

Minutes of the Selectboard Meeting of  
Thursday, June 25, 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 12 people in the audience.

Also participating: Ernie Ciccotelli, Cheryl Lindberg, Doug Wilberding, Sue Pitiger, Robert Johnson, Courtney Dragiff, Linda Cook, Pam Smith, Police Chief Jennifer Frank, Fire Chief Alex Northern.

1. Approval of Agenda. Selectboard (SB) members agreed to proceed with the agenda as drafted.
2. Public Comment. Arnold said he's had comments and questions from people asking about Juneteenth celebration. Arnold said the SB may want to discuss the topic at a future meeting. Ernie Ciccotelli asked about the Rte. 132 culvert and if it is an action item for tonight's meeting. Brochu said that she thinks no, that it's an update from the Town Manager (TM). Ciccotelli asked if Stantec's materials in the meeting packet constitute a quote. Durfee said the SB had previously authorized the town to engage Stantec to provide engineering services for Rte. 132. Ciccotelli asked why the town had not sought bids. Durfee said the purchasing policy allows – in these time-pressed circumstances and given the recent competitive bid process for similar engineering services – the town to proceed without a bid on engineering services. When the culvert is constructed, there will be bids sought for that work. Langhus & Ciccotelli expressed concern that the town not pay too much because of not requiring bids for the engineering work. Durfee noted the quote from Stantec with breakdown on price that was included in the packet. Cheryl Lindberg said that the Listers filed the Grand List abstract last Wednesday, 6-17-2020. They are waiting for grievances now. There is an increase of \$4,246,000 over last year. Grievances are due by July 1, 2020 at 4:30 pm.
3. Consent Agenda. Layton **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Langhus) to approve the consent agenda. **Motion passed unanimously.** SB members agreed that the TM's response to Pam Smith's correspondence was sufficient. SB members agreed to put Nick Krembs's letter on a future SB agenda.
4. 1. Appointments - Lister. Doug Wilberding said that he would like to help the Listers with all of their work; he has a great deal of experience in Real Estate. Langhus asked Wilberding what he sees as the Listers' roles. Wilberding said it is to provide independent review of property values in town. Langhus asked Wilberding how he feels about potential conflicts and the interpersonal nature of the position. Wilberding said that he will certainly recuse himself in the event that any conflict arises for him. Layton **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Gere) to appoint Doug Wilberding to the Board of Listers for a term to expire on August 11, 2020, which is the date of the next town election. **Motion passed 3 to 2 (no- Arnold, Langhus).**
4. 2. Appointments – Development Review Board. Sue Pitiger said she has served for some years as an alternate on the DRB, and she would like to serve as a regular member. Layton **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Gere) to appoint Sue Pitiger to the Development Review Board for the remainder of an unexpired term to expire on April 30, 2021. **Motion passed unanimously.** The SB entered executive session at 7:40 pm.

4. 3. Appointments – Recreation Council. Robert Johnson said he has been involved in the Norwich Selectboard Minutes – 06/25/2020 Mtg

town's recreation department for some time. Layton **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Gere) to appoint Robert Johnson to the Recreation Council for a 3-year term to expire on March 31, 2023. **Motion passed unanimously.**

4. 4. Appointments – Conservation Commission. Courtney Dragiff said that she is back in Norwich and would like to return to a post on the Conservation Commission. Layton **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Arnold) to appoint Courtney Dragiff to the Conservation Commission for a 4-year term to expire on March 31, 2024. **Motion passed unanimously.**

**\*\*At 7:10 PM, Langhus left the meeting.\*\***

5. Special Town Meeting Warning w/Articles. Durfee said the Town Clerk confirmed earlier today that no additional articles were proposed since the drafting of the warning put before the SB in the meeting packet. The Town Clerk is looking at various options for voting in COVID-safe ways. Gere **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Arnold) to approve the August 11, 2020 Special Town Meeting warning as presented in the meeting packet. **Motion passed unanimously.**

6. Year to date (YTD) Revenue/Expense (R/E) Report. Durfee gave a brief summary of the balance sheet, as included in the SB meeting packet. Linda Cook asked about designated fund overspending. Durfee said this is going to be fixed as a journal entry. Cheryl Lindberg asked some specific questions about the balance sheet. Pam Smith asked about the Energy Committee expense and overage; Durfee said that it was for the EV charging station, for which the town was awarded a grant and money is expected to offset the expenditures. SB members agreed they would like to learn more about town budgeting and finance documents. Durfee said the town's contracted auditor or NEMRC consultant could provide a presentation to the SB.

