

Minutes of the Selectboard Meeting of  
Wednesday, May 24, 2023, at 6:30 pm

This hybrid meeting was held in the Multipurpose Room in Tracy Hall.

Members present: Marcia Calloway, Chair; Mary Layton, Vice Chair; Roger Arnold (via Zoom); Pamela Smith; Priscilla Vincent

Also participating: Brennan Duffy, Interim Town Manager; Cheryl Lindberg, Treasurer; Kris Clement; Andrew Scherer; Lily Trajman; Peter Orner; Robert Gere; Charlotte Metcalf; Jay Benson; Joel Stettenheim; Lila Stettenheim; Mary Gorman; Troy McBride; L. Brooke Dingedine; Kimberly Hayden; Aaron Lamperti; John Cushman; Jennifer Goulet; Stuart Richards; Charlotte Metcalf

**1. Welcome.** Meeting was called to order at 6:36 pm by Calloway.

**2. Agenda Review.** At request of the Chair, the Board by consensus agreed to **table** items 12 and 14 until the next meeting. Layton moved, seconded by Vincent, to approve the agenda with those two changes made. **Approved unanimously.**

**3. Minutes – May 10, 2023, meeting.** After discussion of potential corrections, Calloway suggested and it was agreed by consensus to **table** full consideration of the May 10 minutes until the June 7 meeting, with any corrections requested expected to be submitted by individual Board members in writing prior to that date.

**4. Correspondence.** Calloway announced that Jaci Allen and Brian Loeb have tendered their resignations from the Planning Commission and that the interim Town Manager will advertise the now-vacant positions. She thanked them for their service and contributions. Calloway also said that David Hubbard has resigned from the Conservation Commission. He, too, was thanked for his service.

Smith suggested eliminating the Board's email address and substituting a full list of the members' addresses because she has repeatedly not received emails she should have. Duffy said he would look into the issue.

Calloway solicited a motion to address Smith's concerns and Smith moved to eliminate the Board's email address and substitute a list of all the members' email addresses. Motion failed for lack of a second.

Layton moved, seconded by Vincent, to approve receipt of the correspondence.  
**Approved unanimously.**

**6. AP Warrant(s).** Vincent moved, seconded by Smith, to approve the AP warrant as detailed in the meeting's packet. Calloway then requested and there was general agreement to split the item into three motions to address distinct warrants. She further asked Vincent and Smith to accept a friendly amendment such that their motion would address only AP Warrant #1006, which they did. **Passed unanimously.**

Layton moved, seconded by Smith, to approve AP Warrant #1004. **Approved unanimously.**

Vincent moved, seconded by Layton, to approve AP Warrant #1003. **Approved unanimously.**

Clement came forward to request clarification regarding how motions are initiated, in particular in the context of the motion made at a previous meeting to increase the number of members on the Planning Commission from seven to nine, whose authorship has not been made evident. Calloway agreed that that was inappropriate.

Via Zoom, Andrew Scherer, a member of the Solid Waste Committee, expressed concern about the process by which the Transfer Station's fees had been increased and that change communicated to the public. The Board agreed to take such concerns into consideration in the future.

**6. School Board Liaison report.** Lily Trajman, the School Board's liaison to the Norwich Selectboard, stepped in via Zoom to promote the upcoming May Day celebration at the Marion Cross School. She said she anticipates appearing as liaison at the first of the Board's meetings each month.

**7. Cannabis retail request follow up.** The Board discussed its receipt of further communication from a non-Norwich member of the public concerning establishing a cannabis retail outlet in Norwich. Calloway requested that it be noted in these minutes that the Board will not hold a special Town vote on this proposal, though its advocates are welcome to petition for such a vote on the regular ballot at Town Meeting.

**8. Update on bike/pedestrian/Beaver Meadow Road issues.** Duffy reviewed the history of various studies that have been done on these issues, noting also that the Town is in discussions with Two Rivers regarding relevant grant opportunities. He questioned whether another scoping/planning study is in order at this point and wondered whether instead, it might be time for the Town to consider committing the necessary funds for a project's completion.

Orner came forward to advocate for making such a commitment, reminding the Board of the passage of Article 10 on the 2022 Town Meeting ballot approving a \$50,000 allocation in support of such efforts.

**9. Update on Kids' Bridge project.** Duffy reported that they have received a number of letters of interest in the volunteer Project Manager position and they will be following up with the candidates.

**10. Interim Town Manager update.** Duffy reported that no new interest has been shown in the open Planning & Zoning Administrator and that the Finance Director opening has evinced little interest as well. They are now looking to make another temporary hire to fill the latter position, such support becoming ever more critical as the Town approaches year-end.

He also reported they have successfully hired a candidate for the new Administrative Assistant position, with an expected start date of mid-June.

On the DPW, Duffy reported that line striping is due to begin soon, to be carried out in two phases. Also, they have received three bids for repaving work to be completed this summer. And the New Boston Road culvert project is largely completed, though it will require some final repaving this summer.

The Department of Transportation has accepted the Town's proposal for a municipal assistance grant.

