

Minutes of the Special Selectboard Meeting of  
Wednesday, November 10, 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; Rod Francis, Interim Town Manager; Miranda Harris Bergmeier, Assistant to the Town Manager.

Also participating: Corlan Johnson, Fielding Essensa, Linda Cook, Andy Scherer, Bonnie Blake, Lily Terry, Interim Police Chief Simon Keeling, Fire Chief Alex Northern.

1. Approval of Agenda. Arnold asked to amend the agenda by adding an item to discuss an A/P warrant. Arnold **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Layton) to approve the agenda with the additions of an A/P warrant for the Fire District and a discussion of future Selectboard meetings. **Motion approved unanimously.**
2. Public Comment. Corlan Johnson spoke about the possibility of having an indoor farmer's market in Tracy Hall; she wants someone from the state to come and tell us yes or no on whether we can have the market indoors in Tracy Hall. Linda Cook asked if having the farmer's market in Tracy Hal allows for enough staff time to clean up after the market. Calloway said she'd be talking about a listserv dogs issue later on in the meeting.
3. Consent Agenda. Calloway asked to pull the Jon Felde correspondence, the Doug Wilberding correspondence, and the winter salt bid. Calloway **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Layton) moved to approve the consent agenda, minus the Jon Felde correspondence, Doug Wilberding correspondence, and the winter salt bids. **Motion approved unanimously.** Calloway asked if we considered the source of the salt. Brochu said the Cargill salt comes from OH, NY, and AL. Brochu **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Layton) to accept the winter salt bid from Cargill. **Motion approved unanimously.** Brochu **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Layton) to accept the winter salt bid from Cargill. **Motion approved unanimously.** Calloway said the Jon Felde letter brings up safety issues. Calloway proposed a safety committee to discuss safety issues in town. Brochu said this is not an opportune time to start an enterprise such as a new town committee. Brochu said she is more inclined to start something after January. Layton said it's useful to think of safety from multiple angles, as Calloway suggested. Francis said there is a town staff safety committee. Andy Scherer thanked Calloway for her comment. Calloway **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Gere) to accept correspondence from Jon Felde regarding traffic safety. **Motion approved unanimously.** Calloway expressed concern about the Energy Committee's possible endorsement of private companies. Calloway **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Layton) to accept correspondence from Doug Wilberding regarding the Energy Committee. **Motion approved unanimously.**
- 3.5 A/P Warrant for Water Bill from Fire District. Layton **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Gere) to approve check warrant #22-10 in the amount of \$444.01 payable to the Norwich Fire District. **Motion approved unanimously.**
4. Resolution for Dr. John Edwards Lawe. Arnold read aloud a proposed SB resolution honoring John E. Lawe [see the resolution attached to these minutes]. Layton **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Gere) to approve the resolution in recognition of Dr. John Edwards Lawe's contributions to the Town of Norwich. **Motion approved unanimously.**
5. Appointments to Solid Waste Committee. Bonnie Blake spoke in support of her application to the Solid Waste Committee. Brochu **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Gere) to appoint Bonnie Blake to the Solid Waste Committee for a term to be determined by the Solid Waste Committee. **Motion approved**

**unanimously.** Lily Terry spoke in support of her application to the Solid Waste Committee. Gere **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Layton) to appoint Lily Terry to the Solid Waste Committee for a term to be determined. **Motion approved unanimously.**

6. Interim Town Manager Report. Francis gave a verbal report concerning various topics, including: closure of Tracy Hall (TH) to the indoor farmer's market. This is because of local trends regarding Covid rates are concerning. Francis said that the Tracy Hall closure will continue until Covid conditions have changed. Francis said town staff have spoken to the farmer's market management and have offered them the use of the TH parking lot. For direct town events, we have much more control over how the events are conducted. The next possibly affected event will be a Lunar New Year celebration. This event will be evaluated when the time approaches. Francis said the DPW Equipment Operator position is open again after a failed search; the DPW Director position just received 2 more applicants. Francis is concerned about the town's ability to provide basic DPW services, because of the lack of staffing at DPW. There is a region-wide shortage of workers. Francis is exploring the possibility of contracting with private contractors for winter plowing. Calloway asked if last year we had the TH farmers market. Francis said no, we didn't. Brochu said the State of Vermont continues to say we should avoid gathering in large groups indoors because of the inherent risk. Arnold said he wants the SB and public to be aware of the possible differences in DPW coverage in the short term, given all of these challenges. Brochu said what Francis is doing is timely and prudent; Layton agreed. Francis said the TM office continues to be extremely busy.

