

Minutes of the Selectboard Meeting of
Wednesday, June 26, 2019 at 6:30 pm

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

There were about 18 people in the audience.

Also participating: Cheryl Lindberg, Linda Cook, Demo Sofronas, Claudette Brochu, Charlotte Metcalf, Ed Piper, Rod Francis, Jaci Allen, Stuart Richards, Kris Clement, and Ernie Ciccotelli.

1. Approval of Agenda. Selectboard (SB) members agreed to amend the agenda to discuss the payment of two bills. Langhus **moved** (2nd Layton) to amend the agenda by adding an action item under agenda item #7, Town Manager Report, to authorize payment of two bills using Recreation Facilities and John Girard Fund designated funds. **Motion approved unanimously.**

2. Public Comment. Cheryl Lindberg said that she sent a copy of the completed checklist to the Selectboard, which will be included in correspondence for the next SB meeting. Linda Cook said that the annual 5-Church Rummage Sale will be held at Tracy Hall on July 12, 13, and 14; call Linda at 603-208-7847 if you need help donating items. Demo Sofronas said that the annual Town Fair will be held on the Norwich Green on July 18, 19, and 20. Claudette Brochu announced that the bag bank is overflowing, so please take a bag if you need one. Charlotte Metcalf thanked the SB for passing the bag ordinance.

3. Appointments to Open Positions. Demo Sofronas explained that he has served on the Advance Transit (AT) Board of Directors for some time. AT has increased ridership in Norwich for the last 7 years. Sofronas is seeking another 3-year term on the board. Langhus asked what AT is doing about reducing fossil fuel use. Sofronas said that AT is looking into electric buses. Sofronas said that the board meets once a month, plus any committee meetings. Sofronas said that he very rarely misses meetings. Ed Piper said that he also applied for appointment to the AT board, and spoke with Sofronas before the SB meeting. Piper said that he is happy to have Sofronas continue on the board until he is ready to step aside. Pieper said he is a big fan of AT. Piper worked in mental health for years, and saw how people benefit from AT's services. Piper asked the SB to hang onto his application for the future and keep Sofronas as rep for this next term. Piper is very interested in participating in the future. Arnold asked if there is an alternate rep position; Sofronas said he will ask AT if that is a possibility. Layton **moved** (2nd Langhus) to appoint Demo Sofronas to the Advance Transit Board for a three-year term ending in June 2022 and to explore the possibility of having an alternate representative. **Motion approved unanimously.**

6. Consent Agenda. Brochu and Layton said that they would like to pull John Farrell's correspondence out of the consent agenda in order to discuss the Norwich Farms signage change, as addressed in Farrell's letter. SB members asked the Town Manager (TM) and Planning Director if the change in the sign – from Norwich Farms to Norwich Farms Creamery – was in violation of any town rules or regulations. Durfee and Rod Francis (Planning Director) said that the sign change is not in violation. Langhus **moved** (2nd Layton) to accept John Farrell's letter regarding Norwich Farms Creamery sign change into correspondence. **Motion approved unanimously.**

8. 2019 TRORC Proposed Regional Plan – Joint Discussion with Planning Commission (PC). Rod Francis explained that the Regional Planning Commission (RPC) develops a plan for the region – Two Rivers-Ottauquechee Regional Commission (TRORC) – of which Norwich is part. TRORC has
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thus far maintained an interchange policy designed to discourage sprawl in rural areas. Francis discussed the memo he provided for the SB meeting packet. Francis also said that the PC has asked TRORC for clarification on their stance toward mixed use development in the Lewiston area, for example, in order to find out how the proposed regional plan would function. Francis emphasized that there are currently no plans for any such development. Francis presented the SB's options regarding the proposed regional plan, per his memo to the SB. Francis suggested the SB include memo option #4 in their response to TRORC. Arnold asked about the zoning maps in the proposed regional plan. Layton said she would like to use comments 2 through 5 from Francis's memo in the SB response to the proposed plan. Langhus said he has been looking at the regional plan sections that are not related to land use, and liked the attention the plan pays to climate issues, but would like to see more input from TRORC regarding siting renewable energy infrastructure. Jaci Allen said she agrees that the SB should incorporate #2 through 5 in their response. Allen said she sees positive aspects in the proposed plan. Brochu asked how receptive TRORC will be to input. Francis said they have been open to take on comments he has made thus far. Brochu asked about the process for approving the regional plan. Linda Cook asked for a copy of the correspondence with Peter Gregory. Durfee said that it will be part of the next SB packet. Stuart Richards said he asked Peter Gregory if Norwich could break with TRORC. Richards said he is very concerned about the possibility for development on Route 5 South. He doesn't want dense multi-family development in Norwich. Richards wants to maintain a strong center of town, as it has been. Richards would like to see the SB protect the interchange. Kris Clement asked what happens if the town's zoning regulations are in conflict with the regional plan. Francis said that if the proposed project triggers Act 250, then TRORC will govern. Ernie Ciccotelli said he thinks this is a very short time frame for public comments and the SB should ask for more time to provide comment. Langhus agreed that this is an overly compressed time frame, which precludes meaningful public input. Brochu asked for other SB members to offer input on the SB written response. SB members reached consensus to ask Francis to draft written comments to TRORC incorporating point 2 through 5, as included in Francis's memo. These are:

