

**DRAFT Minutes of the Norwich Selectboard Meeting of  
Wednesday, January 17, 2024**

This special meeting was held in hybrid format in Tracy Hall meeting room with by Zoom and Jam broadcasting by You-Tube.

Members of the public body in Tracy Hall<sup>1</sup>: Marcia Calloway, Chair; Pamela Smith; and Priscilla Vincent.

Members of the public body present by Zoom: Mary Layton, Vice Chair; and, Roger Arnold.

Other active participants in the meeting<sup>2</sup>: Brennan Duffy, Town Manager; Studio Nexus Architects Doug Sonsall and Brianna Gillam.

Members of the public present in Tracy Hall:

- From Norwich: Jack Cushman, Charlene Gates, Peter W. Griggs, Matt Swett, Stephen Foltz, Kathleen Foltz, Conrad Koehler, Matt Herbert, Jeff Swenson, Peter Orner, Alex Northern, Cheryl A. Lindberg, David G. Krimmel
- From Hanover: Francesco Dembirski
- From Green Valley, AZ: Dill Harrington

Members of the public appearing on Zoom: Chad Morig, Judy & Jim Bernat, Colleen Fox, Vincent Crow, Jaci Allen, Barrie Rosalinda, Linda Gray, Lynwood Andrews, Demo Sofronas, Rob Gere, Jaan Laaspere, Carolynne Frye, Nancy Osgood, Christie James, Shoshana Hort, Pam Mullen, Tomm Griggs, Brie Swenson, Stacy Morig, Matt Swett, Lily Trajman, Emily Scherer, Katie Crouch, Sue Kaufman, Richard Neugass, Todd Thompson, Elliot Harik, Alberto Paniagur, Jeff Lubell, Oona Gardner, Brian Loeb

**Welcome.** Meeting was called to order by Calloway at 6:35 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. Calloway reiterated that the primary purpose of the meeting was to listen to the voting public of Norwich as to how we should use surplus monies which were budgeted but not spent.

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

**Public Comments for items not on the agenda:** None.

**First Listening Session – Tracy Hall.** Architects Sonsall and Gillam gave an overview of their work to date and work to be completed. Reports, when prepared, will be shared with the Town Manager, Selectboard, and available to the public. To date the architects have reviewed drawings, investigated systems, and talked with staff who work in the building. No design work or cost estimates have been done yet. They are trying to gather information to meet the needs of the town. Preliminarily, they are focusing on:

- Limited improvements to function in the short term;
- Updates to meet energy code;
- Achieving net zero energy.

The architects cited a number of deficiencies including but not limited to: mechanical heating, cooling and fresh air systems, poor drainage in the basement, septic issues, lighting and insulation. The architects also noted issues with parking, office and meeting space privacy and acoustics, vault access and humidity, sprinkler system questions, sprawling of concrete on window ledges and steps, storage limitations, bricks falling from the building, lack of snow guards on the roof, rafter and roof slate issues.

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<sup>1</sup> 1 V.S.A. § 312(b)(1)(A)

<sup>2</sup> 1 V.S.A. § 312(b)(1)(B)

Summary: Phase I, deficiencies, is complete. The architects would like to have the benefit of the separate energy assessment, which Norwich has arranged and is waiting for. Then the architects will look at programmatic requirements for the building. Finally, the architects will develop a schematic plan.

**Public comments concerning Tracy Hall:**

Person	Concern
Pam Smith	Gym floor
Marcia Calloway	Triage recommendations needed & multi-purpose spaces
Roger Arnold	Public outreach & opinion of children; maximize use of the stage
Priscilla Vincent	Additional meeting options in other town buildings
Jack Cushman	Request for reports when they are available & cooling and loads given projections of climate change
Cheryl Lindberg	Insulation
Linda Gray	Energy assessment is coming up soon
Nancy Osgood	Commending the attention to historical preservation
Brie Swenson	Will coordinate child focus groups; explained how the Recreation Department actively uses the stage for Drama Club and productions as well as musicians at community pot luck dinners.
Mary Layton	Will coordinate high school groups/contact Jeannie Cornfeld re climate work
Lynwood Andrews	Agrees children should be involved & questions how Tracy Hall could be used for community emergency shelter space
Alex Northern	Explained why Tracy Hall is not and cannot be a designated shelter; Hartford High School working with the Red Cross is the closest as they possess the required components for a "shelter."

