

Minutes of the Special Selectboard Meeting of  
Wednesday, December 12, 2018 at 6:30 pm

Members present: John Pepper, Chair; Claudette Brochu, Vice Chair; Linda Cook; John Langhus (joined meeting at 7:21 pm); Mary Layton; Herb Durfee, Town Manager; Miranda Bergmeier, Assistant to the Town Manager.

There were about 26 people in the audience.

Also participating: Demo Sofronas, Rob Gurwitt, Cheryl Lindberg, Bonnie Munday, Rod Francis, Peter Orner, Sarah Rooker, Lucinda Walker, Karen Harris, Steve Keller, Randy Richardson, Len Brown, Donna Girot, Marcia Calloway, Colin Calloway, and Larry Wiggins.

1. Approval of Agenda. SB members agreed to move the consent agenda to just after public comment.
2. Public Comment. Cheryl Lindberg said that she will be away for the holidays and the assistant treasurers will be able to help with payroll, as needed.
4. Consent Agenda. Pepper said the Town Survey results have been compiled and are ready to be posted on the Norwich website. Cook said that Jill Kearney-Niles is retiring as Recreation Director. Cook also said the Affordable Housing Subcommittee is working on criteria for use of the fund. Durfee said the Transfer Station will continue to accept returnables and the first \$500 of any collected deposits will go to the Norwich Police Cadets fund. Any amount over the first \$500 will go into the Citizens Assistance fund. Cook asked if the Selectboard wants to send a letter to Dave Sickle regarding his retirement from VLCT PACIF. Cook also mentioned letters from town students asking about adding recycling capabilities at the transfer station. Durfee said that he has been answering multiple calls and emails on this topic. Layton **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Cook) to approve the November 28, 2018 Selectboard minutes as drafted. **Motion passed 4 to 0 (Langhus absent).** Layton **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Brochu) to approve the warrants/payables. **Motion passed 4 to 0 (Langhus absent).** Layton **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Cook) to accept the correspondence. **Motion passed 4 to 0 (Langhus absent).**
3. FY2020 Budget. a. Outside Agencies. Demo Sofronas, representing Advance Transit, spoke about the increase in local ridership of Advance Transit's various services. Cook said the public enjoys using the buses. Demo Sofronas spoke on behalf of the American Legion and said that they are asking for funds to put together the annual parade, per usual. Demo Sofronas spoke on behalf of the Cemetery Commission and said they maintain the town's graveyards. This year, they are asking for an increase in appropriation to cover increased grounds keeping costs. This is the first increase in 12 years. Peter Orner spoke on behalf of the Child Care Center of Norwich, which is requesting money for scholarships, per usual. Sarah Rooker spoke on behalf of the Norwich Historical Society. Rooker said that, over the last year they have worked on disaster planning to preserve items in their collection, in addition to providing educational programs. Demo Sofronas spoke on behalf of the Lions Club and said that their request for funding is in support of the fireworks display at the annual Norwich Fair in late July. Lucinda Walker spoke on behalf of the Norwich Public Library. Walker said that last year, there were over 49,000 visits to the library, including over 5,000 virtual visits, 5,996 people attended 311 programs, 26,000 separate uses of Library Wi-Fi, and use by students after school. The library is asking for an increased appropriation amount over last year and they have worked very hard to minimize expenses. Walker said that the library is asking this year for a \$50,000 appropriation for capital expenses, including repairs for cracks in the foundation. Walker said the Norwich Selectboard Minutes – 12/12/2018 Mtg

library has public board meetings and encourages people to attend them. Karen Harris, President of the Library Board of Trustees, said that they take their budget and requests for town funding very seriously, and work to keep spending down. \*John Langhus joined the meeting at this point (7:21 pm)\* Steve Keller spoke on behalf of SEVCA, which provides a variety of services to low-income residents. Last year, SEVCA served 33 Norwich residents in 23 households. SEVCA provides heating/utility assistance, VITA program, Headstart, and ACA navigators. Randy Richardson spoke on behalf of the Upper Valley Trails Alliance (UVTA), which is asking for the same amount as last year. The UVTA does a variety of trail projects, using a lot of volunteers. The UVTA works largely on conservation; getting people into nature so they will want to protect it. Len Brown, Executive Director of the White River Council on Aging (aka Bugbee Senior Center), said that they are requesting the same amount as in prior years. His organization serves meals, onsite and delivered, and provides social programs and a medical equipment lending program. Donna Girot spoke on behalf of CATV, and said that they are asking for a new appropriation of \$2,000 because they are looking at losing most of their funding, due to proposed changes in the rules around cable company support of public access TV.