7. Police Department: Operating Budget. [for details of the Police Department draft budget, see the SB meeting packet for this meeting].

8. Police Department: Capital Budget. [for details of the Police Department capital budget, see the SB meeting packet for this meeting] Francis explained the plan for tonight's meeting is for the SB to discuss Police Dept. (PD) and Fire Dept. (FD) budgets operating and capital in greater detail. These proposed budget are predicated on continuing the same levels of service from last year and the same basic equipment. Interim Police Chief Simon Keeling spoke about the proposed PD budget, using a slide show [which will be made part of the next SB meeting packet]. SB members discussed concerns about the number of vehicles in the PD fleet. Andy Scherer asked the PD to work with other departments in town to create safe spaces regarding traffic. SB discussed body cameras, police cruisers – the number needed, and replacement schedules for equipment.

9. Fire Department: Operating Budget. [for details of the Fire Department draft budget, see the SB meeting packet for this meeting].

10. Fire Department: Capital Budget. [for details of the Fire Department draft budget, see the SB meeting packet for this meeting]. Fire Chief Alex Northern gave an overview of the operating budget. Francis and Fielding Essensa talked about the proposed capital budget allocations for the FD. Northern summarized proposed capital replacement plans for vehicles and apparatus. SB members discussed options for FD spending, including planning for possible future fire conditions.

10.5 [added agenda item] Budget Meeting Schedule. SB members discussed when next to meet. SB members agreed to cancel the November 24<sup>th</sup> meeting. Brochu **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Gere) to authorize Roger Arnold or Mary Layton to sign an A/P warrant dated November 23, 2021. **Motion approved unanimously.**

11. Ratification of Response to Public Records Request Appeal. Layton **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Gere) to find that premature general public knowledge about pending litigation would clearly place the town at a substantial disadvantage. **Motion approved unanimously.** Calloway **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Layton) to enter executive session under 1 VSA §313(a)(1)(E) and to invite Rod Francis into the executive session. **Motion approved unanimously.** The SB entered executive session at 9:59 pm. Layton **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup>

Gere) to enter public session. **Motion approved unanimously.** The SB entered public session at 10:30 pm.

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

Meeting adjourned at 10:31 pm.

By Miranda Bergmeier

Approved by the Selectboard on December 8, 2021

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Roger Arnold, Selectboard Chair

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

PLEASE NOTE THAT CATV POSTS RECORDINGS OF ALL REGULAR MEETINGS OF THE NORWICH SELECTBOARD.

**A Resolution  
Honoring Dr. John Edwards Lawe  
for His Service to the Town of Norwich**

WHEREAS, John E. Lawe was an esteemed member of our community who passed away on October 14, 2021 at the age of 92, and

WHEREAS, for the past 43 years John was actively involved in Town Government in numerous ways, both officially and unofficially, that benefited the Town immeasurably, including

- Serving as the Norwich Health Officer from 1978 into 2021; and
- Serving as a member of the Selectboard between 1982 and 2000, and
- Serving also as Clerk of the Selectboard when he drafted many policies and ordinances that, today, still define many of the roles and responsibilities of Town officials and departments; and
- Serving as a member of the Norwich Zoning Board of Adjustment and as Chair of that board's successor, the Development Review Board, for many years into 2021; and

WHEREAS, John was also one of the first members of the Norwich FAST squad when it was formed in 2002, and

WHEREAS, John served additionally into 2021 as the Infection Control Coordinator for evaluating possible exposures to bloodborne pathogens as defined in the Norwich Bloodborne Pathogen Exposure Control Plan, and

WHEREAS, John also represented Norwich in many regional organizations, including the Upper Valley-Lake Sunapee Regional Planning Commission, the Connecticut River Joint Commission, and the Vermont League of Cities and Towns, and

WHEREAS, John's involvement in both Town and Civic organizations contributed greatly to the quality of life in Norwich and beyond; and

WHEREAS, John was involved in all of the afore-mentioned roles and organizations in a manner that earned him respect for his character, graciousness and demeanor, where John knew how to disagree without being disagreeable.

NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED, that the Norwich Selectboard, on behalf of the Town of Norwich, most gratefully acknowledges Dr. John E. Lawe's dedication to the Town and to the region, celebrates his life and accomplishments, and expresses its admiration for a life well lived.

NOW BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Selectboard extends to his family and to his many friends profound gratitude for all the tangible and intangible ways that John gave of his time and effort to the Town and to the community.

ADOPTED BY the Norwich Selectboard on November 10, 2021.

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Roger Arnold, Chair

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Mary Layton, Vice-Chair

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Claudette Brochu

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Marcia Calloway

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Robert Gere