Town of Norwich, Vermont
Minutes of the Selectboard Meeting
Wednesday, March 26, 2025

Active Participants at Tracy Hall: Mary Layton (SB Chair), Kimo Griggs (SB Vice Chair), Priscilla Vincent (SB member), Matt Swett (SB member), Marcia Calloway (SB member), Brennan Duffy (Town Manager), Pamela Smith (Town member), Craig Layne (Town member), Lynnwood Andrews (Town member), Charlie Lindner (Town member), Christie James (Town member), Cheryl Lindberg (Town Treasurer), Patricia Spellman (Town member), John Farrell (Town member), Chris Rimmer (Town member), Barry Rotman (Town member)

Active Participants on Zoom: Brie Swenson (Recreation Director), Lily Trajman (Town Clerk), Daniel Officer (Prudential Committee Chair), Matthew Romei (Police Chief), Betty Barba (Town member)

The meeting was called to order by Chair Mary Layton at 6:31 pm.
YouTube Timestamp: 16:43

1. **Agenda**
   Timestamp: 17:12

   Marcia asked how the Selectboard should handle potential fire department calls that would require Matt to leave the meeting. Matt will consider possible protocols and share them with the Selectboard at the next meeting.

   Selectboard members discussed the order of agenda items.

   I move to approve the agenda as amended. -- Priscilla moved (2nd Matt) Vote: yes (unanimous)

2. **Chair's Report**
   Timestamp: 22:49

   The Chair (1) brainstormed to improve communications; (2) collaborated to create the agenda; (3) devised a framework for project procedures for the Selectboard to review, to potentially cover the topics of the heat plan, renovation of Tracy Hall, purchasing policy revision, gifts policy revision, and communications; (4) listened to an Open Meeting webinar; (5) listened to an AI synopsis of the last Selectboard meeting; (6) noted communications with Kris Clement, Chris Caroll, and Pam Smith; (7) reviewed the Town Manager contract, evaluation form, and extension; and (8) reviewed the Katucki settlement.

Marcia echoed the need to be respectful and factual in communications.

3. **Public Comments for Items not on the Agenda**
   Timestamp: 29:16

   None.

4. **Appointments to Committees**
   Timestamp: 29:34

   Public comment:
   - Pamela Smith, Craig Layne, Brie Swenson, Lynnwood Andrews, Charlie Lindner, Christie James, Cheryl Lindberg, Patricia Spellman, and Brian Kunz, with details noted below.

   Pamela Smith spoke to her application for Lister. When asked, Pamela stated that she would not sign the Personnel Policy. The Selectboard and Pamela discussed the contents, role, and community member qualms about the Policy. The Town Manager spoke in favor of the Policy and suggested the Town Counsel return to discuss the purpose of the Policy.

   (Bd. of Listers - 1 interim seat): I move to appoint Pamela Smith to the position of Lister for a term to expire on March 3, 2026. -- Priscilla moved (2nd Kimo) Vote: yes (Priscilla, Kimo, Matt, Mary), no (Marcia)

   Craig Layne spoke to his application for the Conservation Commission. Brie Swenson stated her support for Craig Layne.

   (Conservation Cmssn - 3 seats): I move to appoint Craig Layne to the Conservation Commission for a term to expire on March 31, 2029. -- Priscilla moved (2nd Kimo) Vote: yes (unanimous)

   Lynnwood Andrews spoke on behalf of Lindsay Putnam's application for the Conservation Commission.

   I move to appoint Lindsay Putnam to the Conservation Commission for a term to expire on March 31, 2029. -- Priscilla moved (2nd Kimo) Vote: yes (unanimous)

Lynnwood spoke to her application for the Conservation Commission. Lynnwood responded to a Selectboard question on water quality review. Brie stated her support for Lindsay and Lynnwood.

I move to appoint Lynnwood Andrews to the Conservation Commission for a term to expire on March 31, 2029. -- Priscilla moved (2nd Marcia) Vote: yes (unanimous)

The Selectboard discussed Elissa Close's application.

(Development Review Bd. - 2 alt. seats): I move to appoint Elissa Close as Alternate to the Development Review Board for a term to expire on April 30, 2026. -- Priscilla moved (2nd Kimo) Vote: yes (unanimous)

Charlie Lindner spoke to his application for the Energy Committee. Charlie responded to questions on committee activities and website infrastructure.

(Energy Cmtee. - 2 seats): I move to appoint Charlie Lindner to the Energy Committee for a term to expire on March 31, 2028. -- Priscilla moved (2nd Kimo) Vote: yes (unanimous)

Christie James spoke to her application for the Finance Committee.

