

Minutes of the Selectboard Meeting of  
Wednesday, June 10, 2020 at 6:30 pm

This meeting was conducted via teleconference using ZOOM, in order to maintain appropriate physical distance under COVID-19 precautions. 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 19 people in the audience.

Also participating: Linda Cook, Shelby Grantham, Lorrie Wilkes, SAU 70 Business Administrator Jamie Teague, Cheryl Lindberg, Town Clerk Bonnie Munday, Pam Smith, Dept. of Public Works Director Larry Wiggins.

1. Approval of Agenda. Arnold requested, and SB members agreed, to add an item to the agenda for the SB to vote to condemn the murder of George Floyd and structural racism – as item 2b, just after public comment.

2. Public Comment. Shelby Grantham said she is afraid of going to demonstrations because of her age and the risks presented by COVID-19, so she wanted to speak at the SB meeting. Grantham said that on June 28<sup>th</sup> there will be a car caravan demonstration to call for racial justice. Grantham has been working with Police Chief Frank to arrange the details. Lorrie Wilkes spoke about the “8 Can’t Wait” initiative and whether Norwich has any of those in place. Arnold said that he is sending Wilkes a document written by Chief Frank on this matter. Brochu said that TRORC is having another hearing about the proposed regional plan on July 1, 2020 at 10:00 am. More information is available on their website at <https://www.trorc.org/trorc-regional-plan/>

2B. Resolution – Added Agenda Item. Arnold read aloud a proposed resolution condemning the murder of George Floyd and structural racism. Following brief discussion, during with SB members expressed support for the resolution, Arnold **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Langhus) that the Norwich SB adopt the resolution condemning the murder of George Floyd and structural racism. **Motion approved unanimously.**

3. Consent Agenda. Layton **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Langhus) to approve the consent agenda. **Motion passed unanimously.**

4. Executive Session – Personnel Issue. Layton **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Gere) to make a finding that premature public knowledge of the Selectboard’s position relative to civil litigation would place the town at a substantial disadvantage. **Motion passed unanimously.** Layton **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Gere) to enter executive session under 1 VSA § 313(a)(1)(E) – “...pending or probable civil litigation or a prosecution, to which the public body is or may be a party...” – to discuss a personnel issue and to include the Town Manager and Town legal counsel. **Motion passed unanimously.** The SB entered executive session at 6:56 pm.

Layton **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Gere) to enter public session. **Motion passed unanimously.** The SB entered public session at 7:39 pm. The SB took no further action on this matter.

5. Executive Session – Great River Hydro. Layton **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Gere) to make a finding that premature public knowledge of the Selectboard’s position relative to civil litigation would place the town at a substantial disadvantage. **Motion passed unanimously.** Layton **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Gere) to enter executive session under 1 VSA § 313(a)(1)(E) – “...pending or probable civil litigation or a prosecution, to which the public body is or may be a party...” – to discuss a litigation issue involving Great Norwich Selectboard Minutes – 06/10/2020 Mtg

River Hydro and to include the Town Manager and Town legal counsel. **Motion passed unanimously.** The SB entered executive session at 7:40 pm.

Layton **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Gere) to enter public session. **Motion passed unanimously.** The SB entered public session at 8:15 pm. The SB took no further action on this matter.

7. FY21 Budget in Light of COVID-19. SB members agreed to take up this agenda item, ahead of agenda #6. Brochu said that she, Cheryl Lindberg, and Herb Durfee met with Jamie Teague, Business Administrator for SAU 70, recently. Teague then addressed the meeting and introduced and summarized the documents that were included in the SB meeting packet regarding the school budget. Teague said the school administrators have asked school departments to hold off on spending until absolutely needed, to allow the towns more time to submit tax payments to SAU 70. Teague said some good news is that the Dresden assessment will be a little lower possibly than projected. Also the tax increase is projected to be lower than originally thought. Teague gave a summary of the documents included in the SB meeting packet. Cheryl Lindberg asked Teague about a typo on the documents. Lindberg asked if we would need to hire more buses to transport kids with social distancing. Teague said it's too early to tell; hopefully we'll know more in July. Durfee said hopefully the town could have its first tax payment due in September. Teague said she can talk to Hanover to ask if they can pay more earlier and then Norwich can pay more later. Teague said she'd be happy to provide general information to the public about how school budgeting works. Following is a link to school funding information: <https://www.vtvsba.org/copy-of-funding-video>

6. Outstanding Open Positions. Arnold introduced a table drafted by Arnold and Gere and summarized its contents: a list of town committees and their members and terms. Layton asked about the SB's procedure on filling vacancies when someone resigns. SB members discussed the process for filling vacancies. Bonnie Munday, Town Clerk, said the SB appoints to fill vacancies "forthwith" or as soon as possible. Lindberg reiterated what Munday said. Lindberg said that notice of a vacancy in SB minutes is an effective advertisement; she said it's important to appoint as soon as possible. Lindberg said that when someone applies, whether there's been an official advertisement or not, the SB should take up that application. Langhus and Layton said they think it's important to advertise as widely as possible. SB members agreed that Arnold will compile a complete list of vacancies to be advertised and will work with the Town Manager's office to advertise as soon as possible – by the end of the week, if possible and by Monday, if necessary. Pam Smith asked for clarification on what positions are appointed and what are elected. Smith said it's hard for her to find the list of open positions on the Town website.

8. Town Manager Report. Durfee said that the projection for the undesignated fund balance is for approximately \$1.1 million for the end of FY2020. Durfee said the balance sheet he emailed to the SB is current through the end of May. Brochu asked about delaying expenditures where possible during the beginning of the next fiscal year. Durfee said that is the plan and also he has asked Department heads to limit end-of-year expenditures for this fiscal year (FY2020).

9. Special Town Meeting Warning w/Articles. SB members agreed to move the next SB meeting to June 25<sup>th</sup> (Thursday) and table this issue until then.

10. Transfer Station Fee Structure. Brochu recommends leaving the sticker and coupon fees the same as they are currently. SB members agreed.

11. Rte. 132 Box Culvert Replacement Request for Proposals. Durfee introduced this topic. The Town Manager (TM) recommends doing the culvert work ASAP to minimize costs Durfee explained his recommendation to use Stantec for engineering services to start the project, and then the town would go out to bid to complete the construction work. Pam Smith asked why we would rent signals

to close one lane of traffic, rather than closing the entire road and detour traffic. Larry Wiggins explained that there is a significant amount of truck traffic that should not be sent onto smaller detour roads. Layton **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Langhus) to allow the Town Manager to exercise an exception to the Purchasing Policy under §11a “Competitive Proposals” allowing for Stantec Engineering to proceed with engineering/scoping/permitting for replacement of the box culvert on Rte. 132 near Bowen Hill Road, as referenced in the June 9, 2020 email from Herb Durfee to the Selectboard. **Motion passed unanimously.**

12. Vermont Local Government Resolution. Langhus **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Gere) to approve the resolution stating that all cities, towns, and villages in Vermont are essential – as presented in this meeting’s packet materials. **Motion passed unanimously.**

13. COVID-19 Update. SB members agreed there was no update to discuss.

14. Set Agenda for June 25, 2020 SB Meeting. SB members discussed potential agenda items for the next SB meeting.

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

Meeting adjourned at 10:15 pm.

By Miranda Bergmeier

Approved by the Selectboard on June 25, 2020

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Claudette Brochu  
Selectboard Chair

Next Meeting – June 25, 2020 – Meeting at 6:30

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