

Minutes of the Special Selectboard Meeting of  
Wednesday, November 3, 2021 at 5:30 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 (joined at 5:39 pm); Rod Francis, Interim Town Manager; Miranda Harris Bergmeier, Assistant to the Town Manager.

Also participating: Fielding Essensa, Linda Cook.

1. Approval of Agenda. Arnold asked to amend the agenda by adding an item to discuss an A/P warrant. Layton **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Brochu) to approve the agenda with requested amendment. **Motion approved unanimously (Gere absent for this vote).**

2. Public Comment. No public comment was offered. Gere joined the meeting at 5:39 pm.

3. Town Manager Search Update & Screening Committee. Arnold said there have been approximately two dozen applicants for the TM position. Arnold said the SB needs to officially appoint a town staff member to the TM Screening Committee. Arnold said he sought a recommendation for a staff appointee and Rod Francis, Interim TM, suggested Miranda Bergmeier. Layton **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Calloway) to appoint Miranda Bergmeier as town staff representative to the Town Manager Screening Committee. **Motion approved unanimously.**

3.5 A/P Warrant for County Taxes to Windsor County. Francis explained that this is the payment of county taxes and also a bond payment to the county. Layton **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Gere) to authorize Roger Arnold to sign an A/P warrant to fund an annual payment to the Windsor County Treasurer in the amount of \$27,947.00. **Motion approved unanimously.**

4. ARPA Funds. Francis gave some information about the process and requirements for ARPA spending. Francis said the town will be challenged to set aside time for a deliberate process to determine how to best use the funding. Francis discussed the state of Vermont's efforts to determine the state programs' priorities. Brochu said she realizes this is a bad time to be having substantive discussions about ARPA matters because we're in the middle of budget discussions. Brochu also pointed out that expenditures made starting in March 11, 2021 are eligible retroactively. Layton said the SB should present structured options to the public, rather than being too vague, so it's important for the SB to have a clear understanding of how ARPA works and what's eligible. Layton mentioned the possibility of funding the connection of internet to individual households. Arnold asked SB members to consider improvements to Tracy Hall as a possible use of ARPA funds. Calloway said the town needs to have a safe public space – which is naturally Tracy Hall (TH). Brochu agreed, as did Layton. Layton said it will be important to do something that has public support. Gere agreed and said we should have information about permitting and contracting labor. Brochu said ventilation in TH to mitigate the spread of disease qualifies under ARPA. SB members discussed ways to solicit and compile ideas from the public about ARPA spending. Linda Cook suggested that the SB put out information to the public sooner, rather than later, so that they can meaningfully participate in the this process. Cook expressed concern about whether TH is an adequate building, or do we need to build more space. Cook gave some ideas about public projects to consider.

5. FY23 Operational Budget Presentations. Francis gave a summary of the budget drafting process. Francis and Fielding Essensa (Finance Director) have been meeting with town department heads (DHs) about their budgets, including allocations to designated funds. Starting next week, the Norwich Selectboard Minutes – 11/10/2021 Mtg

police and fire departments will present their draft budgets to the SB at their meeting. They've been looking at projects that are ongoing and committed to, and which will need to continue to be funded in FY23. Francis is asking DHs to offer succinct and brief explanations about what is in their respective budget drafts. Francis and Essensa have discussed how to present large amounts of budget information effectively over Zoom. Francis asked the SB for feedback on Zoom presentations. Calloway suggested ideas for how to display Excel spreadsheets. Arnold suggest the SB discuss their ideas about changes to department budgets at the time the DB is present, rather than wait until after all presentations are complete. Francis said that early SB feedback about their goals for the overall budget will be very helpful to Francis and Essensa. Layton said Francis's suggestion makes sense. Layton also said the SB should contain costs, while still paying attention to environmental goals. Calloway agreed with the approach where the SB will discuss each department budget as they come up. Gere agreed. Brochu wants to try the new suggested process as well, and Layton agreed. SB members discussed the draft appropriations form and the policy, in particular. Brochu said she's fine with using the old form when an organization has already submitted this year using that old form. SB members agreed that nay organizations that are asking for more money this year, or are new organizations need to appear before the SB at a meeting. SB members are revising their policy, along with the form.

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

Meeting adjourned at 7:31 pm.

By Miranda Bergmeier

Approved by the Selectboard on December 8, 2021

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Roger Arnold, Selectboard Chair

Next Meeting – November 10, 2021 – Meeting at 6:30

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