

Minutes of the Special Selectboard Meeting of
Wednesday, October 24, 2018 at 6:30 pm

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

There were about 12 people in the audience.

Also participating: Kris Clement, Roger Arnold, Stuart Richards, John Farrell, Demo Sofronas, Tracey Hayes, Jonah Casper, Rod Francis, and Cheryl Lindberg.

1. Approval of Agenda (Action Item). Selectboard (SB) members agreed to postpone agenda items #6 (Town Survey Results) and #7 (BoardDocs.com) to future meetings, and to move the agenda item regarding cannabis to a point earlier in the meeting. The agenda was amended to comport with the way the minutes are recorded.
2. Consent Agenda Items (Action Item). Cook requested that the approval of the 10/10/2018 minutes be removed from the consent agenda, to be discussed separately. SB members agreed to discuss the 10/10/2018 minutes at a point later in the meeting. Layton **moved** (2nd Langhus) to approve consent agenda, minus approval of 10/10/2018 Selectboard minutes. **Motion passed unanimously.**
3. Public Comments (Discussion Item). Kris Clement asked about how much FEMA work is remaining to be done, and why will it cost 2 million dollars. Clement also asked what will happen after the 3-month trial for Story Kitchen. She asked how will the SB decide whether to continue with the trial/contact and will other methods of communicating with the public be explored. Clement asked if the town should reconvene a communications committee. Layton said that she is listening, and appreciates all the feedback from citizens in general and specifically regarding the Story Kitchen trial. Brochu suggested that the Story Kitchen issue be on a future agenda for discussion. Durfee said that with regard to the FEMA work, the first phase (Contract #1) is very nearly complete; Contract 2 is mostly complete, and Contract 3 has not yet begun. Durfee said that FEMA will pay approximately 75% of the cost, with the State of Vermont paying 12.5% and Norwich paying 12.5%. Roger Arnold said that he attended a leadership conference recently that was very informative. Arnold submitted a report about the conference that is included in this week's SB packet. Arnold talked about a conference session he attended that addressed how to engage people in a variety of ways, and to invite the public into public discourse. Cook said that Norwich used to have a Town Eating Day where people would gather over a meal to discuss Town issues. Stuart Richards said that at 7:00 pm on October 25, 2018, Norwich Affordable Housing, Inc. will have a meeting at the Police Station. John Farrell said that he thinks the money spent by the town on Story Kitchen could be better spent in other ways. He said to go ahead with the 3-month trial period, but he doesn't think it should continue past that. Durfee said that this will be the last meeting taped by Demo Sofronas for CATV, after doing the taping for 14 years. Durfee, on behalf of the SB, thanked Demo for his work and presented with a certificate and a box of chocolates.
4. Selectboard Policies. Selectboard members agreed to postpone discussion on agenda item 4 until a time when Pepper is present.

10. Cannabis Forum follow-up (Discussion Item). SB members agreed to move this item earlier in the meeting, to facilitate public participation. Durfee said that a public forum regarding cannabis was recently held at the Marion Cross school and attendees discussed thoughts about the recent changes

in Vermont's state laws. 2 state senators, a VLCT representative, and a citizen who uses medical cannabis were among the attendees. Durfee said this was a good start to the discussion and now we as a town are in the early stages of figuring out how we want to approach the issue. Langhus asked if the state legislators said they are working on figuring out the rules and regulations around the new cannabis law. Durfee said they have begun work on that, and the legislators wanted to hear what Norwich people were saying about it. Tracey Hayes said that, at the forum it was said that recreational use of cannabis is "on the horizon". Since the forum, Hayes has been polling parents and many have questions about the details of the Vermont cannabis law. Hayes said that Sgt. Frank of the Norwich Police Dept. has offered to conduct an information session for parents on this topic. Durfee said he will continue to work with Hayes on this issue. Langhus thanked Hayes, and said we should avoid an all-or-noting approach to the issue. Jonah Casper said that many of us could use more information about hemp and cannabis. He encouraged everyone to learn more about it. Research is being done about how to best use the hemp plant. Hayes said she would like to figure out how to get broader input. Langhus suggested that she reach out to connect with the pro-cannabis groups of people. Brochu suggested submitting an article to the Norwich Times addressing the issue(s) and educating the public on what is legal, etc. Stuart Richards asked about how federal laws interact with state and locals laws. Langhus said that cannabis is still federally illegal.

