

Minutes of the Selectboard Meeting of
Wednesday, June 12, 2019 at 6:30 pm

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

There were about 8 people in the audience.

Also participating: Cheryl Lindberg, Christine Pinello, Sally Matless, Elizabeth Perry, Fran Walls, Niri (unknown last name), Colleen Fox, Jeff Reed, Doris Nelson, Kris Clement, and Peter Warner.

1. Approval of Agenda. Selectboard (SB) members agreed to proceed with the agenda as drafted.
2. Public Comment. John Pepper talked about parking signs at Squam Lake that might be examples for what to post at Gile Mountain parking area.
3. Animal Control Update. Durfee gave an update about the town's animal pound, saying that he and the Police Chief met with Christine Pinello recently. Based on their discussion, Durfee drafted a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and sent it to Pinello for her review and comment. Pinello said that she was glad to have met with Durfee and the Police Chief and she appreciated Brochu's suggestion that they have a meeting. Pinello then said that she want to be paid for her services, regardless of the cost, rather than agree in an MOU to a "not-to-exceed" amount. SB members agreed that Pinello should be paid for whatever services she provides. Arnold asked Durfee if he wants the SB to give input on a review of the leash law. Sally Matless said that it is important to spay and neuter your pets and Elizabeth Perry spoke in support of Pinello.
4. Solar-Powered RRFBs. Durfee said that Norwich was awarded 2 separate grants for two sets of Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons (RRFBs). One grant was awarded in 2017 and one in 2018, for RRFBs at four crosswalks: Tracy Hall, Town Green, the Norwich Inn, and the Church Street school crossing. Durfee said that the subject of RRFBs has been addressed from time to time in SB packets since 2017. Fran Walls said that she doesn't agree with installing RRFBs. Niri, a student, said that she uses the crosswalks a lot and she thinks it will be much safer with RRFBs in place. She has had the experience of being caught in the crosswalk when drivers do not stop. Colleen Fox said that she is in favor of installing RRFBs because they will help remind drivers to stop at crosswalks. Cheryl Lindberg suggested that the town wait before it installs the second set of RRFBs. Jeff Reed asked if the RRFBs issue had been publicly warned and discussed prior to the grants being applied for. SB members answered that yes, it had. Reed asked why the issue is being discussed again after the decision has been made. Pepper said that SB members have gotten a large volume of comments about the RRFBs, and so they wanted to be sure to give time during the meeting for people to speak to the SB. Langhus said that he would like to see the SB hold a special meeting with committee/commission members and members of the public to review procedures and regulations around public meetings and public bodies. Doris Nelson said that she opposes RRFBs and thinks that our police should enforce speed limits. Kris Clement said that she wants Norwich police to issue more tickets, rather than putting up flashing signs. Brochu said that she challenges people to sit at Tracy Hall and watch drivers speed, roll through stop signs, and drive through crosswalks not stopping for pedestrians. She said that RRFBs will help drivers see pedestrians in low visibility situations. We haven't had a death yet, but that is because we have been lucky. Peter Warner said he thinks there are a lot of people in town who support RRFBs. Warner believes that the SB is doing the right thing and we shouldn't wait for someone to get hurt. Colleen Fox said that RRFBs will allow visibility for pedestrians crossing without having to have streetlights, thus minimizing light pollution.

Arnold asked why the state had decided to award the grant. Durfee said that the state considered the factors of traffic volume, number of pedestrians, presence of a school, and public buildings/businesses that draw people. Langhus said it's fine for people to offer input, but it's not fair to criticize the Town Manager for getting grants. The SB sets policy goals and overall spending priorities, and the Town Manager looks to implement those in the ways most advantageous to the town. Fran Walls asked for a tally of emails in favor and against RRFBs. Pepper said that he reached out to the 5th grade class at MCS for their opinions about RRFBs. They took a straw poll and the majority of students were in favor of them. Durfee summarized a large number of citizen emails about RRFBs, the large majority of which were against. [*Copies of all emails not included in the 6/12/19 packet will be made part of the 6/26/19 SB packet.] Kris Clement said that she keeps hearing that the speed of traffic is a problem, and she wants the Norwich police to ticket drivers because they don't issue enough tickets. Sally Matless said that she thinks that rural character is very important in Norwich and keeping speed low is part of that.

5. Expanded Plastics Recycling Update. Durfee said that he has met with Norwich Transfer Station staff members and they are getting geared up to accept additional plastics for recycling. They are looking at three options: 1) Town staff transports materials to Barre; 2) Town staff transports materials to Hannaford; or 3) current hauler, Casella, collects materials and transports to Hypertherm. Durfee is working on a cost analysis of the options. Also, Durfee is putting together educational flyers for citizens, which explain how the new recycling will work. We will need Town staff to monitor for contaminants in the recycling stream. Durfee said that he will be talking with Langhus about the recycling options.

6. Consent Agenda. Brochu said that she would like to pull out of the consent agenda the correspondence from Bonnie Munday regarding delinquent dog licenses. Langhus **moved** (2nd Brochu) to approve the consent agenda, absent delinquent dog owners. **Motion passed unanimously.** SB members agreed to ask the Town Manager to work with the Police Chief on the issue of unlicensed dogs.

