

**Minutes of the Norwich Selectboard Meeting of
Wednesday, December 6, 2023**

This special meeting was held in Zoom format with all Selectboard members, Town Manager, and public viewing remotely.

All members of the public body present¹: Marcia Calloway, Chair; Mary Layton, Vice Chair; Roger Arnold; Pamela Smith; and Priscilla Vincent.

All other active participants in the meeting²: Brennan T.M. Duffy, Town Manager; Joyce Hasbrouck, Interim Finance Director; Barrie Rosalinda, Finance Director; Lister Cheryl Lindberg; Stuart Richards.

Welcome. Meeting was called to order by Calloway at 6:31 p.m., Arnold joining at approximately 6:33 p.m. Calloway reminded everyone that full names are required for admission to the Zoom platform to eliminate “Zoom bomb” interruptions and delays in the meetings; and, people trying to get admitted to meetings may contact Selectboard members to be identified for admission.

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

The following minutes reflect

“all motions, proposals, and resolutions made, offered, and considered, and what disposition is made of same.”³

“the results of any votes, with a record of the individual vote of each member if a roll

Budget Presentation. Interim Finance Director Hasbrouck began the FY25 Budget presentation, referring to slides in the packet, found here: <http://norwich.vt.us/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/00-12-6-2023-Selectboard-Agenda-Special-Mtg-indexed.pdf> Hasbrouck slides provided answers to previously asked Questions, see pages 5-20 of the packet. She then explained the differences between lease versus buy options, see page 21-24 of the packet. Hasbrouck reviewed Capital Fund Surplus Infusion Article Requests (page 26 of the packet) and summarized Surplus Spending Requests in the context of the Unrestricted General Fund balance (page 27 of the packet). The funds requiring changes to purpose statements are on page 28 of the packet, Funds to Transact by Article Requests are on page 29-30, and she referenced the Revenue Report on pages 31-33. Hasbrouck explained that the purpose of the budget discussion for this meeting was to answer the remaining questions for the final budget which will be presented on December 13, 2023 for Selectboard ratification; and to look at the Tax Rate estimate. With introduction and discussion for each of the remaining questions, the Selectboard took a straw poll on each of the following questions:

- **Should the Town Adm Prof'l Services line item be reduced?** If yes, by how much?
 - For: Smith; Vincent; Layton
 - Against: Arnold; Calloway
 - **Decision:** Reduce the Town Adm Professional Services line to \$10,000.

- **What is the amount to be budgeted in FY25 for Tax Expenditures?**
 - For: Smith and Vincent initially \$21,000; Layton \$21,298
 - Against: Arnold; Calloway
 - **Decision:** Agreed to \$21,298 after discussion

- **Listers Office – what will be the budgeted amounts be for stipend or wages, professional assessor services?**
 - For: \$56,500 Layton, Arnold; Calloway; no change as to form of stipend payment
 - Against: \$67,500 Smith; \$61,510 Vincent

¹ 1 V.S.A. § 312(b)(1)(A)

² 1 V.S.A. § 312(b)(1)(B)

³ 1 V.S.A. § 312(b)(1)(C)

- **Decision:** \$56,500; no change as to form of stipend payment. Calloway confirmed that she has forwarded Selectboard questions to counsel, regarding the requested shift to pay elected Listers a wage instead of a stipend. Lindberg asked what was expected to be learned from counsel. Until the Selectboard has a response, no decision will be made.
- **Police cruisers** – two questions
 - Question #1 – **What will we allocate to Fund 11 Police Cruisers?**
 - For: \$35,000 Vincent; Layton; Calloway
 - Against: \$0 Arnold; Smith
 - **Decision:** Allocate \$35,000 to Fund 11 Police Cruisers
 - Question #2 – **Will we enter into a lease for the purchase of 2 vehicles?**
 - For: 1 lease Arnold; 2 leases Vincent; Layton; Calloway
 - Against: None
 - **Decision:** Lease 2 vehicles
- **Shall the allocation to the new Culvert fund stay at \$150,000 or increase by \$100,000 for a total of \$250,000?**
 - For:
 - Against: Vincent, Layton, Smith, Arnold, Calloway
 - **Decision:** Stay at \$150,000 with the Article to include creation of the fund and authorization of funding.
- **Shall we allocate more money to Fund 50? If yes, by how much?**
 - For: 12 percent Arnold, Vincent, Layton, Smith, Calloway
 - Against: None
 - **Decision:** Yes, 12 percent.
- 1. **What amount of the surplus will be used to “Buy-down” the tax rate?**
 - For: \$700,000 Arnold, Vincent, Layton, Calloway
 - Abstain: Smith
 - Decision: Use \$700,000 of the surplus to buy down the tax rate and be prepared to explain to voters that this is money toward reparation of prior years’ of underfunding Funds for save for capital purchases.

