

Minutes of the Norwich Selectboard Regular Meeting
Wednesday, April 24, 2024

Members via Zoom: Roger Arnold, Marcia Calloway, and Mary Layton and Pamela Smith all attending via Zoom. Priscilla Vincent was understandably absent.

Others Participating via Zoom: Brennan Duffy, Town Manager; Chris Kaufman, DPW Director; Linda Gray; Matthew Stuart; Patrick Bradley; Irv Thomae; Gail Torkelson; Jeff Goodrich; Christian Spalding; Kris Clement; Andy Scherer; and Brian Loeb.

The Chair called the meeting to order at 6:32pm. Prior to conducting any Selectboard business, the Chair asked for a moment of silence to honor the passing of Jonathan Vincent, who most recently was serving as a Lister.

1. Agenda

Layton moved (2nd Arnold) to approve the agenda. Yes – Arnold, Layton, and Smith;
No – Calloway.

2. Chair's Report

Smith stated that she has met with the Town Manager and Assistant Town Manager to review the agenda.

3. Public Comments – None

4. Selectboard and Town Manager Goals

The Board reviewed the 2024 Town Manager Annual Performance Evaluation in the packet drafted by Calloway. The discussion centered around Human Resource assistance; recruitment and retention strategies as well as filling open staff positions; recommendations from the auditor; and protection of the Town Manager's time. Smith stated that she felt there are areas of responsibility that lie solely with the Selectboard and that she was anticipating separate Goals and Objectives for the Selectboard, as well as Goals and Objectives for the Town Manager that would be incorporated in a Town Manager's performance evaluation. Layton concurred that there are discreet tasks that are solely the responsibility of the Selectboard. Layton moved (2nd Arnold) to accept the 2024 Town Manager Annual Performance Evaluation as a first read. Yes – Arnold, Calloway, Layton and Smith.

5. Committee Appointments

The Selectboard interviewed applicants for open positions on committees, commissions and boards.

- Layton moved (2nd Calloway) to appoint Linda Gray to the Development Review Board for a 3-year term ending April 30, 2027. Yes – Arnold, Calloway, Layton and Smith.

- Layton moved (2nd Arnold) to appoint Matthew Stuart to the Development Review Board for a 3-year term ending April 30, 2027. Yes – Arnold, Calloway, Layton and Smith.
- Layton moved (2nd Calloway) to appoint Patrick Bradley to the Development Review Board for a 3-year term ending April 30, 2027. Yes – Arnold, Calloway, Layton and Smith.
- Layton moved (2nd Arnold) to appoint Sue Pitiger to the Development Review Board for a 3-year term ending April 30, 2027. Yes – Arnold, Calloway, Layton and Smith.
- Layton moved (2nd Calloway) to appoint Irv Thomae to the EC Fiber Governing Board for a 1-year term ending April 30, 2025. Yes – Arnold, Calloway, Layton and Smith.
- Layton moved (2nd Calloway) to appoint Gail Torkelson to the Historic Preservation Commission for a 1-year term ending April 30, 2025. Yes – Arnold, Calloway, Layton and Smith.
- Layton moved (2nd Calloway) to appoint Jeff Goodrich to the Planning Commission for a 4-year term ending April 30, 2028. Yes – Calloway, Layton and Smith; No – Arnold.
- Layton moved (2nd Calloway) to appoint Christian Spalding to the Planning Commission for a 4-year term ending April 30, 2028. Yes – Arnold, Calloway, Layton and Smith.
- Layton moved (2nd Calloway) to appoint Andy Scherer to the Solid Waste Committee for a 3-year term ending April 30, 2027. Yes – Arnold, Calloway, Layton and Smith.
- Layton moved (2nd Calloway) to appoint Matt Hall as Tree Warden for a 1-year term ending March 31, 2025. Yes – Arnold, Calloway, Layton and Smith.
- Layton moved (2nd Arnold) to appoint Brian Loeb as the Norwich representative to the Two Rivers Ottawaquechee Regional Commission for a 1-year term ending April 30, 2025. Yes – Arnold, Calloway, Layton and Smith.

Smith will work with the Town Manager and Assistant Town Manager to develop a list of unfilled positions to continue the work of advertising and recruiting applicants for all remaining vacancies.

6. DPW Grants in Aid

Duffy explained that this is an annual submission to request State funding for road and culvert work. Chris Kaufman stated that the Grants in Aid and the Better Roads

Grant programs will be combined next year, which will simplify the process and reduce the workload.

Layton moved (2nd Calloway) to authorize the Town Manager to sign the Letter of Intent to Participate in the SFY25 Municipal Roads Grants-in-Aid Program on behalf of the Town of Norwich. Yes – Arnold, Calloway, Layton and Smith.

7. DPW Culvert Bid Recommendation

Chris Kaufman presented the information regarding culvert work that was put out to bid. SB members commended Kaufman for providing a very detailed summary. Work is expected to start in May and be completed sometime in June 2024. Smith expressed concern about paying for this work from the Culverts Fund prior to its establishment on July 1, 2024, as approved by the voters.

- Layton moved (2nd Calloway) to authorize the Town Manager to contract with Daniels Construction in the amount of \$12,500 for the replacement of the Route 132 culvert with funds from the Culverts Fund that will be established on July 1, 2024 with a final cost to the Town of \$2,500 after reimbursement of \$10,000 from the VTrans 2024 Better Roads Grant. Yes – Arnold, Calloway, Layton and Smith.
- Layton moved (2nd Calloway) to authorize the Town Manager to contract with Daniels Construction in the amount of \$52,450 for the replacement of 4 Turnpike Road culverts with funds from the Culvert Fund that will be established on July 1, 2024 with a final cost to the Town of \$24,950 after reimbursement of \$27,500 from the VTrans Grants-in-Aid Grant. Yes – Arnold, Calloway, Layton and Smith.

