

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

Members present: John Pepper, Chair; Claudette Brochu, Vice Chair; Roger Arnold; Mary Layton; Herb Durfee, Town Manager; Miranda Bergmeier, Assistant to the Town Manager. John Langhus was present via telephone, but not yet sworn in and therefore not a voting member.

There were about 9 people in the audience.

Also participating: Linda Cook, Liz Blum, Rod Francis, Jaci Allen, and Sgt. Jennifer Frank (Norwich Police Dept.).

1. Approval of Agenda. Selectboard (SB) members agreed to proceed with the agenda as drafted.
2. Public Comment. Linda Cook asked a question about a charge by Pathways Consulting on the warrants, and also made a suggestion for an amendment to the March 5, 2019 minutes.
3. Consent Agenda. Layton **moved** (2nd Brochu) to approve the consent agenda, including Linda Cook's suggestions for amendments to the March 5, 2019 minutes. **Motion passed unanimously.**
4. Town Manager Report. Durfee said that he will continue to provide updated financial reports, along with written narratives. Durfee said he does reports in order to be transparent with the SB about important activities and events, to keep the public informed, and to keep his own records of the year's events. Durfee asked SB members for any suggestions about reports. Layton said that she like to hear from Herb verbally at the meetings, and is also happy with the level of detail he has included in his written reports. Brochu said she likes getting the written reports in the SB packets; she likes to get general information unless it's about something that the SB needs to act on. SB members agreed that they want written reports once a month. Langhus said he would like strategic information in the Town Manager's report. Brochu said she wants some status report regarding FEMA in every Town Manager's report. Durfee said the Recreation Director interviews have been happening, and they are starting on the Finance Director interviews soon. Contract negotiations with the Police and DPW union have begun. The FEMA process for the July 2017 storm and for the last portion of Hurricane Irene funding is ongoing. Durfee told the SB that he is out of the office next week for vacation. Pepper asked about the Finance Director search and Durfee said that we have received approximately 7 applications thus far.
5. Proposed Ordinance to Ban Plastic Bags – 2nd Reading. Langhus asked if it is possible to have more time to get the draft ordinance in front of the public for their input. Durfee said that yes, there is no immediate deadline for the SB to make a decision on the ordinance. Brochu wants to have more publicity to the public. Brochu also wants to discuss the ordinance but not vote on it tonight; Layton agreed. Arnold asked what Herb wants to work on with this ordinance. Durfee said he has made suggestions for edits based on the Vermont statute enabling this type of ordinance. Durfee substituted the state statutory language where it conflicted with Norwich's draft ordinance. Langhus agreed that we should have the town's attorney look at the draft ordinance before the SB votes on a final version. Langhus would like to send the original ordinance draft without Durfee's revisions to the lawyer. Layton questioned whether this ordinance is too heavy-handed for Norwich's goals. She doesn't want this to be overly punitive. Pepper said banning plastic bags is a growing trend. Langhus acknowledged Layton's concerns, but he wants manufacturers to stop making products – like plastic bags – that cannot be safely disposed of after use. Brochu said this would be a small first step to reduce pollution. Brochu asked Langhus about the paper bag charge. Langhus

said that charge is there to encourage people to bring their own shopping bags. Brochu thinks that is overreaching to require a paper bag fee. Liz Blum asked how the plastic bag ban would play out at the farmer's market. Blum is in favor of this ban, in order to change our behavior. The more these bans occur, the more pressure will be on manufacturers to change their packaging. Pepper asked what is the next step in the process. SB members agreed that Langhus and Durfee will work together to get a new draft to send to an attorney for review. After the review is done, then it can come back to the SB for further consideration. No motion was made. Durfee updated the SB regarding plastic bag & films recycling. Durfee said that Casella can put 96-gallon containers at the transfer station and the cost would be approximately \$200 per load for hauling and processing.

6. Affordable Housing Fund. The Planning Commission (PC) have developed a draft for review by the Affordable Housing Subcommittee (AHS) at their 3/25/2019 meeting. Rod Francis, Planning Director, sent the latest draft policy approved by the PC to Pepper, who shared it with other SB members. The next step is for the AHS to give their input and revise the draft policy, as appropriate. Layton asked about the interest rate mentioned in the draft and if it is an appropriate rate. Francis said that the AHS discussed that at length, and the idea is for the relatively small fund to be used all at once and then repaid. Arnold asked if it's been considered to add to this fund from other sources. Francis said yes, they have considered that, but were not there yet. Arnold asked about governance of the fund and who will review applications. Francis said the draft policy enables the SB to be the decision makers. Layton asked if Francis could please read aloud from the draft, which will be included as correspondence in the SB 3/27/2019 packet.

