

Minutes of the Selectboard Meeting of
Wednesday, April 27, 2022, at 6:30 pm

This meeting was conducted via teleconference using ZOOM according to Open Meeting Law requirements. Members present: Roger Arnold, Chair; Mary Layton, Vice Chair; Claudette Brochu; Marcia Calloway; Robert Gere; Rod Francis, Town Manager; Miranda Bergmeier, Assistant to the Town Manager.

Also participating: Andy Scherer, Stacy Morig, Fielding Essensa, Chris Kaufman, Cheryl Lindberg.

1. Approval of Agenda. Arnold requested that the SB add to the agenda consideration of a request for additional expenditure for land records restoration. Calloway suggested that the SB consider splitting the two topics covered in agenda item #10 [Meeting calendar and goal planning]. Calloway **moved** (2nd Layton) to approve the agenda, as amended. **Motion approved unanimously.**
2. Public & Selectboard Comment. Andy Scherer spoke about the Water District's upcoming work on Hazen Street and suggested that the town should put in wastewater pipes while the road is torn up and the holes are dug.
3. Consent Agenda. Brochu talked about the last motion in the 4/13/2022 draft minutes. Brochu said that she and Arnold worked on finding an HR consultant, but they did not hire anyone because they, as 2 members of the SB, are not able to do that. Brochu and Arnold worked to investigate finding someone to hire, but they didn't enter into a contract and are instead bringing their research back to the full SB for consideration. Layton **moved** (2nd Brochu) to approve the consent agenda. **Motion approved unanimously.**
4. Appointment of Town Service Officer. Stacy Morig spoke in support of her application for Town Service Officer. Layton **moved** (2nd Gere) to appoint Stacy Morig to the position of Town Service Officer for a term to expire on March 31, 2023. **Motion approved unanimously.**
5. Financial Dashboard. Fielding Essensa, Finance Director, summarized the financial dashboard and reports as contained in the SB meeting packet. SB members discussed their reaction to the dashboard and reports.
6. American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Funds. Marcia said she has some concerns about the memo written by Francis and included in the SB meeting packet. Francis summarized the reasoning behind his memo. Brochu said she wants to get input from the voters, in addition to input from the town's department heads. SB members discussed with Francis and Essensa how the ARPA funding and budgeting process works. Layton **moved** (2nd Gere) to adopt the standard allowance for revenue loss to document the use of ARPA funds as revenue replacement in qualifying budget years as per the US Treasury State and Local Recovery Funds (SLRF) Final Rule published on May 17, 2021. **Motion approved (4 – yes; Calloway – no).**
7. DPW Expenditures. Chris Kaufman, DPW Director, summarized the 2 projects proposed for the DPW garage, as detailed in the SB meeting packet. Calloway asked if the security measures were necessary. Kaufman said he thinks it's important to protect the town's investment in the equipment we have. Layton said she thinks it's prudent to protect the town's taxpayers' investment. Layton **moved** (2nd Brochu) to approve the expenditure of up to \$5,000 for lunchroom improvements at the DPW garage and \$3,802.25 for a new keyed security system at the DPW garage, both

amounts to be spent from the Highway Garage reserve fund. **Motion approved unanimously.**

8. Contract Staffing: Zoning Administrator (ZA). After some discussion, Layton **moved** (2nd Brochu) to authorize the Town Manager to sign the short-term agreement with TRORC for the provision of municipal zoning services, not to exceed \$7,200. **Motion approved (4 – yes; Calloway – no).**

9. Renew Liquor License. Layton **moved** (2nd Brochu) to recess the Selectboard meeting. **Motion approved unanimously.** Layton **moved** (2nd Brochu) to convene as the Norwich Liquor Commission. **Motion approved unanimously.** The Selectboard recessed and reconvened as the Norwich Liquor Commission at 8:12 pm. Layton **moved** (2nd Calloway) to approve the liquor license application for PLR Enterprises (dba Norwich Wines and Spirits). **Motion approved unanimously.** Layton **moved** (2nd Calloway) to close the Norwich Liquor Commission session and reconvene the Selectboard meeting. **Motion approved unanimously.** The Selectboard reconvened at 8:13 pm.

*Added Agenda Item: Expenditure from Records Restoration Reserve Fund. After brief discussion, Layton **moved** (2nd Brochu) to authorize the additional expenditure of \$1,115 from the Records Restoration Reserve Fund for services to be provided by Cott Systems. This is in addition to the \$26,058.00 expenditure to Cott System authorized by the Selectboard on April 13, 2022. The total expenditure from the Records Restoration Reserve Fund shall be \$27,173.00. **Motion approved unanimously.**

10. Meeting Calendar and Goal Planning. Arnold suggested that the SB table the Gantt chart discussion to a future meeting. SB members agreed and discussed future agenda items and their suggestion of topics. SB members agreed to table this agenda item for further discussion at a future meeting.

11. Personnel (possible executive session). Arnold said the SB will speak more openly after coming out of executive session. Layton **moved** (2nd Brochu) to enter executive session under 1 VSA § 313(a)(3) – “...evaluation of public officer or employee...” – to discuss a personnel issue and to include the Town Manager. Calloway offered a friendly amendment to exclude the Town Manager initially from the executive session and then invite him to join afterward. No other SB member seconded the proposed amendment (amendment failed). **Original motion by Layton without amendment approved unanimously.**

The Selectboard entered executive session at 8:32 pm.

Layton **moved** (2nd Gere) to enter public session. **Motion approved unanimously.** The SB entered public session at 10:13 pm.

Layton **moved** (2nd Brochu) to authorize the chair to sign a contract with Mark Heyman of HR Happens to assist the town in building a positive work environment for all. **Motion approved unanimously.** Arnold said that, in executive session, the SB agreed that they have heard from town employees and the Town Manager and believe that it's important to build a positive workplace culture and environment. The HR consultant to be hired will be independent and will interview employees and possibly offer assistance in developing town policies.

12. Adjourn. Layton **moved** (2nd Calloway) to adjourn. **Motion approved unanimously.**

Meeting adjourned at 10:16 pm.

By Miranda Bergmeier

Approved by the Selectboard on May 11, 2022

Roger Arnold, Selectboard Chair

Next Meeting – May 11, 2022 – Meeting at 6:30

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