

Minutes of the Selectboard Meeting of  
Wednesday, January 22, 2020 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 10 people in the audience.

Also participating: Cheryl Lindberg, Rod Francis, Omer Trajman.

1. Approval of Agenda. Selectboard (SB) members made no changes to the agenda.
2. Public Comment. No public comment was offered.
3. Selectboard Comments. Brochu asked about the taxes due reminder postcard that was recently mailed out, which stated a due date/time of 6:00 pm on 2/14/2020, rather than 4:30 pm, as was passed at the 2019 Town Meeting. Durfee said that the postcard was already printed and ready for mailing before the SB's last meeting when the issue was discussed. The 6:00 pm time was to allow taxpayers a little extra time to pay their taxes without penalty, because the finance office is willing to stay late to offer that courtesy. Cheryl Lindberg said that if there is never a penalty for late payment, then people won't pay on time. Lindberg said that's what credit card companies do; it's good to have a penalty to incentivize people to pay.
4. Consent Agenda. Brochu asked if there was a noise complaint that prompted the SB correspondence regarding a noise ordinance. Rod Francis, Planning Director, said that last fall, the issue was brought up and has been dealt with. Brochu **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Langhus) to approve the consent agenda. **Motion approved unanimously.**
5. a. A/P Warrants. Brochu asked about the higher-priced gasoline being purchased; specifically, she wanted to know when the town will stop buying all non-ethanol gas. Durfee said he will be looking into options for purchasing cards for employees to fill vehicles with regular gas. Layton **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Langhus) to approve check warrant #20-15 for Recreation Facility and Improvement Fund in the amount of \$1,096.45 and for General Fund in the amount of \$172,501.45. **Motion passed unanimously.**
  - b. December 2019 Revenue/Expense Report. Durfee said he is providing the SB with financial statements at every meeting at this point. Brochu said she prefers the "percentage of budget" format for financial statements. Brochu asked about additional types of reports. Durfee offered to meet with Brochu to review report options.
  - c. Open Mtg Law (OML) Handout. Layton said she will develop a one-page overview guide on OML for distribution to town committees. Langhus said that a training session would be an option, as well. SB members discussed various options for training.
  - d. Cannabis Resolution. Arnold said that VLCT has asked the towns to consider approving a resolution to support Vermont legislation that allows localities to regulate and tax cannabis. Arnold said that VLCT has asked towns to support an "opt in" regime of regulation. Arnold said he is not sure that Norwich should weigh in on the statewide issue. Langhus suggested the Town Meeting might be a good time and forum for discussing this issue and get input from townspeople. Rod Francis said that when medical cannabis was first permitted by Vermont law, the state set up regulations for siting any dispensaries. With recreational cannabis, towns could enact zoning

regulations to try to regulate the location of cannabis shops. Brochu asked for Police Chief Jennifer Frank's opinions. Frank said she would consider the size of the proposed business, for one, because the scale of the operation would influence its attractiveness as a target for burglary. Frank thinks that conversations need to happen with a large number of groups in town before the SB takes any action. SB members declined to take action on the resolution.

e. Town Plan. Langhus **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Layton) to acknowledge formal receipt of the Town Plan as of Friday, January 17, 2020. **Motion passed unanimously.** SB members discussed options for scheduling Town Plan public hearings. Langhus **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Brochu) to schedule the initial public hearing concerning the Norwich Town Plan at 6:30 PM on February 26, 2020 in the Tracy Hall Multipurpose Room and the second public hearing at 12:00 noon on March 7, 2020 in the Tracy Hall Gym, which hearing shall also be known as the first 2020 Town Eating Day. **Motion passed unanimously.**

6. Finance Committee Report. The Finance Committee submitted materials to the SB at the meeting [those materials will be included in the next SB packet as correspondence]. Omer Trajman, Finance Committee (FC) Chair, gave an overview of the FC memo and materials. SB members thanked the FC for their work in compiling information.

7. Town Manager Report. Durfee mentioned several issues, including: FEMA has hopefully finished asking for additional documents and will be issuing final payments; union contract bargaining will re-start tomorrow; cybersecurity training for town staff has begun; town staff are putting together an RFQ for general municipal attorney services and for IT services; Durfee will look into a SB question about whether there is any asbestos concern for Tracy Hall, in the event the town voters approve renovation plans for the building.

8. Town Manager Evaluation/Contract. Brochu **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Langhus) to enter executive session under VSA §313(a)(3) to discuss the Town Manager evaluation/contract. **Motion passed unanimously.**

SB moved into executive session at 8:41 pm.

Langhus **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Brochu) to enter public session. **Motion passed unanimously.**

SB moved into public session at 9:54 pm.

10. Adjournment. Langhus **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Pepper) to adjourn. **Motion passed unanimously.**

Meeting adjourned at 9:54 pm.

By Miranda Bergmeier

Approved by the Selectboard on February 12, 2020

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Claudette Brochu  
Selectboard Chair – at time of signing

Next Meeting – February 12, 2020 – Meeting at 6:30

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