

Minutes of the Selectboard Meeting of  
Wednesday, July 10, 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: Omer Trajman, Rod Francis, Jaci Allen, Jeff Lubell, Charlotte Metcalf, Cheryl Lindberg, Jennifer Frank.

1. Approval of Agenda. Selectboard (SB) members agreed to proceed with the agenda as drafted.
2. Public Comment. Omer Trajman, Finance Committee (FC) Chair, gave an update on FC activities. Trajman said they elected officers of the FC; they looked at the tax rate and suggest that keeping the homestead tax rate flat from last year will allow the town to start rebuilding its savings. In the coming months, the FC will look at the next FY budget. Roger Arnold distributed a handout from Marcia Calloway, which will be included in the next SB packet.
3. Consent Agenda. Layton **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Langhus) to approve the consent agenda with the exception of item 3.a.11, which will be moved to agenda item 9c. **Motion approved unanimously.**
4. TRORC Regional Plan Draft – Finalize Joint SB and Planning Commission (PC) Comments. Layton said she like the draft comment letter and supports sending it. Layton said she like the term “Community Design”, and asked if it has a formal meaning. Rod Francis, Planning Director, said that it does, and the TRORC Regional Plan (RP) gives the definition. The RP addresses options for designing communities to encourage healthy physical activity; this is a growing trend in Planning. Arnold said he thinks the letter is very thoughtful and asked about the process of drafting it. Jaci Allen said that Francis drafted it and then the PC discussed, edited and approved it. Francis said he and Jeff Lubell met with Peter Gregory at TRORC to discuss the draft. Langhus said he liked the tone of the letter; it struck a good balance between respect and insistence. Brochu mentioned Marcia Calloway’s email to the state office and asked if the state has any control over TROR’s activities. Francis said that towns have control over town zoning; unless activity comes up for a state permit, the state of TRORC cannot intervene. The state cannot compel a town to enact certain zoning rules. Pepper asked what is the expected result of Norwich’s comments on the draft RP. Francis said that TRORC will compile the comments and present them to their governing body for any edits, and then the revised RP will go the member towns for voting. Jeff Lubell said that he and Francis’s meeting with TRORC was very productive and hopefully lays groundwork for further cooperation.
5. Set FY 2019-20 Tax Rate. Durfee said that next year he will propose that the voters at Town Meeting decide whether to establish a designated fund for “Emergency Reserves”. Durfee said the SB will set a tax rate based on the factors outlined in the sheet included in the meeting packet. Durfee recommended town tax rates of 2.389 (homestead) and 2.1471 (non-resident). SB members discussed Durfee’s proposal for tax rate, including possible reductions to the proposed rates. After discussion, Layton **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Brochu) to set the FY20 Total Homestead Tax Rate at \$2.3289 (which equals the sum of the \$1.8068 School Homestead Rate, the \$0.5146 Town Tax Rate which includes the \$0.0024 Local Agreement Rate, and the \$0.0075 County Tax Rate) and the Total Non-Residential Tax Rate at \$2.1471 (which equals the sum of the \$1.625 School Non-Residential Rate, the \$0.5146 Town Tax Rate which includes the \$0.0024 Local Agreement Rate, and the \$0.0075 County Tax Rate), each rate being based on \$1,000 per assessed valuation. **Motion failed 2 to 3 (yes- Layton, Norwich Selectboard Minutes – 7/10/2019 Mtg**

**Arnold; no-Langhus, Brochu, Pepper).** After further discussion, Langhus **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Brochu) to set the FY20 Total Homestead Tax Rate at \$2.3233 (which equals the sum of the \$1.8068 School Homestead Rate, the \$0.5090 Town Tax Rate which includes the \$0.0024 Local Agreement Rate, and the \$0.0075 County Tax Rate) and the Total Non-Residential Tax Rate at \$2.1415 (which equals the sum of the \$1.625 School Non-Residential Rate, the \$0.5090 Town Tax Rate which includes the \$0.0024 Local Agreement Rate, and the \$0.0075 County Tax Rate), each rate being based on \$1,000 per assessed valuation. **Motion passed 3 to 2 (yes- Brochu, Langhus, Pepper; no- Layton, Arnold).**

6. TM Report

a. Authorize TM to Expend from the Computer Fund. Langhus **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Layton) to authorize the expenditure of \$755.25 from the Computer Equipment Designated Fund to pay for the replacement of the Assistant Clerk's computer. **Motion passed unanimously.**

b. Fee Schedule Update. Durfee said that the fee schedule update draft is in progress, especially the Transfer Station fees, which are being amended in such a way to encourage proper disposal of items. This work is almost finished.

c. Town Road & Bridge Standards. Vermont's state requirements have changed, so that is why the SB is being asked to adopt revised standards at this time. Langhus **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Layton) to adopt the 2019 Town Road and Bridge Standards, as revised in the packet, with the understanding that the Town Manager and the DPW Director will further review the standards for possible additional update by the Selectboard. **Motion approved unanimously.**

7. Board Summer Schedule. Layton said that she would consider an extra meeting to do policies work. Pepper and Brochu said they are open to doing that. After further discussion, SB members agreed to have a meeting on July 24, 2019.

8. Undesignated Fund Balance Policy. SB members agreed that they will discuss this issue more fully in their next meeting.

9. Selectboard Policies Status.

a. Master Financial Policy. Layton discussed briefly the documents she provided for the SB packet. Layton recommends all financial policies should be in a master policy. Brochu asked for a copy of the policies in editable electronic format. Layton **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Brochu) to adopt the Town of Norwich Master Financial Policy, as presented in the SB packet, as a first reading. **Motion approved unanimously.**

b. Banner Policy; Sexual Harassment Policy. Brochu **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Langhus) that the SB adopt the Banner Policy and the Sexual Harassment Policy, as presented in the packet, as a first reading. **Motion approved unanimously.**

SB members discussed formatting /structure for policies, in general. Layton said that she thinks the SB should adopt a policy that governs how the SB develops policies. Brochu and Layton will put together a draft for SB consideration at a future meeting.

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

Selectboard Policies  
Authorization to Apply for a Trails Grant

At 9:34 pm, Layton **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Pepper) to adjourn. **Motion passed unanimously.**

Meeting adjourned at 9:34 pm.

By Miranda Bergmeier

Approved by the Selectboard on July 24, 2019

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~~John Pepper~~ Claudette Brochu, Vice Chair  
Selectboard Chair

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

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