Stuart Richards asked about the Tax Rate. Hasbrouck showed the Tax Rate effect of infusing \$700,000 of the surplus; see page 71 of the packet. Hasbrouck and Duffy explained the next steps to be taken on December 13, 2023 toward ratification of the budget; see page 73 of the packet.

2. Katucki v. Town of Norwich, Executive Session under 1 V.S.A. § 313(a)(1)(E).

Layton moved to find that premature general public knowledge of privileged attorney client communications would clearly place the public body or a person involved at a substantial disadvantage pursuant to 1 V.S.A. § 313(a)(1), including by revealing privileged information and waiving attorney client privilege; Vincent seconded; Calloway, Layton, Vincent, Arnold, Smith: Yes. **Motion Passed.**

Layton moved to enter Executive Session under 1 V.S.A. § 313(a)(1)(E) to discuss pending civil litigation to which the public body is a party, and to invite Town Counsel and the Town Manager; Vincent seconded; Calloway, Layton, Vincent, Arnold, Smith: Yes. **Motion Passed.**

Selectboard entered Executive Session at 8:27 p.m.

Arnold moved to enter public session; Layton seconded; Calloway, Layton, Vincent, Arnold, Smith: Yes. **Motion Passed.**

Selectboard entered Public Session at 8:48 p.m.

Layton moved to approve the form of the Settlement Agreement and the form of the Stipulation regarding dismissal of the Katucki litigation as recommended by legal counsel for the Town; Smith seconded; Calloway, Layton, Vincent, Arnold, Smith: Yes. **Motion Passed.**

Layton moved to authorize the Chair to execute the approved form of the Settlement Agreement; Smith seconded; Calloway, Layton, Vincent, Arnold, Smith: Yes. **Motion Passed.**

3. Executive Session to receive confidential attorney-client communications made for the purpose of providing professional legal services to the body pursuant to 1 V.S.A. § 313(a)(1)(F).

Layton moved to find that premature general public knowledge of privileged attorney client communications would clearly place the public body or a person involved at a substantial disadvantage pursuant to 1 V.S.A. § 313(a)(1), including by revealing privileged information and waiving attorney client privilege; Vincent seconded; Calloway, Layton, Vincent, Arnold, Smith: Yes. **Motion Passed.**

Layton moved to enter Executive Session under 1 V.S.A. § 313(a)(1)(F) to receive confidential attorney-client communications made for the purpose of providing professional legal services to the body; and to invite Town Counsel and the Town Manager; Vincent seconded; Calloway, Layton, Vincent, Arnold, Smith: Yes. **Motion Passed.**

Selectboard entered Executive Session at 8:51 p.m.

Arnold moved to enter public session; Layton seconded; Calloway, Layton, Vincent, Arnold, Smith: Yes. **Motion Passed.**

Selectboard entered Public Session at 10:00 p.m.

Adjourn.

Layton moved to adjourn; Vincent seconded; Calloway, Layton, Vincent, Arnold, Smith: Yes. **Motion Passed.**

Meeting adjourned at 10:01 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Marcia S. Calloway, Chair
Norwich Selectboard

Minutes approved 12/13/2023