7. 1. Fund Balance Policy. Layton said she is concerned about the part of the existing policy that references using the undesignated fund. Layton asked other SB members if they are open to instituting an Emergency Designated Fund. Arnold said it would be possible to put surplus moneys into other designated funds, as well. Durfee said it's problematic to raise funds for the undesignated fund. Durfee said you need voter approval to transfer money out of the undesignated fund. Durfee said the SB can budget for an emergency fund – as a percentage of the budget. Gere asked if designated funds carry over from year to year; Durfee said yes, they do. Brochu suggested that language be added to the policy to state that the SB won't buy down the tax rate without voter approval. SB members agreed. At budget time, SB will discuss possible formation of an emergency fund. SB members agreed to ask the TM to draft revised language for the policy. Layton said she will work with the TM on that for the next SB meeting.

7. 2. Tax Collection Policy. SB members agreed this topic was not ready for SB discussion and they agreed to discuss it at a future meeting.

7. 3. Policy on Posting of Police Standards. Arnold said the policy's purpose is to increase transparency and trust. Arnold drafted the policy in a broad way in order to allow the Police Department (PD) some flexibility to post only those policies that are subject to public records request. Layton said it's important to establish trust with the community and she wants to hear from Chief Frank about the volume of documents and how to organize them. Chief Jennifer Frank said that she was disheartened that the SB started this policy without involving the PD in that development process. Frank said the PD has no problem sharing policies that don't affect officer safety. Frank said that here are other procedures /standards that would not be good to share with the public because it could hamper people's safety – officers and members of the public. Brochu said that typically, policies are worked on by more than one SB members before going to the rest of the SB;

Brochu would like to see that happen with this proposed policy. Arnold said he apologizes for not collaborating. Brochu said she'd like further specifics in this policy, and also to run it by Chief Frank for input and the TM. Layton said that more information being provided doesn't always increase people's sense of control or understanding. Layton said the policy needs to be reworked before she can support it. SB members agreed that Arnold and Brochu will work on the policy draft and submit it to the TM and PD Chief for review.

8. Town Manager Update. Durfee gave some highlights from the SB packet. Durfee said he has finished a leadership course and he included a handout reference sheet regarding powerful questions. Next meeting, Durfee will provide his monthly written report. Brochu asked about Finance Director interviews; Durfee said we are working on compiling interview schedules.

9. Brown Schoolhouse Trail Bridge. Durfee gave a summary of packet materials on the RFP for the bridge project. The Town received 8 proposals, which were reviewed by a team. After the team evaluated the proposals, they agreed that Nick Fabrikant's proposal was preferred. Brochu said she thinks it is not a good time to seeking a loan for this bridge's construction without knowing what the town's revenue stream will be. Brochu would like to wait until we know more. Layton **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Gere) to authorize the Town Manager to negotiate and execute a contract with Nick Fabrikant for the design build Brown Schoolhouse Trail Bridge project in an amount not to exceed \$75,700, and to further authorize the Town Manager to obtain lending terms from area banks for the Board's review and approval on securing the voter authorized funding for the project. **Motion passed 3 to 1 (no-Brochu).**

10. Route 132 Road Classification. Brochu said the Thetford SB asked the Norwich SB to consider joining in a request to reclassify Rte. 132. Brochu said she is not in favor of doing this. Layton, Arnold and Gere all agreed (Langhus had left the meeting earlier, as noted). No action was taken.

11. Fire Dept. Request for Designated Funds. Fire Chief Alex Northern said this request is to purchase regular replacements of gear. Layton **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Gere) to authorize the expenditure not to exceed \$8,000 from the Norwich Fire Department Equipment Designated Fund as outlined in the Fire Chief's June 2, 2020 correspondence to the Selectboard. **Motion passed unanimously.**

12. Liquor Licenses. Layton **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Gere) to recess the Selectboard meeting and convene as the Norwich Liquor Control Commission. **Motion passed unanimously. SB recessed at 8:59 pm.**

Layton **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Gere) to approve liquor license applications as follows and to authorize the Town Manager to sign on behalf of the Selectboard due to COVID-19:

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1. Outside Consumption Permit for L'Elephant Vert, LLC d/b/a Carpenter & Main Restaurant;
  2. Third Class Restaurant/Bar License to Sell Spirituous Liquors for L'Elephant Vert, LLC d/b/a Carpenter & Main Restaurant;
  3. First Class Restaurant/ Bar License to Sell Malt and Vinous Beverages for L'Elephant Vert, LLC d/b/a Carpenter & Main Restaurant;
  4. First Class Restaurant/Bar License to Sell Malt and Vinous Beverages for Blue Sparrow Kitchen, Co. d/b/a Blue Sparrow Kitchen; and,
- 
5. Second Class Liquor License to Sell Malt and Vinous Beverages for PLR Enterprises, Inc. d/b/a Norwich Wine and Spirits. **Motion passed unanimously.**

Layton **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Gere) to close the Norwich Liquor Control Commission session and reconvene the Selectboard meeting. **Motion passed unanimously. SB reconvened at 9:06 pm.**

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

Meeting adjourned at 9:07 pm.

By Miranda Bergmeier

Approved by the Selectboard on July 8, 2020

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Claudette Brochu  
Selectboard Chair

Next Meeting – July 8, 2020 – Meeting at 6:30

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