

Minutes of the Selectboard Meeting of
Wednesday, September 11, 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 12 people in the audience.

Also participating: Kris Clement, Don McCabe, Eliza Hamm, Linda Cook, Christine Pinello, Carey Callaghan, Kari Asmus, Omer Trajman, Cheryl Lindberg, and Police Chief Jennifer Frank.

1. Approval of Agenda. Selectboard (SB) members agreed to amend the agenda to move agenda item #9 (re: stray/abandoned animals) to a point earlier in the meeting, just after item #4. SB members also agreed to add an agenda item (4a) just after the stray/abandoned animals discussion, in order to discuss the Dresden Finance Committee.

2. Public Comment. Kris Clement asked if the Planning Commission (PC) plans to fill the vacancy created when Steve Thoms resigned from the commission in July 2019. SB members said that the PC will need to decide that, and the TM's office will advertise the opening if one exists.

3. Family Place Request for Alcohol Policy Waiver. Don McCabe spoke briefly on behalf of the Family Place, in support of their request. Langhus **moved** (2nd Layton) to grant The Family Place a waiver to the Norwich alcohol policy, in order to serve alcohol at the Gingerbread Festival the evening of December 6, 2019. **Motion approved unanimously.**

4. Nor'east Trail Runs Request for Clarification. Eliza Hamm spoke on behalf of Nor'east Trail Runs, a company that seeks to present a marathon race in Norwich on October 27, 2019. Hamm said that they had a small event last year and are looking to repeat the event again in 2019. Hamm said that her company has reached out to the Police Chief seeking approval. Layton said that safety is a primary concern. Pepper asked how big this year's event will be. Hamm said they have received approximately 70 registrations thus far. Durfee said that he will talk to the Police Chief about the status of the company's request.

9. Impounding & Stray/Abandoned Animals. Layton said that she doesn't know what state legislation there is regarding cats, and said that the SB needs to consider the health of town cats and also the costs to the town. Arnold asked how common it is for towns to include cats in their animal control ordinance. Brochu said she does not want a hard and fast number for vet services; Brochu wants to talk about the issue at the time if the town goes over budget. Arnold said he thinks that the SB's job should be more to handle the animal control ordinance and not be drafting an agreement with a vendor. Arnold said he would help develop a draft of the ordinance for SB review. SB members agreed to continue to pay Dr. Christine Pinello (veterinarian) for her services as the need arises, pending development of an updated animal control ordinance. Linda Cook thanked Pinello for her services; Cook also said that she thinks the current system is working fine. Pinello said that she is looking forward to working with the SB to develop the animal ordinance.

4a. Dresden Finance Committee – Status. Carey Callaghan, a member of the Hanover Finance Committee, distributed to the SB a set of written draft discussion points regarding re-forming the Dresden Finance Committee (DFC). Callaghan said that the DFC existed in the past, and was comprised of members from Norwich and from Hanover; the DFC worked on Dresden School District budget issues. During the last several years the DFC has not existed, for lack of Norwich participants/members, and the Hanover Finance Committee has been the only body working on budget issues. Callaghan would like to have input from Norwich citizens. Kari Asmus, Chair of the

Hanover Finance Committee, talked about the history and structure of the DFC and also the duties of the DFC. Callaghan and Asmus said they have talked to the Norwich School Board, and the school board is open to re-establishing the DFC. Layton suggested that maybe there would be some people involved in the Marion Cross School who would be interested in serving on the DFC. Omer Trajman, Chair of the Norwich Finance Committee (NFC), said that the NFC talked about the DFC at one point but did not continue to discuss the matter past that brief conversation. Cheryl Lindberg said that she strongly believes there should be Norwich representation on the DFC. Arnold asked if it is important for the DFC be comprised of people who are already members of the NFC. Callaghan said that he thinks it is best for the DFC to be comprised of town finance committee members, so that the same people are doing both the town and school budgets.

