

Minutes of the Special Organizational Selectboard Meeting of
Wednesday, March 7, 2018 at 6:30 pm

Members present: John Pepper, Chair; Claudette Brochu, Vice Chair; Linda Cook; John Langhus; Mary Layton; Phil Dechert, Acting Town Manager; Miranda Bergmeier, Assistant to the Town Manager.

There were about 7 people in the audience.

Also participating: Cheryl Lindberg, Dennis Kaufman, Demo Sofronas, Jay Whitehair, and Matt Swett.

Phil Dechert opened the meeting at 6:30 pm.

1. Nominations and Election of Chair (Action Item). Langhus **nominated** (2nd Layton) Pepper as Selectboard Chair. After brief discussion, Pepper was elected Selectboard Chair by unanimous vote.

2. Nominations and Election of Vice Chair (Action Item). Brochu **nominated** (2nd Langhus) Cook as Vice Chair. After brief discussion, Cook did not receive the necessary three votes. Langhus then **nominated** (2nd Pepper) Brochu as Vice Chair. After brief discussion, Brochu was elected Selectboard Vice Chair by unanimous vote.

Dechert passed leadership of the meeting to the newly-elected Chair, John Pepper.

3. Approval of Agenda (Action Item). The Selectboard (SB) agreed to proceed with the agenda mostly as drafted, but to move Public Comment to just before Review of Next Agenda. Brochu asked why does SB put approval of the minutes at the end of the meetings. SB discussed other possibilities for how to address minutes approval.

4. Choose Official Town Newspaper (Action Item). Layton **moved** (2nd Langhus) that the Valley News be the official paper of the Town of Norwich. **Motion passed unanimously.**

5. Set Selectboard Regular Meeting Schedule. SB members discussed possible days other than Wednesdays to hold regular meetings. Dennis Kaufman said that SB meetings should be convenient to the public because the SB serves the public. Demo Sofronas said that CATV8 has set their schedule for other towns on other days, so moving Norwich's SB meetings might present some challenge for CATV8. Cheryl Lindberg said that the SB meeting night would affect the accounts payable schedule. Langhus **moved** (2nd Brochu) to set the Selectboard's regularly scheduled meetings for the 2nd and 4th Thursdays of the month at 6:30 pm, contingent on availability of the meeting room, starting April 12, except as modified by the Selectboard or meeting calendar. **Motion passed 3 to 2 (yes- Brochu, Langhus, Pepper; no- Cook, Layton).**

6. Open Positions (Discussion/Action Item). Langhus asked about the status of the finance committee. Cheryl Lindberg provided some information about the origins of the finance committee and said that she would serve on the finance committee. Lindberg suggested that it might be a good idea to simplify the finance committee so it's less complicated. Brochu asked if it would be possible to mail a list of open positions to all Norwich households. Langhus **moved** (2nd Pepper) to approve the advertisements for open positions, advertise them in the usual manner and look into advertising via mail, as well. **Motion passed unanimously.**

7. Authorize Chair or Vice Chair to Sign Payroll Warrants (Discussion/Action Item). Cook said that sometimes both the Chair and Vice Chair are unavailable, so provision should be made for that

situation. Langhus **moved** (2nd Pepper) to authorize the Chair or the Vice Chair, or the Chair's designee, to examine and sign the payroll warrant. **Motion passed unanimously.**

8. Authorize Chair or Vice Chair to Sign Accounts Payable (Discussion/Action Item). Langhus **moved** (2nd Brochu) to authorize the Chair or Vice Chair, or the Chair's designee, to examine and sign warrants against the Town when approval of the warrant is for expenditures that are within the purchasing authority of the Town Manager and are necessary to be drawn between regular Selectboard meetings or when the time between regular Selectboard meetings exceeds two weeks, provided that the warrant will be included in the Selectboard packet for the next regular Selectboard meeting. **Motion passed unanimously.**

9. Adopt Procedure for Receipt of Correspondence (Discussion/Action Item). Pepper said the SB has not been following its written policy on correspondence. The written policy is to summarize and respond to the correspondence. Pepper suggested the correspondence be moved up to earlier in meetings – closer to public comment. Pepper suggested that SB members contact people who send in correspondence to get a fuller picture of the situation. Brochu asked about getting correspondence posted on the website. Dennis Kaufman thanked the SB for looking at addressing correspondence in a new way. Layton **moved** (2nd Langhus) that the Norwich Selectboard adopt the Procedure for Receipt of Correspondence as presented. **Motion passed unanimously.**

10. Adopt Rules for Conduct of Regular and Special Selectboard Meetings (Discussion/Action Item). Brochu said she wants the SB Chair to summarize any decisions made and make a statement of any next steps to be taken on each agenda item. Brochu proposed amendment language. Pepper asked about the SB vision. Brochu proposed putting the vision on the next agenda. Langhus **moved** (2nd Layton) that the Norwich Selectboard adopt the Rules for Conduct of Regular and Special Meetings as presented and amended. **Motion passed unanimously.**

11. VLCT Spring Selectboard Institute 3/24/2018 (Discussion Item). Pepper and other SB members expressed interest in attending the Selectboard Institute. Pepper will email the names to the Town Manager's office for completion of registration.

12. Public Comment (Discussion Item). Jay Whitehair spoke regarding the Norwich Fire Chief job search panel. Whitehair said he thinks that local Norwich firehouse people were overlooked in forming the panel, and more should be added. Dechert explained that right now there are four people identified for the hiring advisory panel, and Dechert will be adding two more people. Whitehair said he thought it would be good to add two more people, as Dechert has proposed. Matt Swett, Assistant Fire Chief, said the last time a new fire chief was hired, the Fire Department members had more direct involvement, and this time is a new process, so people are reacting to that. Cook said that the new Town Manager is in the process of hiring three positions and the SB needs to give the TM the leeway to hire his employees. Cook believes that the TM will listen to the input provided from various people. Pepper said it sounds like the process will take into account local input and expert input.

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

- Finance Committee

- Review & Adopt Vision & Guiding Principles

- Coalition for Climate Change & Sustainability Resolution Press Release

- Norwich Farm Creamery

- Posting of Open Positions – Update from Brochu

- Selectboard Calendar of Meetings

- Selectboard Goals for the Year

14. Town Manager Discussion – executive session may be needed (Discussion/Action Item). Langhus **moved** (2nd Brochu) to enter executive session to discuss the Town Manager’s status, pursuant to 1 VSA §313(a)(3). **Motion passed unanimously.**
At 9:15 pm, the Selectboard moved into executive session.

Langhus **moved** (2nd Brochu) to enter public session. **Motion passed unanimously.**
At 9:50 pm, the Selectboard moved into public session.

Langhus **moved** (2nd Brochu) to delegate to Claudette Brochu, Linda Cook, and John Pepper the authority to correspond and interact with our town staff and Town Manager regarding the Town Manager’s absence. **Motion passed unanimously.**

At 9:52 pm, Langhus **moved** (2nd Brochu) to adjourn. **Motion passed unanimously.**

Meeting adjourned at 9:52 pm.

By Miranda Bergmeier

Approved by the Selectboard on March 28, 2018

John Pepper
Selectboard Chair

Next Meeting – March 14, 2018 at 6:30 PM

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