

Minutes of the Selectboard Meeting of
Wednesday, December 9, 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 8 people in the audience.

Also participating: Mason Dwinell, Stuart Richards, Rod Francis, Anthony Williams, Carrie Flanagan-Sullivan.

1. Approval of Agenda. Selectboard (SB) members agreed to proceed with the agenda as drafted.
2. Public Comment. Mason Dwinell said he is advocating for the townspeople to vote on an ordinance restricting gun use in Norwich. Stuart Richards asked if the Green Fleet working group will observe the Open Meeting Law (OML). Durfee said it is his own Town Manager group – not the SB’s group and not a public body – so it is not subject to OML and its implications. When and if the SB takes up discussion of a Green Fleet Policy, those discussions will be subject to the OML. Richards asked how much has been or will be spent on attorneys to address Planning Commission (PC) and OML issues. Arnold asked Richards to clarify – did he mean attorneys hired to address issues raised by Richards? Richards objected to that rephrasing. Durfee said that he can get back to Richards with the attorney costs. Layton wants to know how much time the Town Manager’s (TM’s) assistant spends in posting committees’ materials, so that the SB can consider how not to overburden the TM office. Gere said that the OML training provided by the town’s attorneys was widely attended and was very valuable and gave information on OML broadly. Richards suggested the SB consider using MSTeams as an alternative to Zoom.
3. Appointments to Open Positions (Childcare Committee). Layton said that the Childcare Committee will benefit from the business sector participation provided by the applicant, Bob Haynes. Layton said that Haynes will be a valuable addition the committee, as he has been working on the issue in Randolph, Vermont, for some time. Layton **moved** (2nd Langhus) to appoint Robert Haynes, Jr. to the Childcare Committee. **Motion approved unanimously.**
4. Consent Agenda. Layton **moved** (2nd Gere) to approve the consent agenda. **Motion approved unanimously.** SB members noted that the Citizen’s Assistance Fund payment is to be paid to Jerm’s Heating & Plumbing, to pay half the cost of replacing a resident’s heating system. Layton **moved** (2nd Langhus) to approve the expenditure of \$3,000 from the Citizen’s Assistance Fund, as described in the December 9th Selectboard meeting packet. **Motion approved unanimously.**
5. Outside Appropriations. No outside agencies were in attendance at the meeting.
6. Town Manager Report. Arnold asked what is coming next from the OML training. Durfee said that the training was meant to provide an OML overview and also offer responses to specific questions from town officials. Next, after the next round of regular SB appointments, the SB should issue a handout of hold another OML refresher course for all boards and committees. Arnold asked Durfee to confirm that, after the OML training, the public can assume that the town’s boards and committees are acting in compliance with OML. Durfee said yes. Rod Francis, Planning Director, Norwich Selectboard Minutes – 12/9/2020 Mtg

said that the town's attorney has said that, given the lack of clear case law on OML, the town should consult the town's attorney when contemplating forming a work group. Durfee said any request to access the town's attorney needs to go through him, as TM. Durfee said he hasn't been able to hire a Finance Director – all three offers were declined. Durfee asked SB members if it is OK with them for Durfee to work with Arnold and Layton to develop an interim plan to address the Finance Director vacancy. Layton said we need to be aware of time demands placed on the TM Assistant and the SB should discuss in the future ways to complete administrative tasks for the town's boards and committees.

7. Insured Cash Sweep and Small Business Checking Accounts Proposal. Layton **moved** (2nd Gere) to authorize the Town Treasurer to open an FDIC Insured Cash Sweep (ICS) account under the name "Town of Norwich, Vermont" with Mascoma Bank to help ensure full collateralization of Town Funds, such authorization to be retroactive to September 3, 2020. **Motion approved unanimously.** Layton **moved** (2nd Gere) to authorize the Town Treasurer to open a Small Business Checking (SBC) account under the name "Town of Norwich, Vermont" with Mascoma Bank, such authorization to be retroactive to September 3, 2020. **Motion approved unanimously.** Layton **moved** (2nd Gere) to authorize the expenditure of any funds necessary to open and maintain the ICS and SBC accounts, such authorization to be retroactive to September 3, 2020. **Motion approved unanimously.** Layton **moved** (2nd Gere) to authorize the Town Treasurer to transfer \$3 million from the Town's checking account held with Mascoma Bank to the newly opened Mascoma ICS via the newly opened SBC account, such authorization to be retroactive to September 3, 2020. **Motion approved unanimously.** Layton **moved** (2nd Gere) to authorize the Town Treasurer to transfer \$500,000 from the ICS back to the Town's checking account held with Mascoma Bank via the Mascoma SBC account, such authorization to be retroactive to September 28, 2020. **Motion approved unanimously.** Layton **moved** (2nd Gere) to authorize the Town Treasurer to transfer \$1 million from the ICS back to the Town's checking account held with Mascoma Bank via the Mascoma SBC account, such authorization to be retroactive to December 1, 2020. **Motion approved unanimously.**

8. Request for Authorization re: Computer/IT Request for Bids. Durfee introduced Anthony Williams and Carrie Flanagan-Sullivan, with SymQuest, who have helped Norwich identify the town's IT needs, in preparation for the RFP process. Durfee wants to address those needs by seeking bids/proposals. Layton asked about how the transition would look when the town moves to new computer infrastructure. Would Tracy Hall be shut down for a day? Or, how would it work? Arnold asked if the town should go to a cloud-based solution, or should the town own its own server hardware. Flanagan-Sullivan said that SymQuest proposes a hybrid set-up where the town keeps server hardware and also uses cloud-based services. The transitions to new servers would happen overnight, so the new system would be ready the next day. Flanagan-Sullivan said the town can't immediately go fully cloud-based because we have some software that that is local-server-based. Langhus asked if we could go all cloud-based. Williams said that going all the way to the cloud at once would be more disruptive. Gere agrees that a hybrid model for the servers makes sense from an IT risk standpoint and because of cost optimizations. Williams said this assessment is tailored to be understood by a wide range of people. Arnold asked if SymQuest's assessment would allow for future changes. Williams and Flanagan-Sullivan said yes, it would. Langhus said he appreciated at the information, but does not think the TM should have to seek SB approval to seek bids. Layton **moved** (2nd Gere) to authorize the Town Manager to go to bid for up to \$30,000 for new server and computer workstations with related software and installation of said equipment and software. **Motion approved (4-yes; 0-no; abstain-Langhus).**

9. Executive Session – Public Officer. Layton **moved** (2nd Langhus) to enter executive session under 1 VSA §313(a)(4) to discuss a disciplinary or dismissal issue concerning an appointed public
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officer and to invite the Town Manager to join said executive session. **Motion approved unanimously.**

SB entered executive session at 7:53 pm.

Layton **moved** (2nd Gere) to enter public session. **Motion approved unanimously.** SB entered public session at 8:30 pm.

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

Meeting adjourned at 8:34 pm.

By Miranda Bergmeier

Approved by the Selectboard on March 10, 2020

Roger Arnold
Selectboard Chair

Next Meeting – December 16, 2020 – Meeting at 6:30

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