

**Minutes of the Selectboard Meeting of
Wednesday, August 23, 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; Pamela Smith; Priscilla Vincent

Also participating: Brennan Duffy, Interim Town Manager; John (Jack) Cushman; Linda Gray; Yanmei Lin; Cheryl Lindberg, Treasurer

Note that sections are presented here in the order they were addressed at the meeting, which may occasionally differ from their sequential item numbering.

Welcome. Meeting was called to order by Calloway at 6:33 PM. She reminded anyone wishing to join via Zoom® to present with both first and last names to help prevent unwelcome intrusions, commonly known as “Zoom-bombing.”

1. Agenda. Layton moved, seconded by Vincent, to approve the agenda as amended. **Passed Unanimously.**

2. Minutes. Calloway reported that Cheryl Lindberg, Town Treasurer and Administrative Clerk of the Listers, requested a correction to the minutes of August 9, 2023. Layton moved, seconded by Smith, to approve the minutes of August 9 with that correction, which will be implemented by Smith. **Passed Unanimously.**

3. Correspondence. Calloway reported the receipt of “a lot” of correspondence on many topics, as reflected in the packet for the current meeting. She also said David Hubbard has resigned as a long-time member of the Watershed Land Management Council. The Board thanked him for his service.

Layton moved, seconded by Vincent to accept the correspondence as submitted. **Passed Unanimously.**

4. AP Warrant. Smith raised the issue again of requiring relevant account numbers be included on financial documents for Board consideration. She said there already has been a motion passed to that effect but the policy seems not to have been implemented. Calloway asked her to find that motion and bring it back to the Board's attention. Smith agreed she would, but Calloway asked for Board consensus support on the matter in the meantime, to which there was no objection.

Regarding the contract with Better Bin, discussed at a previous meeting, Jack Cushman volunteered by Zoom that he's personally found their app has helpful information and that the better consumer sorting it encourages may lower costs and increase revenues to the Town. Vincent said the Solid Waste Committee should better publicize the app's rollout. From the audience, Linda Gray said some preparatory work is still needed before its implementation ought be publicized.

Layton moved, seconded by Vincent, to approve the AP Warrant number 1021 in the amount of \$247,688.43. **Passed Unanimously.**

Interim Town Manager Report. Duffy reported that efforts continue to determine a shorter-term access plan for Hemlock Rd., while being still unable to contact a particular abutting landowner has been a significant hindrance. It appears access by building a bridge across the river to an existing emergency exit on the interstate also is not a tenable prospect. He said they'd just had an "exploratory call" with FEMA, in part to establish a particular contact person there. Duffy hopes a meeting scheduled later in the week will lead Hemlock Rd. to be classified again as an emergency situation. DPW plans to erect more substantial barriers to prevent additional unauthorized activities on the road, which have been further complicating things.

Yanmei Lin, a resident on New Boston Rd. who also owns property on Hemlock, asked if it's permissible to park and walk in from a pulloff near the road closure signs and Duffy said it was. In response to her question about fuel-truck access this winter, Duffy said as of now it's not allowed but he will investigate further what can be done in that regard. He also said the Town has done all thus far required by FEMA and will continue to update residents on close to a weekly basis.

Cheryl Lindberg, in her capacity as a lister, asked via Zoom what arrangements can be made for appraisers to examine properties on Hemlock Rd. Duffy said they should expect "a brisk three to five minute walk" to get in and advised they should contact the owners in advance to arrange to see interiors.

Duffy also reported an offer to a Finance Director candidate has been accepted with a start date of August 28. He will wait to provide further information until that date.

Duffy said the new Interim Police Chief continues to settle in, now in his fourth week. He also said three new electronic speed signs are now on order and will be used at least initially to replace the three that are currently inoperable. He does not know whether those can be repaired. Duffy said he's contacted Green Mountain Power to inquire what may be necessary to install the new signs, including any permitting, and is hoping to find a local electrician to do the work.

