

Minutes of the Special Selectboard Meeting of Wednesday, December 6, 2017 at 6:30 pm

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

There were about 22 people in the audience.

Also participating: Charlotte Metcalf, Pam Smith, Stuart Richards, Beth Kopp, Lucinda Walker, Robin Rice-Voigt, Cheryl Lindberg, Claudette Brochu, Tim Cronan, Phil Dechert, Marcia Calloway, Colin Calloway, Miriam Richards, and Frank Manasek.

Layton opened the meeting at 6:37 pm.

1. Approval of Agenda (Action Item). The Selectboard agreed to proceed with the agenda as drafted.
2. Public Comments (Discussion Item). Charlotte Metcalf read a prepared statement regarding the Town Plan, and gave the statement to the Selectboard for inclusion in their 12/13/17 meeting packet as correspondence. Pam Smith suggested that the Selectboard raise the Town Clerk's pay up to grade 21. Pam gave the Selectboard a copy of a page from the Condrey Report, which hand-out will be included in the 12/13/17 meeting packet as correspondence. Stuart Richards expressed disapproval of a staff member's behavior at the 11/29/17 Selectboard meeting.
3. Outside Agencies Seeking New or Increased FYE 2019 Budget Appropriations (Discussion Item). Beth Kopp, Director of Youth-In-Action (YIA) explained that her organization was not seeking an increased appropriation over last year, but she is attending the meeting in order to answer any questions the Selectboard might have about her program. Mary Layton asked how many students participate in YIA, and Kopp said that over 300 students participate. Lucinda Walker, Director of the Norwich Public Library, told the Selectboard that the library is having its roof fixed now, and that 307 people came through the library doors today. She said that the library is used for a wide variety of activities and services, and they are requesting an increased appropriation in order to continue those activities and services. Cook **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Flanders) to include the Norwich Public Library request for a \$275,000 appropriation on the ballot for the 2018 Town Meeting. **Motion passed unanimously.** Robin Rice-Voigt spoke on behalf of The Family Place, and said that they are not asking for an increased appropriation, and offered to answer any questions the Selectboard might have. Rice-Voigt said that The Family Place has served approximately 1,200 families in the area, including 40-50 from Norwich.
4. FYE 2019 Budget (Discussion/Action Item). John Pepper spoke about the 10% cut exercise in budget planning as being not intended to strike fear, but rather to help people understand their budgets. Also, Pepper clarified that when each department comes up with ways to cut 10%, then the total of all departments' 10% is an overall 10% reduction. John Langhus said that the 10% cut exercise is an analytic tool to reexamine priorities within an organization's mission. Pepper would like to look at ways to increase revenue without raising taxes. Layton wants to look at the sidewalk maintenance fund. Cook thinks there is a way to cut 10% from the budget without cutting any personnel. Flanders spoke about the memo he submitted in the meeting packet regarding possible cuts in the Fire Department and in the Assessor's Department,

including changing to a five-year reappraisal cycle. Langhus expressed support for changing to a five-year cycle. Cheryl Lindberg said that the Board of Listers is not prepared to comment on Flanders's memo, and presented to the Selectboard a copy of a page taken from the latest VLCT compensation survey. This copy will be included in the 12/13/17 packet. Claudette Brochu said that she would be extremely disappointed if there were not reductions in this budget. Flanders raised a question about the amount the Town is paying to rent hydrants from the Fire District. Langhus asked if there had been discussion about the possibility of the Town and the Fire District joining together. Tim Cronan said that the fire hydrants serve properties outside the Fire District because the fire trucks use the hydrants to fill up and shuttle to other properties. Cronan said that the Selectboard received a memo explaining the hydrant charges (which memo will be included in the 12/13/17 packet). Flanders spoke about Andy Hodgdon's correspondence to the Selectboard (in the 12/6/17 packet); Flanders said that the level to which the Town wants to maintain/repair the sidewalks will determine how much will need to be spent.