8. Police Department Request to Expend Special Equipment Reserve Funds

Duffy explained that this request is for equipment that needs to be installed to complete the body camera acquisition.

Layton moved (2nd Calloway) to authorize the expenditure of \$1,400 from the Police Special Equipment Reserve Fund #21 for 4 Sierra Wireless Modems as part of the body camera installation. Yes – Calloway, Layton and Smith; No – Arnold.

9. Receipt of Correspondence

Correspondence was received from our auditors, Sullivan & Powers, as a function of the single audit conducted for the ARPA funds. Suzannah Ciernia invited residents to attend a free showing of “Kiss the Ground” on April 25, 2024 at 7pm at the Unitarian Universalist Church. Phillip Zea submitted his resignation from the Historic Preservation Commission after 5 years of service. The SB thanks Phillip Zea for his service. John Farrell submitted a request for reimbursement for replacement of mailboxes damaged during the plowing season. Duffy stated that it is the Town’s policy to provide reimbursement. Steven Hepburn submitted an email questioning if the

Chair had violated the Conflict of Interest Policy by not recusing when her husband, Will Smith, applied for appointment to the Energy Committee. Smith stated that she had consulted the Town's policy on Conflict of Interest. She felt the standard of "substantial personal or financial gain" did not apply in this instance as the Energy Committee does not receive a stipend and there was nothing to be gained personally from her husband's appointment. Ultimately, Will Smith was not a finalist for appointment and therefore, the Chair did not cast a vote for her husband.

Layton moved (2nd Calloway) to accept all correspondence. Yes – Arnold, Calloway, Layton and Smith.

10. Approval of April 10, 2024 Minutes

SB members thanked Layton for drafting the April 10, 2024 minutes and commended her for a job well done. Only one correction was offered on Item #11 - Arnold voted "No" on that motion. Layton moved (2nd Calloway) to approve the April 10, 2024 minutes as amended. Yes – Arnold, Calloway, Layton and Smith.

11. Approval of AP Warrants

- Layton moved (2nd Calloway) to approve AP Warrant number 1120 in the amount of \$95,510.83 to be paid from the General Fund. Yes – Arnold, Calloway, Layton and Smith.
- Layton moved (2nd Calloway) to approve AP Warrant number 1117 in the amount of \$65,937.85 to be paid from the General Fund. Yes – Arnold, Calloway, Layton and Smith.
- Layton moved (2nd Calloway) to approve AP Warrant number 1118 in the amount of \$3,060.10 to be paid from the Police Cruiser Reserve Fund #11. Yes – Arnold, Calloway, Layton and Smith.
- Layton moved (2nd Calloway) to approve AP Warrant number 1119 in the amount of \$8,100.00 to be paid from the Operational Development and Performance Reserve Fund #51. Yes – Arnold, Calloway, Layton and Smith.

12. Draft Policy – Resolutions and Letters of Support – 2nd Read

Layton questioned whether we could/should add an option for residents to petition for a resolution of interest to the residents that could be of a political nature to appear as an Article on the Town Warrant. Calloway will research this topic and redraft this policy for consideration at the May 8 SB Meeting.

13. Town Manager's Report

Duffy provided an outline of his report in the packet. Several applications were received for Planning & Zoning Director, however, none of the applicants were selected. Chief Romei will be presenting a proposal at the May 8 meeting for acquiring two cruisers that were approved in the FY25 budget. The DPW Director and the TM met with FEMA representatives to discuss current project status and

reimbursement process. Work continues finding an Administrative Assistant for the TM's office shared with DPW, hiring a structural engineer for the Olcott Road bridge and design plans for Hemlock Road and the installation of an inclinometer. The Personnel Policies have been redrafted following the VLCT model that was available last year when the revision process started. The SB expressed a desire to have the draft policies reviewed by Town Counsel. Duffy hopes to have a draft ready for SB review during May with the goal of ratifying the new policies before the start of the new fiscal year on July 1, 2024, if at all possible. The energy audit of Tracy Hall should be ready by mid-May. This audit will be provided to Studio Nexus to incorporate in their overall plan for Tracy Hall improvements. The VCDP grant application, FERC letter, and the annual ARPA report were all successfully submitted. A meeting has been scheduled with a representative of the Fire District's Prudential Committee, the Fire Chief and the TM to discuss the fire hydrant rental charges. An RFP has been issued for design of the proposed walkability corridor on Beaver Meadow Road. The Conservation Commission has issued a statement that the Emerald Ash Borer is now present in Norwich. Work will begin in earnest to establish the extent of the problem and possible solutions.

14. Committee and Department Head Reports

Reports were submitted by the Finance office, the Fire Chief, Police Chief and Recreation Director. Smith noted that Town spending of 73.31% as of March 31, 2024 is slightly under the 75% expected at the 9-month mark.

15. Adjournment

Layton moved (2nd Calloway) to adjourn at 9:42pm. Yes – Arnold, Calloway, Layton and Smith.

Respectfully submitted,

Pamela T. Smith
Selectboard Chair

Approved: May 8, 2024

Pamela T. Smith
Selectboard Chair