

Minutes of the Selectboard Meeting of
Wednesday, April 10, 2019 at 6:30 pm

Members present: Claudette Brochu, Vice Chair; Roger Arnold; John Langhus; Mary Layton; Herb Durfee, Town Manager; Miranda Bergmeier, Assistant to the Town Manager. John Pepper, Chair, was present via telephone until 8:40 pm. Claudette Brochu served as chair for the meeting.

There were about 12 people in the audience.

Also participating: Linda Cook, Charlotte Metcalf, Jeff Goodrich, Rod Francis, Omer Trajman, and Jaci Allen.

1. Approval of Agenda. Selectboard (SB) members agreed to proceed with the agenda as drafted.

2. a. Public Comment. Linda Cook asked whether the Town Manager (TM) has taken action on Town Meeting Article 37, or if the SB has taken action. SB members said that the Planning Commission (PC) has begun working on the issues of resiliency. Cook asked about whether the town's attorney had looked at the proposed plastic bag ban. Langhus said that the attorney did review the proposed ordinance and did not identify any legal impediment to moving forward. Charlotte Metcalf suggested that when the SB responds in writing to a resident's question, that written response should be shared with the public.

2. b. Consent Agenda. SB members agreed to pull the quit claim deed matter out of the consent agenda, for separate consideration. Layton **moved** (2nd Langhus) to approve the consent agenda with the exception of the quit claim deed. **Motion passed unanimously.** Durfee explained that after Bradley Hill Road was moved, it created a title issue for property alongside the road. The title issue will be solved by the proposed quit claim deed from the town. Langhus pointed out a typographical error in the deed; specifically, "ands" should be corrected to "lands". Langhus **moved** (2nd Layton) to accept the quit claim deed in the Selectboard packet as correspondence. **Motion passed unanimously.** Langhus **moved** (2nd Layton) to authorize the Town Manager to execute a quit claim deed from the Town to Francis and Josie Hanlon concerning land on Bradley Hill Road, with the correction noted. **Motion passed unanimously.**

2. c. Town Manager Report. Durfee said that the Road and Bridges Standards were added to the SB motions sheet today, because it needs to be approved by the SB in order for the town to apply for a road work grant from the State of Vermont. The grant application is due on April 15th. Langhus **moved** (2nd Layton) to approve for signature the "Annual Financial Plan – Town Highways" and the "Certification of Compliance for Town Road and Bridge Standards and Network Inventory" that were emailed to the Selectboard today and will be included in the next Selectboard meeting packet. **Motion passed unanimously.**

c.i. Union Negotiations Update. SB members agreed to move this discussion to a point later in the meeting.

c.ii. FY2019 Budget Update. Brochu said that she had asked for this agenda item because she wants to discuss where we are with spending. Durfee handed out to the SB a hardcopy of a spreadsheet that Pepper prepared to show where the town is with their ongoing expenses. [this spreadsheet will appear in the 4/24/19 SB packet] Langhus asked about the "other projects" line referenced in the spreadsheet. Durfee said that he thinks that refers to the DPW budget. Pepper explained that his spreadsheet is a reformatted version of the town budget, grouping like-named budget lines together. Langhus asked about the repair and maintenance lines. Brochu and Durfee said those lines refer to the DPW garage and the Public Safety Building. Brochu asked how the

anticipated revenue amounts are set for the budget. Durfee said that he and the departments make conservative estimates based on past experience. Some of the fees that figure into those estimates are set by state statute and some are set by the SB. Layton said that if we're thinking about increasing fees to increase revenue, we should look at what we earn in fees currently, so we know what impact raises will have. Linda Cook suggested that the SB look at the Tracy Hall rental charges, in particular.

3. a. TRORC Update. Jeff Goodrich, current Norwich representative to the Two Rivers Ottauquechee Regional Commission (TRORC) spoke to the SB about TRORC activities. Goodrich said that the TRORC is working on a housing needs assessment for the Upper Valley as an entire region, including both sides of the CT River. Goodrich said that the TRORC meets once a month to discuss business, including transportation, the regional plan, a 10-year strategic plan, Act 250, and economic development. Langhus asked about Goodrich's attendance at TRORC meetings. Goodrich said that he doesn't go to meetings where they discuss things that Goodrich has been working on in a subcommittee, because he finds that to be redundant. Goodrich said that his term as TRORC rep. is expiring at the end of this month, and he would like to be appointed to another term, so that he can continue the work he has been doing there. Goodrich said that typically, 15-20 of the 30 member towns attend any given TRORC meeting. Arnold asked about the document [about housing] that Goodrich sent to the SB and that was included in the 4/10 meeting packet. Goodrich said that he thinks it is something that the SB should look at, to know how TRORC is approaching the topic as it drafts the regional plan. Durfee suggested to the SB that they make sure that the town's TRORC rep. is conveying Norwich's priorities and is encouraging a grassroots approach to planning, rather than a top-down approach. Brochu said that she thinks it is essential for Norwich's TRORC rep. to attend all the TRORC meetings.

