

Town of Norwich, Vermont



CHARTERED 1761

Norwich Selectboard Rules of Procedure

Statutory Authority

The Selectboard of the Town of Norwich, State of Vermont, incorporates by reference the Vermont Statutes which govern the meetings of public bodies and the rights of public citizens pertaining to such meetings. Pertinent statutes include but may not be limited to the following which are found in Title 1, Chapter 5: Common Law; General Rights; Subchapters 2 (Public Information) and 3 (Access to Public Records), cited below. A printed copy of these statutes will be compiled and located in the physical meeting room for each selectboard meeting and will be appended to these rules and found on the Town of Norwich, Selectboard website at <http://norwich.vt.us/selectboard-policies/>

- Public Information
 - 1 V.S.A. § 310(1) through (4)
 - Definitions: “Business,” “Deliberations,” “Meeting,” “Public body”
 - 1 V.S.A. § 312(a)(1) through (2)
 - Right to attend meetings of public agencies
 - 1 V.S.A. § 312(h)
 - “...public shall be given a reasonable opportunity to express its opinion on matters considered by the public body during the meeting...”
 - 1 V.S.A. § 313
 - Executive Sessions
 - 1 V.S.A. § 314
 - Penalty and enforcement
- Public Records
 - 1 V.S.A. § 317a
 - Management of public records

Preface as to Language

Throughout this document the words “selectboard,” “public body,” or “body” are used to refer to the Norwich Selectboard. The word “selectboard” is capitalized only when used with the word “Norwich.”

Organization

1. The body shall annually elect a chair and a vice-chair. The chair of the body or, in the chair's absence, the vice-chair shall preside over all meetings. If both the chair and the vice-chair are absent, a member selected by the body shall act as chair for that meeting.
2. The chair shall preserve order in the meeting and shall regulate its proceedings by applying these rules and making determinations about all questions of order or procedure. At all times members will be respectful to each other and to the public.
3. A majority of the members of the body shall constitute a quorum. If a quorum of the members of the body is not present at a meeting, no meeting shall take place.
4. No single member of the body shall have authority to represent or act on behalf of the body unless, by majority vote, the body has delegated such authority for a specific matter at a duly noticed meeting and such delegation is recorded in the meeting minutes.
5. Motions made by members of the body require a second. The chair of the body may make motions and may vote on all questions before the body. A motion will only pass if it receives the votes of a majority of the total membership of the body.
6. All comments must be clear and audible to all present physically or virtually. A member may speak or make a motion only after being recognized by the chair. Motions to close or limit debate will be entertained.
7. Any member of the body may request a roll call vote. Pursuant to 1 V.S.A. 312(a)(2), when one or more members attend a meeting electronically, a roll call vote is required, and any time a vote is not unanimous.
8. Meetings may be recessed to a time and place certain.
9. These rules may be amended by majority vote of the body and must be readopted annually.

Agendas

1. Each regular and special meetings of the body shall have an agenda, with meeting time allotted for each item of business to be considered by the body. Those who wish to be added to the meeting agenda shall contact the selectboard through its email address, selectboard@norwich.vt.us, which is monitored by the Town Manager's office, to request inclusion on the agenda. The chair shall determine the final content of the agenda with input from the Town Manager's office and majority support of the board.
2. At least 48 hours prior to a regular meeting and at least 24 hours prior to a special meeting, a meeting agenda shall be posted in or near the municipal office and on the following websites: Town of Norwich Selectboard Agenda tab <http://norwich.vt.us/selectboard-agendas/> and the Norwich listserv norwich@lists.vitalcommunities.org. The agenda must also be made available to any person who requests such agenda prior to the meeting.
3. All business shall be conducted in the same order as it appears on the noticed agenda, except that any addition to or deletion from the noticed agenda must be made as the first act of business at the meeting. No additions or deletions from the agenda shall be considered once the first act of business at the meeting has commenced. Any other adjustment to the noticed agenda, for example, changing the order of business, postponing or tabling actions or agenda items, may be made by majority vote of the body.

Meetings

1. Regular meetings shall take place on the second and fourth Wednesdays of the month at 6:30 p.m. at Tracy Hall Meeting Room, Norwich, Vermont.
2. Special meetings shall be publicly announced at least 24 hours in advance by giving notice to all members of the body unless previously waived; to the Norwich listserv; and to any person who has requested notice of such meetings. In addition, notices shall be posted in the municipal clerk's office.
3. Emergency meetings may be held without public announcement, without posting of notices, and without 24-hour notice to members, provided some public notice thereof is given as soon as possible before any such meeting. Emergency meetings may be held only when necessary to respond to an unforeseen occurrence or condition requiring immediate attention by the public body.
4. A member of the body may attend a regular, special, or emergency meeting by electronic or other means without being physically present at a designated meeting location, so long as the member identifies him or herself when the meeting is convened and is able to hear and be heard throughout the meeting. Whenever one or more members attend electronically, voting that is not unanimous must be done by roll call. If a quorum or more of the body attend a meeting (regular, special, or emergency) without being physically present at a designated meeting location, the agenda for the meeting shall designate at least one physical location where a member of the public can attend and participate in the meeting, except where act of law otherwise allows.

Public Participation

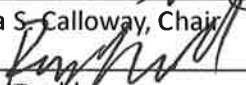
1. All meetings of the body are meetings in the public, not of the public. Members of the public shall be afforded reasonable opportunity to express opinions or give information about matters considered by the body, so long as order is maintained according to these rules.
2. After each agenda item is introduced by the chair, the selectboard will have opportunity discuss first, but before any action is taken by the public body at each meeting, there may be reasonable time afforded for open public comment. The chair may suggest commenters conclude their remarks within three (3) minutes.
3. Comment by the public or members of the body must be addressed to the chair or to the body as a whole, but not to any individual member of the body or public.
4. Members of the public must be acknowledged by the chair before speaking.
5. If a member of the public has already spoken on a topic, he or she may not be recognized again until others have first been given the opportunity to comment. If a member of the public wishes to make the same comment as someone else, they should concur with a previous speaker and not reiterate the point.
6. Order and decorum shall be observed by all persons present at the meeting. Neither members of the body, nor the members of the public, shall delay or interrupt the proceedings or the peace of the meeting or interrupt or disturb any person while speaking. Members of the body and members of the public are prohibited from making personal, impertinent, threatening, or profane remarks.
7. Members of the body and members of the public shall obey the orders of the chair or other presiding member. The chair should adhere to the following process to restore order and decorum of a meeting, but may bypass any or all steps when he or she determines in his or her sole discretion that deviation from the process is warranted:

- a. Call the meeting to order and remind the members of the applicable rules of procedure.
- b. Declare a recess or table the issue.
- c. Adjourn the meeting until a time and date certain.

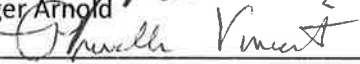
ADOPTED this _____ day of March, 2023, by:



Marcia S. Calloway, Chair



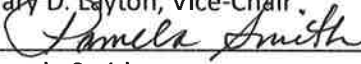
Roger Arnold



Priscilla Vincent



Mary D. Layton, Vice-Chair



Pamela Smith