

Minutes of the Selectboard Meeting of  
Wednesday, December 4, 2019 at 6:30 pm

Members present: John Pepper, Chair (joined meeting at 7:26 via telephone); Claudette Brochu, Vice Chair (served as chair in Pepper's physical absence); Roger Arnold; John Langhus (via telephone); Mary Layton; Herb Durfee, Town Manager; Miranda Bergmeier, Assistant to the Town Manager.

There were about 6 people in the audience.

Also participating: Stuart Richards, Linda Cook, Cheryl Lindberg, Larry Wiggins, Robert Kewer.

1. Call to Order – meeting was convened at 6:32 pm.
2. Approval of Agenda. Selectboard (SB) members agreed to defer the following items to future meeting(s): Cybersecurity Policy, Animal Control Ordinance, Green Fleet Policy, Whistleblower Policy, and Dresden MOU.
3. Public Comment. Stuart Richards said he has some complaints, although he doesn't want to minimize the hard work done by the town's volunteers. Richards said that he sent correspondence to the Planning Commission (PC) recently and it was not included in their last meeting packet. Richards also said that he feels the PC is holding meeting at inconvenient times and places, and they are not properly allowing public comment at the meetings. In response to questions from SB members, Richards said these problems have existed in the PC's last 2 meetings, not over the long term.
4. Consent Agenda. Layton **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Arnold) to approve the consent agenda. **Motion passed unanimously.**
5. Town Manager Report. Durfee gave to the SB printouts of the current ledger of accounts, which will be included in next week's SB meeting packet. Durfee said that the FEMA reimbursement is still in process with the State of Vermont; the state has said they are working diligently to process the town's payment/reimbursement. Durfee said he has just gotten a draft copy of the Norwich Town Plan, which the PC will discuss at their meeting this week. The PC is planning to have the Town Plan to the SB and to voters in time for the 2020 Town Meeting, if the SB wants to follow an expedited schedule. Durfee said the Finance Office is being currently staffed 5 days per week with a full-time temporary employee and a part-time consultant from NEMRC. Durfee is deciding how to proceed regarding advertising the position or not. Durfee provided to the SB a list of financial controls. Layton asked what position Durfee is considering Becky for. Durfee said that Becky is ready to take on most of the Finance Director position and would need some additional training regarding fund balance accounting. On day-to-day work, Becky is more than capable. Langhus asked where we are in spending on the temp's time, versus what was budgeted for the Finance Director and Finance Assistant. Durfee said that information is in the sheets he handed out tonight; Brochu read aloud that information off of the sheets. Langhus asked what is the temp agency's hourly rate; Durfee said approximately \$30 per hour. SB members then discussed options for paying for the purchase of new Police Department computers and agreed to take up the issue again at their next meeting.
6. a. FYE 2021 Budget – Dept. of Public Works (DPW). Larry Wiggins, DPW Director, said that he has defined DPW's needs in 3 main areas: infrastructure, manpower, and equipment. Wiggins gave a brief overview of his department's budget proposal. Wiggins said there are many culverts in town that need work. He suggests using contractors to help get the culvert work done in a timely manner. Wiggins has submitted a 5-year plan for equipment replacement, including new generators for Tracy Hall and a new plow truck. As for manpower, DPW did not have sufficient staff to do all of the mowing and some other work this year. Wiggins proposes establishing a new position to do labor

work, including mechanic work. Wiggins also proposes hiring a part-time administrative assistant. Layton said that a part-time admin assistant makes sense because the former DPW director had his wife do all of the department's clerical work. Layton also agreed the culverts need a lot of work. SB members discussed the proposed DPW budget with Wiggins in further detail. Brochu asked about the inventory of unused culverts; Wiggins said those will be used. Langhus thanked Wiggins for his detailed work, and said that Wiggins has made compelling arguments for his proposals. Wiggins said the town's need for bridge work is pressing. Brochu would like to see safety equipment expenses come under a specially-labeled budget line. SB members had questions about bridges. Wiggins suggests hiring an engineering firm to conduct a bridge inventory that will identify priorities, estimated costs, and possible schedule for work. Brochu asked about crack sealing proposed cut, and Wiggins said he'd like to spend that money on more cost-effective pursuits. Brochu asked questions about various budget line items. Arnold asked if Wiggins feels that DPW has had enough resources to address the "social" infrastructure. Wiggins responded that, for small projects, they can almost always help out and he sees that as integral to the function of DPW. Cheryl Lindberg brought up issues about Carpenter Street and Koch Road and asked if an additional employee on crew would reduce OT utilization. Wiggins said the State of Vermont is working on their portion of the Carpenter Street issue. Brochu asked about getting budget information out to the public. Durfee said the overall budget is or will be on the town website, and members of the public are welcome to come to Tracy Hall to review the fully detailed budget binder. Linda Cook had questions about specific DPW line items. Robert Kewer asked about the town's purchase of gasoline and whether we are buying premium gasoline. Wiggins said we are buying mid-grade from Evans Fuel; we made that switch approximately 3 years ago. Wiggins said most of our vehicles run diesel. Kewer asked if the town could switch its small-engine equipment to electric. Wiggins and Durfee said the town is transitioning to lower fossil fuel use equipment wherever possible.

7. a.1 Layton **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Arnold) to approve check warrant #20-12 for General Fund in the amount of \$35,047.80 and for Conservation Commission Fund in the amount of \$20,000.00. **Motion passed unanimously.**

6 b.ii Green Fleet Policy deferred to the 12/11/2019 SB meeting.

b.iii Whistleblower Policy – Durfee included in the SB packet a draft of a policy and Brochu submitted written comments – also in the SB packet. SB members discussed the draft policy, including the possibility of requiring written reports. SB members agreed to "strongly encourage" written reports but not "require" them. Brochu and Durfee will work on a new draft to present to the SB for the 12/11/2019 meeting.

d. Prioritized Financial Procedures. Durfee explained that many of the procedures in use currently are not written down, so he is in the process of generating a list of procedures that exist now or need to be written. SB members discussed the need to written financial procedures and possible timeline for completion. Durfee said he is continually working on it, and it is a very large and time-consuming project.

e. VLCT/PACIF Response. Durfee thanked Brochu for her input on Durfee's draft document and said that he will incorporate input from other SB members if they provide it. Durfee will finalize the document and present it to the SB for consideration and approval at their 12/11/2019.

7 c. Resolution regarding Cannabis. SB members discussed when and whether to discuss this topic. SB members agreed to defer this discussion and issue to their 1/8/2020 meeting.

9. Future Agenda Items. SB members anticipate the following future agenda items:  
December 11:

- FYE 2021 Budget – Public Safety
- Town Manager Contract (executive session)
- Regional Energy Coordinator
- Green Fleet Policy
- Dresden MOU (if ready for discussion)
- Police Department Computers
- Whistleblower Policy
- VLCT/PACIF Response

December 18:

- FYE 2019 Audit Review (possible presentation by Batchelder Associates)
- Planning Commission - Town Plan Update
- FYE 2021 Budget – General Government and Remaining Line Items

10. Adjournment. At 10:01 Layton **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Arnold) to adjourn. **Motion passed unanimously.**

Meeting adjourned at 10:02 pm.

By Miranda Bergmeier

Approved by the Selectboard on December 11, 2019

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John Pepper  
Selectboard Chair

Next Meeting – December 11, 2019 – Meeting at 6:30

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