

Town of Norwich Special Select Board Meeting
December 6, 2022 Minutes

1. Welcome and Chairs Remarks. Start Time 6:30 pm
2. Agenda Review: The agenda was amended to table #6 Interim Town Manager Update to the 12/7 meeting, and to table item number 10 Inspection of Trail at MCS. Arnold moved, second by Layton to approve the agenda as amended. Vote: Unanimous Yes
3. Consent Agenda: Arnold moved, second by Gere to approve the consent agenda. Vote: Unanimous Yes. Items pulled: The 11/22 minutes included an incorrect vote count on the reappraisal item and the 11/29 draft minutes did not include who voted to enter public session. The errors will be corrected and minutes resubmitted at a subsequent meeting.
4. Town-wide Reappraisal Panel Meeting: A wide ranging discussion centered on a critical deadline, December 9, 2033, to submit form RA 308 to the state in order that school, transportation, and other funds are not withheld. An RFP sent by the Listers resulted in one bid by KRT Appraisal that was reviewed by the Reappraisal Review Panel on 12/1/22. The Reappraisal Panel agreed by consensus that “KRT Appraisal is willing to put in the effort to meet the expectations of the Town of Norwich.” In a discussion of the proposed contract there were several comments. Rob Gere supported hiring KRT and is ready to move forward. Roger Arnold stated that “the sole bid was not responsive to all criteria” and wanted to see a written response to terms proposed by the committee. Cheryl Lindberg said bullet points were sent to KRT Appraisal and that the firm “complied” with all bullets. Roger Arnold noted that the Selectboard can approve the contract but a new Town Manager must sign the document. Pam Smith said the District Advisor says to submit R 308 with a contract. Public comment: Stuart Richards noted that KRT Appraisal responded to an RFP in August, also as the sole bid, at \$25,000 lower price. Neil Odell stressed the importance of meeting the timeline to submit RA 308 so that funds are not withheld, Linda Cook wanted to know if transportation funds also would be withheld.

5. Dan and Whits Charging Station Contract Renewal. This contract also cannot be signed until an Interim Town Manager is hired. The Selectboard moved to approve the contract subject to a later signing date. Roger Arnold suggested contacting Voltrek to inform them that we will not be able to have the contract signed before the warranty renewal date of 12/7/22. Arnold moved, second by Gere, to approve the agreement with Voltrek as presented in the packet, for ratification by a future Town Manager. Vote: Unanimous Yes.
6. Interim Town Manager Update tabled to 12/7/22.
7. Town Manager Search RFP: A memo by Mary Gorman submitted to the Selectboard to be included in the 12/7 packet listed five search firms and guidelines suggestions for the search process and a method to estimate costs. The line item for this effort will fall under Professional Services. The suggested cost is 30% of the value of the Town Manager's salary. The five firms listed included New England and national focus. An Interim Town Manager could develop the RFP based on a "one page draft" of attributes and qualifications desired by the Selectboard. Marcia Calloway will create a draft of this document and circulate it for comments and edits. Public comment: Charlotte Metcalfe: poll the employees. Linda Cook: poll Community members. Roger Arnold responded to these comments and suggested to the Chair to refer to the most recent community survey.
8. ARPA Funds: Discussion topics on the agenda were in regard to the need to hire a fund/administrator, how to decide what projects to fund, and awareness of the time line for critical deadlines. A federal online "portal" exists that must be accessed to communicate about use of the funds. Aaron Lamperti will check with Rod Francis about the status of portal access. Public Comments: Matt Swett noted that a reserve fund has been created with over a million dollars in it. Decisions about spending should occur before December 31, 2024 and projects must be completed and documented by 2026. Linda Cook noted that Pathways Engineering is familiar with the portal. She also wanted the public to be able to provide input.

9. Select Board Minutes: There were thirty applicants for the position of minutes taker. A person will be selected and approved at the December 14th meeting.
10. Inspection of Trail at MCS tabled, no date certain
11. Human Resources Support discussion: Public Comment by Stuart Richards was, "What happened to HR Happens." Marcia Calloway reply is that the Selectboard is "looking afresh." A wide-ranging discussion ensued about how to support human resources from various perspectives such as: through better understanding of roles via a revised and updated Personnel Policy and Calendar, mediation of affected parties, hiring a consultant for focused work to include "on-boarding" and team building," actions by a Town Manager, adding an Assistant Manager position with a focus on HR, and executive session discussions by the Selectboard. The issues were variously characterized as structural, transitional, emotional, relational, legal, and behavioral. The "jurisdiction" of the Selectboard was discussed, as the board is responsible for supervising one employee, the Town Manager. The nature of improvement sought includes interactions at all levels and across all governmental roles: Selectboard, other elected officials, the Town Manager, Department Heads, town employees, town committee and commission members, and members of the public.
12. Future Agenda Items: For December 14th, a) budget presentations: Town Clerk, Listers b)Town Manager Search ongoing work c) Summary of Finalized and Unfinished Master Financial Policies d) On-going HR and inter-office collaborative work discussions e) Action item: Minute takers f) Special Appropriations g) For the December 21st: Committees, Boards and Commissions
13. Arnold moved, second by Lamperti to adjourn. Vote: Unanimous Yes. Time: 8:52 pm

Approved by the Selectboard on December 14, 2022

Marcia Calloway, Selectboard Chair

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