5. Consent Agenda. Langhus **moved** (2nd Brochu) to approve the consent agenda. **Motion approved unanimously.** Linda Cook said that she wants the SB to seek public input about VLCT's legislative advocacy for increased local control.

6. Board to Sign Accounts Payable/Warrants. Langhus **moved** (2nd Brochu) to approve check warrant #20-06 for General Fund in the amount of \$621.26. **Motion approved unanimously.** Langhus **moved** (2nd Brochu) to approve check warrant #20-05 for General Fund in the amount of \$88,514.91. **Motion approved unanimously.** Langhus **moved** (2nd Arnold) to approve check warrant #19/20 for General Fund in the amount of \$4,634,571.62 with the coding correction noted for check number 7951, and Land Management Council Fund in the amount of \$845.04. **Motion failed unanimously.** Layton said she is uncomfortable with the fact that no Finance Director has signed the warrant. Langhus agreed, and said he would like to see all of these expenditures audited. Pepper and Langhus said they would like to see future reports in a different format that will be manipulable to make it easier to interpret the information provided. Brochu said that she would like, going forward, to have the warrants sorted by department so it's easier to track budget spending. Pepper agreed and asked also for sorting by descending dollar amount. Kris Clement said that most of the companies she is familiar with use checks and not ACHs.

7. Town Manager Report.

a. Appoint Town Manager as Delegate for VLCT Annual Meeting. Langhus **moved** (2nd Brochu) to appoint the Town Manager as the voting delegate for Norwich at the 2019 VLCT Annual Business Meeting. **Motion approved unanimously.**

b. Union Negotiations. Durfee said that union negotiations have gotten back on track recently. SB members agreed to have Brochu and Layton serve as SB liaisons with the Town Manager regarding union negotiations. (no executive session was necessary)

8. Town Finances.

a. Financial Policies. Layton said that this 1st draft of Financial Policies is good and she is seeing the need to add to it, as well. Arnold said that he wants procedures to be part of the policies. Brochu offered comments on Section 11. Langhus **moved** (2nd Layton) to conduct the 2nd reading with possible adoption of the Town of Norwich Master Financial Policy, as presented and amended in this meeting, at the September 25, 2019 SB meeting. **Motion approved unanimously.**

b. Financial Issues, If Update is Available. Brochu asked if there was an update available on the financial issues. Durfee said that he had nothing new to report. Jennifer Frank, Norwich Police Chief, said the investigative update she released recently was also sent out by the Town Manager's office. Brochu asked if there is a timeline for when we will know more about the BEC case and can release more information. Frank said that she has no way to give a time estimate.

c. FY 2020-21 Budget Schedule. Brochu asked what impact this will have on budget development for the next fiscal year. Durfee said that the SB will get a first draft of the complete budget, at the latest, for the 1st meeting of November. The format will be in a 3-ring binder. SB members discussed the schedule for meetings when the SB will work on the FY21 budget.

d. FY 2019 Year-End Financial Position. Langhus would like to see a report from the Finance Office showing a FY19 year-end report.

e. NEMRC Bulk Time Purchase Agreement. Langhus **moved** (2nd Brochu) to authorize the Town Manager to enter into the Bulk Time Purchase Agreement with NEMRC for the provision of consultation services for the Town Finance Department in the amount of \$9,408.00, with such spending to be allocated to the Finance payroll budget line item and taken from the Finance Assistant wage line item. **Motion approved unanimously.**

11. Adjournment. SB members agreed that Brochu will compile input from other SB members regarding the next meeting agenda, and will submit the completed agenda to the Town Manager's office for posting.

At 9:09 pm, Langhus **moved** (2nd Arnold) to adjourn. **Motion approved unanimously.**

Meeting adjourned at 9:09 pm.

By Miranda Bergmeier

Approved by the Selectboard on September 25, 2019

John Pepper
Selectboard Chair

Next Meeting – September 25, 2019 – Regular Meeting at 6:30 PM

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