

Minutes of the Selectboard Meeting of
Wednesday, May 8, 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.

There were about 10 people in the audience.

Also participating: Joanna Whitcomb, Linda Cook, Brie Swenson, Jeff Goodrich, Steve Thoms, Susan Brink, Scott McGee, Rod Francis, Jeff Lubell, Bob Miller, Omer Trajman.

1. Approval of Agenda. Selectboard (SB) members agreed to proceed with the agenda as drafted.
2. Public Comment. No public comment was offered.
3. Dartmouth College Campus Project. Joanna Whitcomb, Director of Campus Planning for Dartmouth College, spoke about the school's Strategic Master Plan (SMP). She gave a general overview of the SMP, using the presentation slides which were included in the 5/8/2019 SB meeting packet. Dartmouth is working with architects and planners and reaching out to various constituencies for input on the plan. Brochu asked about the proposed traffic light at the bottom of Wheelock just over the Ledyard Bridge on the Hanover side, expressing concern about traffic back-up as a result of that light. Whitcomb said that the light must be installed there as a condition of Hanover's approval of the project. Brochu asked about the parking lot in the Lewiston section of Norwich. Whitcomb said that for now, during the SMP construction, the lot will not be available for non-Dartmouth people during business hours on weekdays. After hours and on weekends, people can park there. Layton asked if light rail is a long-term consideration for the college. Whitcomb said that they are not putting significant effort into that at present. Arnold asked if Dartmouth is considering affordable housing. Whitcomb said that the college is planning to build more graduate housing, with the thought that providing more such housing will ease the pressure on other area housing, thus allowing more space for affordable non-student housing. Durfee mentioned the possibility for development of the Lewiston area if that is something the Town of Norwich wants to do. Whitcomb said that Dartmouth would be open to talking about that. Brochu asked about what lands the college owns along the Connecticut River. Pepper said that the SB is very interested in working with Dartmouth on affordable housing issues. Linda Cook said she would like to see a current traffic study around the Ledyard Bridge, given lengthy traffic back-ups for vehicles exiting I-91. Cook suggested the possibility of another CT River bridge north of the Ledyard Bridge.
4. Appointment to Open Positions. Brochu **moved** (2nd Layton) to appoint Catherine Girard to the Recreation Council for a three-year term ending in March 2022. Brie Swenson said that Girard will be an excellent addition to the Rec Council. **Motion passed unanimously.** Layton **moved** (2nd Langhus) to appoint Jeff Goodrich as representative to the Two Rivers-Ottawaquechee Regional Commission for a one-year term ending in April 2020. Jeff Goodrich said that he is re-applying for TRORC rep because he cares about Norwich and enjoys his work on the TRORC. Goodrich said he understands it is important to the SB that he attends as many TRORC meetings as possible. Goodrich brought with him some printouts relevant to his work on the TRORC [these documents will be included as correspondence in the 5/22/19 SB packet]. Goodrich discussed his attendance record at TRORC meetings and talked about the issues he has worked on. Layton said that she sees that Goodrich has worked extensively on technical issues. Brochu asked Goodrich about his statements to the SB at a previous meeting, and whether the attitude behind those

statements might show in Goodrich's body language during the TRORC meetings he attends. Steve Thoms spoke in favor of Goodrich's re-appointment. Thoms said he thinks it's better to have a resident be appointed, rather than a staff member because it's always better to have a citizen participate in such positions. Durfee explained the reason Rod Francis, Norwich's Planning Director, submitted an application. This was because Durfee had asked him to so, after the SB had declined to appoint anyone to the TRORC position at their earlier meeting. Durfee said that he was not seeking to replace citizen volunteers with paid staffers. Rod Francis offered to answer any SB questions. Susan Brink, a member of the Planning Commission (PC), said that she has been working on the Town Plan for the last 2 years. Brink said that Goodrich has very valuable technical knowledge. Given that the Town Plan is currently in a very delicate place, it is also very important to consider the personality of whoever is appointed to the TRORC position, and to consider that person's ability to work with other TRORC members. Scott McGee spoke in support of Goodrich's application, and said that Goodrich has the ability to diffuse difficult situations and work collaboratively. Arnold suggested to SB members that they consider what qualifications the SB wants in the TRORC rep. Pepper said that he thinks the most important consideration is how the rep works with others, especially at this point, given the need to get the Town Plan approved by the TRORC. Pepper asked Francis to give an overview about how the TRORC works. Francis said there are approximately nine meetings per year and usually 26 or so of the 30 towns are in attendance at any one time. Usually, larger towns have a staff member attend along with a volunteer town rep. Towns with town managers and zoning administrators usually use staff as reps because they expertise and are paid to represent the town. Langhus asked Francis if he saw any potential for conflict if Francis served on the TRORC and disagreed with the Town Manager's opinion on a matter. Francis said that there would be no conflict, because he would vote as directed by the Town Manager. Linda Cook encouraged the SB to keep open communications with the TRORC rep. **Motion failed 2 to 3 (yes- Langhus, Layton; no- Brochu, Pepper, Arnold).**

