

Minutes of the Selectboard Meeting of  
Wednesday, March 10, 2021 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: Roger Arnold, Chair; Mary Layton, Vice Chair; Claudette Brochu; Marcia Calloway; Robert Gere; Herb Durfee, Town Manager; Miranda Bergmeier, Assistant to the Town Manager.

There were about 8 people in the audience.

Also participating: Stuart Richards, Linda Cook, Doug Wilberding, Cheryl Lindberg, Rebecca Holcombe, Pam Smith.

1. Approval of Agenda. Layton **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Gere) to approve the agenda. **Motion approved unanimously.**
2. Public Comment. Stuart Richards spoke about the Finance Committee (FC) and said it doesn't make sense to appoint FC members if the committee's work will be ignored. Richards also talked about the OML lawsuit; he would like to see the SB settle on an agreement with Chris Katucki without going to court. Richards then talked about the sign situation, which he thinks should also be dealt with. Cheryl Lindberg said she wants to know about the potential re-opening of Tracy Hall. Doug Wilberding asked if there has been any discussion about the Town Manager's contract.
3. Consent Agenda. Cheryl Lindberg had some questions about warrants. Durfee said he will look into those questions and provide answers. Calloway asked whether we should wait until the Board has reviewed the proposed changes to the policy. Arnold stated this batch of correspondence would be handled under the existing policy. Calloway asked why the memo from John Carroll was not part of correspondence. Arnold explained the material was in support of agenda item #10 and not correspondence. Brochu clarified that the Carroll document was the result of the previous Board's goal setting from 2019. Brochu **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Layton) to approve the consent agenda. **Motion approved unanimously.**
4. Childcare Committee Update. Arnold said the Childcare Committee (CC) is ad hoc, with a charge to expire in April 2021. CC was formed as a result of the Norwich Town Plan. Rebecca Holcombe, CC Chair, spoke to the SB about the work of the CC. Holcombe shared a PowerPoint presentation to summarize the work of the CC thus far. This presentation was part of the SB meeting packet. SB members discussed aspects of the CC's work. Holcombe talked about the CC's plan for its future work and also about pending legislation in the Vermont legislature. Holcombe said the CC would like more time to complete its work; they would like their final deadline to be extended to December 31, 2021. Layton said she hopes the SB will permit the extension. Arnold said the SB will take up action on an extension at the next SB meeting. Other SB members agreed.
5. Town Manager Report. Town Manager Herb Durfee said the temporary Finance Director has begun diving into the financial controls, so he can prepare a document to share with the SB. Durfee said the police chief search is ongoing; the community survey has over 200 replies so far. The police chief application deadline will be extended to further develop the applicant pool. The DPW equipment operator search process is ongoing, with few applicants so far; 2 other Upper Valley towns are also hiring now and they pay higher wages. There was a water overflow event at the Police Fire building recently; specialized cleaning has occurred to ensure staff safety in the building. FEMA has approved the town's Local Hazard Mitigation Plan, which makes the town eligible for additional funding level for future disaster events. Durfee pointed out the Becky Grammer has worked very

effectively to bring down delinquent tax accounts. Durfee reported that there has been a significant increase in late tax payments. He and Becky believe this may be due to the increase in property transfers. Brochu asked about the new Casella fee schedule and whether Durfee can wait to sign it until after the Solid Waste Committee meets on March 11. Durfee said yes, he can wait and he will appreciate getting the committee's feedback.

6. Amendments to Procedure for Receipt of Correspondence. Layton **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Calloway) to amend the Procedure for Receipt of Resident Correspondence, as presented in the meeting packet and as amended. Layton introduced the draft revisions that she and Calloway developed and which were included in the SB packet. Calloway explained the process she developed where a designated SB member would review each piece of correspondence and evaluate how the correspondence should be handled. SB members discussed approaches to handling correspondence, and the proposed revisions. **SB members agreed to table the motion until the 3/24/2021 meeting, after further work by Layton and Calloway.**

7. Amendments to Rules for Conduct of Regular and Special Selectboard Meetings. Brochu **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Layton) to amend the Rules for Conduct of Regular and Special Selectboard Meetings, as presented in the meeting packet. Brochu introduced the topic of the proposed revisions SB members and Town Manager offered feedback and suggestions. After discussion, Brochu withdrew her motion and SB members agreed to reconsider further revisions at their 3/24/2021 meeting.

8. Reaffirm Master Financial Policies. Layton **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Brochu) to reaffirm the Master Financial Policies, as presented in the meeting packet and as amended. Arnold asked SB members to indicate which parts of the mast policy need reconsideration. SB members agreed to divvy up the policies for working on revisions and address those at future meetings. Arnold suggested that SB members each write a memo summarizing what changes they would like to make to the policies. SB members agreed to this approach. **Motion approved unanimously.**

9. Parking Lot Agenda Items. Arnold asked SB members to offer reactions to his memo regarding parking lot items. SB members discussed which items should be taken up by the SB at future meetings. Pam Smith asked that the GMP billing information and Solaflect spreadsheets be made part of a future SB packet. Arnold and Durfee said they will.

10. Operational Plan and Goal Setting. SB members discussed their thoughts about operational planning for SB operations. SB members agreed that some sort of professional help would be valuable for SB in guiding them in this area, possibly a facilitated goal-setting session. Durfee suggested a broader-ranging process, beyond goal setting. Layton, Brochu and Calloway suggested that the SB focus on capital planning first.

11. Set Date for Continuation of Operational Plan and Goal Setting Discussion. SB members agreed to meet on March 31, 2021 for a special meeting.

12. Town Manager Evaluation – Executive Session. Layton **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Brochu) 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 10:56 pm. Brochu **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Gere) to enter public session. **Motion approved unanimously.** At 11:37 pm the Selectboard moved into public session. No action was taken in public session, other than to adjourn.

11. Adjourn. Gere **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Brochu) to adjourn. **Motion approved unanimously.**

Meeting adjourned at 11:38 pm.

By Miranda Bergmeier

Approved by the Selectboard on March 24, 2021

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Roger Arnold  
Selectboard Chair

Next Meeting – March 24, 2021 – Meeting at 6:30

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