5. Update from Planning Director re: TRORC (Discussion/Action Item). Planning Director, Rod Francis, said that his memo on this topic was included in the SB's meeting packet. Francis summarized the contents of that memo, including the consequences of not having a TRORC-approved plan. In his memo, Francis offered five options for the SB to consider in moving forward. Francis said that if Norwich amends its town plan, then Norwich would have to go through a new set of public hearings. Langhus asked for more detail about why the TRORC denied approval for the town plan. Francis said that the TRORC gave no specifics – just that the plan was not compatible. Langhus said that a couple of SB members should talk directly to Peter Gregory at TRORC. Cook said that Francis did an excellent job of representing Norwich to the TRORC at its recent meeting. SB members discussed various approaches. Layton then **moved** (2nd Langhus) to move forward with option number 2, as outlined in the October 17, 2018 memo to the Selectboard from Rod Francis. **Motion passed 3 to 1(no- Cook)**. Brochu **moved** (2nd Langhus) that the Selectboard appoint Langhus and Layton to meet with TRORC to advocate for the Norwich Town Plan. **Motion passed 3 to 1(no- Cook)**.

8. Grand List Errors & Omissions (Discussion/Action). Layton **moved** (2nd Langhus) to revise the Grand List as requested by the Board of Listers in its Errors and Omissions memo to the Selectboard, dated October 10, 2018. **Motion passed unanimously**.

9. Police Dept. Bulletproof Vests Grant Authorization (Discussion/Action). Layton **moved** (2nd Langhus) to authorize the Town Manager to apply for a grant to purchase replacement bulletproof vests for the Police Department, and to authorize expenditure of an amount not to exceed \$1,350.00 from the Police Equipment Designated Fund. **Motion passed unanimously**.

11. November Town Meeting Ballot (Discussion/Action). SB members discussed a plan for how to lead the Town Informational meeting on Thursday, November 1, 2018. They agreed that the Town Moderator would lead the meeting, and either Pepper or Brochu would present information about the Affordable Housing question that will be on the ballot.

12. Town Manager's Report (Discussion). TM said the audit is underway. Langhus asked if the SB had received the final FY18 financial yet, and Brochu said they were received in August. Cook requested that the SB receive hardcopies of the auditor's report before the auditor makes a presentation to the SB, so the SB will have time to review it before the presentation. TM said that is
Norwich Selectboard Minutes – 10/24/2018 Mtg

the plan. TM said that he has applied for a culverts grant. TM asked the SB to readopt the Traffic Ordinance in order to re-establish the proper timeline for ordinance adoption. Layton **moved** (2nd Cook) to adopt the Town traffic-related ordinances, as recommended by the NPD, into a single, codified ordinance, pursuant to 24 VSA Section 1971, et seq. **Motion passed unanimously.** SB members then discussed the Story Kitchen postings. SB members talked about ways to make the articles available to members of the public, including possibly posting hardcopies of the articles on a bulletin board. TM said that Chris O'Brien had submitted his resignation from the Planning Commission. Cook **moved** (2nd Layton) to accept, with regrets, Chris Brien's resignation from the Planning Commission, effective October 24, 2018. **Motion passed unanimously.** Cook **moved** (2nd Langhus) to advertise the vacancy on the Planning Commission. **Motion passed unanimously.** SB members decided to move consideration and approval of the 10-10-2018 minutes to the November 1, 2018 meeting.

13. Review of Next Agendas (Discussion/Action Item). Brochu requested the Energy Committee give a presentation to the SB regarding the EV Charging Station grant proposal. SB members listed the following as agenda items for the next meetings:

- Town Survey Update
- BoardDocs.com
- Affordable Housing Fund Process
- Candidates for Open Positions
- Communications Committee
- FEMA Updated Financials
- Selectboard Policies
- Budget Draft Overview
- EV Charging Station Grant
- Hazard Mitigation Plan Grant
- Minutes of 10-10-2018

After additional discussion, SB members agreed to take up Selectboard Policies at a special Selectboard meeting on November 1, 2018 immediately following the informational meeting.

At 9:31 pm, Cook **moved** (2nd Langhus) to adjourn. **Motion passed unanimously.**

Meeting adjourned at 9:31 pm.

By Miranda Bergmeier

Approved by the Selectboard on November 14, 2018

John Pepper
Selectboard Chair

Next Meetings – November 1, 2018 – Meeting at 7:00 PM
November 14, 2018 – Meeting at 6:30 PM

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