

**Minutes of the Selectboard Meeting of
Wednesday, November 15, 2023, at 6:30 p.m.**

This special meeting was held by Zoom only.

Members present: Marcia Calloway, Chair; Mary Layton, Vice Chair; Pamela Smith; Priscilla Vincent. Roger Arnold joined at 6:36 p.m.

Also participating: Brennan Duffy, Town Manager; Joyce Hasbrouck, Interim Finance Director; Matt Swett; Jack Cushman; Linda Cook; Lily Trajman.

Welcome. Meeting was called to order by Calloway at 6:31 p.m. She reminded everyone that the meeting was via Zoom® only, that the meeting was being recorded, and the agenda for this special meeting included only budget presentation and discussion.

1. Agenda. Layton moved, seconded by Vincent, to approve the agenda. Calloway, Layton, Smith, Vincent, Yes; Arnold, Absent. **Motion Passed.**

Budget Presentation. Interim Finance Director Hasbrouck presented a comprehensive explanation of summary data related to the FY25 Budget, with some capital asset spending details from the Capital Plan. The presentation was included in the Selectboard meeting packet and may be found here: <http://norwich.vt.us/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/00-Selectboard-Packet-11-15-2023-indexed-2.pdf>

Notable points made during the presentation included:

- The changing COLA amount which was 3.84 % at the time she created the slides, but which had decreased to 3.79 % as of this date; Hasbrouck estimates a 3.8 % COLA.
- A suggestion to consider in future years a method to make the transfer station self sustaining.
- A suggestion to create two new DW funds for culvert and roadway/pedestrian safety infrastructure.
- Grant fund estimates for 5 years due to the yearly variability in their availability.
- The figures for life expectancy of certain assets are not correct in NEMRC system so the capital spending plan incorporates actual life expectancy information received from departments.
- The suggestion is to use part of the surplus (\$1,810,3530) which for this year is (\$1,072,065) to inject a sum of surplus money to 'buy down' the amount of allocations needed. Hasbrouck added three additional slides which considered injections of \$300,000; \$500,000; and \$700,000 from surplus.

Board members discussed options which included waiting to make any decisions until there was data for Tracy Hall or other potential projects; proposing to voters the use of Reserve Funds to earmark portions of surplus for future projects; injecting some of the surplus to reduce allocations to sustain funding the the final budget. Matt Swett mentioned the value of bonds. Jack Cushman reminded the board that Article 36 required the board to consider climate change in their decision making. No decisions were made.

On November 21 the board will hear from the departments of Public Works, Fire and Police. On November 29, remaining department heads will be heard as needed. On December 6, a draft budget is expected to be presented. On December 13, the Finance Office and Town Manager expect to present a final budget to the board.

Adjournment. Smith moved to adjourn, seconded by Layton. **Passed Unanimously.**

Meeting Adjourned: 8:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Marcia S. Calloway, Selectboard Chair

Approved by the Selectboard on _____, Marcia S. Calloway, Selectboard Chair