

Minutes of the Selectboard Meeting of
Wednesday, February 28, 2018 at 6:30 pm

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

There were about 12 people in the audience. The meeting was held at the new public safety building at 10 Hazen Street.

Also participating: Stuart Richards, Cheryl Lindberg, Linda Gray, Charlotte Metcalf, Kris Clement, Carolyn Frye, Claudette Brochu, and Marcia Calloway.

Mary Layton opened the meeting at 6:40 pm.

1. Approval of Agenda (Action Item). The Selectboard (SB) agreed to move item #9 (Town Plan Survey) to a spot immediately following Public Comments.
2. Public Comments (Discussion Item). Stuart Richards asked about the status of a \$45,000.00 affordable housing fund that had been established some years ago. Richards suggested that the Selectboard renew its commitment to affordable housing by setting aside \$45,000.00 for the affordable housing fund. Dechert said that 8 or 9 years ago a fund was created to facilitate affordable housing in Norwich. At present, the fund has expired, not having been renewed when it came up for renewal. The fund could be reinstated at a future town meeting, but not at the next March 2018 meeting, because it was not included in the warning. Flanders said that this Selectboard meeting is his last, as he is retiring from service on the Selectboard. Flanders said that is has been a challenge and pleasure to serve on the Selectboard. He said they've accomplished good things together, especially the new Police/Fire building. Cook 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, which everyone is welcome to attend. Pepper said that he appreciates Flanders's efforts and hard work on the Selectboard, particularly, his work in producing things for the Selectboard to consider.
9. Town Plan Survey for Town Meeting (Discussion/Action Item). Flanders and Layton said they'd be happy to put off a survey until the next Selectboard meeting. Pepper said he'd like to send out a survey, even if it's not perfect. Stuart Richards said that the Town had professional help with the 2005 survey they sent out, and a lot of effort went into it.
3. Fire Chief Resolution (Discussion/Action Item). Cook and Flanders said the resolution is in honor of the retiring Fire Chief, Steve Leinoff, and gave to Selectboard members a copy of the proposed resolution for consideration. After brief discussion, Flanders **moved** (2nd Pepper) to approve the resolution regarding the Norwich Fire Chief. **Motion passed unanimously.**
4. Contract Assessor Discussion (Discussion/Action Item). Layton explained that Bill Krajewski, the contract assessor, has sent a letter to the Selectboard exercising the option to terminate the current contract effective June 30, 2018. Cheryl Lindberg said that the Board of Listers will hopefully meet with Krajewski soon. Lindberg hopes that the site visits and other contract work will be completed by the end of June. Linda Gray asked if the process for getting a new assessor will happen so there won't be a gap in service. Lindberg said that is the goal.
5. Climate Change & Sustainability Resolution (Discussion/Action Item). Langhus said that he

put together a revised resolution which he submitted today to fellow Selectboard members. Charlotte Metcalf said that she included some questions in her correspondence to the Selectboard. Metcalf said a small number of towns had joined the coalition. Linda Gray said that the action of the resolution is to join the Vermont Climate Pledge Coalition; any future actions or expenditures would need to be approved by the Selectboard. This resolution is about the Selectboard's intent to take actions in the future, but it is not a binding contract requiring any specific action. Lindberg said she didn't think the Selectboard should vote on this today, because it wasn't in the meeting packet. Cook is concerned about the resolution's reference to the U.S. commitment to the Paris climate agreement. Charlotte Metcalf, Kris Clement, and Stuart Richards all expressed concern about the proposed resolution. Langhus said the resolution has been discussed by the Selectboard in the most recent prior meetings, and the resolution version he submitted to the Selectboard today contained no new language from the one submitted in the last meeting; it is merely a "cleaned up" final edition. Langhus said he thinks the Selectboard should vote on the resolution during tonight's meeting. Flanders then read the three action sentences of the resolution. After some more discussion, Flanders **moved** (2nd Pepper) to approve a resolution to join the Vermont Climate Pledge Coalition and direct the Town Manager to work with town departments, committees, and residents to reduce greenhouse emissions. **Motion passed 4 to 1 (no- Cook).**

6. Board to Sign Accounts Payable/Warrants (Discussion/Action Item). Flanders **moved** (2nd Pepper) to approve check warrant #18-18 for Records Restoration Fund in the amount of \$2,580.00; for Fire Equipment Fund in the amount of \$5,073.00; for Public Safety Facility Fund in the amount of \$4,868.95; for Highway Equipment Fund in the amount of \$43,571.00; and for General Fund in the amount of \$2,114,825.20. **Motion passed unanimously.**

7. Town Manager Report (Discussion Item). Dechert, as Acting Town Manager, provided a brief report. Dechert said that Town Manager Durfee is out of the hospital now and at home, and is headed in the right direction with his recovery. There is no word yet on when he will be back at work. There will be an open house on March 9th in the new public safety building. The DPW building renovation and addition is underway. Some existing insulation has to be replaced to remove black mold. No estimate has yet been received for that work. Hiring for a new Administrative Clerk is underway. The Fire Chief hiring process also underway. Next, we will need to hire a new Planning Director. Our new police sergeant is starting work on March 5, 2018. Dechert plans to bring in a consultant to assist with Planning Department work he is unable to complete because of his work as Acting Town Manager.

8. Selectboard Budget Presentation for Town Meeting (Discussion/Action Item). Flanders said it would be nice to add to the presentation some graphics from the Town Report. The Selectboard members discussed the particulars of the presentation and discussed options for which member(s) should present which portions of the presentation. Stuart Richards said that the tax rate doesn't matter to him, but it matters to others and we need to reduce the tax rate in Norwich so people won't need to move away.

10. Correspondence (Discussion/Action Item). Pepper suggested that a Selectboard member should contact the senders of correspondence to discuss that correspondence as part of the future procedures for receiving correspondence. The Selectboard will discuss that procedure at its organizational meeting next week. Cook **moved** (2nd Flanders) to receive correspondence from Marcia Calloway regarding the Town Plan; from Charlotte Metcalf regarding the Town Plan; and from Stuart Richards regarding the Town Plan. **Motion passed unanimously.**

11. Selectboard –
 - a. Approval of Minutes (Action Item). After some discussion of proposed edits, Flanders **moved** (2nd Pepper) to approve the minutes of the February 3-6, 2018 and February 14, 2018 Selectboard meetings. **Motion passed unanimously.**
 - b. Review of Next Agendas (Discussion/Action Item). The Selectboard agreed to include in their March 7, 2018 agenda the usual organizational meeting agenda items.

Langhus left the meeting at 8:45 pm, due to an emergency requiring his attention.

- c. Dechert explained that he cannot work for Norwich past April 30, 2018 because of VMERS rules. Layton **moved** (2nd Pepper) to enter executive session to discuss the Town Manager's status, pursuant to 1 VSA §313(a)(3). **Motion passed 3 to 1 (no- Flanders).** The Selectboard moved into executive session at 8:55 pm. Flanders **moved** (2nd Pepper) to enter public session. **Motion passed unanimously.** At 9:07 pm, the Selectboard moved into public session.

At 9:10 pm, Cook **moved** (2nd Flanders) to adjourn. **Motion passed unanimously.**

Meeting adjourned at 9:10 pm.

By Miranda Bergmeier

Approved by the Selectboard on March 7, 2018

John Pepper
Selectboard Chair

Next Meeting – March 7, 2018 at 6:30 PM

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