

Minutes of the Special Selectboard Meeting of Thursday, March 28, 2019 at 6:30 pm

Members present: John Pepper, Chair; Claudette Brochu, Vice-Chair; John Langhus; Mary Layton; and, Roger Arnold.

Others present: John Carroll, Facilitator; Herb Durfee; and, Linda Cook (~8:45 pm)

1. **Call to Order.** At 6:30 pm, Pepper called the meeting to order. Pepper introduced those persons present.
2. **Public Comment.** None.
3. **Selectboard Goals Planning.** John Carroll facilitated the Board's discussion on their short-term goals for the coming year (i.e., through February 29, 2020) and beyond (i.e., "big, hairy, audacious goals", aka BHAG).

At Carroll's prompt, each Board member expressed what they expected over the next 10 months:

Brochu – Would like clearer direction of the Board for the next 10 months and next 10-20 years.

Arnold – Essentially, agreed with Carroll's presentation to the Board during yesterday's meeting (3/27/19) and the need to strategically address our needs. [A copy of Carroll's handout from the 3/27/19 meeting is attached to these minutes.]

Layton – Hoping to improve the Board's process of dealing with agenda items so we don't get in our own way. Looking for good communication; "getting it done"; need fewer categories of discussion; need to understand shape Town is in; focus on internal controls; get handle on capital assets; address climate issues; examine income inequity issues; continue to address lack of affordable housing and concerned about not letting others into Town.

Langhus – Echoed Arnold's strategic comment and value of Carroll's presentation; strategically expects focus on Town Plan to help shape what Norwich will look like in 10 years (e.g., how many houses, including affordable units, we should/could have); tactically then have the courage and innovative thought, especially with policies, to effect those goals.

Pepper – Echoed Brochu's statement but would like to further crystalize that direction. There's too much "fog" clouding the Board and the Town's direction at too many levels; would like to address the "culture" of Norwich – the "inner bones" of the Town, public officials, and staff; asking if we can have a positive effect; noted the Gantt chart prepared on Board goals a couple of years ago; and, emphasized his like of the "elective" vs. "structural" components of Carroll's handout to the Board.

Carroll thanked the Board members for their candor also commenting that the Board's, "...diversity of perspective is its massive asset". Next, Carroll described the process he was going to take the Board through. He reminded the Board that it's likely the discussion would be a beginning with need for at least another session.

[For the balance of the facilitated portion of the meeting, refer to the attached sheets that record the questions asked by Carroll and the responses shared by Board members.]

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As a summary, Carroll offered that a major component to a successful Board is its ability to “convene” meetings for the purposes of bringing people and groups together to jointly accomplish tasks. He emphasized the importance of committees and that without committee work it’s likely the Board would not realize many of their BHAG’s. Carroll asterisked a couple of the Board’s needs related to making sure constituents don’t have fear of retribution for raising issues and making sure interruptions are minimized. He indicated these items are “tender spots” and should be worked on more independently from the goal process since they relate more specifically to procedure and Board dynamic.

On behalf of the Board, Pepper thanked Carroll stating they wouldn’t have been able to get to the heart of some of the issues raised without his facilitation. At this point, Pepper asked for a short recess (8:37 pm) and, then, suggested that Board members have a short discussion about the meeting after the break. [Langhus departed, due to family commitment.] At 8:43 pm, Pepper reconvened the meeting.

There was general discussion by the Board on the identified information from the facilitated discussion. Essentially, the discussion focused on the next steps. Pepper agreed to synthesize the sheets into a matrix for the Board’s continuing discussion. [See attached matrix.] The Board discussed whether or not to hold a special meeting to continue the goal discussion. Ultimately, the Board by consensus agreed to take up the discussion at its next regular meeting rather than scheduling a special meeting.

4. **Adjournment.** At 9:16 pm, Layton **moved to adjourn. Seconded** by Brochu. **Motion passed 4-0-0.** Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Herbert A. Durfee, III, Town Manager

APPROVED:
April 10, 2019

John Pepper, Chair

Date