5. Town Plan Receipt (Discussion/Action Item). The Town Plan has been approved by the Planning Commission and submitted to the Selectboard. Marcia Calloway said that she has sent a letter to the Vermont Attorney General (which will be part of the 12/13/17 Selectboard packet) and asked the Selectboard not to act to receive the plan until the State has answered her letter. Colin Calloway wants the Selectboard to reject the Town Plan. Charlotte Metcalf voiced objection to the tone of various emails concerning the Town Plan. Claudette Brochu, Stuart Richards, and Frank Manasek expressed concerns about the Town Plan and its development. Flanders **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Pepper) to receive the Town Plan as prepared by the Norwich Planning Commission. **Motion passed 4 to 1 (no- Cook)**. Flanders suggested the Selectboard wait until the Selectboard meeting to set the date for the first hearing. Herb Durfee explained that the Selectboard now "owns" the Town Plan, not the Planning Commission, and the first public hearing has to happen 30-120 days after today (date of receipt). The next hearing can happen whenever the Selectboard deems appropriate. Charlotte Metcalf expressed concern about possible zoning changes. Miriam Richards and Stuart Richards each recommend that the town conduct a comprehensive survey of the townspeople.

6. Board to Sign Accounts Payable/Warrants (Discussion/Action Item). Flanders **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Pepper) to approve check warrant #18-12 for General Fund in the amount of \$103,581.82; for Tracy Hall Fund in the amount of \$2,818.00; for DPW–Paving Fund in the amount of \$4,294.66; for Public Safety Facility Fund in the amount of \$17,415.75; and for Highway Garage Fund in the amount of \$39,022.46. **Motion passed unanimously**.

7. Town Manager Report (Discussion Item). Durfee reported that preparing for meetings has been a large portion of recent work, including doing research for Selectboard budget and negotiations. FEMA came to Tracy Hall today for a meeting and said that the Town is doing well with our documentation; Nott's continues to do roadwork until winter conditions stop them. Durfee is continuing the work of "rebooting" workplace safety, and trainings are being conducted and scheduled.

8. Correspondence (Discussion/Action Item). Flanders **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Pepper) to receive correspondence from Andy Hodgdon regarding sidewalks; from Two Rivers-Ottawaquechee Regional Commission regarding Draft TRORC Bylaws; from Pam Smith regarding the proposed salaries; from Norwich Recreation Department regarding budget comparison; from Charlotte Metcalf regarding property assessment; and from Jeff Goodrich regarding TRORC. **Motion passed unanimously**.

10. Selectboard

a) Approval of the minutes of the 11/8/2017 and 11/25/2017 Selectboard meetings (Discussion/Action Item). Flanders **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Pepper) to approve the minutes of the November 8, 2017 and November 15, 2017 Selectboard meetings, with revisions put forward. **Motion passed unanimously.**

b) Review of Next Agendas (Discussion/Action Item). The Selectboard agreed on the following items for the agenda of the Special Selectboard meeting of December 13, 2017:

6:00 Start with Executive Session re: Drake Mediation  
Town Plan Process  
Additions/Subtractions to Budget  
Union Contract (Executive Session Possible)  
Errors & Omissions re: Grand List

11. Negotiated Agreement (Discussion/Action Item). Flanders **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Pepper) to find that premature public knowledge would clearly place the public body at a substantial disadvantage. **Motion passed unanimously.** Flanders **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Pepper) to enter executive session to discuss the negotiated agreement, pursuant to 1 VSA §313(a)(1)(B). **Motion passed unanimously.** The Selectboard moved into executive session at 8:48 pm.

Flanders **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Pepper) to enter public session. **Motion passed unanimously.** The Selectboard moved into public session at 9:31 pm.

At 9:31 pm, Cook **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Flanders) to adjourn. **Motion passed unanimously.**

Meeting adjourned at 9:32 pm.

By Miranda Bergmeier

Approved by the Selectboard on February 14, 2018

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Mary Layton  
Selectboard Chair

Next Meeting – December 13, 2017 at 6:00 PM

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