

Minutes of the Selectboard Meeting of
Wednesday, February 13, 2019 at 6:30 pm

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

There were about 70 people in the audience.

Also participating: Blythe Adams, Henry Anderson, Peter Arvold, Oliver Benedict, Bjorn Bungener, Milan Cantone, Selah Cheng, Andrew Cramer, Wyatt Daigle, Eliza des Cognets, Bryan Doucette, Carter Faill, Darius Faudie, Liam Kitchel, Jacobi Marotti, Kinnie Melamut, Peter Morig, AJ Myers, Roan Palm, Nathaniel Picconi-Eakin, Phineas Roy-Ollie, Ava Saemann, Matilda Siri, Emma Smith, John Taylor, Cosima Torresani, Millie Trombley, Twyla Weinstein, Mary Westrich, Elaine Waterman, Omer Trajman, Carolyn Frye, Jenn McMillan.

1. Approval of Agenda. Selectboard (SB) members agreed to add an agenda item just after #7 (Church Street Sidewalk) to discuss public comments about the Town Meeting warning article regarding spending from the Conservation Fund. Cook said no.

2. Marion Cross School 5th Graders' Presentation re: Recycling. Langhus introduced the topic, saying that the Marion Cross 5th graders have taken an interest in the Town's recycling program, and will make a presentation to the SB. Students spoke about the dangers to wildlife, especially ocean animals, and then dangers to humans. They talked about the effects of plastics on the Earth's climate. Students discussed the cities and towns around the country that have banned plastic bags. California and Hawaii have enacted statewide bans. Brattleboro, VT and Wilmington, VT have enacted bans and Middlebury, VT is working on passing a ban. Students said they asked around to recycling centers to find out what materials they can process. Terracycle is a company that processes materials. The ARCC in Barre, VT is a facility that accepts a wide variety of materials. TREX is a company that makes decking material out of certain plastic shopping bags. Thetford, VT has an arrangement with that company and uses Hannaford as a collection point. The students said that Addison County Solid Waste District accepts plastic film, such as grocery, produce, dry cleaning, and cereal bags. Marion Cross students have been circulating a petition to ban single-use plastic bags in Norwich. Some students talked to Norwich businesses that use plastic bags to find out what it would take to discontinue their use. They learned that Dan & Whit's has stockpiled a year's supply of bags, which represent a cost of \$500, so the students got a Byrne Foundation grant for \$500 to buy the bags from Dan & Whit's so they can switch to paper right away. Fogg's said that they could easily switch to paper bags, and King Arthur Flour said they don't use any plastic bags. Students asked all Norwich businesses whether they use plastics and, if they do, how could they move away from using plastics. Students contacted the Town of Brattleboro to ask how their ban has worked and how they enacted it. In conclusion, the students outlined their proposals for dealing with plastic waste: to set up a recycling collection for plastic film, such as an arrangement with TREX, and to ban plastic bags and Styrofoam. SB members thanked and congratulated the students. SB members agreed that they will take up this issue in a future meeting to explore an ordinance regarding plastics. Langhus **moved** (2nd Cook) to thank the Marion Cross School 5th grade class and their teacher, Jonathan Fenton, and commend them for their work on recycling issues for the benefit of Norwich. **Motion passed unanimously.**

3. Public Comment. Elaine Waterman said that she was upset about the draft letter in the SB packet that said the SB was interested in finding out if there is a way to develop a Safe Routes to School project that is agreeable to all parties (town, state, and homeowners). Pepper said the letter is a draft only, for SB consideration, and an attempt to find another solution within the framework of Norwich Selectboard Minutes – 2/13/2019 Mtg

the grant. Cook said we had already voted on a letter to send to the state of Vermont. Waterman thanked Pepper for the clarification. Omer Trajman said the Finance Committee has started looking at the financial policies, per the SB's request. They are divvying up the policies among Finance Committee members for further work. Cook said she's like to sit with Finance Committee members to continue this work. Carolyn Frye said that, in the past, before DPW handled Transfer Station operations, there was a Solid Waste Committee comprised of residents.

7. Church St. Sidewalk Project – Statue of Payment / Alternate Project. SB members agreed to move this agenda item to earlier in the meeting, to facilitate public participation on the issue. Pepper asked what fellow SB members thought about trying to have the State of Vermont agree to use the grant money for an alternate project. Layton said that she thought it would be good to make a clean break and move forward as the SB had previously agreed, which was to discontinue work on Safe Routes to School. Langhus and Brochu said that they agreed with this approach.

