

Minutes of the Selectboard Meeting of
Wednesday, February 14, 2018 at 6:30 pm

Members present: Mary Layton, Chair; Linda Cook; Stephen Flanders; John Langhus; Phil Dechert, Acting Town Manager; Miranda Bergmeier, Assistant to the Town Manager.

There were about 22 people in the audience.

Also participating: Stuart Richards, Charlotte Metcalf, Matt Swett, Jonathan Vincent, Elisabeth Gordon, Linda Gray, Cheryl Lindberg, Marcia Calloway, and Frank Manasek.

Mary Layton opened the meeting at 6:32 pm.

1. Approval of Agenda (Action Item). The Selectboard (SB) agreed to reorder agenda items to address in the order reflected in the minutes, as follows.
2. Public Comments (Discussion Item). Stuart Richards suggested a moment of silence for the Florida shooting victims and for healing thoughts for Town Manager, Herb Durfee. Linda Cook suggested including thoughts for everyone who is having difficulties. Charlotte Metcalf spoke about the Town Plan, reading from a written statement containing suggestions and questions. [The written statement will be included in the next SB meeting packet, as correspondence.] Matt Swett said that Fire Chief Steve Leinoff will be retiring effective March 9, 2018 and the Fire Department will be holding a reception in his honor on that day from 4:30-6:30 pm.
4. Jonathan Vincent asked the SB to appoint Barbara Currier to the Prudential Committee for the Norwich Fire District. He explained that the SB is the appropriate body to make appointments to the Prudential Committee. Cook **moved** (2nd Flanders) to appoint Barbara Currier to the Norwich Fire District Prudential Committee to fill the one-year vacancy created by Jonathan Vincent's resignation. **Motion passed unanimously.**
6. Board to Sign Accounts Payable/Warrants (Discussion/Action Item). Cook asked a question about a particular warrant item and Dechert did not have the answer at that time. Cook will follow up on her question at another time and said she would abstain from voting on the motion. Flanders **moved** (2nd Langhus) to approve check warrant #18-18 for Highway Garage Fund in the amount of \$82,967.48; for Fire Equipment Fund in the amount of \$2,607.44; for Public Safety Facility Fund in the amount of \$99,256.27; for Highway Equipment Fund in the amount of \$98,427.00; and for General Fund in the amount of \$1,843,037.37. **Motion passed 3 – 0 (Cook abstained).**
8. Elisabeth Gordon Request to Present Play at Town Meeting (Discussion/Action Item). Elisabeth Gordon spoke to the SB about her request to stage a reading of a sequel she has written to last year's play read before Town Informational Meeting. SB members said that the play had been well-received by meeting attendees. Flanders moved (2nd Cook) to approve the presentation of a play by Elisabeth Gordon prior to the informational meeting on March 5, 2018. **Motion passed unanimously.**
10. Approve and Sign Certificate of Highway Mileage (Discussion/Action Item). SB members asked if there were any significant changes to the mileage certificate from last year. Dechert explained that there were not. The only change is the addition of a very small portion of Rte. 5 alongside Tracy Hall. Flanders **moved** (2nd Cook) to authorize the Acting Town Manager to approve and sign the Certificate of Highway Mileage. **Motion passed unanimously.**

5. Climate Change & Sustainability Resolution (Discussion/Action Item). Linda Gray spoke to the SB and said that the proposed resolution is a symbolic gesture, but it can still carry weight by showing leadership on this issue. Gray said that saying “yes” to the resolution means that the Town would try to track actions taken to limit greenhouse emissions. Norwich is already doing some things, and there are future actions the Town could consider, also. Cook had questions and objections to some of the “strong” language in the resolution. Langhus explained that he submitted a marked-up version of the resolution for SB consideration, wherein he had removed some of the “charged” language. Langhus will work with Cook to craft edits to the resolution and bring back to the next SB meeting. Cheryl Lindberg said that she is concerned that approval of this resolution would cost the Town money by compelling the Town to spend more money in the future. Flanders said that the resolution would merely direct the SB to think differently about energy use, rather than compel any specific expenditure.

