

Minutes of the Selectboard Meeting of
Wednesday, November 20, 2019 at 6:30 pm

Members present: John Pepper, Chair (left at approximately 8:30 pm); Claudette Brochu, Vice Chair (served as chair in Pepper's absence); Roger Arnold; John Langhus (via telephone); Mary Layton; Herb Durfee, Town Manager; Miranda Bergmeier, Assistant to the Town Manager.

There were about 13 people in the audience.

Also participating: Stephen Flanders, Linda Cook, Police Chief Jennifer Frank, Demo Sofronas, Cheryl Lindberg, Aaron Lamperti, Mike Davey, Christopher Ashley.

1. Approval of Agenda. Selectboard (SB) members agreed to move agenda item #6b to a point earlier in the meeting, in order to facilitate Chief Frank's participation; SB members also agreed to defer item #7 (Union Negotiations Update) to a future meeting.

2. Public Comment. Stephen Flanders drew the SB's attention to a memo in the SB packet from the Trails Committee regarding a proposed Gile Mtn. parking lot expansion. Linda Cook asked why Miranda Bergmeier had signed the accounts payable warrant in the SB packet. Durfee explained this was because he was out of the office and unable to sign; Durfee authorized Bergmeier to sign in his stead.

3. Consent Agenda. Brochu asked to pull John Farrell's letter out of the consent agenda, so the SB could discuss his letter and a possible response. SB discussed the issue raised by Farrell concerning the tractor crossing signs on Turnpike Road and agreed that Arnold will research the issue and respond by letter to John Farrell. Brochu **moved** (2nd Layton) to accept John Farrell, letter as Selectboard correspondence. **Motion passed unanimously.** Layton **moved** (2nd Brochu) to approve the consent agenda. **Motion passed unanimously.**

6. b. Request for Purchase of New Police Computers. Police Chief Jennifer Frank gave some background information on the Police Department's (PD's) request to replace the computers (MDTs) in police cruisers. Frank explained the need for replacement MDTs. Frank also explained the options she explored for purchasing. Also there is an issue with 2 outmoded desktop computers in the PD station. Frank said she has made every effort to find the most fiscally prudent options. Frank explained that the communications study fund was designed for police and emergency services, so it makes sense to use that fund to purchase computers used in police communications. The total cost is hard to know right now, because Frank hasn't heard back from the supplier about extending their deal to an additional 2 computers. \$13,575.00 is Frank's estimate of the total cost. Brochu **moved** (2nd Layton) to authorize the expenditure of up to \$16,300.00 from the Communications Study Designated Fund for the purchase and installation of four mobile data communication terminals, to be used in the police patrol vehicles and any additional computers that Chief Frank can obtain for that amount. **Motion passed unanimously.**

Demo Sofronas said that Chief Frank does a very good job of having all her facts when she presents a proposal to the SB.

4. Town Manager Report. Durfee said he presented to the SB members each a binder containing all FYE2021 proposed budget expenditures. Durfee said he received the draft audit from the town's auditor, Bonnie Batchelder. Brochu asked when Batchelder will be back in town to make her audit presentation to the SB. Brochu asked Durfee to ask Batchelder if she can attend the Dec. 18th SB meeting.

a. Bank of America letter. After brief discussion, Layton **moved** (2nd Arnold) to approve for signatures the letter to Bank of America to designate points of contact concerning the Town's credit card account. **Motion passed unanimously.**

5. a. Energy Performance Update. Aaron Lamperti, member of the Norwich Energy Committee, gave some background information about the energy audit regarding the town's energy usage. Lamperti discussed some general possibilities for improvements. Michael Davey, with Energy Efficient Investments (EEI), spoke about his company's work with other municipalities and school districts. Davey discussed some options for heating and energy usage changes, referencing the two documents provided to the SB outlining 2 options. Davey said the next step would be to create a more detailed study to be complete by mid-December. At this time Davey is seeking guidance from the SB about which option to pursue in a more detailed study. Layton asked about timeline. Davey said that it would be approximately 1 year. Layton asked whether Tracy Hall would have to be vacant during the work, and Davey said no; we can shift people around as different areas are worked on. Brochu asked about geothermal heat's benefit over heat pumps. Davey said geothermal is more efficient and greener. Davey offered the opportunity to take tours of 2 buildings that use the 2 separate options. Langhus said a smaller group should study the options and he suggested figuring out a way to make gradual changes. Langhus suggested we think about going "big" with geothermal, perhaps to serve multiple customers. Christopher Ashley expressed support for this project. Pepper **moved** (2nd Brochu) to form a working group with 1 member of the Selectboard, 1-2 members of the Finance Committee, and 1-2 members of Town staff to evaluate options with EEI and make recommendations by December 31, 2019. **Motion passed unanimously.**