3. b. Plastic Bags Ordinance – 2nd Reading & Possible Adoption. Layton said that she is interested in what tax consequences the 10-cent fee for paper bags will have. Will the 10 cents be taxable? Arnold said that question is an open one, to be determined by the Vermont legislature. Brochu proposed to amend the implementation/effective date to September 1, 2019. Charlotte Metcalf said she thinks the retailers should be allowed to decide how much to charge. Langhus read aloud from the proposed ordinance to explain that retailers can decide to charge more than the 10 cents, if they want to. Brochu said that she wants to find a way to subsidize the added bag cost for those customers who are financially needy. Langhus and Brochu read aloud from correspondence from Steve Hoffman and from Franny Eanet, which will be included in the 4/24/2019 SB packet. Langhus **moved** (2nd Arnold) to accept the 2nd reading of the Civil Ordinance Regulating Single-Use Plastic Bags Within the Town of Norwich, Vermont and to adopt the 2nd reading, as amended to delete section 6 and change the effective date to September 1, 2019. **Motion passed unanimously.**

3. c. Draft Affordable Housing Fund Policy. Durfee said this is an initial "first look" at the draft policy. At their 4/24/2019 meeting, the SB will hear from Brian Loeb, who is on the Affordable Housing Subcommittee (AH). Rod Francis, Planning Director, said this draft policy was written in response to the article passed in town meeting. Langhus asked Francis about the process used to develop the draft policy. Francis said that the AH met several times to develop consensus about the role of the small fund. The AH agreed that the fund could be useful as a magnet for additional funding or incentive to begin work on housing. AH members agree that the fund should be used as a single lump sum, rather than splitting it up. They also agreed that the fund should not be used in a speculative endeavor that might not result in housing. Layton said that she appreciated the work that went into this draft policy. Layton and Arnold asked questions about whether the fund could be added. Francis said that yes, it can.

After this discussion, SB members agreed to take a quick break. Pepper, who had been attending via telephone, left the meeting at 8:40 pm.

3. d. Selectboard Goals Session Follow-Up. Brochu asked fellow SB members if they want to schedule a special SB meeting to finish work on planning SB goals, and ask John Carroll to facilitate. Arnold and Layton agreed to this possibility. Layton suggested that the SB decide on a timeframe for each goal. Brochu and Durfee agreed to work together on the SB policies project. Omer Trajman, Finance Committee (FC) Chair, said that the FC has been working on reviewing the town's financial policies and is about halfway done. Trajman said the FC seems more comfortable opining and consulting, rather than drafting policy. SB members agreed to find a date to schedule a special meeting for goals and invite John Carroll to facilitate.

2. c. Town Manager Report – Union Negotiations Update. Durfee said that the negotiating session that was scheduled earlier this month had to be rescheduled, so he did not have any new information for the SB. SB members agreed that it was not necessary to go into executive session on this matter. Durfee will provide the SB with a substantive update after the negotiation sessions have resumed.

4. Future Meeting Agenda Items. Brochu said that she would like the following information to be included in the SB packet when the outdoor farmer's market solar installation is considered: abutters' input, input from the Co-op as landowners, who will receive the solar credit, the impact – if any – on the nearby community garden, notice to abutting landowners, what will the installation look like, and what do the residents in town think of the project.

SB members agreed to the following agenda items for their next meeting:

- Women's Club Request for Alcohol Policy Waiver
- Appointments to Open Committee Positions
- Farmers Market Proposed Solar Project
- Affordable Housing Fund Policy Update – Brian Loeb of AH Subcommittee to attend
- Dartmouth College Campus Project – college planning staff to attend
- Union Negotiations Update (if timely)

At 9:39 pm, Layton **moved** (2nd Arnold) to adjourn. **Motion passed unanimously.**

Meeting adjourned at 9:39 pm.

By Miranda Bergmeier

Approved by the Selectboard on April 24, 2019

John Pepper
Selectboard Chair

Next Meetings – April 24, 2019 – Regular Meeting at 6:30 PM

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