

Norwich Selectboard Regular Meeting Minutes

March 13, 2024

Select Board members present: Roger Arnold, Marcia Calloway, Mary Layton, Pam Smith, Priscilla Vincent

Active Participants: Town Manager Brennan Duffy, Cheryl Lindberg, Mary Gorman, Christian Spaulding, Jaan Laaspere, Alex Northern

The meeting was called to order by the Chair at 6:33 pm.

Item #1 Approval of the agenda

Vincent moved, second by Layton to approve the agenda as amended.

Vote: Yes, Unanimous

Item #2 Adoption of Selectboard Rules of Procedure

Layton moved, second by Vincent to adopt the Selectboard Rules of Procedure as presented. Vote: Yes, Unanimous

Item #3 Chair's Report

Chair Pam Smith called for collegial interactions at the meetings. A three minute limit is asked for public comment. The meeting agendas will be developed as a joint effort of the Selectboard Chair and Vice Chair, the Town Manager and Assistant Town Manager. Agenda items can be suggested by Selectboard members and placed on the agenda if three members agree.

Item #4 Public Comments

There were no public comments.

Item #5 Adoption of Local Emergency Management Plan (LEMP)

Layton moved, second by Vincent to adopt the Local Emergency Management Plan and to authorize the appropriate signatures as required.

Vote: Yes, Unanimous

Item #6 Interview Applicants for Planning Commission

Applicants Mary Gorman and Christian Spaulding attended via Zoom and in person respectively. Rob Gear was out of town and without internet and was not able to attend. The applicants present were invited to state their interest in serving on the Planning Commission. Selectboard members asked questions and then conducted a straw poll to indicate their reasoning for supporting their candidate of choice. Reasoning included support of a candidate Spaulding as someone with a

health policy background, new to town with a young family (a fresh perspective) vs. candidate Gorman who has extensive planning experience via the Provost's Office at Dartmouth. Spaulding was encouraged to apply for upcoming openings on the Planning Commission or other Committees. Gere was appreciated for other service to the Town. Jaan Laaspere, Chair of the Planning Commission noted that future openings are populated by members who intend to be considered for reappointment, and that the Planning Commission supports their reappointment.

Calloway moved, second by Vincent to appoint Mary Gorman to the Planning Commission for the unexpired term ending April 2027.

Vote: Yes: Layton, Vincent, Calloway, Smith. No: Arnold

Item #7 Selectboard Goals

The Selectboard held a wide ranging discussion with input from the Town Manager about a multifaceted list of oversight and policy goals. The Chair will compile the list which the Selectboard will prioritize at the March 27th meeting. Calloway suggested that the best way to plan was to refer to the specific terms laid out in the Town Manager's contract. Clearly understood and accepted boundaries regarding the responsibilities of the Selectboard versus the Town Manager would be helpful. It was noted as true in the past that dealing with daily email and interruptions eats up the Town Manager's time, and that development and production of the packet are very time consuming. Arnold suggested that the packet could be an opportunity for enhanced communication and leadership. Cheryl Lindberg advocated for yearly review of all policies.

Item #8 Goals for the Town Manager

Town Manager Duffy enumerated several goals in which he will be actively involved this spring, including the following:

- 1) Continued revision of the Personnel Policy by a process that involves the Selectboard in a policy decision regarding parity of pay and benefits for non-Union employees, consideration of the format of the wage chart as informed by the results of the Compensation Study and the ratification of the Collective Bargaining Agreement, and study of the Condrey report.
- 2) The Tracey Hall renovation plan. A recent energy audit and an evaluation by architects Studio Nexus are moving along and should inform Selectboard decisions about a timeline and scope of renovations in the near future.
- 3) Hiring to fill vacant positions continues to be critical
- 4) It appears to be most workable for Selectboard questions for the Town Manager to be considered by the entire board for approval rather than having individual members approach the TM.

The Select board identified several goals: Develop a Calendar of Known Deadlines, do not get in the weeds, keep the big picture and the TM's contract terms in mind. The second meeting of the month after the monthly department head meetings seems logical for the TM written report, which will include bullet points that can be expanded on verbally at the meeting if needed. All

agreed that moving away from a sense of reaction to the crisis of the moment would be very helpful.

Item #9 Approval of February 28, 2024 minutes

This item was tabled pending corrections that need to be in the next packet.

Item #10 Cure Open Meeting Law Violation

There was wide ranging discussion about the exact procedure to follow in order to “cure” this violation.

Layton moved, second by Vincent to cure the Open Meeting Law violation created by the late posting of the Selectboard minutes of February 28, 2024, and to commit to timely postings of all Selectboard draft minutes in the future.

Vote: Yes: Layton, Vincent, Smith. No: Calloway. Abstain: Arnold

Item #11 Approval of AP Warrant

Layton moved, second by Calloway to approve AP Warrant number 1105 in the amount of \$115,721.15.05 to be paid from the General Fund.

Vote: Yes, Unanimous

Layton moved, second by Vincent to approve AP Warrant number 1106 in the amount of \$9,763.31 to be paid from Reappraisal Fund #12.

Vote: Yes, Unanimous

Item #12 Receipt of Correspondence

Layton moved to accept the receipt of all correspondence as presented in the packet.

Vote: Yes, Unanimous

Item #15 Naming of Town Parcel

Layton moved, second by Vincent to officially name Parcel 20-242.000 owned by the Town of Norwich and consisting of 37.09 acres as the Milton Frye Nature Area, as requested by the Norwich Conservation Commission in their correspondence contained in the May 10, 2023 Selectboard packet. Vote: Yes, Unanimous

Item #16 Committee and Department Head Reports

Tabled - Department Head Reports are typically in the packet for the 4th Wednesday.

Item #17 Adjournment

Vincent moved, second by Layton to adjourn the meeting at 9:29 pm.

Vote: Yes, Unanimous

Minutes taken by Mary Layton