

Minutes of the Organizational Selectboard Meeting of  
Wednesday, March 4, 2020 at 6:30 pm

Members present: Claudette Brochu, Chair; Roger Arnold, Vice Chair; Robert Gere; John Langhus; Mary Layton; Herb Durfee, Town Manager; Miranda Bergmeier, Assistant to the Town Manager.

There were about 5 people in the audience.

Also participating: Linda Cook, Andy Scherer, Larry Wiggins.

1. Nominations & Election of Chair. Herb Durfee, Town Manager, opened the meeting, given that the newly-constituted Selectboard (SB) had not yet selected a chairperson. Durfee explained that Gere would not be a voting member of today's meeting, because he had not yet been sworn in. Gere would be participating in discussions, but cannot vote at this time. SB members and Durfee discussed their preferences for a chair, how they see the role, and what duties the chair would perform. Langhus said he likes to have an assertive forward-facing chair who will interact with the press and public on behalf of the SB. Arnold said he would like the chair to be assertive and meet with the Town Manager (TM) frequently, have a solid understanding of the agenda items, and be authorized to speak for the group. Layton said she sees the chair as a servant of the SB, especially in crafting agendas, and the chair is the public face of the Town. Gere said it is important to have a well-defined role for the chair so that person understands what is expected of them. Brochu agree with the others and said the chair should make sure the agendas are clear about who is doing what, what outcomes are we looking for, and what are the results/outcomes of the SB's deliberations and votes. Brochu said the SB could do more outreach to the town and have greater interaction with the TM. Durfee said it's very valuable to him to have frequent interaction with the SB chair in face-to-face meetings. This helps with payroll, warrants, and issues the SB is addressing. It helps the TM get done the things he needs to do. Linda Cook said she thinks it's important for the chair and vice chair to work well together and make the public feel welcome. Langhus nominated Claudette Brochu as Chair and Roger Arnold as Vice Chair. Brochu seconded. Brochu said she would be willing to serve as chair, with 2 caveats: She can't come into the office during working hours to review payroll, and she doesn't have a cell phone. Arnold said he would be willing to be vice chair and is willing to talk to the press. Arnold said he could "fill in" Brochu's caveats. Layton said a weekly check-in with the TM is very important. Arnold said he is happy to do that weekly. Vote was unanimous in favor (4 yes, 0 no, Gere did not vote).

2. Nominations & Election of Vice Chair. See above under item #1; chair and vice chair nominated and voted simultaneously.

3. Approval of Agenda. At this point, newly-elected chair Brochu led the meeting. SB members agreed to proceed with the agenda as drafted.

4. Public Comment. Andy Scherer said that his comment is related to the blinking crosswalk lights that did not pass at Town Meeting. Scherer asked if the SB can make decisions about stop signs at the intersection near Tracy Hall. Scherer asked if the SB might address problems around that intersection. SB members talked about putting that issue on a future agenda. Scherer also asked about the possibility of DBW trucks using biomix fuel to reduce the town's carbon footprint. Langhus and DPW Director Larry Wiggins said that at present, the town is not seriously considering that given difficulty in finding reliable supply of that fuel, among other reasons. Brochu thanked John Pepper, whose term on the SB just expired, for his service on the SB. Brochu thanked Bonnie Munday, Town Clerk, and her crew for running yesterday's election smoothly.

5. Choose Official Town Newspaper. Langhus **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Arnold) to designate the Valley News as the official newspaper of the Town of Norwich. **Motion passed unanimously.**

6. Set Selectboard Regular Meeting Schedule. After brief discussion, Langhus **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Layton) to set the Selectboard's regularly scheduled meetings for the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesdays of the month at 6:30 pm except as modified by the Selectboard or meeting calendar. **Motion passed unanimously.** Langhus **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Layton) to approve the Norwich Selectboard meeting calendar as presented in the meeting packet. **Motion passed unanimously.**

7. Authorize Chair or Vice Chair to Sign Payroll Warrants. Langhus **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Layton) to authorize the Chair or the Vice Chair to examine and sign payroll warrants. **Motion passed unanimously.**

8. Authorize Chair or Vice Chair to Sign Accounts Payable. Langhus **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Layton) to authorize the Chair or Vice Chair to examine and sign warrants against the Town when approval of the warrant is for expenditures that are within the purchasing authority of the Town Manager and are necessary to be drawn between regular Selectboard meetings or when the time between regular Selectboard meetings exceeds two weeks, provided that the warrant will be included in the Selectboard packet for the next regular Selectboard meeting. **Motion passed unanimously.**

9. Adopt Procedure for Receipt of Correspondence. Langhus **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Layton) to adopt the Procedure for Receipt of Correspondence, as presented in the meeting packet. **Motion passed unanimously.** Brochu asked where items email to SB go. Emails addressed to "Selectboard" go into the TM Assistant's email inbox. The TM Assistant then puts the email into the SB meeting packet for the next available meeting and also forwards the email electronically to the SB members if the email message is time-sensitive and needs to be seen by SB members before the next packet comes out.

\*\*Langhus left the meeting at the conclusion of this discussion. Durfee reminded the remaining three voting SB members that any action going forward would need to be approved by all three members, under quorum rules.\*\*

10. Adopt Rules for Conduct of Regular and Special Selectboard Meetings. Layton asked if SB should discuss guidelines for individual SB members' communications on the listserv. Arnold said he only releases information that has been previously made public. Brochu said SB members don't forfeit their free speech rights. Arnold suggested the SB revisit the topic of developing a mutual understanding among SB members in order to build trust within the SB as a group. Gere asked about the limits of communications with regard to Vermont's Open Meeting Law. SB members discussed the basics. Brochu said she would like to see SB members refrain from using cell phones for non-SB business during SB meetings. Arnold **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Layton) to adopt the Rules for Conduct of Regular and Special Meetings, as presented in the meeting packet. **Motion passed unanimously.**

11. DPW Vehicle Update. Durfee introduced Larry Wiggins, Director of Dept. of Public Works (DPW) to speak on this topic. Wiggins explained that Truck #4 is in need of repair. Truck #4 is a 2010 truck frame; the body is 2006, approximately. It has 45,090 miles which are hard miles, as is the case with dump trucks, given the conditions under which they are used. At 10 years old, this truck is coming to the end of its life, and it's the only 4x4 in the DPW fleet. The truck was found to have coolant in its engine oil, so it went into the repair shop, where they replaced the cylinder head and radiator. The quote for this work was approximately \$24,000 and we should have the truck back from the shop by next Monday. This truck is scheduled to be replaced after other vehicles. After this repair work, Truck #4 should last another 2 years. When we replace it, we will trade it in. We will pay

for repairs out of operating funds and later, we may need to use designated fund money. Arnold asked how this situation will affect long-range budget planning. Durfee said the capital budget plan will be adjusted.

12. Re-affirm the Master Financial Policies, Including the Fraud Policy. Arnold suggested the SB defer this agenda item to the next SB meeting on March 11, 2020. SB members agreed to do so.

13. VLCT Spring Selectboard Institute 3/21/2020. Gere said he would like to attend the SB Institute; Layton said she will also attend. Durfee said that SB members should enroll with VLCT directly and ask VLCT to bill the town, per usual. Arnold said that he will attend the Town Officers' training in April 2020.

14. Adjournment. Layton **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Arnold) to adjourn. **Motion passed unanimously.**

Meeting adjourned at 7:50 pm.

By Miranda Bergmeier

Approved by the Selectboard on June 10, 2020

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Claudette Brochu  
Selectboard Chair

Next Meeting – March 11, 2020 – Meeting at 6:30

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