7. Norwich PD Firearms Requisition Request. Brochu **moved** (2nd Layton) to approve the expenditure of up to \$1,750.00 from the designated special equipment fund to replace the firearms and associated necessary gear as described in the firearms requisition request dated 2-1-2019. Sgt. Jennifer Frank, Norwich Police Dept. (NPD), said that it is recommended that every so often a police department needs to update its firearms. Frank summarized the NPD's request, reviewing with the SB members the written materials submitted in the SB packet. Frank said the NPD is moving from 6 weapons down to 5. Layton asked about training with the new weapons; Frank said that all officers will train on the new weapons during their usual annual training. Arnold asked about the disposal of the old guns. Frank said that they will be traded in with a properly-licensed retailer. Arnold asked about the higher capacity magazines in the new handguns. Frank explained that the current needs of the NPD are best served with the proposed guns, which are the model recommended by law enforcement agencies such as the FBI. Arnold explained that he is uncomfortable with the larger capacity magazines. **Motion passed (yes- 3; no- 0; abstain- Arnold).**

8. Selectboard Goals 2019-2020. Pepper suggested that the SB decide if they should meet specially to discuss goals for 2019-20 and review the 2018-19 goals. Brochu would like a special meeting with a facilitator. Layton asked if there is a more streamlined process the SB should use. Pepper said the SB follow-through could have been better. Layton and Arnold agreed with the idea of having a facilitator. Langhus suggested having a special meeting at some point with all members of all Town committees and commissions to discuss the Vermont Open Meeting Law and expectations. Other SB members agreed to do this at a time after all new appointments have been made. SB members agreed to have a special meeting at 6:30 pm on March 28, 2019 to discuss SB goals for 2019-2020. Pepper will ask John Carroll if he can serve as a facilitator for the 3-28-2019 meeting.

9. a. Selectboard Meeting Schedule. Langhus suggested the SB allow more time in one meeting each month to dig into meatier issues. SB members agreed to discuss at their 3/28 special meeting. SB members agreed to a revised 2019-20 calendar, which Pepper will send to Durfee for release. Layton **moved** (2nd Brochu) to set the Selectboard's regularly scheduled meetings for the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays of the month at 6:30 pm except as modified by the Selectboard and to approve the

Selectboard meeting calendar as presented and amended. **Motion passed unanimously.**

b. Rules for Conduct of Meetings. Layton asked Durfee asked how it would work to have the Chair and Town Manager set the SB agenda. Durfee said that anyone who wants something on the agenda would contact Durfee or the Chair to ask for the item to be put on the agenda. SB members discussed edits to the policy regarding the conduct of meetings. Brochu **moved** (2nd Arnold) that the Norwich Selectboard amend the Rules for Conduct of Regular and Special Meetings as follows: in paragraph 4.1, delete the words, “subject to the approval of two other board members.” **Motion passed unanimously.**

c. Procedure for Receipt of Correspondence. Brochu said the SB needs to firm up their correspondence policy, especially regarding emails sent individually to SB members. SB members agreed to keep the policy largely the same, with a minor modification to make clear that SB correspondence will not be posted on the website separate from SB packets. Brochu **moved** (2nd Layton) that the Norwich Selectboard amend the Procedure for Receipt of Correspondence as follows: under paragraph 5, the last sentence should be deleted and another sentence added, which reads, “Selectboard correspondence can be viewed within Selectboard meeting packets.” **Motion passed unanimously.** Linda Cook asked how should members of the public submit correspondence if they want it to be included in the official SB correspondence. SB members agreed that the writer should request explicitly that the item be made part of official SB correspondence.

d. Status of Town Appointments. SB members reviewed a list of current appointments and their expiration dates. Layton said that Martha Drake and Paula Harris are no longer Bugbee Senior Center reps. Brochu will contact the Bugbee Center to ask if they need a Norwich representative or not. SB members discussed what process they should use for making appointments. Pepper proposed that first-time applicants should appear at a SB meeting or have someone speak on their behalf. SB members worked together to draft a revised policy. [This policy will be included in the SB 3/27/19 meeting packet.] Brochu **moved** (2nd Layton) to approve the Selectboard Appointment Policy as crafted at their March 13, 2019 meeting. **Motion passed unanimously.**

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

- Appointments to Open Positions on Town Committees, Commissions, etc.
- Selectboard Policies – Review the list of 86 policies

10. Town Manager Evaluation. Layton **moved** (2nd Brochu) to enter executive session under 1 VSA §§ 313(a)(3) in order to discuss personnel issues and to possibly include the Town Manager at some point. **Motion passed unanimously.**

The Selectboard moved into executive session at 10:20 pm.

Brochu **moved** (2nd Arnold) to enter public session. **Motion passed unanimously.**
At 10:40 pm the Selectboard moved into public session.

Layton **moved** (2nd Brochu) to accept the Town Manager evaluation as of March 13, 2019. **Motion passed unanimously.**

At 10:53 pm, Brochu **moved** (2nd Pepper) to adjourn. **Motion passed unanimously.**

Meeting adjourned at 10:53 pm.

By Miranda Bergmeier

Approved by the Selectboard on March 27, 2019

John Pepper
Selectboard Chair

Next Meetings – March 27, 2019 – Regular Meeting at 6:30 PM
March 28, 2019 – Special Meeting at 6:30 PM – to discuss 2019-20 SB Goals

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