

**Minutes of the Norwich Selectboard Regular Meeting
held in person at Tracy Hall and via Zoom
Wednesday, July 24, 2024**

Attending in Person: Pam Smith, Chair; Mary Layton, Vice-Chair; and Priscilla Vincent.

Attending via Zoom: Roger Arnold; and Marcia Calloway.

Others Participating in person and via Zoom: Brennan Duffy, Town Manager; Cheryl Lindberg, Chair of the Board of Listers; Lily Trajman, Town Clerk; Dan Officer, Prudential Committee Chair; Peter Orner; and Jaan Laaspere.

The Chair called the meeting to order at 6:31pm.

1. Agenda

Smith suggested tabling Items #6 and #13. Calloway requested that they remain for discussion. Motion by Arnold (2nd Layton) to approve the agenda. Vote: Yes – Arnold, Layton & Vincent; No- Calloway & Smith. Motion passed.

2. Chair's Report

Smith reported that she has had several meetings and conversations with the Town Manager regarding the agenda and tax rate setting.

3. Public Comments – Lily Trajman reminded voters that ballots for the August 13 statewide primary and Town ballot are now available in her office. They can be requested via email, telephone or in person. Smith read a letter from the staff at Dan & Whit's thanking the Board for approving their liquor license renewal.

4. Committee Appointments

Motion by Layton (2nd Vincent) to nominate Alex Northern as the Norwich Town Health Officer for appointment by the Vermont Health Commissioner for the remainder of an unexpired term ending October 31, 2025.

Motion by Layton (2nd Vincent) to appoint Watt Alexander to the Upper Valley River Subcommittee of CT River Joint Commission. Vote: Yes – Layton, Vincent, Calloway, Arnold & Smith.

5. Listers Update

Cheryl Lindberg, Chair of the Board of Listers, gave a summary of the work done by the Listers to hear grievances and lodge the Grand List. The Listers have warned a meeting for 9:00am on Thursday, July 25, to lodge the Grand List with the Town Clerk.

There was discussion about whether the Open Meeting Law was followed by the Listers in the process of lodging the Grand List.

6. Tax Rate Setting

The Selectboard has scheduled a special meeting for 12:30pm Thursday, July 25, 2024 to set the tax rate for FY25.

7. Police Department Reserve Fund Requests

Motion by Layton (2nd Vincent) to approve the purchase of 1 AED and 1 Bleed Kit in the amount of \$3,007.50 from Fund #47 Public Safety Facility Fund. Vote: Yes – Layton, Vincent, Calloway, Arnold & Smith.

Motion by Layton (2nd Vincent) to approve the purchase of 2 AEDs and 4 Bleed Kits in the amount of \$3,982.40 from Fund #21 Police Special Equipment Fund. Vote: Yes – Layton, Vincent, Calloway, Arnold & Smith.

8. Norwich Community Collaborative Request for Support Letter

Motion by Layton (2nd Vincent) to authorize the Chair to sign a letter of support for the Norwich Community Collaborative's grant request to the Northern Border Regional Commission. Vote: Yes – Layton, Vincent, Calloway Arnold & Smith.

9. Town Manager's Report

Duffy highlighted several items in his report in the packet. **Fire Department:** Engine 2 has been sold to Bethel for \$45,000; **Administrative Assistant:** Heidi Classon has been working for about 2 weeks in the Town Manager's office and for DPW and seems to be a good fit; **Olcott Road Bridge:** The work has been completed. **Hemlock Road:** Work continues on the design of the project and with FEMA. Smith asked if there was any change in the inclinometer readings. Duffy reported no change. **Moore Lane Bridge:** An RFQ for long-term mitigation with responses due August 19. Clean Harbors will visit the site during the week of July 29 to clean up the site and install a new boom for containment. Motion by Calloway (2nd Layton) to confirm that the Town Manager is to expend over \$12,000 for Clean Harbors in connection with the remediation and containment of the Moore Lane Bridge emulsion. Vote: Yes – Layton, Vincent, Calloway, Arnold & Smith. Peter Orner expressed his concern about the efforts to date and encouraged the Town to find a permanent solution. **Personnel Policy Update:** The policy will be reviewed by Town staff. SB review is expected at the 2nd meeting in August. **Beaver Meadow Road Pedestrian Improvements:** Contractors are very busy at this time and it is hoped that they can begin work in the near future. **Hydrant Rental Fee Update:** It is expected that a meeting will take place in early August. Dan Officer, Chair of the Fire District's Prudential Committee spoke to the long-standing request to the Town with a 3-year glide path of increases. These increases have been budgeted by the Fire District and a failure to receive the funds would create a deficit on their books. **MOA with SAU 70:** An agreement has been signed with the SAU to allow the Town to deduct any expenses incurred due to facilities not being available for Recreation Department use.

