

Minutes of the Selectboard Meeting of  
Wednesday, May 11, 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: Lily Trajman, Steven Bauer, Chris Kaufman, Linda Cook, Pam Smith, Jeff Lubell, Brian Loeb, Cheryl Lindberg.

1. Approval of Agenda. Layton **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Brochu) to approve the agenda. **Motion approved unanimously.**
2. Public & Selectboard Comment. Lily Trajman commented on the Childcare Committee findings; she thinks that a committee should be convened to look at after school care and summer childcare for elementary-age kids. Trajman also expressed displeasure with the cost and duration of available summer camps offered by the Norwich Recreation Department. Layton said that there was an addendum to the packet that was the town's attorney's memo written in response to a question from Calloway. Layton said she thinks the SB should consider coming up with a process for officially engaging the town counsel's services, because that work results in expenses for the town.
3. Consent Agenda. Layton **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Brochu) to approve the consent agenda, including the proposed minutes changes submitted by Cheryl Lindberg. **Motion approved unanimously.** Calloway said that she also sent some corrections to the Town Manager's office. SB members agreed to make those corrections.
4. Appointment of Zoning Administrator & Acting Zoning Administrator. Steven Bauer, with TRORC, introduced himself and explained what services he will provide the Town of Norwich as Zoning Administrator (ZA). Francis said that he recommends Bauer be appointed ZA and Francis be appointed Acting ZA, because Francis can continue as Acting ZA if and when the Town needs to hire a different ZA. Calloway asked about Bauer's qualifications. Bauer said he has a recent law degree and talked about his work background in land use law. Layton **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Gere) to appoint Steven Bauer to the position of Zoning Administrator effective May 12, 2022. **Motion approved unanimously.** Layton **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Gere) to appoint Rod Francis to the position of Acting Zoning Administrator effective May 12, 2022. **Motion approved unanimously.**
5. Bridge Closure – Chapel Hill Road. Chris Kaufman, DPW Director, explained the reasoning behind the recommendation to close the Chapel Hill Road bridge, as detailed in Kaufman's memo in the SB meeting packet. After consulting an engineering firm and three experts employed by the State of VT, the recommendation is to close the bridge immediately because it is unsafe. Kaufman also has talked to the Police Chief and Fire Chief, who both said that residents' safety and accessibility by emergency services would not be adversely affected by the closing the bridge. Calloway suggested that we close the bridge immediately for safety and also seek public comment before deciding the long-term plan for the bridge. Francis said that, if the SB votes to close the bridge, the Town will notify the neighbors. Linda Cook is concerned that the signage indicating the closure needs to be prominent. Brochu **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Layton) to close the Chapel Hill South road bridge immediately due to its unsafe condition and construct a turnaround. **Motion approved unanimously.**

6. Town Manager Report. Francis briefly summarized his written report, as included in the SB meeting packet. Francis also said we have hired Keith Waterman, whom we are very glad to have. We have learned that the stand-up “sulky” mower owned by the town is not adequate for the amount of mowing we need to do. We need to get a sit-down mower, which will be safer for town staff to use. Francis and Kaufman have investigated electric and gas options for a new mower, and electric options for large mowers are not practicable at this time.

7. RFP for Audit and RFQ for Master Financial Policy, Procedures, and Internal Controls. Francis discussed the rationale behind the RFP and RFQ, and funding sources. SB members discussed the reasoning behind seeking expert help to develop policy proposals and the process for developing financial policies. Pam Smith suggested that the Town Treasurer be involved. Brochu **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Layton) to authorize the Town Manager to proceed with the issuance of an RFP for Auditing Services and an RFQ for Financial Consulting Services. **Motion approved unanimously.**

8. Update from Affordable Housing Subcommittee. Jeff Lubell, a member of the subcommittee, shared his computer screen to summarize the work of the Affordable Housing Subcommittee (AHS). Brian Loeb talked about the parcels in town that the AHS has identified as possible sites for affordable housing development. Lubell talked about possible options for building single-family or duplex houses. Lubell requested that the SB authorize the TM to contact the Fire District (via its Prudential Committee) about possibly exercising the town’s development rights on Fire District land; SB discussed. Cheryl Lindberg said that the town took development rights in exchange for exempting the Fire District land from town taxation. Lindberg said there is a land management plan in place from 2001 that limits development on Fire District land. After some discussion, Brochu **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Gere) to authorize the Town Manager to approach the Prudential Committee to investigate the feasibility of small-scale affordable housing on Fire District Land. Calloway offered a friendly amendment to specify the specific tracts of land as SPAN numbers 45014211592 and 45014212882. Brochu and Gere agreed to the friendly amendments. **Motion approved unanimously.**

9. Meeting calendar. Arnold shared his screen, showing possible goals and projects for the SB. SB members discussed their ideas about things the SB should work on in the coming year, including Tracy Hall, the town’s website, the Article 36 Task Force’s recommendations, the Childcare Committee’s recommendations, personnel policies update, and other issues. After discussion, the main themes for agreement that emerged were the town’s physical and digital spaces.

10. Adjourn. Layton **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Calloway) to adjourn. **Motion approved unanimously.**

Meeting adjourned at 9:19 pm.

By Miranda Bergmeier

Approved by the Selectboard on May 25, 2022

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Roger Arnold, Selectboard Chair

Next Meeting – May 25, 2022 – Meeting at 6:30

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