Regarding the DPW, Duffy said the structural steel repairs at their facility have been completed for less than expected. He asked that the Board schedule a site visit in September, which was agreed.

On the Recreation Department, Duffy said things are quieter around Tracy Hall now that summer camp season has ended. He also said the Assistant Recreation Director position will be advertised.

Duffy said the outstanding RFPs for a compensation study and Tracy Hall improvements have garnered some responses and he expects more as their deadlines very soon approach. The Town Manager position's RFP has thus far yielded only a couple responses, but its deadline is not so imminent as are the others.

In the Interim Finance Director's stead, Duffy summarized Joyce Hasbrouck's report, which is presented in the packet for this meeting. He said he found her piecharts especially illuminating. Smith asked why the report did not specify grants receivable from VTRANS to offset outlays for new culverts. Duffy said he would ask Hasbrouck to clarify that via email.

Layton moved, seconded by Arnold, to appoint Joyce Hasbrouck and all future Finance Directors as the Town of Norwich Audit Coordinator, and to direct that all criteria set out in the Interim Finance Director's memo of August 9, 2023, be observed for collection and collation of audit materials produced on behalf of the Town and Town subsidiaries. Calloway, Layton, Arnold, Vincent, Yes; Smith, Abstain. **Motion Passed.**

5. Update on Katucki and Rosenbloom litigation. 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 Vincent, to enter Executive Session under 1 V.S.A. § 313(a)(1)(E) to receive information regarding pending civil litigation to which the public body is a party, and to invite legal counsel and the Interim Town Manager. **Passed Unanimously.**

Entered Executive Session: 7:04 PM

Layton moved, seconded by Arnold, to enter public session. **Passed Unanimously.**

Entered Public Session: 8:06 PM.

6. Applicants for an open position on the Recreation Council. Steven Hepburn came to the table to request appointment, explaining that while it was not long ago that he and his wife moved to Norwich from New Hampshire with their one young son, his interest was immediately drawn to the recreation and sports programs available here, in whose governance and advocacy he presently sought to serve. Vincent moved, seconded by Smith, to appoint Steven Hepburn for the open position on the Recreation Council for a three-year term. **Passed Unanimously.**

7. Baseball Field Contract Amendment. Layton moved, seconded by Vincent, to amend the Baseball Field contract as recommended by the Interim Town Manager to pay for only the work done to date. **Passed Unanimously.**

8. Cassella Contract Renewal. Arnold asked about concerns raised by citizens observing a seemingly insufficient number of food-waste totes at the Transfer Station. Duffy said that while he doesn't know details, he understands the DPW is working toward a solution. Via Zoom, Cushman said research done by the Solid Waste Committee suggests opening the food composting contract to competitive bids might yield considerable savings.

Calloway said the issues raised may best be addressed in upcoming budget discussions.

Layton moved, seconded by Vincent, to authorize the Interim Town Manager to sign the Casella Renewal Contract for a term ending March 31, 2024, pursuant to the new rate sheet provided and included in the August 23, 2023 Selectboard packet. **Passed Unanimously.**

9. Appoint Voting Delegate, VLCT annual mtg, 9/26/23, S. Burlington. Layton, seconded by Vincent, to nominate Miranda Bergmeier as the Town of Norwich voting delegate for the VLCT Annual Meeting on September 26, 2023 in South Burlington, Vermont. **Passed Unanimously.**

10. Interim Town Manager Review. Layton moved, seconded by Vincent, to enter Executive Session under 1 V.S.A. § 313(a)(3) to discuss the evaluation of a public officer or employee, and to invite the Interim Town Manager as appropriate. **Passed Unanimously.**

Entered Executive Session: 9:15 PM

Arnold moved, seconded by Layton, to enter public session. **Passed Unanimously.**

Entered Public Session: 10:31 PM.

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

Meeting Adjourned: 10:35 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Ralph C. Hybels
Minutes Taker

Approved by the Selectboard on

Marcia Calloway, Selectboard Chair

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