

## **Minutes of the Norwich Selectboard Meeting of Wednesday, September 11, 2024**

This regular meeting was held by in person in Tracy Hall and via Zoom with JAM broadcasting on You-Tube.

All members of the public body present in Tracy Hall<sup>1</sup>: Pam Smith, Chair; Mary Layton, Vice Chair; Priscilla Vincent.

All members of the public body present via Zoom: Roger Arnold; Marcia Calloway.

All other active participants in the meeting<sup>2</sup>: Brennan T.M. Duffy, Town Manager; Bruce Genereaux; Stephanie Hamilton; Nora Lake; Chris Polashenski; Peter Orner; Jaan Laasphere; Cheryl Lindberg. Meeting was called to order by Smith at 6:30 p.m..

### **Item 1 Agenda.**

- Layton moved to approve the agenda as amended to move Correspondence from Item 11 to Item 4; seconded by Vincent. Arnold, Layton, Smith, Vincent: Yes; Calloway, No as to Item #2. **Motion Passed.**

### **Item 2 Chair Report.**

- Smith reported of her conversations with the Town Manager.

### **Item 3 Public Comments for Items not on the Agenda**

- Bruce Genereaux re the budget preparation, requesting increases be limited to no more than the expected CPI increase and departments be asked to recommend no more than 3.54 percent increase except for items not under town control
- Stephanie Hamilton re an incident today at Huntley Field meadow in which her daughter was bitten by a dog off leash and she does not know the dog's rabies status, requesting limitation of dog access to Huntley Field.
- Jaan Laaspere re Moore Lane Bridge, and continuing concern that the visible staining on the bridge wall represents both old and new stain escaping the newly installed barrier.
- Peter Orner re (1) pedestrian safety as children return to school and roads are unsafe, requesting accountability for the \$50,000 voted in 2003 to improve this problem; (2) the history of the speed signs which cost \$6,000 yet cars are still speeding; (3) pedestrian corridor approved but not moving forward, he requests a future agenda item.
- Brennan Duffy offered information about his visit to Moore Lane Bridge today e.g. apparent lack of any physical evidence of new emulsion leakage by sight or touch; and confirming his conversation with the Stantec bridge engineer, encouraging them to 'fast track' for a long-term solution. Duffy hopes to have more information for the next Selectboard meeting, and then subsequent opportunity to look at the scope of work and options, get public comment, and decide on an option.

### **ITEM 4 Correspondence**

- Letters in the packet included:

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<sup>1</sup> 1 V.S.A. § 312(b)(1)(A)

<sup>2</sup> 1 V.S.A. § 312(b)(1)(B)

- Brian Riordan re speeding on Union Village Road, requesting more patrolling;
  - Tony Adams re taxation on Chapel Hill Road, information from prior meeting;
  - DRB notice of conditional use review of Norwich Community Collaborative application to make improvements e.g. ADA;
  - Brian Loeb re TRORC working on regional plan and his role on executive committee;
  - Mary Brownlow and Peter Orner re Moore Lane Bridge concerns;
  - Steven Hepburn re Recreation Advisory Council review of their minute and agenda posting procedure;
  - Sweetland Farms requesting a permit from the Selectboard to grade in the right-of-way on Route 132 near Union Village Road;
  - Kris Clement re town telephone line;
  - Priscilla Vincent re Selectboard at the Resource Fair.
- Nora Lake, Sweetland Farms, spoke to her letter requesting for a permit from the Selectboard to grade and create a gradual slope in the right of way on Route 132 adjacent to their farm. Discussion included whether Planning input would be required, whether the Selectboard has authority to authorize this work in a Town Manager form of government, whether 19 V.S.A. § 1111(b) controlled. Duffy was asked to seek advice from legal counsel.
  - Peter Orner spoke as to his Moore Lane Bridge concerns. Orner agrees with Laaspere's assessment, questions continued use of Stantec given prior containment failed, and he wants to know what the leaking chemical is and whether it is a danger to public health.
  - Vincent moved to accept all correspondence. Second by Layton. Arnold, Calloway, Layton, Smith, Vincent: Yes. **Motion Passed.**

#### **Item 5 Town Credit (card) Authorized Name Change**

- Town staff requests removal of former employee name on the credit card, replacing it with that of the Town Manager.
- Layton moved to change the cardholder name on the Town of Norwich Business Advantage Cash Rewards credit card ending in 4413 from Roberta Robinson to Brennan Duffy, Town Manager, effective immediately. Second by Vincent. Arnold, Calloway, Layton, Smith, Vincent: Yes. **Motion Passed.**