2. Limited comment in support of removing the interchange area in Norwich
3. Suggest more clarity about scale of residential development in rural areas
4. Suggest more flexibility around retail uses in the mixed use district when combined with residential development
5. Suggest more attention to neighborhood amenity (including retail) in mixed use development

4. Vermont DEC Stormwater Grants-In-Aid. Durfee said that the state has invited certain towns to participate in a program to help towns with best practices around stormwater management. Norwich is one such town. Norwich can identify priority project regarding stormwater. Durfee is seeking SB approval to participate in this program and receive help from the state. This program is focused on water quality, but can also result in improved infrastructure resiliency. Langhus **moved** (2nd Layton) to authorize the Town Manager to participate in the Vermont Department of Conservation Stormwater Grants In Aid Program. **Motion approved unanimously.**

5. 2019 Paving Program. Durfee said that the town has gone out to bid on paving. Blaktop is the apparent low bidder, and Durfee seeks SB approval to spend from the paving designated fund to pay for the portion of cost not covered by the state grant. Langhus **moved** (2nd Layton) to authorize the expenditure of up to \$45,040 from the Paving Designated Fund to pay for the town's cost share to pave a section of Union Village Road. **Motion approved unanimously.**

7. Town Manager Report. The tennis court suffered damage this spring. Almost all the repair costs are covered by warranty. Langhus **moved** (2nd Layton) to authorize the expenditure of \$810 from the Tennis Courts Designated Fund to pay for repairs to the tennis courts. **Motion approved unanimously.** SB members thanks Peter French and all volunteers who replaced the Huntley pavilion roof; it looks beautiful. Layton **moved** (2nd Langhus) to authorize the expenditure of

\$4,769.97 from the John Girard Designated Fund to pay for the purchase of cedar shakes and roofing materials to replace the Huntley Meadows pavilion roof. **Motion approved unanimously.** Durfee presented to the SB a proposed revised fee schedule, which will be included in the July 10 SB packet. Brochu asked how Durfee determined how to raise the fees. Durfee said he has been balancing fees with actual costs. Brochu asked if we should suspend C&D collection. Durfee said that we should keep taking C&D waste for now, until we see what Lebanon and Hartford landfills do. SB members agreed to formally thank Roberta Robinson for her many years of service, and express their deep appreciation for her work.

9. Selectboard Goals Discussion – Affordable Housing. Layton said that she and Arnold attended a recent Affordable Housing Subcommittee meeting (AHS). Layton came away feeling that AHS is doing good work, and affordable housing in Norwich will be a daunting proposition. Arnold said that AHS talked about strategies for raising funds for affordable housing. Langhus asked if the town can adjust taxes on accessory dwellings in order to encourage affordable housing that way. Durfee said there is the possibility of tax stabilization for those buildings. Stuart Richards said he thinks affordable housing is doable in Norwich if someone puts in the time and effort. Richards said that land is available in Norwich. He suggested that the SB make the affordable housing fund easily enough accessed to move quickly. Arnold asked about affordable housing strategy document the AHS working on.

10. Selectboard Policies Status. SB members agreed to postpone this agenda item to their July 10 meeting.

11. Verizon 60-day Advance Notice re: Cellular Attachment... Brochu said that she is very opposed to the new utility pole. Langhus said that the SB has the opportunity, but is not required, to comment. Layton said that she disagrees with Brochu. Francis said it's very unlikely the SB could affect this project. SB members decided not to take any action on this matter.

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

- Master Financial Policy
- Set Tax Rate
- Affordable Housing
- TRORC Regional Plan Discussion
- Road and Bridge Standards
- July/August Meeting Schedule

At 10:09 pm, Layton **moved** (2nd Langhus) to adjourn. **Motion passed unanimously.**

Meeting adjourned at 10:09 pm.

By Miranda Bergmeier

Approved by the Selectboard on July 10, 2019

John Pepper
Selectboard Chair

Next Meeting – July 10, 2019 – Regular Meeting at 6:30 PM

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