9. Town Plan: Process and Next Steps (Discussion/Action Item). Flanders said that he agreed with the tenor of Langhus’s suggested edits to the Town Plan [included in the SB meeting packet]. Cook said that she wants to compare the versions submitted by Flanders, Langhus, and members of the public to come up with the SB version of the Town Plan. Flanders suggested that two SB members take the various versions and input and synthesize them for review. SB members agreed to this approach. Cook and Pepper will do that work. Flanders then suggested that the SB discuss Flanders’s and Langhus’s revisions to see where they contrast and where they agree. Flanders and then Langhus proceeded to discuss their respective edits. Map 11 was discussed and it was suggested to alter the map to show the current zoning areas – to remove the controversial new zone in the proposed Town Plan’s map 11. Layton said the Town Plan needs to be open to a variety of approaches to increase affordable housing. Charlotte Metcalf said that she wants there to be separation between the village center and any proposed development area. Marcia Calloway expressed concern about the possible elimination of Act 250 protections and requirements. She read from a memo she handed to the board – which will be included in the next Selectboard meeting packet as correspondence. Frank Manasek spoke about assumptions being made about housing density. Stuart Richards said the central question is how much growth is the right amount and would like a survey to solicit public input on the issue.

**The Selectboard conducted a minute of silence, as planned.

3. Approval of the minutes of the 12/6/2017, 12/13/2017, 1/10/2018, 1/17/2018, 1/20/18-1/23/2018, 1/24/2018, and 1/29/2018 Selectboard meetings (Discussion/Action Item). SB members agreed to amend the 1/20-1/23 minutes to include Pam Smith’s suggestions and agreed to add Cheryl Lindberg’s suggested language to the 1/10 minutes. SB members also agreed to correct the incorrect or incomplete names in the 1/20-1/23 minutes. Flanders **moved** (2nd Langhus) to approve the minutes of the December 6, 2017, December 13, 2017, January 10, 2018, January 17, 2018, January 20 – 23, 2018, January 24, 2018, and January 29, 2018 Selectboard meetings with amendments put forward and names corrected. **Motion passed unanimously.**

11. Correspondence (Discussion/Action Item). Flanders **moved** (2nd Langhus) to receive correspondence from Tracey Kawecky regarding the Town Plan; from Pam Smith regarding the Town Plan; from Marcia Calloway regarding the Town Plan; from Calli Guion regarding the Town Plan; from Christopher Katucki regarding the Town Plan; from Lindsay Putnam regarding the Town Plan; from Ernie Ciccotelli regarding affordable housing; from Charlotte Metcalf regarding the Town Plan; from Tracey Hayes regarding the Town Plan; from Omer Trajman regarding the Town Plan; from Colin Calloway regarding the Town Plan; from Chris Moore regarding the Town Plan; from Upper Valley Haven regarding donations to the Food Shelf; and from Stuart Richards regarding the Town Plan. **Motion passed unanimously.**

7. Town Manager Report (Discussion Item). Phil Dechert provided a brief report, given Herb Durfee's absence due to a serious car accident. Dechert said that the Public Safety Building is almost done, with a punch list of minor items remaining to be completed. SB members discussed the possibility of holding the 2/28/2018 SB meeting in the meeting/training room at the new building. They decided that they will do so, if the meeting space is ready. Dechert said that the DPW building has had a leak in its roof since 2000, and water has gotten into the insulation and created black mold. During construction, the insulation will need to be removed and replaced. Dechert said that hiring processes are underway for two positions: Administrative Clerk and Fire Chief. Cheryl Lindberg said that the Board of Listers would like to stay involved in the Administrative Clerk process.

12. a. Selectboard – Town Manager Evaluation (Discussion/Action Item). At this point, Flanders **moved** (2nd Langhus) to enter executive session to discuss a personnel matter, pursuant to 1 VSA § 313(a)(3) and to potentially include Phil Dechert and/or Doug Robinson. **Motion passed unanimously.**

At 9:43 pm, the Selectboard moved into executive session.

Flanders **moved** (2nd Langhus) to enter public session. **Motion passed unanimously.**

At 10:22 pm, the Selectboard moved into public session.

Cook will explore options for an Interim Town Manager and bring those to the SB's next meeting for discussion. Langhus **moved** (2nd Flanders) to ratify the appointment of Phil Dechert as Acting Town Manager until further notice. Cook explained that she will abstain from voting because she objects to putting off addressing the issue until this meeting, and had wanted to meet earlier. SB members agreed that, in the future, they should have a standing plan for such events. **Motion passed 3 to 0 (Cook abstained).**

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

- Town Plan Survey for Town Meeting
- Fire Chief Resolution
- Interim Town Manager Options
- Climate Change / Sustainability Resolution
- Selectboard Presentation of Budget for Town Meeting

At 10:28 pm, Flanders **moved** (2nd Langhus) to adjourn. **Motion passed unanimously.**

Meeting adjourned at 10:28 pm.

By Miranda Bergmeier

Approved by the Selectboard on February 28, 2018

Mary Layton
Selectboard Chair

Next Meeting – February 28, 2018 at 6:30 PM

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