Brochu **moved** (2nd Arnold) to appoint Rod Francis as representative to the Two Rivers-Ottawaquechee Regional Commission for a one-year term ending in April 2020. **Motion passed 4 to 1 (no- Langhus).**

Brochu **moved** (2nd Layton) to appoint Jeffrey Lubell as alternate representative to the Two Rivers-Ottawaquechee Regional Commission for a one-year term ending in April 2020. Jeff Lubell said that he applied for the alternate position because he does not have time to attend meetings regularly. Lubell said he would like to serve as back-up to the representative. **Motion passed unanimously.**

5. Consent Agenda. On behalf of the Norwich Community Nurse Working Group, Bob Miller read aloud a letter the group sent to the SB, which letter was included in the 5/8/19 SB packet. Brochu **moved** (2nd Layton) to approve the consent agenda. **Motion passed unanimously.**

6. Adoption of Local Emergency Management Plan (LEMP). Durfee explained that the SB needs to take three separate actions to enact the LEMP; the actions are detailed in three separate motions. Durfee said that the emergency spending limit allows the TM to mobilize assets needed to address an emergency, but any expenditures will afterward be brought before the SB as soon as possible. Brochu asked why the LEMP shows that pets are not allowed in Tracy Hall if it is used as a shelter. Durfee said that he does not see it as a permanent prohibition, but at this time, more research needs to be done about how we can make it work as a pet-inclusive shelter. The plan is to allow pets in the future, once the details have been ironed out. Brochu **moved** (2nd Arnold) to authorize the Town Manager to spend up to \$25,000 for emergency management and mitigation purposes within 70 hours of an incident, per page 3, section 3 of the Local Emergency Management Plan, effective immediately. **Motion passed unanimously.** Layton **moved** (2nd Brochu) to readopt the National Incident Management System (NIMS). **Motion passed unanimously.** Layton **moved** (2nd Brochu) to adopt the Local Emergency Management Plan, as amended. **Motion passed unanimously.**

7. Town Manager Report. Durfee briefly summarized his written report, which was included in the SB packet. Brochu asked about the potential Hepatitis C exposure mentioned in Durfee's report. Durfee said that it was contact with blood and the employee has tested negative. Layton **moved** (2nd Brochu) to contract with the TRORC to serve as project manager for the VTrans TAP grant related to the installation of two culverts on Tigertown Rd in an amount not to exceed \$31,488 and according to the proposed scope of work in Attachment A: Scope of Work for Municipal Project Manager as provided in the Board's May 7, 2019 packet. **Motion passed unanimously.** Layton **moved** (2nd Brochu) to clarify that the Selectboard mutually agrees with Herbert Durfee, III, Town Manager, that his contract with the Town concerning salary is interpreted such that the respective fiscal year's salary grid, updated annually according to the applicable CPI adjustment, is used to determine the position's annual salary, and, further, that Mr. Durfee's January 3, 2019 e-mail indicates the annual salary amounts, by fiscal year and subject to the applicable performance evaluation conducted by the Selectboard. **Motion passed unanimously.**

8. Selectboard Goals Session Follow-up. Pepper said that he compiled each member's goals rankings and comments. He distributed copies to SB members; the document will be included in the next SB packet.

9. Great River Hydro Pending Litigation. SB members agreed to defer this topic to a future meeting, when there will be more information available.

10. Town Manager Report – Union Negotiations Update. Brochu **moved** (2nd Layton) to find that public discussion of a labor relations agreement with employees would clearly place the public body at a substantial disadvantage. **Motion passed unanimously.** Brochu **moved** (2nd Layton) to enter executive session under 1 VSA §§ 313(a)(1)(E) in order to discuss pending civil litigation and to include the Town Manager. **Motion passed unanimously.**

SB moved into executive session at 10:23 pm.

Layton **moved** (2nd Brochu) to enter public session. **Motion passed unanimously.** SB moved into public session at 10:36 pm.

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

- Expanded Plastics Recycling
- Shopping Bags Distribution
- Updates:
 - Internal Controls
 - SB Policies Binder
 - SB Communications

At 10:45 pm, Brochu **moved** (2nd Layton) to adjourn. **Motion passed unanimously.**

Meeting adjourned at 10:45 pm.

By Miranda Bergmeier

Approved by the Selectboard on May 22, 2019

John Pepper
Selectboard Chair

Next Meeting – May 22, 2019 – Regular Meeting at 6:30 PM

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