7. Town Manager Report...

7d. Authorize Town Manager to Apply for VTrans 2019 Bike & Pedestrian Grant. Peter Warner and Colleen Fox, residents on Beaver Meadow Road, said that they and a group of other residents recently met with the Town Manager and Police Chief about looking to the possibility of extending the sidewalk on Beaver Meadow Road. Langhus and Layton thanked the residents for their efforts and encouraged them to gather as much public input as possible. Durfee said that the VTrans grant would fund a scoping analysis to look into possibly extending the sidewalk, and this would include seeking public input. Brochu asked if the town would have to repay funds if we decide we don't want to go through with constructing a sidewalk. Durfee said that this grant would not provide funds to build the sidewalk, so we would not be committing to doing that. Fox said that her neighbors and she are generally in favor of constructing a sidewalk and they are in the beginning stages of reaching out to other town residents for input. Warner said that he doesn't want to be waiting for something bad to happen before doing a sidewalk project. Layton asked what the timeline might be on such a project – four years? Durfee said possibly yes. Linda Cook said that this is a repeat of the beginning of the Church Street sidewalk project that failed. Cook said that we should open up public discourse now, so that everyone can offer input now. Cook asked about how much money would be the town's share of the scoping analysis cost. Durfee said it would be approximately \$6,000. Pepper asked if the SB's motion should include a dollar amount to be clear about how much money the town will commit to spending. Durfee said that, after the town finds out whether they will be offered a grant, they can decide if they want to accept the grant and how much money they will commit to spending. Langhus asked the Beaver Meadow Road residents if they are ready to reach out to neighbors to solicit input about a potential sidewalk – both in favor and against the project. The residents said that yes, they

are. Langhus **moved** (2nd Arnold) to authorize the Town Manager to apply for a VTrans 2019 Bicycle and Pedestrian Grant to conduct scoping analysis inclusive of soliciting public input and preparing conceptual options for a possible sidewalk along Beaver Meadow Road connecting the existing sidewalk at Bridge 39 with the existing sidewalk at Moore Lane. **Motion approved unanimously.**

7a. RFP for Bank Loan. Durfee said that he has put out an RFP for a bank loan, per the terms of Article 11 of the 2019 Town Meeting. Brochu asked if another bank had a lower bid than Mascoma. If so, why would we choose Mascoma? Brochu said she doesn't necessarily object to choosing Mascoma, but asked Durfee to request that they match the other bank's lower interest rate. Durfee said that he would do that. Langhus **moved** (2nd Pepper) to authorize the Town Manager to accept the loan bid dated May 9, 2019 submitted by Mascoma Bank, such bid having been solicited pursuant to Article 11 approved by Norwich voters at 2019 Town Meeting and recommended for acceptance by the Norwich Finance Director and Town Manager. **Motion approved unanimously.**

7b. 2019 PACIF Grant for Fire Dept. Equipment. Brochu **moved** (2nd Pepper) to authorize the expenditure of up to \$6,102.20 from the Fire Department Equipment Designated Fund to pay for the town's 50% cost share under the terms of a grant awarded by VLCT –PACIF. **Motion approved unanimously.**

7c. Reauthorize Line of Credit (Storm Loan). Durfee explained that the town will need additional money after June 30, 2019 when the current line of credit will expire. Langhus **moved** (2nd Layton) to authorize the Town Manager to sign loan documents reauthorizing the line of credit with Mascoma Bank, originally instituted in connection with July 2017 storm repair expenses and as specifically reauthorized at the 2019 Town Meeting. **Motion approved unanimously.** Cheryl Lindberg asked about the Listers budget - specifically the \$20,000 projected surplus. Lindberg said that the Listers would like to have that money put into the Listers designated fund. Durfee said that at this time it is premature to set aside that money, because the town budget needs to be looked at as a whole to see what surplus we might or might not actually have. When the SB builds the next fiscal year's budget in the fall, that will be the time to make that request. Lindberg said the Listers had 15-16 grievances this time and just had their hearings today. Brochu asked about the cell antenna pole information that was included in the SB packet. Durfee said that AT&T has given the town notice of their application to install a pole. The town can choose whether or not to chime in on the issue. SB members agreed to put the issue on their next agenda. Durfee said that he has drafted a repair work form for use by town departments. The town has gone out to bid for gravel and for paving. Norwich was awarded paving and structures grants. Durfee is working with the Norwich Historical Society on a proposal for an historical marker sign regarding the former town pool. Durfee has been working on Illsley Road issues and the interested parties are in agreement thus far about a plan for installing a culvert. Durfee has started the early stages of working on a possible granite bench installation on Main Street near Tracy Hall on private property. Durfee has completed final sign off on the submission for \$1.4 million in FEMA funds for 2017 storm damage. Brochu said that she had asked about why the town is buying premium gasoline. Durfee said that Police Chief Frank and DPW Director Wiggins both said that non-premium gas is OK for everything except the grounds keeping equipment. DPW is looking at options for supplying non-ethanol gas for the equipment that needs it. The town may need to buy a storage tank.

8. Distribution of Reusable Shopping Bags Update. Brochu said that Mascoma Bank has donated canvas shopping bags for town citizens in need. Linda Cook will help to distribute the bags. SB members publicly thanked Mascoma for their donation.

9. Selectboard Policies Status. SB members discussed options for continuing their work on updating SB policies.

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

Proposed AT&T Cell Antenna
Town Fee Schedule Update
Affordable Housing
Regional Plan – Develop Town’s Comments w/Planning Commission and Planning Director
Appoint Advance Transit Rep.

At 9:46 pm, Langhus **moved** (2nd Brochu) to adjourn. **Motion passed unanimously.**

Meeting adjourned at 9:46 pm.

By Miranda Bergmeier

Approved by the Selectboard on June 26, 2019

John Pepper
Selectboard Chair

Next Meeting – June 26, 2019 – Regular Meeting at 6:30 PM

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