

Minutes of the Selectboard Meeting of
Wednesday, July 28, 2021 at 6:30 pm

This meeting was conducted via teleconference using ZOOM and in person in Tracy Hall, in order to comply with Open Meeting Law requirements while providing remote access for attendees. 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 23 people in the audience.

Also participating: Nancy Osgood, Suzanne Lupien, Craig Layne, Jim Harlow, Rebecca Holcombe, Brie Swenson, Pam Smith, Linda Cook.

1. Approval of Agenda. Layton **moved** (2nd Calloway) to approve the agenda. **Motion approved unanimously.**
2. Public Comment. Nancy Osgood spoke regarding the Barrett oven, reading from a letter she wrote expressing concern about the Barrett Meadow oven [a copy of the letter will be included in the next SB packet]. Suzanne Lupien spoke about the Barrett Meadow oven and the importance of maintaining the town's assets to keep them from degrading. Lupien said she'd like to see a welcome brochure containing information regarding the town's historic assets. Layton said it's necessary to educate oven users so as to avoid damaging it and we need to make provision for maintaining such assets. Calloway agreed it would be a good idea to have a welcome brochure explaining historically significant things in town.
3. Consent Agenda. Calloway requested pulling all correspondence. Calloway asked for an explanation on the Arnold memo to the SB. Arnold explained his memo to the SB related to Smith correspondence on OML violations pertaining to draft minutes postings. The SB agreed by consensus to address OML requirements to all board-appointed committees/commissions. Layton expressed concern that all groups are trying their best to comply but things happen. Arnold suggested that Miranda had thoughts on how to comply. Arnold suggested the SB work to develop consensus on a guiding document explaining how town committees should submit documents for posting. SB members discussed approaches to this issue. Brochu said the Trails committee is drafting a proposal to submit to the SB to change Burton Woods Road from a Class 4 road into a trail. Brochu **moved** (2nd Calloway) to accept the correspondence from Pam Smith, Jerry Terino, and Roger Arnold. **Motion approved unanimously.** Brochu **moved** (2nd Layton) to approve the consent agenda, minus the correspondence. **Motion approved unanimously.**
4. Conservation Commission Appointment. Craig Layne spoke in support of Charlotte Tagupa's application to the Conservation Commission. Layton **moved** (2nd Brochu) to appoint Charlotte Tagupa to the Conservation Commission as a youth representative. **Motion approved unanimously.**
5. Resolutions for Currently Serving Active Duty Military Personnel. Jim Harlow, Commander of the local American Legion Post #8, introduced Jaycee Cobb and Paisley Beckett, family of service member Robert Beckett; Minnie Slater and Tom Slater, parents of service member Tom Slater; and American Legion member. Harlow thanked Town Manager Durfee for helping shepherd these resolutions to the SB. Arnold read aloud the draft resolutions [as included in the SB meeting packet]. Brochu **moved** (2nd Layton) to approve the resolutions included in the Selectboard packet expressing appreciation for active duty military service members Robert Beckett and Thomas Slater. **Motion approved unanimously.** Linda Cook said she is proud of both service members and thanked them

for their service.

6. Interim Report from Childcare Committee. Rebecca Holcombe, chair of the Childcare Committee, synopsized the committee's report, as included in the SB packet. The committee has found that there is a particular shortage of childcare for the youngest children. Holcombe spoke about highlights of the committee report, including challenges facing those seeking childcare. Calloway said she would like to see the committee focus on developing multiple solutions and seeking input from people who have navigated childcare challenges in the past. Layton said the most frustrating part of this problem is the low wages to early childcare providers; she hopes to determine something the town can do to address the low wages issue. Arnold said he's interested in the possibility of contracting to address care needs. Holcombe gave an example of a school that provided space to a childcare provider, so the provider was able to raise workers' wages because they didn't have to pay building overhead costs. Layton said she feels a need to look at case studies and other approaches. Gere said he appreciates the committee's work and high quality of their report and surveys. Arnold said he thinks childcare is a public good. Brochu agreed that case studies of varied economic family situations would be helpful. Brie Swenson said that Norwich Recreation serves K-8 or K-6 children, not 0-5 years old.