10. Preparation for the August 13 Informational Hearing

Motion by Calloway (2nd Arnold) to allow Arnold to prepare a PowerPoint presentation with 3 items: 1) the Article; 2) the FY25 Lister Budget; and, 3) a listing of Lister office staff. Vote: Yes – Layton, Calloway & Arnold; No – Vincent & Smith. Motion passed. Smith requested distribution of the PowerPoint slides to the SB members prior to the Informational Hearing.

11. Audit Engagement Letter

Layton expressed concern over the following wording in the engagement letter: “Management control of overrides”. Duffy was asked to reach out to the auditor for clarification and report back to the Board.

Motion by Calloway (2nd Arnold) to authorize the Town Manager to execute an engagement letter with the auditors Sullivan, Powers & Co. for the FY2024 audit.

Vote: Yes – Layton, Vincent, Calloway, Arnold & Smith.

12. Change in Financial Reports Format

Motion by Vincent (2nd Calloway) to approve the finance report format generated in NEMRC by the Finance Director. Vote: Yes – Layton, Vincent, Calloway, Arnold & Smith.

13. Subcommittee Appointments

Calloway referred to her document dated July 3, 2024 as a recommended process for bringing subcommittees into compliance with the law. Jaan Laaspere asked why subcommittees made up wholly of committee members would need to submit to this approval process. Clarification will be sought from legal counsel on this question.

Motion by Calloway (2nd Arnold) to direct the Chair to write to the Planning Commission and Conservation Commission with regard to existing subcommittees with individuals not appointed by the Selectboard. Vote: Yes – Layton, Calloway, Arnold & Smith; Abstain – Vincent.

14. Approval of AP Warrants Approval of AP Warrants

- Layton moved (2nd Calloway) to approve AP Warrant #1148 in the amount of \$67,167.94 to be paid from the General Fund. Vote: Yes – Layton, Vincent, Calloway, Arnold & Smith.
- Layton moved (2nd Calloway) to approve AP Warrant #1144 in the amount of \$58,000.00 to be paid from Fund #41 DPW Bridge Fund. Vote: Yes – Layton, Vincent, Calloway and Smith.

15. Approval of June 26, 2024 Minutes

Motion by Calloway (2nd Arnold) that the Selectboard follow the statutory description of “minutes” found at 1 V.S.A. § 312(b)(1). Vote: Yes – Layton, Calloway & Arnold; No – Vincent & Smith. Motion passed.

Motion by Vincent (2nd Layton) to approve the June 26, 2024 minutes as presented.
Vote: Yes – Layton, Vincent & Smith; No – Calloway & Arnold. Motion passed.

16. Receipt of Correspondence

Motion by Layton (2nd Vincent) to accept all correspondence. Vote: Yes – Layton, Vincent, Calloway, Arnold & Smith.

17. Department Head Reports

Reports were received from the Finance Director, Fire Chief, Police Chief & Recreation Director.

18. Adjournment

Layton moved (2nd Vincent) to adjourn at 9:51pm. Vote: Yes – Layton, Vincent, Calloway, Arnold & Smith.

Respectfully submitted,

Pamela T. Smith
Selectboard Chair

Approved _____, 2024