

Minutes of the Selectboard Meeting of  
Wednesday, March 31, 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 3 people in the audience.

Also participating: Linda Cook, Cheryl Lindberg, Pam Smith.

1. Approval of Agenda. Layton **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Gere) to approve the agenda. **Motion approved unanimously.**
2. Public Comment. No public comment was offered.
3. Check-ins / Introduction. Selectboard (SB) members offered their thoughts about what the Town does well and what we can improve. Layton thinks we have some strong departments and we can work on coordinating among those departments and offices. Gere thinks the SB has been largely reactive, rather than oriented to longer-range planning. Brochu shared her SWOT analysis. Calloway listed various strengths and weaknesses. SB members agreed that the town's infrastructure needs attention, for example.
4. Defining Work Product.
5. Work Session.
6. Next Steps  
SB members engaged in a wide-ranging discussion. Arnold shared his screen, showing the Trello board. SB members offered comments on the Trello program. Arnold demonstrated some of the functions available in the program. SB members discussed options for how to organize and customize the Trello board. SB members discussed what projects they would next undertake, what resources they will need to complete those tasks, and how best to identify what needs to be done next. SB members agreed to submit to the Town Manager's office written comments and/or SWOT analysis regarding the SB's work plan for meetings between now and January, 2022. Calloway's comments are attached to these minutes.
7. Adjourn. Brochu **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Layton) to adjourn. **Motion approved unanimously.**

Meeting adjourned at 9:02 pm.

By Miranda Bergmeier

Approved by the Selectboard on April 14, 2021.

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Roger Arnold  
Selectboard Chair

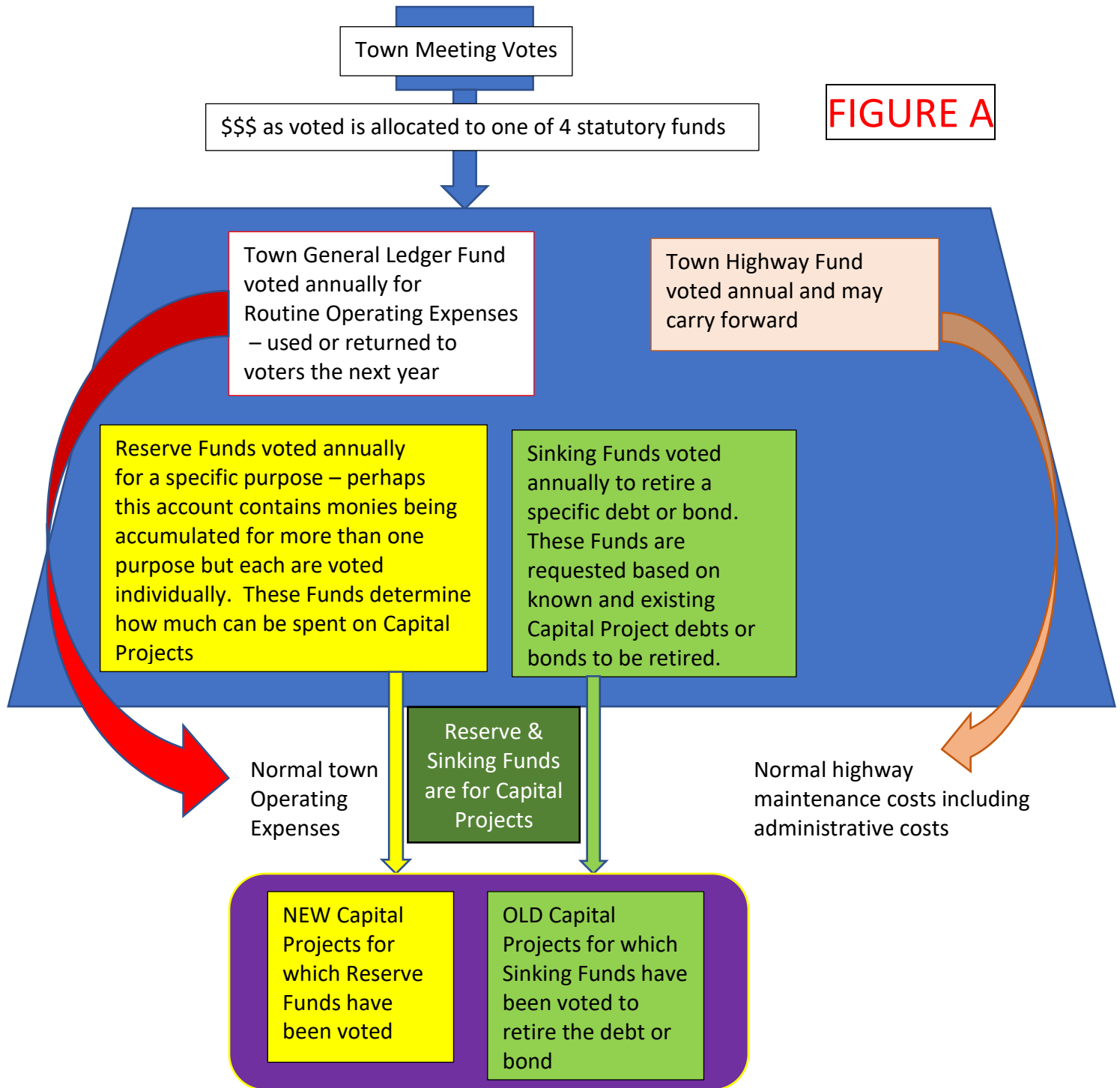
Next Meeting – April 14, 2021 – Meeting at 6:30 pm