4. Paper Communications Sent to All of Norwich. Cook said that she spoke to Jenn McMillan about publishing SB content in the Norwich Times (NT). McMillan then addressed the SB, and said that other towns use their own local versions of NT. NT is mailed to all postal patrons in the 05055 zip code. The Norwich Library and the City of Lebanon use her company to produce and distribute content. NT has a civic organization rate of \$250 for a ½ page and \$125 for a ¼ page. Those prices are for finished publication-ready content. NT is published 4 times per year. Brochu suggested that SB members would provide any content to be published. Cook volunteered to bring to the SB a draft she and Brochu will develop.

5. Consent Agenda. Cook asked that the warrants and minutes be pulled out of the consent agenda. As for the remaining items – correspondence – Langhus **moved** (2nd Layton) to approve the consent agenda. **Motion approved unanimously.** Cook then asked about whether the amount to be spent to purchase additional sand had been included in the 1/23/2019 minutes, and asked that the amount - \$13,150 – be included in the 2/13/2019 minutes. Cook also questioned the warrant item on Pathways for the FEMA project. Langhus then **moved** (2nd Layton) to approve the warrants and the 1/23/2019 minutes with proposed amendment by Brochu. **Motion approved unanimously.**

6. Town Meeting Presentation Planning. SB members discussed how to make the SB presentation at Town Meeting. Pepper said that he can draft the slideshow, send it to SB members by Monday, 2-18-2019, and then submit it for the 2/27/2019 SB meeting packet.

7.5. Added Item regarding Conservation Fund. Langhus presented to the SB his draft statement about the Town Meeting article regarding spending from the Conservation Commission Fund. Langhus said the article was non-binding, per the town attorney's counsel. SB members agreed they would not release an official statement about the article.

8. Organizational Meeting Discussion. Pepper said that he wants to find a way to avoid deciding a long-term SB chair right away after the election, so that the tone of the body is more collegial. SB members discussed options for choosing a chair, given that Vermont statute requires that the SB name a chair "forthwith" after the election. SB members did not agree to a specific approach, other than to try to slow down the chair selection discussion to give time to all SB members to offer input before naming the chair. Brochu said that the SB should agree to a set of clear and consistent rules about how to name people to committees and commissions.

9. VLCT Self Governance Pilot Project. SB members agreed to postpone discussion on this matter to a future meeting.

10. Approve Certificate of Highway Mileage. Langhus **moved** (2nd Brochu) to approve the 2019 Certificate of Highway Mileage. **Motion passed unanimously.**

11. Town Manager Report. Durfee said that an Electric Vehicle Charging Station grant was awarded to the Town of Norwich for an installation at Huntley Meadow Park & Ride lot. Durfee said he prepared written answers to the questions from the performance audit and has sent a copy of that correspondence to SB members. The generator at the Public Safety Building has been tested and seems to be OK to run the entire building. The wiring will be fixed so that the generator will run the building. The Tracy Hall generator still needs work, as does the DPW generator. Durfee said that the Town will need to replace the Tracy Hall and DPW Garage generators. Durfee is exploring the possible options, including military surplus or VT state purchasing contract. Durfee pointed out budget expenses that are currently running at higher amounts than expected for this time of year. Overtime is one such are, due to DPW work on roads because of this winter's storms.

12. Union Negotiations Update. Langhus **moved** (2nd Pepper) to find that public discussion of a labor relations agreement with employees would clearly place the public body at a substantial disadvantage. **Motion passed unanimously.** Langhus **moved** (2nd Brochu) to enter executive session under 1 VSA §§ 313(a)(1)(B) in order to discuss a labor relations agreement with employees and to include the Town Manager. **Motion passed unanimously.**

The Selectboard moved into executive session at 10:07 pm.

Langhus **moved** (2nd Brochu) to enter public session. **Motion passed unanimously.**
At 10:10 pm the Selectboard moved into public session.

13. Town Manager Evaluation. Langhus **moved** (2nd Brochu) to enter executive session under 1 VSA §§ 313(a)(3) in order to discuss personnel issues. **Motion passed unanimously.**

The Selectboard moved into executive session at 10:10 pm.

Langhus **moved** (2nd Layton) to enter public session. **Motion passed unanimously.**
At 11:00 pm the Selectboard moved into public session.

14. Future Meeting Agenda Items. SB members agreed to the following as agenda items for the next meeting:

- Draft newsletter content
- Agenda for organizational meeting
- SB policies
- Town Meeting presentation planning
- Liquor Control Board – Liquor Licenses
- Affordable Housing Fund policy

At 11:08 pm, Langhus **moved** (2nd Layton) to adjourn. **Motion passed unanimously.**

Meeting adjourned at Layton pm.

By Miranda Bergmeier

Approved by the Selectboard on March 13, 2019

John Pepper
Selectboard Chair

Next Meeting – February 27, 2018 – Meeting at 6:30 PM

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