3. b.ii. Continued Budget Development. Bonnie Munday, Town Clerk, was present to answer any Selectboard member questions. Brochu asked if Munday had included in her budget enough funds to cover necessary records restoration. Munday said that she typically does about \$9,000 worth of restoration each year. Larry Wiggins, Public Works Director, was present to answer Selectboard questions. Brochu raised concern about the number of pick-up trucks in the town's inventory. Wiggins said that the town has 2 regular pick-ups and the remaining trucks are 1-ton trucks. Wiggins proposes trading in the director's truck, plus 1 unnecessary 1-ton to reduce the fleet by 1 truck. Brochu asked about the "other projects" undefined line items – she said she is bothered by that lack of specificity. Wiggins agreed that he wants to be more specific, but lacks information and experience with Norwich's needs to evaluate where cuts can be made or specifics added. One place where Wiggins was able to cut was in paving projects. Next year, Wiggins said, he will be highly specific. Cook thanked Wiggins for reconfiguring the plow routes. She said she has gotten a lot of positive feedback about plowing. Cook asked if we need 2 graders. Wiggins said the town needs 2 graders for emergency response to road damage, and to keep up roads to their current standards. Cook would like to add \$2,500 into the Tracy Hall Fund to pay for energy efficiency improvements. Langhus thanked Wiggins for his work on the budget. Langhus asked about the wood chipper and the new plow truck. Layton asked about inventory control. Layton is concerned about keeping track of equipment. Layton asked Wiggins's opinion about what would happen if we suspend paving projects for one year. Wiggins said that, in his experience, it is much more expensive to repair a road that has been left to deteriorate than it does to perform regular maintenance. Pepper asked about road crew wages and the crew vacancy. Wiggins said that safety is a real concern and if we didn't fill the vacancy, we wouldn't have enough people to do all the necessary work without overworking them and sacrificing safety standards.

3.b.i. Story Kitchen. Rob Gurwitt, co-owner of Story Kitchen, handed out a spreadsheet showing viewership numbers of various stories on DailyUV. Cook said that she wants to know how we can reach computer non-users. Gurwitt said the town used to have a newsletter that was mailed out 3 times per year for a cost of \$3,000 per year. Langhus said he doesn't support going forward with this expense, because he's concerned that the articles are more like advertising than information sharing. Kris Clement handed out the Communication Committee charge from several years ago. The SB members agreed to put off any decision on Story Kitchen until a future meeting.

5. Planning Commission – Number of Members. Ernie Ciccotelli said that he plans to resign from the Development Review Board, in order to maintain a manageable workload. Cook **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Norwich Selectboard Minutes – 12/12/2018 Mtg

Langhus) to increase the membership of the Planning Commission from seven to nine members and to appoint all applicants, retroactive to November 14, 2018: Ernie Ciccotelli and Brian Loeb to terms ending in 2022, and Leah Romano to an unexpired term ending in 2019. **Motion passed unanimously.**

6. Update of Meeting with Two Rivers Ottauquechee Regional Commission (TRORC). Langhus said that he and Layton met with the TRORC executive director to ask TRORC to reconsider their decision. It was clear that the commission would not reconsider. The remaining option is to rewrite the Town Plan, which is Langhus's preference. Rod Francis, Planning & Zoning Director, said that he thinks a rewrite could be done in one year with outside consulting help. This would require additional funds to accomplish the rewrite. He thinks going back to square one with a rewrite is a good idea and will require intensive outreach to the community and also some specialized services. Cook asked what additional funds would be required. Francis said he doesn't know exactly, but would guess approximately \$18,000. Marcia Calloway said she is pleased to hear about increased public outreach. She wants assurance that there will be meaningful engagement with diverse segments of the public. Colin Calloway wants to see the map go back to blank when the town restarts the process. Cook said we are starting anew with a new Planning Director and fresh Planning Commission members and we can move forward now.

SB members agreed to discuss general ideas about the FY2020 budget. Brochu said she wants to level-fund the SB budget. Langhus said he thinks it was good to use undesignated fund money for the July 1 storm expenses, but he wants to replenish the undesignated fund in FY2020, rather than put money into the various designated funds per usual yearly procedure. Langhus suggests foregoing those deposits for one year, but leave the budget line items as they are.

7. SB members agreed to defer agenda item #7 to a future meeting.

8. SB members agreed to defer agenda item #8 to a future meeting.

9. SB members agreed to defer agenda item #9 to the December 19, 2018 meeting.

10. SB members agreed to defer agenda item #10 to the December 19, 2018 meeting.

11. Future Meeting Agenda Items. SB members agreed to begin their December 19<sup>th</sup> meeting with a possible executive session for the Town Manager salary issue and then start the public session at approximately 7:00 pm. SB members agreed to the following as agenda items for the next meeting:

Town Manager Salary – Authorize Retroactive Step & CPI Adjustment

Financial Policies Update – Policy #1

Auditor's Report on FY2018

Town Firewood Supply

SB Goals Status

FY2020 Budget

At 10:36 pm, Cook **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Pepper) to adjourn. **Motion passed unanimously.**

Meeting adjourned at 10:36 pm.

By Miranda Bergmeier

Approved by the Selectboard on January 23, 2019

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John Pepper  
Selectboard Chair

Next Meeting – December 19, 2018 – Meeting at 6:30 PM

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