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

- What does the Board and the Town do particularly well?
  - Speaking to the results in Town, Norwich
    - Has maintained the physical appearance of a small Vermont town
    - Has protected valuable open spaces for community use – the green, Huntley, the playing fields
    - Has supported a good library
    - Has created a successful recycling/waste system
    - Has supported a successful recreation program
    - Has provided for police and fire protection
- What areas should be improved?
  - Lack of any obvious process to identify problems and projects
  - Lack of articulated methodology to solve problems and plan to pay for identified projects
  - Lack of any apparent understanding of the efficacy of multi-faceted approaches to problems
  - Lack of Selectboard oversight of appointed committees and groups to ensure cohesive and coordinated work toward the same identified goals
  - Insufficient turnover on committees and boards to ensure adequate diversity of thought, opinion, talent and agendas
  - thoughtful

## Agenda Item #4

- Name, define, discuss the scope of a desired work product, short-term and long-term.
  - First and short-term (this year) – develop an Operational Plan – See Figure A (page 2)
    - Direct the Treasurer to set up the appropriate separate funds so that budgeting will be more transparent and in compliance with statute
    - Spend the spring and summer organizing and understanding what monies are voted and for what purpose; and, develop a reporting system so that the Selectboard can run reports and understand the posture of funding and expenses.
  - Second both short-term and long-term – identify possible Capital Plan projects
    - Develop a methodology to identify possible projects
    - Ensure and include community involvement
    - Determine the costs of the various projects
    - Develop a priority list of those projects – based on safety issues, etc.
    - Determine how many of those projects can reasonably be planned for the next year
    - Prepare for future vote of the necessary funds (by majority vote) at either an annual or special town meeting
    - Deposit those monies in a Reserve Fund to be used for the voted project(s)



**FIGURE A**

- Town General Fund – 17 VSA 2664
- Town Highway Fund – 17 VSA 2664 and 19 VSA 312
- Reserve Funds – 24 VSA 2804
- Sinking Funds – 24 VSA 1777

## Statutes

### Town General Fund – 17 VSA 2664

#### § 2664. Budget<sup>1</sup>

At its annual meeting, a town shall vote such sums of money as it deems necessary for the interest of its inhabitants and for the prosecution and defense of the common rights. It shall express in its vote the specific amounts, or the rate on a dollar of the grand list, to be appropriated for laying out and repairing highways and for other necessary town expenses. If a town votes specific amounts in lieu of a rate on a dollar of the grand list, the selectboard shall, after the grand list book has been computed and lodged in the office of the town clerk, set the tax rate necessary to raise the specific amounts voted. The selectboard may apply for grants and may accept and expend grants or gifts above those that are approved in the town budget. The selectboard shall include, in its annual report, a description of all grants or gifts accepted during the year and associated expenditures.

### Town Highway Fund – 17 VSA 2664 (above) and 19 VSA 312 (below)

#### § 312. Municipal property tax; highway expenditures; general use of funds; unexpended balances

The funds raised from town highway taxes shall not be used for any purpose other than that for which the tax was voted, subject to the provisions of this chapter. If in any year money so voted is not expended, it shall be applied for the same purpose<sup>2</sup> the following year.

### Reserve Funds – 24 VSA 2804

#### § 2804. Reserve funds; use

(a) At an annual or special meeting duly warned, a municipality may establish a reserve fund to be under the control and direction of the legislative branch of the municipality. The reserve fund shall be kept in a separate account and invested as are other public funds and may be expended for such purposes for which established, or when authorized by a majority of the voters present and voting at an annual or special meeting duly warned, for other purposes.

### Sinking Funds – 24 VSA 1777 (“Indebtedness generally”)

#### § 1777. Regulations

When a municipal corporation has established or provided a sinking fund for the retirement of a bond issue or other debt, the fund so established or provided shall be kept intact and separate from other monies at the disposal of such corporation, shall be accounted for as a pledged asset for the purpose of retiring such obligations, and shall not be appropriated or used for the current expenses of such corporation.

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<sup>1</sup> Note that 17 VSA 2664 mentioned highway expenses but does NOT indicate that unspent monies can be held over for another year. Compare 17 VSA 312 which specifically DOES indicate that unspent monies CAN be held for another year.

<sup>2</sup> By creating a separate highway account, there will be no co-mingling of funds, and no risk that monies can be deemed ‘undesigned’ and spent on something else.