**Second Listening Session – Use of Surplus Funds.** Calloway referred to the five sheets of paper posted on the board and explained the genesis of the surplus funds under discussion, specifically:

- \$1,800,000.00 previously budgets monies which were not spent
- - 100,000.00 previously budgeted for police equipment which is not yet received/paid for
- \$1,700,000.00 uncommitted surplus
- - 700,000.00 voted by Selectboard as part of the next budget to buy down the amount of tax to be collected
- **\$1,000,000.00 surplus under discussion**

The other four sheets of paper identified ideas the Selectboard had discussed as possible uses for the surplus. Specifically, Tracy Hall Fund #13, Fire Apparatus Fund #6, Highway Garage Fund #8, Generator Fund #46.

In support of funding for Fire Apparatus, Chief Alex Northern and Deputy Chief Matt Swett provided a handout for everyone present and showed excerpts of that document the Zoom screen. Chief Northern pointed out the expectation of service, that the town is growing and demand for service will grow as well. The chiefs explained that funding for apparatus had dipped as a consequence of the 2017 storm event, and funding levels had never recovered. Comparing Thetford, a neighbor of similar size, the chiefs noted they had a 16 year replacement schedule. Nationally, the recommendation is 20 years. In Norwich, the replacement is 26 years. The chiefs explained how the lack of funding impacts safety, planning for apparatus replacements, and forces longer use and maintenance of existing apparatus.

In support of funding for the Highway Garage Fund, and on behalf of the DPW, Brennan Duffy explained the needs of repairs and renovation to the existing garage.

Peter Orner also provided a handout in support of using \$80,000 to \$90,000 for pedestrian corridors from Heritage Lane to Barrett Memorial Park, and Huntley Street to Moore lane.

Public comments concerning use of surplus monies:

Person	Climate	Tracy Hall	Sidewalks and/or pedestrian corridors	Fire Dept	Police/ Public Safety	Affordable Housing	Highway Dept
Jack Cushman	X						
Cheryl Lindberg		X \$1,700,000					
Peter Orner			X \$80-90,000				
Conrad Fuller			X				
Shoshana Hart			X				
Demo Sofronas		X \$500,000	X	X	X		
Jeff Lubell						X \$10,000	
Amy Stringer				X			
Tom Griggs			X	X			X
Andy Scherer			X	X		X	
Elliott Harik			X (& use \$100,000 from the existing sidewalk fund)	X			
Brian Loeb			X			X	
Lynwood Andrews		X					

N.B. Selectboard took a five minute break from 8:30 p.m. to 8:35 p.m. Due to problems with internet connection throughout the evening, and the remaining agenda, JAM concluded their You-Tube broadcast at that time. They will post the Zoom recording on the JAM website.

**2. Update on collective bargaining, Executive Session.** Vincent moved 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). Seconded by Smith. Layton, Arnold, Smith, Vincent, Calloway: Yes. **Motion Passed.**

- Vincent moved to enter Executive Session under 1 V.S.A. § 313(a)(1)(B) to discuss labor relations agreements with employees, and to invite Town Counsel and the Town Manager. Seconded by Smith. Layton, Arnold, Smith, Vincent, Calloway: Yes. **Motion Passed.** Selectboard entered Executive Session at 8:41 p.m.
- Vincent moved to enter public session. Seconded by Smith. Layton, Arnold, Smith, Vincent, Calloway: Yes. **Motion Passed.** Selectboard entered Public Session at 10:02 p.m.

**Adjournment:** Smith moved to adjourn. Seconded by Vincent. Layton, Arnold, Smith, Vincent, Calloway: Yes. **Motion Passed.** Selectboard adjourned at 10:03 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Marcia S. Calloway, Chair  
Norwich Selectboard