

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

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

There were about 2 people in the audience.

Also participating: Cheryl Lindberg and Jaci Allen.

1. Approval of Agenda (Action Item). Layton **moved** (2nd Brochu) to amend the agenda to include consideration of the stipulation in the Drake court appeal. **Motion passed 3 to 1 (no- Cook).**

2. Public Comment. None.

2.5 Drake Court Appeal Stipulation (Discussion/Action Item). Durfee said that William Drake appealed his property's value. Durfee said that a settle was made and agreement was reached yesterday just before the scheduled court date. Durfee provided the SB members with copies of the Stipulation of Settlement, and asked the SB for authorization for to settle. Cheryl Lindberg said that the next value assessment can be set by the Board of Listers per their usual schedule under this agreement. SB members agreed to bring this issue to the 11-14-2018 meeting for consideration.

3. Correspondence. Layton **moved** (2nd Brochu) to receive correspondence from East Central Vermont Telecommunications District regarding an ECFiber Budget Hearing notice. **Motion passed unanimously.**

4. Warrants/Payables. Cook asked for clarification regarding town solar installations, and asked to see a current balance sheet showing costs and revenue. Layton **moved** (2nd Brochu) to approve check warrant #19-10 for Recreation Facility – John Girard Fund in the amount of \$10,000.00 and for General Fund in the amount of \$241,742.18. **Motion passed unanimously.**

5. Selectboard Policies (Discussion/Action). Layton said that she and Cook have been working on financial policies. They recommend addressing the budget management policy first. Layton said that it is important to keep policies and protocols clear and separate. The SB makes policy; the Town Manager sets protocols. Layton wants to know what SB members want to know and receive in terms of reports. Layton asked about using purchase orders (POs) to keep track of encumbrances. Durfee said that one way to do it is to limit POs at the end of the fiscal year. Brochu likes the idea of time-limited POs. Layton said that she and Cook can revise the budget management draft policy to bring back to the SB. Layton asked if SB should have policy language to address severe storms. Durfee said that is possible, but we still need to have flexibility to take care of things in an emergency situation. Pepper asked what's standard in other towns and what should we do. SB discussed the benefits and cons of designated reserve funds, undesignated, and borrowing on lines of credit. Layton asked if SB should ask voters to establish a storm emergency fund. Durfee recommended keeping a certain amount in the undesignated fund and then put remainder into various designated funds. Cheryl Lindberg asked why move undesignated funds into restricted funds and force limitations on how money is spent. Durfee said that having more restricted funds adds accountability to the money and how it can be spent. SB members agreed to talk about undesignated funds versus restricted funds. SB members agreed that Policy #1 needs work. Policy #2 looks acceptable, except Brochu said she is not sure that it should allow for so wide a range as 10% - 20%. Durfee said that the auditor can give the town guidance about designating a percentage more specifically. SB agreed

that Policy #3 does not need any editing. Layton **moved** (2nd Brochu) to readopt Financial Policy #3, Grants, Gifts, and Special Funds. **Motion approved unanimously.** After brief discussion, SB members agreed to leave the policy regarding late homestead filings as is, for now. Pepper will look into this issue to bring it back to the SB. Durfee said they can set a lower penalty rate or eliminate it altogether. SB members agreed to move discussion on the personnel policies to the end of the meeting.

6. Selectboard Survey (Discussion/Action). Pepper said that he has released the results of the survey, and asked what the SB wants to do next with the survey. Brochu said that the SB had talked about focusing on specific answers and releasing information about those questions in a series of reports over time. SB members agreed to release all of the raw data to the public in the meantime. Jaci Allen suggested that the town have some kind of public meeting to discuss the survey results and answers. Durfee suggested a town “eat-in” for that purpose (a potluck meal/meeting). Cook said that she is concerned that not all citizens answered the survey. Brochu said that she will generate a document comparing the 2005 and 2018 survey responses. Pepper will compress the raw data file so it can be posted online.

7. BoardDocs.com (Discussion). Pepper said that he attended the SAU 70 Board meeting to see how BoardDocs works. Brochu said she has tried the BoardDocs site to view meeting documents and had no problem with it. Pepper thinks it would be a very good idea for the SB to use BoardDocs. Cook said the SB should move to whatever new system will work. Pepper read from his 10/24/2018 memo regarding BoardDocs. Brochu asked if SAU 70 had looked at other options, and could we ask them what other companies they explored. Brochu asked if the Town Manager could look into options for SB document management systems and website overhaul/redesign. Layton **moved** (2nd Brochu) to have the Town Manager research the cost plans offered by BoardDocs.com, as well as research costs for website redevelopment. **Motion approved unanimously.**

8. Energy Committee Vacancy (Discussion/Action). Cook **moved** (2nd Layton) to accept, with regrets, the resignation of Jonathan Teller-Elsberg from the Energy Committee. **Motion approved unanimously.** The vacancy will be advertised.

9. Winter Operations Procedure – Authorization for Per Diem “Employee” for Sidewalks (Discussion/Action). Durfee explained that plow routes are being restructured and shuffled. Adam will plow in a truck, and the Fire District has agreed to allow Mike Tebbetts to plow sidewalks on a part-time per diem basis. He will be paid an hourly rate, with no benefits. Tebbetts will primarily be a Fire District employee and will respond to that employer’s emergency calls as a priority. Brochu asked how much this will cost. Durfee said that it will be dependent on the weather, and he will look at past winters to try to get an estimate. Cook said that she hopes we won’t need an additional staffer long-term. Cook asked if it will be possible to use the snow blower to be more efficient in snow removal following grader use. SB members asked to have the new DPW director attend a future SB meeting so he can explain new procedures and directly answer questions. Layton **moved** (2nd Cook) to authorize the Town Manager to engage the services of Mike Tebbetts to operate the sidewalk plow on a per diem basis. **Motion approved unanimously.**

5 e) Selectboard Policies: Personnel Policies – executive session may be needed. At this point, SB members agreed to discuss the personnel policies and further agreed that they should enter executive session to do so. Layton **moved** (2nd Brochu) that the public body has made a specific finding that premature public knowledge would clearly place the Town of Norwich at a substantial disadvantage under 1 VSA §§313(a)(1)(A) and 313(a)(4). **Motion approved unanimously.** Layton **moved** (2nd Brochu) to enter executive session, including the Town Manager, to discuss personnel policy items that could affect pending union contract negotiations. **Motion approved unanimously.**

SB moved into executive session at 9:04 pm.

Brochu **moved** (2nd Pepper) to enter public session. **Motion approved unanimously.** SB moved into public session at 9:34 pm.

11. Review of Next Agendas (Discussion/Action Item). SB members agreed to the following as agenda items for the next meeting:

Committees “Interviews” & Appointments: Audit Committee, Finance Committee, Recreation Council, Planning Commission
Highways Designated Fund Authorization for Electrical Work to Highway Garage
Treasurer’s Quarterly Investment Report, 9/30/18
Hazard Mitigation Plan Update
2018 EV Supply Equipment (EVSE) Grant
Town Manager Salary – Authorize Retroactive Step & CPI Adjustment
Appoint Counsel for TransCanada Hydro Northeast, Inc. appeal of Norwich BCA
Emerald Ash Borer Management
FYE 2020 Budget – Handout 1st Draft
Drake Court Appeal Stipulation

At 9:35 pm, Cook **moved** (2nd Pepper) to adjourn. **Motion passed unanimously.**

Meeting adjourned at 9:35 pm.

By Miranda Bergmeier

Approved by the Selectboard on November 28, 2018

John Pepper
Selectboard Chair

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

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