#### **Item 6 DPW Bid Approvals**

- Layton moved to approve a contract with Twin State Sand and Gravel for gravel and ledge products at the rate of \$4.95/ton. Second Vincent. Arnold, Calloway, Layton, Smith, Vincent: Yes. **Motion Passed.**
- Layton moved to approve a contract with Twin State Sand and Gravel for winter sand at the rate of \$18.90/ton. Second Vincent. Arnold, Calloway, Layton, Smith, Vincent: Yes. **Motion Passed.**
- As to the proposed snow plowing contract, discussion included duration of need for additional assistance and budgeted funds.
- Layton moved to approve a contract with Chase Site Services, Inc., for FY25 winter snow plowing in the amount of \$105,135. Second Calloway. Arnold, Calloway, Layton: Yes; Smith, Vincent: No. **Motion Passed.**

### **Item 7 Personnel Policy, Second Read**

- Discussion about the Policy included: the need to state that performance evaluations would happen yearly; the need for or use of Addendum B vis-à-vis compliance by/“discipline” of elected officials; the reference to non-exempt and exempt staff in Section 32; the reasons for and clarification of the definitions of full-time and part-time employees; whether there is a need for a separate Sexual Harassment statement in addition to the one in the Policy; Town Clerk and Listers as both elected and paid employees; accrual of vacation time and payout of same.
- Duffy will prepare three topics for the third read of the Personnel Policy:
  - Re the Sexual Harassment Policy: is there a requirement for a separate policy in addition to the one in the Personnel Policy.
  - Re performance evaluations: clarification of annual evaluations and preservation of the right to conduct additional evaluations if necessary.
  - Re Section 32: the use of exempt and non-exempt language in that section.
- Layton moved to accept the second read of the Personnel Policy. Second Vincent. Arnold, Calloway, Layton, Vincent: Yes; Smith: No. **Motion Passed.**

### **Item 8 Town Manager Review Planning**

- Discussion included creation of process to review the Town Manager versus use of the Performance Evaluation form approved by the Selectboard on May 8, 2024.
- Calloway moved to ask every Selectboard member to complete the “Town Manager Annual Performance Evaluation as Approved for use on May 8, 2024,” for use in Executive Session at the September 25, 2024 Selectboard meeting and to invite the Town Manager. Second Arnold. Arnold, Calloway, Layton: Yes; Smith, Vincent: No. **Motion Passed.**

### **Item 9 Selectboard Handbook Review**

- Discussion included (1) Calloway’s memo of September 5, 2024 laying out a process for review for five committees who had submitted charges; and (2) the “Policy Governing Reporting of Committees, Commissions, Task Force, or Other Groups/Individuals Appointed by the Selectboard,” dated May 23, 2018. Selectboard agreed
  - Calloway will (1) update the Handbook with charges submitted by committees, showing any proposed amendments indicated by statute; and (2) in conjunction with the Town Manager, draft language for the introductory pages which addresses the Selectboard’s acknowledgment of the value of committee’s identifying grants, balanced with the Town’s need to administer grants and approve expenditures and work; and (3) prepare a ‘red line’ update of the “Policy Governing Reporting....”
  - Selectboard will (1) review the Handbook updates; (2) send committees (a) an invitation to meet with the Selectboard, with (b) a copy of their amended Handbook page, and (c) a template request to fill out in advance of any meeting, showing e.g. current and future projects and any need for budgetary support, etc.

### **Item 10 A/P Warrants**

- Layton moved to approve AP Warrant #1179 in the amount of \$1,469.11 to be paid from Fund #4 Conservation Commission Fund. Second Calloway. Arnold, Calloway, Layton, Smith, Vincent: Yes. **Motion Passed.**
- Layton moved to approve AP Warrant # 1178 in the amount of \$3,800,205.28 to be paid from the General Fund. Second Calloway. Arnold, Calloway, Layton, Smith, Vincent: Yes. **Motion Passed.**

### **Item 11 Approval of Minutes: August 14 and 28, 2024**

- Layton moved to approve the August 14, 2024 minutes. Second Calloway. Arnold, Calloway, Layton, Smith, Vincent: Yes. **Motion Passed.**
- Layton moved to approve the August 28, 2024 minutes as amended to add the word “tabled” to Item 14. Second Calloway. Arnold, Calloway, Layton, Smith, Vincent: Yes. **Motion Passed.**

### **Item 12 Adjournment**

- Layton moved to adjourn the meeting. Second by Calloway. Second Calloway. Arnold, Calloway, Layton, Smith, Vincent: Yes. **Motion Passed.** Meeting adjourned at 9:31 p.m.

**Respectfully submitted,**

Marcia S. Calloway, Selectboard

Approved by the Selectboard on September 25, 2024

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Pamela T. Smith  
Selectboard Chair