

Town of Norwich Selectboard Minutes

June 13, 2024

The meeting was called to order by the Chair at 6:29 pm.

Active Participants: On site at Tracy Hall: Pam Smith, Priscilla Vincent, Andy Scherer, Jordan Mueller, Cheryl Lindberg, David Krimmel. On Zoom: Roger Arnold, Marcia Calloway, Mary Layton, Brennan Duffy, Peter Orner, Jaan Laaspere, and Linda Gray

Item #1 Agenda:

Vincent moved, second by Layton to approve the agenda as amended. Vote: Yes: Arnold, Layton, Smith, Vincent No: Calloway (objects to Chair's report).

Item #2 Chair's report:

The Chair met with the Town Clerk to discuss procedures for the August 13th Primary and Informational Meetings, the warning, and a petition to change the manner in which Listers are paid. The Town Clerk will send an email to the listserv with procedural information for candidates for elected positions. The deadline for candidate applications is July 8th. The Chair also met with the Town Manager and Assistant Town Manager to create the 6/13/24 meeting agenda.

Item #3 Public Comments for items not on the Agenda-Discussion:

David Krimmel spoke in favor of in-person Selectboard meetings. Priscilla Vincent would like more Selectboard in person attendance. Mary Layton noted that Zoom attendance is sometimes necessary for safety reasons of family members.

Item #4 Committee Appointments:

Based on the Conservation Commission being inadvertently omitted from the advertisement of Open Positions, this one appointment was tabled to the June 26th meeting.

Item #5 Update on Reappraisal Contract:

The Town Manager, Selectboard Chair, Listers Chair, and representatives of KRT Appraisal met to resolve the issue of work remaining on the town wide reappraisal vs. state and town deadlines. The solution is to amend the KRT contract term for an additional year. No additional payments are included in this extension. Approximately \$95,000 of the \$190,000 allotted has been paid.

Arnold and Calloway expressed concern that deliverables are not clearly stated in the contract extension, and skepticism that the work will be completed within the new time frame.

Layton moved, second by Vincent to authorize the Town Manager to work with Town Counsel and the Board of Listers to draft an amendment to the reappraisal contract with KRT. Vote: Yes: Arnold, Calloway, Layton, Vincent, Smith

Item #6 DPW Request for Olcott Road Bridge:

Work on the bridge will necessitate Olcott Road be closed for a time. The Town Manager is working with residents to help them plan for this.

Layton moved, second by Calloway, to accept the bid from Winterset, Inc. in the amount of \$58,000 and to fund this expense from Fund # 41 DPW Bridge Reserve Fund. Vote: Yes: Arnold, Calloway, Layton, Vincent, Smith

Item #7 Solid Waste Committee Transfer Station Fee Proposal:

The Solid Waste Committee submitted a helpful report with an analysis of the fee structure and comparison to past years. A \$5 increase in the resident sticker fee was found to be necessary to for fees to support 71% of transfer fund operations. There was discussion of policy for replacement stickers that have been lost when a vehicle has been sold or for other reasons.

Layton moved, second by Calloway to approve the Transfer Station Fee Proposal as submitted by the Solid Waste Committee and authorize the Town Manager to implement the new fee schedule as of July 1, 2024, which will be posted on the Town website and at the Transfer Station; and to implement a \$1 replacement fee for stickers lost within the same fiscal year. Vote: Yes - Arnold, Calloway, Layton, Vincent, Smith

Item #8 Police Department Request for Ballistic Vests:

This request is for routine replacement of vests.

Calloway moved, second by Layton to accept the bid from NASPO in the amount of up to \$4770 to purchase 3 ballistic vests with funds from #21 Police Equipment Fund as outlined in the request from the Chief of Police.

Vote: Yes: Arnold, Calloway, Layton, Vincent, Smith

Item #9 Police Department Request to Sell Surplus Equipment:

There was discussion about when it is appropriate or necessary for the Selectboard to approve the disposal and sale of surplus equipment. It is not clear that there is a policy for this and whether the policy would be incorporated into the Purchasing Policy.

Vincent moved, second by Layton to authorize the Town Manager to dispose of Norwich Police Department surplus equipment identified by the Chief of Police as no longer needed in a manner most beneficial to the Town. Vote:

Yes: Arnold, Calloway, Layton, Vincent, Smith

Item #10 Shared Energy Coordinator Agreement with TRORC:

Calloway and Smith questioned the value of this agreement to the Town. Arnold was concerned that there is not sufficient engagement of the Selectboard with the SEC, that reports are issued but not read with meaningful and timely responses. He noted that issues with charging stations required 60 hours of work, and that the Selectboard could convene Linda Gray for discussions of ongoing work.

