

Minutes of the Selectboard Meeting of
Wednesday, October 27, 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 Harris Bergmeier, Assistant to the Town Manager.

Also participating: Cheryl Lindberg, Fielding Essensa, Andy Scherer, Linda Cook,.

1. Approval of Agenda. Arnold suggested the SB defer agenda item #12 (Fund Balance Reserve Policy) to a future meeting. SB members agreed. Brochu **moved** (2nd Layton) to approve the agenda with the proposed amendment [deletion of item #12]. **Motion approved unanimously.**
2. Public Comment. No public comment was offered.
3. Consent Agenda. Calloway asked to pull the Jenny Barba letter for discussion as a possible future agenda item. Layton **moved** (2nd Calloway) to approve the consent agenda minus correspondence from Jenny Barba. **Motion approved unanimously.** Calloway said she'd like to have a SB discussion at a future meeting about the issues presented by Barba in her letter. Calloway **moved** (2nd Layton) to receive correspondence from Jenny Barba. **Motion approved unanimously.**
4. Appointments to Town Manager Screening Committee. Arnold discussed the process for selecting people for screening and interview committees. SB members discussed possible appointees for the screening committee by tallying SB members' top three choices. Brochu **moved** (2nd Gere) to appoint Richard Stucker and Marisa Lorenzo to the Town Manager Screening Committee. **Motion approved unanimously.**
5. Interim Town Manager Report. Francis said we are sorry to announce that Masaki Schuette has tendered her resignation from DPW; she will be greatly missed. Francis has made a job offer to a candidate for DPW Equipment Operator. We continue to work on various computer issues with CCI, our new vendor. Arnold asked what is the interim plan for filling the admin position at DPW. Francis said we plan to look for a part-time person to fill the position. Brochu asked if we should advertise as a full-time position. Francis said he'd like to start as part-time, with the possibility of expanding to full-time. Brochu asked if the DPW administrator could be a remote position. Francis said it's possible, but unlikely that it would be as effective.
6. ChargePoint EV Charging Station at Dan & Whit's. Arnold introduced the topic and Francis explained the recommendation for the town to arrange with Dan & Whit's to maintain the charging station and the town will keep ownership. SB members discussed possible options for the charging station. Layton **moved** (2nd Gere) to affirm the Town Manager's decision to enter into an agreement with Dan & Whit's concerning the ownership and operation of the electric vehicle charging station and solar awning on Dan & Whit's property per a memorandum from Geoff Martin, as included in the Selectboard meeting packet. **Motion approved (4 yes; Calloway abstain).**
7. Town Manager Profile from VLCT Consultant. Calloway and Cheryl Lindberg pointed out some errors in the document. Arnold said he will alert Rick McGuire (the consultant) to those so they can be corrected. SB members discussed the draft position profile. Layton **moved** (2nd Brochu) to approve the Town Manager position profile prepared by VLCT and included in the Selectboard meeting packet. **Motion approved unanimously.**

8. Density Study. Francis gave some background information about the density study project and proposed contract. SB members discussed the project and its use. Brochu **moved** (2nd Gere) to approve the Town of Norwich award a contract to AES Northeast not to exceed \$15,000 for the completion of the Density Factor Review, a project supported by the Municipal Planning Grant Program of the Vermont Department of Housing and Community Development. **Motion approved unanimously.**

9. Operating Budget FY23: Executive Summaries. Francis said he and Fielding Essensa, Finance Director, have been working with the town's department heads on budget planning and the September and year-to-date budget numbers. Essensa spoke about operations expenditures for the first quarter of the current fiscal year, plus October. We are trending slightly under budget. Essensa said that the current projection for next fiscal year's proposed budget is fairly flat relative to this fiscal year, at just over a 2% increase. FY2023 budget is still being developed, so this is not finalized. Essensa spoke about the FY2023 budget expenditure summary. Essensa said the current estimated budget increase is preliminary, and will further develop as SB discussions and the budgeting process continues.

10. Status of Designated Funds and Review of Their Financing Functions. Francis said he and Essensa have been focusing on how designated fund allocations relate to the operating budget, and also how designated fund interest is allocated. Essensa said the designated fund chart in the SB packet is a very high-level summary and will be further refined. Andy Scherer asked how broadly can we interpret the purpose of a fund, in terms of how the money is spent. Francis said you have to refer to the original language about establishing the fund.

11. Capital Budgeting: Summary of Prioritized Capital Budget Items. Essensa said the spreadsheet in the packet is the start of a capital improvement plan. Essensa discussed some particulars of the spreadsheet on pages 59-60 of the SB packet.

12. *Deferred to a future meeting, per SB action earlier in the meeting.

13. Board Review Interim Town Manager Staffing Proposals in Support of Key Town Functions. Francis introduced his memo in the SB packet regarding support for town functions. Francis said his recommendations regarding full-time DPW Assistant has changed, in light of Schuette's resignation; Francis now recommends keeping the assistant role at part-time. Francis would like to hire a part-time consultant to assist with DPW operations and management. Francis also would like to hire a part-time Zoning Administrator to handle zoning functions while Francis is serving as Interim Town Manager. Layton said she thinks it's sensible to seek a part-time DPW consultant. Gere said he agreed. Gere **moved** (2nd Layton) to affirm the recommendation to seek a part-time consultant for DPW at 8 to 10 hours per week. **Motion approved unanimously.** SB members agreed they support Francis's proposal to hire the DPW Assistant as a part-time position. Brochu **moved** (2nd Calloway) to affirm the recommendation to seek a part-time Zoning Administrator to support the work of the Planning Director until the position of Town Manager is permanently filled. **Motion approved unanimously.**

14. Adjourn. Linda Cook thanked Rod Francis on behalf of the town for all of his work in multiple roles and said he is doing excellent work. Brochu **moved** (2nd Layton) to adjourn. **Motion approved unanimously.**

Meeting adjourned at 9:50 pm.

By Miranda Bergmeier

Approved by the Selectboard on November 10, 2021

Roger Arnold, Selectboard Chair

Next Meeting – November 3, 2021 – Meeting at 6:30

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