

Town of Norwich Selectboard Minutes

August 28, 2024

The meeting was called to order by the Chair at 6:30 pm.

Active Participants: Selectboard members Pam Smith, Priscilla Vincent, Mary Layton; Town Clerk Lily Trajman, Listers Cheryl Lindberg and Ernie Ciccotelli, Mike Adams, Craig Layne were present at Tracy Hall. SB members Marcia Calloway, Roger Arnold, Town Manager Brennon Duffy, Planning Commission Chair Jaan Laaspere, and Lily Trajman (later in the meeting) via Zoom.

Item #1 Agenda

Vincent moved to approve the agenda, second by Layton, as amended to table #14 Approval of 8/14/24 Minutes. Vote: Yes (Layton, Vincent, Arnold, Smith) No (Calloway, #2 & #6 objection)

Item #2 Chair's Report

The Chair met with the Town Manager and Assistant Town Manager to create the draft agenda.

The Chair requested that Selectboard Meeting attendees adhere to the Rules of Conduct.

Item #3 Public Comments for Items not on the Agenda

The Town Clerk asked to present information about a National Endowment for the Humanities Grant proposal regarding support for preserving documents. She presented this information at agenda item #5.

Layton noted that she wrote an article for the fall issue of the Norwich Times, about storm water resiliency. She asked if Calloway would like to write the article for the winter issue on either the Selectboard Handbook or the Open Meeting Law. Calloway said she would like to write the article.

Item #4 Subcommittee Appointments

The Selectboard framed this action as a first step toward appointing subcommittees and working groups. Future issues needing definition include liability protection for Trails Committee members, defining the number of volunteers per committee, defining who is responsible for submitting invoices for reimbursement, and updating outdated committee charges. Jaan Laaspere asked for "definition and clarity about what it means to be 'under' a commission."

Vincent moved, second by Layton to create the Trails Committee under the Norwich Conservation Commission and appoint the following members: Craig Layne to a term ending March 2025; Jim

Faughnan and Nick Krembs to a term ending March 2026; and Cody Williams, Bob Fiskens and Peter Griggs to a term ending March 2027. Vote: Yes (Layton, Vincent, Calloway, Smith) No: (Arnold)

Vincent moved, second by Layton to create the Affordable Housing Subcommittee under the Planning Commission and appoint the following members: Jeff Lubell and Gordon Greenfield to a term ending March 2025; Brian Loeb and Creigh Moffat to a term ending March 2026; and Jeff Goodrich to a term ending March 2027. Vote: Yes (Layton, Vincent, Calloway, Arnold, Smith)

Item #5 Town Clerk CTCL Grant Letter

Vincent moved, second by Layton, to authorize the Town Clerk to apply for Tech and Civic Life Grant of up to \$5000 for a laptop computer, printer, a set of 12 new stand-up voting booths, and any other supplies deemed necessary. Vote: Yes (Layton, Vincent, Calloway, Arnold, Smith)

Item #6 Norwich/Sharon Border Dispute

The Selectboard considered whether to meet with the Sharon Selectboard to clarify the Sharon/Norwich boundary. There was much confusion about where the legal boundary is located. Under consideration were the Royal Charter of 1761, a 1951 survey and a GIS map. Ernie Ciccotelli related that the GIS map system is set up to create straight lines between two points, and in one area of a Norwich map used as a basis for the GIS system, there is a “jog” that creates a third point of reference. This results in two not quite “parallel” boundary lines shown on the GIS map that was presented in the packet. In the course of the discussion the tax maps of 2004 and 2007 were also referenced. These were not available for review by the Selectboard. A family member of a landowner who questions the boundary used as the basis to determine property taxes, Mike Adams, spoke about a change in taxation that occurred in 2007 that may be related to an error in the 2007 tax map. This case will be brought up within two weeks by the Board of Civil Authority. The Selectboard decided to let the process of clarification about the boundary play out in the BCA meeting rather than meet with the Sharon Selectboard. Town Clerk Lily Trajman asked that Selectboard members not participate in the BCA meeting as ex-officio members. The Selectboard considered two motions to seek legal counsel:

Vincent moved, second by Smith, to seek advice from Town Counsel regarding the Norwich/Sharon Town Line. Vote: Yes (Vincent, Smith) No (Layton, Calloway, Arnold)

Calloway moved, second by Arnold, to ask the Town Manager to confirm with Town Counsel whether Selectboard members as ex-officio members of the BCA have to recuse themselves from a de novo hearing based on the Adams issue being heard as a Town border dispute.

Vote: Yes (Layton, Calloway, Arnold) No (Smith, Vincent)

Item #7 Gile Mountain Repair Reimbursement

Layton moved to reimburse Jim Faughnan a total of \$1,469.11 from Fund #4 Conservation Commission Fund for work done on the Gile Mountain Tower.

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

Item #8 CCI Computer Services Contract Renewal

Layton moved to authorize the Town Manager to sign a three-year contract renewal with CCI for computer services for a total amount of \$104,700.96.

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

Item #9 Town Manager's Report

The report included information about the search for a Town Planning/Zoning Administrator, the Tracy Hall Energy Audit which should be available on September 3rd, a productive meeting regarding the Fire Hydrant fee structure, update on the Moore Lane bridge, and funds that were conveyed to the Dresden school district from taxes received to date.

Calloway moved, second by Arnold to authorize the Town Manager to move forward with a scoping study by Stantec for the Moore Lane bridge. Vote: Yes (Layton, Vincent, Calloway, Arnold, Smith)

Item #10 Personnel Policy – First Read

Suggested edits were to resolve inconsistencies as to definition of part time work and resulting pro-rated benefits, and to sections relating to the union contract.

Layton moved, second by Vincent to accept the Personnel Policy as a first read.

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

Item #11 SB Handbook Review

The Handbook content regarding subcommittees will be edited in regard to issues noted in agenda item #2. The Selectboard agreed that the Town Manager's office maintain a current list of members, current budgets, and other information subject to change, accessible by a link in the Handbook. Mary Layton asked what our policy should be about disseminating information about Open Meeting Law practice, before the Secretary of State issues new guidelines in January. She argued that it would make sense to use the current guidelines until the new ones are issued.

Item #13 A/P Warrants

Layton moved, second by Vincent to approve AP Warrant #1166 in the amount of \$188,351.12 to be paid from the General Fund. Vote: Yes: (Layton, Vincent, Calloway, Arnold, Smith)

Layton moved, second by Vincent to approve AP Warrant #1170 in the amount of \$185.00 to be paid from the General Fund. Vote: Yes: (Layton, Vincent, Calloway, Arnold, Smith)

Layton moved, second by Vincent to approve AP Warrant #1169 in the amount of \$2,725.00 to be paid from Fund #47 Public Safety Facility Fund. Vote: (Layton, Vincent, Calloway, Arnold, Smith)

Item #14 Approval of August 14, 2024 Minutes - **Tabled**

Item #15 Receipt of Correspondence

Correspondence included documents recording the formation of the Fire District and earlier efforts to manage water by the Town of Norwich.

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

Item #16 Adjournment

Vincent moved, second by Layton to adjourn the meeting.
Vote: Yes (Layton, Vincent, Calloway, Arnold, Smith)

Meeting adjourned at 9:38 pm.

Minutes taken by Mary Layton