**11. Committee appointments continued.** In his absence, Vincent spoke in support of Cody Williams's reappointment to the Conservation Commission. Layton moved, seconded by Vincent, to reappoint Cody Williams to the Conservation Commission for a term ending March 31, 2027. **Passed unanimously.**

**12. Forest Fire Warden appointment.** Tabled, per earlier SB discussion.

**13. Review of Selectboard Decision to approve Preferred Site Letter for proposed 500 KW solar installation on Lewis Property, off Upper Loveland Road, Norwich.**

Among the many members of the public who addressed the Board concerning this issue were: Troy McBride, CTO of Norwich Solar Technologies (NST), the company whose project is at stake; Joel Stettenheim, President, Norwich Solar Technologies; Brooke Dingedine of VDM Law—an attorney representing citizens opposed to the proposed project; Kim Hayden of Paul Frank + Collins—an attorney representing NST; Jay Benson; Lila Stettenheim; Mary Gorman; Rob Gere; Aaron Lamperti; Jennifer Goulet; Jack Cushman; Jennifer Goulet; Stu Richards; and Charlotte Metcalf.

Strongly felt opinions were expressed concerning what particular further actions, if any, the Board should take at this juncture. The Minutes Taker judges this discourse too voluminous and nuanced to be adequately represented in these minutes in a manner that would be acceptable to both sides and refers the reader instead to the complete video recording easily retrievable online (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fyj-fZbWaDg>, beginning at the one-hour, fifty-three-minute mark).

After much discussion, the issue was **tabled** for further consideration at a later date.

**14. RFQ Draft for Town Manager search.** Tabled, per earlier SB discussion.

**15. ARPA transfer of funds and documentation.** Lindberg reported there are sufficient extra Town funds to allow an investment of two million dollars in a six-month certificate of deposit. Lindberg's rate request summary is included in the meeting packet. Duffy noted that once the ARPA monies are transferred as discussed at the last meeting, the monies will no longer be encumbered by Federal strictures on the terms of any investments.

Smith added that it is important any transfers out of the ARPA fund be completed by June 30 so the upcoming end-of-year audit will take their subsequent location(s) into account. Lindberg noted there also is some urgency involved because interest rates are certain to continue to decline. Smith agreed and said she further concurs with Lindberg's judgment that investing surplus money in six-month CDs will not expose the Town to any substantial additional risk.

Arnold moved, seconded by Smith, to use the ARPA funds to pay for Town of Norwich payroll expenses in fiscal year 2023. **Passed unanimously.**

Vincent moved, seconded by Arnold, to authorize the Town Treasurer to move \$2M into a six-month-term certificate of deposit at Mascoma Savings Bank. **Passed unanimously.**

**16. Personnel Matters and Hires.** Vincent moved, seconded by Layton, to enter Executive Session pursuant to 1 V.S.A. § 313(a)(3) to consider the appointment or employment of an employee. **Passed unanimously** at 10:57pm.

The remainder of these minutes is derived from notes shared by the Board Chair.

Layton moved, seconded by Smith, to move into public session at 11:17pm. **Passed unanimously.**

No further action was taken on this item.

**17. Collective Bargaining Update.** Layton moved, seconded by Vincent, to find that premature general public knowledge would clearly place the public body or a person involved at a substantial disadvantage pursuant to 1 V.S.A. § 313(a)(1). **Passed unanimously.**

Layton moved, seconded by Smith, to enter Executive Session pursuant to 1 V.S.A. § 313(a)(1)(B) to receive an update on collective bargaining with the employee labor union and invite the Interim Town Manager. **Passed unanimously** at 11:19 pm.

Layton moved, seconded by Smith, to enter public session. **Passed unanimously** at 11:44 pm.

The Board took no further action on Item 17.

**18. Review of Committees, Commissions, Boards and coordination of town work.**  
Tabled, per SB discussion.

**19. ARPA public participation process for use of surplus funds.** Calloway reviewed her memorandum for the Board on this topic and asked the members to give the process some thought and come back to a future agenda item ready to discuss. Smith registered concerns that (a) the actual surplus of ARPA monies would not be known until after the audit and her belief that the surplus would be less than the amount of the total ARPA award and (b) the Board could not provide options for public discussion without detailed information concerning costs, which in turn would take time to determine as they would need expert reviews/opinions. The Board agreed to limit the June 7, 2023 special agenda and focus heavily on what needs to be done in order to present proposals to the public. No further action was taken on this item.

**20. Selectboard meeting dates in June.** Calloway noted that the next regular Board meeting would be in three weeks, June 14, 2023. The Board agreed on the need to keep up the pace given the amount of work to be done.

Layton moved, seconded by Smith, to change the dates of the June Selectboard meetings to special meetings on June 7 and June 21. **Passed unanimously.**

Smith moved to meet on May 31 in a Special Meeting via Zoom, to discuss a contract extension with Interim Town Manager. Seconded by Layton. **Passed unanimously.**

**Adjournment.** Layton moved to adjourn, seconded by Smith. **Passed unanimously** at 12:04 am.

Respectfully submitted,

Ralph C. Hybels,

Minutes Taker

Approved by the Selectboard on June 7, 2023

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Marcia Calloway, Selectboard Chair

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