

Minutes of the Selectboard Meeting of
Wednesday, November 18, 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 6 people in the audience.

Also participating: Jamie Rosenfeld, Rebecca Holcombe, Pam Smith, Cheryl Lindberg.

1. Approval of Agenda. Selectboard (SB) members agreed to swap the order of agenda items 3 and 4, in order to take up agenda item 4 just before item 3.
2. Public Comment. No public comment was offered.
4. Appointments to Open Positions – Childcare Committee. Jamie Rosenfeld said that she works as a museum educator at the Hood museum, and she would like to serve on the Childcare Committee. Rosenfeld said that she wants to help work for the highest quality childcare possible. Layton **moved** (2nd Gere) to appoint Jamie Rosenfeld to the Childcare Committee for a term to expire in April 2021. **Motion approved unanimously.**

Rebecca Holcombe applied to serve on the Childcare Committee. Holcombe said that she is excited to work locally on an issue that she is excited about. Layton **moved** (2nd Gere) to appoint Rebecca Holcombe to the Childcare Committee for a term to expire in April 2021. **Motion approved unanimously.**

3. Consent Agenda. Layton **moved** (2nd Gere) to approve the consent agenda. **Motion passed unanimously.**
5. Solaflect Net Metering Agreement. Durfee said that he and the town's attorneys are discussing four aspects of the Solaflect agreement, and they need input from the SB on those points, which are:
 1. the issue of the solar facility not being located in Norwich, as had originally been envisioned;
 2. additional credits;
 3. degradation of solar panels over time and resulting decrease in value; and
 4. exclusivity provision in the contract.

Durfee asked specifically how interested are SB members in the 3rd and 4th points. Layton said she doesn't know how much affect that degradation will have. Langhus said he thinks it's not worth having the town's attorneys look at points 3 & 4; Layton and Arnold said they agreed. Pam Smith said she wants to know why the town is spending a lot more on electricity, and thinks an independent audit of the contract with Solaflect should be conducted. SB members agreed to pursue points 1 and 2 with the town's attorney in order to amend the Solaflect contract to accurately reflect existing conditions.

6. Fire Dept. Request for Funding. Layton said she thinks the bay door repair is much-needed. Arnold asked if this should be the type of expense usually covered by the operating budget or a designated fund. Durfee said that normally he would want this under operating budget. Langhus said it's appropriate to be in an operational budget. Cheryl Lindberg agreed. Layton **moved** (2nd Arnold)

to approve the expenditure of \$1,225.00 from the Fire Station Designated Fund to cover the cost of repairs to the fire station's apparatus bay doors. **Motion approved unanimously.**

7. Recreation Department Funding Request – Kids Bridge. Layton asked if this is the bridge to allow access to Huntley Meadows. Durfee said yes, it is. SB members discussed the process for spending donated special purpose funds. Layton **moved** (2nd Gere) to approve the expenditure of \$1,513.15 from the special purpose fund related to construction of the “Kids Bridge” to cover the cost of engineering services. **Motion approved unanimously.**

8. October 2020 Financial Reports. Brochu asked about alarm monitoring cost increase. Durfee said he will look into that and get back to the SB.

9. Budget Update. Durfee said he will get the capital budget to the SB members tomorrow and the complete background materials by Friday. Durfee said the town's department heads can attend meetings in whatever order the SB members want. SB members discussed with Durfee the options for budget discussions, including scheduling the department heads.

11. Executive Session – Update on Pending Complaint of Age Discrimination. Layton **moved** (2nd Arnold) to find that premature general public knowledge concerning a pending age discrimination complaint would clearly place the Selectboard and other persons involved at a substantial disadvantage. **Motion approved unanimously.** Layton **moved** (2nd Gere) to enter executive session under 1 VSA §313(a)(1)(D) to discuss the pending age discrimination complaint and to invite the Town Manager to join said executive session. **Motion approved unanimously.** The Selectboard moved into executive session at 8:19 pm. Layton **moved** (2nd Gere) to enter public session. **Motion approved unanimously.** At 8:37 pm the Selectboard moved into public session.

10. Executive Session – TM Evaluation. Layton **moved** (2nd Arnold) to enter executive session under 1 VSA §313(a)(3) to discuss the Town Manager performance improvement plan, and to invite the Town Manager to join said executive session. **Motion approved unanimously.** The Selectboard moved into executive session at 8:38 pm. Layton **moved** (2nd Gere) to enter public session. **Motion approved unanimously.** At 9:52 pm the Selectboard moved into public session.

11. Adjournment. Layton **moved** (2nd Langhus) to adjourn. **Motion approved unanimously.**

Meeting adjourned at 9:53 pm.

By Miranda Bergmeier

Approved by the Selectboard on December 2, 2020

Claudette Brochu
Selectboard Chair

Next Meeting – December 2, 2020 – Meeting at 6:30

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