectboard meeting may be held in the meeting room at the PSB; a building tour could be part of that meeting.

11. Langhus suggested that the Selectboard defer agenda item #11 to another meeting, and the other Selectboard members agreed.

12. Correspondence (Discussion/Action Item). Flanders **moved** (2nd Langhus) to receive correspondence from Will Smith regarding the Town Plan; from Patricia Derrick regarding Illsley Road; from Lynn McCormick and Richard Adams regarding the Board of Listers; from Marcia Calloway regarding the Dyke Property and Town Plan; from John Pepper regarding the Board of Listers; from Charlotte Metcalf regarding the Town Plan; from Ernie Ciccotelli regarding the Board of Listers; from Chris Moore regarding the Town website; from Henry Scheier regarding the Board of Listers; from Stuart Richards regarding the Town Plan; from Cheryl Lindberg regarding the 1/10/2018 draft Selectboard minutes; and from the Norwich Planning Commission regarding compliance with Act 171 related to Forestry for the Town Plan. **Motion passed unanimously.**

13. Selectboard: a) Approval of Minutes (Discussion/Action Item). Selectboard members agreed to defer this item for the next regular meeting.

b) Review of Next Agendas (Discussion/Action Item). Selectboard members agreed to the following agenda items for their next meeting:

- Approval of Meeting Minutes
- School Board / Selectboard Interaction
- Climate Change & Sustainability Resolution
- Illsley Road Discussion

14. Town Manager Evaluation (Discussion/Action Item). Langhus suggested the Selectboard schedule a special meeting for the sole purpose of providing the Town Manager with an evaluation. Selectboard members agreed to schedule the special meeting for 4:00 PM on Monday, January 29, 2018.

At 9:57 pm, Flanders **moved** (2nd Langhus) to adjourn. **Motion passed unanimously.**

Meeting adjourned at 9:57 pm.

By Miranda Bergmeier

Approved by the Selectboard on February 14, 2018

Mary Layton
Selectboard Chair

Next Special Meetings – January 29, 2018 at 4:00 PM
February 3, 2018 at 3:00 PM
February 6, 2018 at 7:00 PM

Next Regular Meeting – February 14, 2018 at 6:30 PM

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