

Minutes of the Selectboard Meeting of
Wednesday, August 25, 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 8 people in the audience.

Also participating: Jack Cushman, Aaron Lamperti, Brie Swenson, Linda Cook, Tom Candon, Jenny Barba and Christopher Coughlin, Gerry Tolman.

1. Approval of Agenda. Arnold said he wants to add as item 9A a discussion of the long-term Town Manager search. Calloway suggested, and SB members agreed, to move item #8 up on the agenda to a point earlier in the meeting. Brochu **moved** (2nd Calloway) to approve the agenda with amendment as discussed. **Motion approved unanimously.**
2. Public Comment. No public comments were offered.
3. Consent Agenda. Calloway asked to pull the A/P warrants for discussion. Calloway asked why Rod Francis signed in lieu of Durfee. Durfee said he had authorized Rod Francis to sign in Durfee's absence and, per Calloway's request, Durfee will also sign, now that he's back in town. Brochu **moved** (2nd Gere) to approve the consent agenda. **Motion approved unanimously.**
4. Town Manager's Report. Durfee said we have not yet gotten applicants for a DPW Equipment Operator. We hope to have an appointed DPW Director by the end of this week. Durfee said he assembled an interview team of Masaki Schuette, Rod Francis, Rita Seto and himself. The incoming Finance Director, Fielding Essensa, will be starting in person on September 7th. A new DPW Working Foreman should be appointed soon, after soliciting internal applications. Durfee is working to onboard the new Finance Director and have things ready for the new DPW Director. Arnold said he will be handing off the policing study RFP to Durfee and Durfee will let the RFP as soon as possible. Durfee said the ARPA funding amounts were announced today and Norwich stands to receive approximately \$900,000. Brochu asked if the SB will be getting a dashboard for June 2021. Durfee said it hasn't been completed yet; the reports provided to the SB in the meeting packet contain all the relevant information. Durfee did just today receive a July dashboard, which he will forward to the SB as soon as possible.
5. Article 36 Task Force Interim Report. Arnold introduced Jack Cushman, chair of the Article 36 Task Force (TF). Cushman shared a PowerPoint presentation developed by consensus among the TF. The presentation outlined the goals and work of the TF. A copy of the presentation will be included in the next SB meeting packet as correspondence. Brochu asked if the TF has been looking into alternatives to fossil fueled town vehicles. Cushman said the TF has been working on a schedule to transition to clean fuel vehicles. Layton said she appreciated the format and organization of the TF's work and she asked about the possibility of switching small engines to electric motors, such as lawnmowers, trimmers, etc. Calloway suggested the TF reach out to residents through the "neighborhoods" network used by Dan Fraser. Gere said he has been very impressed with the true inclusivity in this TF. Aaron Lamperti said the SB doesn't have to wait to take climate action until after the TF has presented its final report; they can take steps sooner.

7. Facilities Memorandum of Understanding Between SAU 70 and the Town of Norwich. Arnold
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said the proposed MOU has changed since the one contained in the SB packet. The new MOU would provide for an exchange of the use of spaces between the town and the school. Brie Swenson, Recreation Director, said the proposed MOU clearly defines what services are provided and what responsibilities arise when the spaces are used. The proposed MOU would be for 5 years, with annual review. Linda Cook asked how the school's use of the town forest is covered by insurance. Swenson said the school would cover for any school-related activities. Tom Candon, Norwich School Board member, said the town forest has been very helpful last school year. Candon said it would be very helpful for the SB to take action tonight so the school students can use the forest again. Jenny Barba and Christopher Coughlin spoke in favor of the school use of the town forest. Barba read aloud her and Coughlin's letter in support of outdoor education for the school students. Swenson said that, in the MOU the town is not agreeing to finance the building of a trail, just agreeing to allow access for the trail to be built. SB members agreed they are willing to hold a special meeting in order to consider for approval an MOU updated draft so that construction of a trail can begin. SB members agreed to hold a special meeting when a revised MOU is ripe for consideration. SB members agreed that the TM's office can sign the town's consent for the school's application for approval to construct a trail in the town's forest.