Layton moved, second by Vincent to authorize the Town Manager to enter into a contract with TRORC for the Shared Energy Coordinator at a cost of \$30,670 for the period July 1, 2024 to June 30, 2025. Vote: Yes: Arnold, Calloway, Layton, Vincent, Smith

Item #11 Child Care Contribution Tax:

The impact on the budget of 100% contribution by the Town was estimated to be about \$8600. The Selectboard was united in deciding that the Town should pay this tax rather than sharing costs with employees. Smith wants the level of contributions to be tracked at budget time. Arnold expressed that the tax is more like a “fringe benefit” and does not need to be reviewed as a budgetary item.

Calloway moved, second by Vincent to collect the Child Care Contribution Tax with 100 % being paid by the Town of Norwich. Vote: Yes: Arnold, Calloway, Layton, Vincent, Smith

Item #12 Approval of May 22, 2024 Minutes:

Vincent moved, second by Layton to approve the May 22, 2024 minutes as amended.

Vote: Yes: Arnold, Calloway, Layton, Vincent, Smith

Item #13 Approval of AP Warrants:

Layton moved, second by Vincent to approve AP Warrant #1133 in the amount of \$120,814.91 to be paid from the General Fund. Vote: Yes: Arnold, Calloway, Layton, Vincent, Smith

Layton moved, second by Vincent to approve AP Warrant #1131 in the amount of \$49,588.00 to be paid from Fund #6 Fire Apparatus Reserve Fund. Vote: Yes: Arnold, Calloway, Layton, Vincent, Smith

Layton moved, second by Vincent to approve AP Warrant #1132 in the amount of \$2,140.69 to be paid from Fund #53 Kids Bridge at Huntley Meadow. Vote: Yes: Arnold, Calloway, Layton, Vincent, Smith

Item #14 Receipt of Correspondence:

Correspondence included support for in person meetings, liquor license applications from King Arthur Flour, New Singular Wireless concerning a mechanical upgrade to a communications tower, Town Clerk dog licenses outstanding, AP warrants approved off cycle, and letters concerning the 30 day extension for the Town Wide reappraisal.

Layton moved, second by Calloway to accept all correspondence
Vote: Yes: Arnold, Calloway, Layton, Vincent, Smith

Item #15 Policy Review Assignments-Discussion:

Green Procurement Committee charge and structure -Arnold

Gift Policy review and recommendations-Calloway

Purchasing Policy review and recommendations-Smith

Item #16 Moore Lane Bridge Update-Discussion:

There was wide ranging discussion of the condition of the bridge and the failure of mitigation efforts to prevent noxious chemicals from dripping into Blood Brook. The solutions to date are not effective for the long run. The Selectboard needs to figure out how to solicit ideas for long term solutions to this problem that may include removal of the bridge, costs of disposal of hazardous material in the bridge deck; and replacement design, scope, and timeline. The DPW director has recommended grinding down the deck and installing an impervious barrier. The Selectboard will discuss criteria and questions for an RFP for permanent solution designs at a future meeting. Peter Orner and Jaan Laaspere spoke regarding the number of years that temporary solutions have been in place that appear ineffective, and urgency to find a permanent solution.

Item #17 – Ratification of CBA Addition of Juneteenth Holiday:

The additional holiday has been offered to the CBA in the form of a “side letter” to the current contract, and a tentative agreement has been reached between the Town and the CBA to adopt this holiday.

Calloway moved, second by Vincent to approve and ratify the Juneteenth paid holiday extending to members of the NEPBA bargaining unit, per a tentative agreement reached between the Union and the Town. Vote: Yes - Arnold, Calloway, Layton, Vincent; No - Smith

Item #18 Adjournment:

Before adjournment Smith noted several agenda items likely to be included at the May 26th meeting, including election preparations, Open Meeting Law amendments and the Selectboard Handbook, Committee Appointments, the Moore Lane bridge, update on the Personnel Policy draft, Tracy Hall renovation plans, hydrant rentals, and legal advice on subcommittees.

Vincent moved, second by Calloway to adjourn the meeting at 9 pm.
Vote: Yes: Arnold, Calloway, Layton, Vincent, Smith

Minutes taken by Mary Layton

Approved by the Selectboard on: June 26, 2024

Pamela T. Smith, Chair