7. Re-Adopt Norwich Fee Schedule. Durfee said that the 2021-22 fee schedule is little changed from last year. The only updates are to the Tracy Hall rental charges. Brochu said the Recreation Field charges need to be attached or include a link to their posting in the fee schedule. Layton asked about Tracy Hall fees. Durfee confirmed that the fees are meant not to make money, but to cover costs associated with the building renter's use. Calloway asked if we will charge the community nurse program for using space in Tracy Hall; Durfee said no, we will not. Layton **moved** (2nd Gere) to adopt the Norwich, VT FY2021-22 Fee Schedule, dated 7/14/2021 and included in the meeting packet.. **Motion approved unanimously.**

8. Additional Repairs for Fire Engine #1. Calloway asked if this \$3,734.08 is over and above the previous \$30,000 the SB approved. Durfee said that yes, it is. Layton **moved** (2nd Gere) to authorize the expenditure of up to \$3,734.08 from the Designated Fund – Fire Apparatus for the repairs to Fire Engine 1. **Motion approved unanimously.**

9. Pavement Marking Bid Package. Durfee explained that the town doesn't have enough money set aside to paint centerlines and fog lines, so the proposal is to paint the centerlines only. With the remaining budget money, Durfee is looking to have some in-village pavement marking, such as crosswalks and stop bars. Calloway expressed concern about road safety and the need to plan so that we can pave both centerlines and fog lines on all roads. Layton **moved** (2nd Gere) to authorize the Town Manager to contract with L&D Safety Marking Corp. in the amount of \$23,690.40 to perform road centerline pavement marking, per the recommendation of the Department of Public Works director. **Motion approved unanimously.**

10. Town Manager Contract Renewal Status. Arnold said the SB has chosen to allow Town Manager Durfee's current contract to expire on August 31, 2021. Layton **moved** (2nd Brochu) to initiate an immediate search for an interim town manager using the services of VLCT. **Motion approved unanimously.** Brochu **moved** (2nd Gere) that the Selectboard not pursue an additional contract with the current Town Manager, with thanks to the current Town Manager for the work he has done. **Motion approved (4 yes; Layton abstain).** Arnold said he acknowledges Durfee's service through the July 2017 storm and the turnover of all the department heads and he asked for other SB member's agreement. Layton said she is very sorry this is not working out, but it is time to move on.

11. Discussion of Policing Study, Reforms, and Process. Brochu & Calloway said they want to

know from the SB whether we will move forward with the RFP. Layton said she cannot affirm the RFP as currently drafted, given its breadth and she is concerned about how to fund it. Gere said he thinks the RFP has greatly improved in its language; he is concerned about finding a consultant. Gere and Arnold agree that the SB has made commitments to the residents. Arnold said he wants the SB to agree on what proposals they want, and then scale back the RFP. Calloway said she thinks it's important to gather data and not provide any slant toward any particular result. Arnold talked about data tracing, as done by Brattleboro. SB members discussed whether to narrow the scope of the work called for the FRP, or leave it as drafted. SB members agreed that Arnold and Gere will work on drafting an RFP for consideration by the SB.

12. Amendments to Gift Policy. Arnold introduced the topic, saying that this policy applies to SB-appointed committees, with the exception of the Conservation Commission, which is governed by VT statute. Layton said she thinks the gift policy is in good shape and she is inclined to accept it, with the addition of the statutory reference to the Conservation Commission. Gere said he sees no problem with committees discussing possible gifts, so long as they make it clear that they do not speak with the authority of the town. SB members agreed to discuss Calloway's edits to the gift policy, which she emailed to SB members outside of the meeting packet. SB members agreed that they would not take action on the proposed policy edits until a future meeting. Calloway walked through an explanation of her proposed edits to the policy. Brie Swenson, Recreation Department Director, raised concerns about the gift policy's proposed edits, and how they could hamper the Rec. Dept's ability to accept small donations, as is customary. SB members agreed this was a problem and agreed on the need to revise the policy to address those concerns. Pam Smith said she thinks there is a question about whether the Trustees of Public Funds should have a role to play in the gift policy.

13. Adjourn. Layton **moved** (2nd Gere) to adjourn. **Motion approved unanimously.**

Meeting adjourned at 9:53 pm.

By Miranda Bergmeier

Approved by the Selectboard on _____, 2021

Roger Arnold
Selectboard Chair

Next Meeting – August 11, 2021 – Meeting at 6:30

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