

Minutes of the Selectboard Meeting of
Wednesday, September 29, 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; Rod Francis, Interim Town Manager; Miranda Bergmeier, Assistant to the Town Manager.

Also participating: Linda Cook, Cheryl Lindberg, Brie Swenson, Fielding Essensa.

1. Approval of Agenda. Layton **moved** (2nd Gere) to approve the agenda. **Motion approved unanimously.**

2. Public Comment. No public comments were offered.

3. Update on Recruitment of Permanent TM. Arnold asked Selectboard (SB) members to provide feedback regarding TM (Town Manager) recruitment. Layton said she liked the idea of having a citizen committee to provide feedback in the initial stages of the TM search. Brochu wondered if the same group would review resumes and conduct interviews. Arnold said there would be two distinct groups. SB members discussed aspects of the recruitment plan. Broch said she doesn't want to require any particular degree major for TM candidates, but instead list certain majors as preferred. Calloway said she wants to ask for a bachelor's degree at minimum. SB members agreed with the proposed salary range. SB members agreed with the job advertisement. SB members discussed the screening committee and agreed to advertise for applicants in time for them to be considered at the next SB meeting. SB members discussed the content of a survey. SB members agreed on two questions for seeking town resident input: 1) what characteristics do you seek in a Town Manager; and 2) what is the most important question to ask a TM candidate. Cheryl Lindberg asked if town employees and officials will also meet and interview the candidates. Arnold said there will be a point in the process when town staff will meet candidates.
Layton **moved** (2nd Calloway) to approve the Town Manager pay range of \$85,000 - \$102,000 per year. **Motion approved unanimously.** Layton **moved** (2nd Gere) to approve the proposed Town Manager recruitment plan and associated materials, as included in the Selectboard meeting packet. **Motion approved unanimously.** SB members agreed that Brochu will develop the survey asking for community input. SB members agreed that Layton and Calloway will serve as SB members of the Screening Committee.

4. Revisions to Gift Policy. Brochu introduced the topic. Brochu said this version of the policy has been clarified to be sure people understand the goals and processes of the SB regarding gifts. Brochu said this policy makes clear that the Girard Fund is the only existing named fund. Brie Swenson, Recreation Director, said it's essential for the gift policy to enable a Recreation Department Scholarship Fund. Calloway had suggestions for edits to the policy. SB members discussed the possibility of establishing future additional named funds. SB members discussed revisions to the gift policy so Arnold can make revision and bring that version back to the SB for consideration. Brochu **moved** (2nd Layton) to accept as a second reading the Policy for the Acceptance of Gifts, as contained in the Selectboard meeting packet and amended. **Motion approved unanimously.**

5. Revisions to the Capital Budgeting and Program Policy. Brochu said she and Calloway opted to start with VLCT's model policy as a starting point. Calloway said this policy is trying to help the town keep track of implementing the Town Plan and also planning how to keep the town going and plan for future purchases. Fielding Essensa, Finance Director, spoke about the functions of a capital plan. Francis said an operational budget is per se an operational plan for a year. Here in Norwich,

most of our capital items are vehicles, aside from our few buildings. Francis said the SB needs to offer input on how to maintain the town's capital items. Brochu said the proposed policy helps explain how the town funds its designated funds. Francis said the annual budget or operational budget is the plan for what happens in a fiscal year. Essensa agreed with Francis and said the capital budget and plan is description/plan for how to manage the town's assets. SB members agreed that "operational plan" means "operational budget". Layton suggested replacing the words "operational plan" with "operational budget" in the proposed policy. SB members agreed. SB members agreed to have Francis clean up the draft policy, circulate it to town staff for review and comment and then return the draft policy to the SB for review and adoption at a future meeting. Brochu **moved** (2nd Layton) to accept as a second reading the Capital Budget and Program Policy for Operational Planning and Municipal Improvement Planning, as contained in the Selectboard meeting packet and amended tonight. **Motion approved unanimously.**

6. Budget Calendar and Preparing For Budgeting Process. Essensa said he has begun the process of putting together capital budgets and is meeting with individual department heads (DHs) to discuss and plan for upcoming FY budgets. Operational budget drafts are due from DHs on October 1st. Essensa will be meeting again with DHs to develop the operational budgets. Arnold said he has told Essensa and Francis that the SB needs to know DHs' justifications and needs & priorities for funding. Essensa said the staff need to communicate detailed justifications and priorities. Essensa said he will build on the previously submitted capital budget and plan to make it more detailed. He will also build a vehicle replacement plan and a list of capital assets with associated maintenance costs. Arnold asked SB members to offer input on what they suggest for budget increases/decrease or services increase/decrease. SB members agreed they would like to limit budget increase as much as possible, while maintaining town services. Brochu said some SBs are making their own decisions without public input. Brochu said she'd like to get input from town residents. Layton **moved** (2nd Calloway) to adopt the budget calendar for FY23, as contained in the Selectboard meeting packet. **Motion approved unanimously.**

7. Update on Hiring of Interim Town Manager. Layton **moved** (2nd Gere) to find that premature general public knowledge would put the town at a substantial disadvantage in its contract negotiations with an Interim Town Manager by disclosing terms of their employment and compensation before the Selectboard has an opportunity to properly consider and discuss the same. **Motion approved unanimously.**

Layton **moved** (2nd Calloway) to enter executive session under 1 VSA §313(a)(1)(a) to consider the Interim Town Manager contract. **Motion approved unanimously.**

The SB entered executive session at 8:51 pm.

Layton **moved** (2nd Gere) to enter public session. **Motion approved unanimously.** The SB entered public session at 9:23 pm.

Layton **moved** (2nd Calloway) to authorize the Chair to send a signed contract to the interim town manager candidate. **Motion approved unanimously.**

Linda Cook asked when the name would be announced. Arnold said the name of the candidate would be announced when the candidate were to sign the agreement.

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

Meeting adjourned at 9:25 pm.

By Miranda Bergmeier