8. Proposed Gifts to the Town via the Recreation Department from Vermont Afterschool and a donation to the Girard Fund. Layton said the playground equipment sounds like a good upgrade. Calloway agreed. Brochu asked about ongoing maintenance will be covered by the Recreation Dept. budget. Layton **moved** (2nd Calloway) to accept the gift of playground equipment proffered by Vermont Afterschool and the gift of \$500 to the John Girard Fund proffered by Cathy Girard. **Motion approved unanimously.**

6. Financial Reports and Financial Dashboard Updates. Durfee explained that the town is in good shape financially at the end of this fiscal year. Durfee recommends the SB establish an emergency designated fund.

9. Update on Interim Town Manager Process. Arnold said he reached out to VLCT regarding hiring an interim TM. VLCT said they can give names to the SB for the SB to contact regarding an interim appointment. Arnold said he has also gotten information from VLCT regarding long-term TM recruitment. Arnold also contacted Municipal Resources, Inc. to get information from them, which is in the packet. Layton said the VLCT services were very helpful last time. Calloway asked about MRI and whether they help with interim or permanent appointments. Arnold said they can't help ups with interim, but they can do the permanent search. Arnold said there is a possible interim candidate referred by VLCT, who can come meet with the SB if the SB desires it. Layton and Gere agreed they would like to invite the potential candidate to a future SB meeting. Layton said she prefers VLCT's services for recruiting a long-term TM. Brochu said she thinks VLCT provided a more personal level of support. Brochu and Layton said naming an existing employee as interim TM is exactly what the SB did last time. Calloway said she thinks the SB should follow the requirements of 24 VSA §1233 which says "... a manager shall be selected with special reference to his or her education, training, and experience to perform the duties of such office..." and noted the VLCT recommendation to also do a credit check on any candidate. Gere said he thinks VLCT sounds fine and would like to know how Hartford and Enfield felt about their experience with MRI. Layton said she doesn't feel the need to look at Francis's CV or ruin a credit check. Layton does think we should give Francis higher pay during the time he is doing his regular Planning job and filling in for the TM. Brochu agreed about raising Francis's salary and about not needing a credit check or CV review. Brochu **moved** (2nd Layton) that the SB chair set up an interview with the prospective Interim Town Manager candidate at the first September SB meeting or at the earliest possible meeting. **Motion approved unanimously.** Brochu **moved** (2nd Layton) that the Selectboard chair set up an interview with a prospective Interim Manager candidate at the first September Selectboard meeting or at the earliest possible meeting.

Motion approved unanimously. Brochu **moved** (2nd Layton) to authorize the initiation of a search process to hire an Interim Town Manager and to contract with VLCT with the proviso that if no progress is made in 6 months then the Selectboard will consider contracting with MRI. **Motion approved unanimously.**

10. IT Vendor and IT Upgrades. Calloway had some specific questions about the CCI proposal. Gerry Tolman spoke about CCI's proposal and why the team recommends awarding them the work of IT services for the town. Arnold thanked the IT RFP review team and Herb for their work. Durfee said this work will start in the beginning of September. Brochu **moved** (2nd Gere) to authorize the Town Manager to execute a 3-year contract with CCI Managed Services according to their quotes and proposal and to authorize the expenditure of funds from the General Administration Designated Fund for the purposes identified in said quotes and proposal. **Motion approved unanimously.**

11. Executive Session – Personnel. Calloway **moved** (2nd Layton) to enter executive session under 1 VSA §313(a)(4) to consider a disciplinary or dismissal action against a public officer or employee. **Motion approved unanimously.**

The Selectboard entered executive session at 9:59 pm.

Layton **moved** (2nd Gere) to enter public session. **Motion approved unanimously.** The Selectboard moved into public session at 10:32 pm.

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

Meeting adjourned at 10:33 pm.

By Miranda Bergmeier

Approved by the Selectboard on September 8, 2021

Roger Arnold
Selectboard Chair

Next Meeting – September 8, 2021 – Meeting at 6:30

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