b. Policies – Digital Media. Brochu said she is looking for input from SB members. SB members discussed options for edits to the draft policy. Brochu **moved** (2nd Layton) to adopt the Town of Norwich Policy on Use of Digital Media by Town Officials, with the amendments proposed in tonight's meeting. **Motion passed unanimously.**

b. Policies – Cyber Security. Layton said she received a copy of a draft policy from Gerry Tolman. Layton sought feedback from the town's IT consultant, as well. Layton is working on doing research to draft a policy. Durfee said he needs to follow up with VLCT about their recommendations. Pepper asked if we can put COPS system into place now, ASAP. Lindberg said she is in the process of doing so. Linda Cook asked if it is possible to get a town phone for the Town Treasurer's use so COPS will work quickly. Lindberg said that she and Durfee have put a number of limiting factors into place in financial procedures. Lindberg said we already have "put the brakes on" in every way possible and are working on getting COPS up and running.

SB took a break at this point. Pepper exited the meeting at this time. When the SB meeting resumed, Brochu served as chair of the meeting.

5 c. Prioritized Financial Procedures. Durfee said he will have a list for the SB at their next meeting, on 12/4/2019.

c. Dresden Finance Committee MOU. Langhus said that there is no draft MOU yet.

d. Budget FY21. SB members discussed how to schedule budget discussions on 12/4, 12/11, and 12/18. Durfee suggested breaking the discussions into thirds. SB members agreed to discuss the DPW budget items on 12/4, Public Safety items on 12/11, and General Government (everything else) on 12/18. SB members agreed to very brief presentations from department heads, followed by questions and discussion from and among SB members.

6. a. Financial Reports & Accounts Payable. Brochu asked about the town's use of premium gas. Durfee said that he will look into that again. Brochu asked if it is possible to stop using petty cash. Langhus asked for the total charges from the town's lawyers regarding the financial scam and personnel matter. Layton **moved** (2nd Arnold) to approve check warrant #20-11 for General Fund in

the amount of \$649,965.06. **Motion passed unanimously.**

c. TJ Donovan Letter re: Opioid Lawsuit. SB members agreed to take no action to withdraw from the negotiation class.

e. Animal Ordinance. Arnold asked SB members for feedback on whether the draft ordinance is unnecessarily unwieldy or punitive, or if it is on the right track. Durfee said the Town Clerk has started looking into this matter and is concerned about dog bite issues. Arnold talked about a possible community-based approach to animal issues. Layton said that some aspects of dog behavior are safety-related. Arnold suggested the SB could consider putting together a citizen group to address these issues. SB members agreed that the draft in the SB packet was a very good start. Arnold said he will take SB members into account and edit the animal ordinance for SB consideration at a future meeting.

9. Future Agenda Items. SB anticipate the following future agenda items:

Dec 4:

- a. FY 2019 Audit Report
- b. FY21 Budget discussion/possible presentation(s)
- c. Policies (Cyber)
- d. Animal Ordinance
- e. Financial Protection update with response to VLTC/PACIF (ongoing discussion on what we are actively engaged in to prevent subsequent occurrence in part as result of RCA. Report due back to VLCT Dec. 23)
- f. Prioritized Financial Procedures List

Dec 11:

- a. Budget update and presentations
- b. Regional Energy Coordinator update

Dec 18:

- a. Town Plan update
- b. Budget update/presentations
- c. Policies
- d. Animal Ordinance
- e. Union update
- f. Prudential Committee Update (Discussion)
- g. Town Auditor Presentation

Jan:

- a. Budget
- b. Policies
- c. TM Evaluation
- d. Solid Waste Committee Charge Future agenda items

Soon:

- a. Town attorney discussion
- b. TM contract

10. Adjournment. At 9:25 Layton **moved** (2nd Arnold) to adjourn. **Motion passed unanimously.**

Meeting adjourned at 9:25 pm.

By Miranda Bergmeier

Approved by the Selectboard on December 4, 2019

John Pepper
Selectboard Chair

Next Meeting – December 4, 2019 – Meeting at 6:30

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