Marcia suggested tabling the Finance Committee to review its purpose and role in relation to the Town Manager and other bodies. The Selectboard and Town Manager discussed role of the Committee and the number of members needed for the Committee to function. Cheryl Lindberg suggested maintaining the Committee to engage with the corresponding Hanover Committee. Lily Trajman stated her support for the Committee and its ability to foster connection between the Schoolboard and Selectboard.

Cheryl stated that the positions had been posted publicly and discussion of the existence of the Committee should not take place in front of existing candidates. The Town Manager stated the potential for the Committee to create more work depending on the specific work of the Committee. The Chair spoke to the benefits of the Finance Committee. The Selectboard will discuss the charge of the Committee at the next meeting.

(Finance Cmtee. - up to 4 seats): I move to appoint Christie James to the Finance Committee for a term to expire on March 31, 2026. -- Priscilla moved (2nd Kimo) Vote: yes (unanimous)

Christie James spoke to her application for the Trustee of Public Funds. The Chair highlighted a note from a previous audit regarding the budgetary process and expressed hesitance on lending procedures.

(Trustees of Public Funds. - 1 seat): I move to appoint Christie James to the position of Trustee of Public Funds for a term to expire on March 3, 2026. -- Priscilla moved (2nd Kimo) Vote: yes (unanimous)

The Chair read a written statement by Steven Hepburn expressing his interest in joining the Finance Committee.

I move to appoint Steven Hepburn to the Finance Committee for a term to expire on March 31, 2026. -- Marcia moved (2nd Matt) Vote: yes (unanimous)

Patricia Spellman spoke to her application for the Finance Committee.

I move to appoint Patricia Spellman to the Finance Committee for a term to expire on March 31, 2026, Priscilla moved (2nd Kimo) Vote: yes (unanimous)

The Chair noted there were no applications for the Planning Commission.

Brian Kunz spoke to his application for the Trails Committee.

(Trails Cmtee. - 1 seat): I move to appoint Brian Kunz to the Trails Committee for a term to expire on March 31, 2028. – Priscilla moved (2nd Marcia) Vote: yes (unanimous)

Matt thanked the members of the community for their interest and engagement in the committees.

4a. (Reordered) Fire District
Timestamp: 1:24:44

The Chair shared correspondence from Alicia Groft requesting the Selectboard fill a vacancy in the Prudential Committee. The Chair asked for clarification on the request.

Public Comment:

- Daniel Officer explained the request and stated that this would be the most efficient process for filling the open role.
- Cheryl Lindberg explained the appointment procedures and spoke in favor of the Selectboard appointing Zachary Currier to the role.

The Selectboard discussed the characterizations of the Fire District and the appropriateness of the Selectboard filling a Fire District vacancy, including since four of the five Selectboard members live outside the District. The Town Manager asked for clarification on the resignation of the third member of the Prudential Committee.

I move to appoint Zachary Currier to fill the vacancy on the Prudential Committee. -- Kimo moved (2nd Priscilla) Vote: yes (Priscilla, Kimo, Matt), no (Mary, Marcia)

4b. (Reordered) Citizens Assistance Fund
Timestamp: 1:43:33

Public Comment:

- John Farrell explained the funds source and request procedure for the Citizens Assistance Fund. John expressed support for reducing the amount of information required from applicants.

The Town Manager expressed support for a Town Service Officer position and the development of thresholds for information required from assistance applicants. The Town Manager and John will meet to discuss the position before the next Selectboard meeting.

5. **Huntley Meadows Court Projects**
Timestamp: 1:53:50

The Town Manager requested discussion of the request ahead of issuing an RFP for the project.

Public Comment:

- Brie Swenson provided an overview of the current state of the tennis courts at Huntley Meadows. Brie shared a potential plan for resurfacing the courts and installing an adjacent basketball court, then responded to Selectboard questions.
- Pamela Smith asked for an update on the court finances.

I move to authorize the Town Manager to issue an RFP for repaving the Huntley Meadows tennis courts and adding a basketball court adjacent to the tennis courts. -- Kimo moved (2nd Marcia) Vote: yes (unanimous)

6. **(Reordered) Emerald Ash Borer Inoculation**
Timestamp: 2:12:40

The Town Manager described the proposed inoculation plan and stated that the funding would be raised outside of the town's jurisdiction. The Selectboard emphasized that this project fund is separate from the Ash Borer plan discussed at the March 12, 2025 Selectboard meeting and that it would be paid for by privately raised funds.

Public Comment:

- Chris Rimmer responded to Selectboard questions on the proposal.

Selectboard members provided suggestions for publicizing the project.

I move to authorize the inoculation of ash trees on Norwich Town property per the March 11, 2025 memo from the Emerald Ash Borer Management Subcommittee to the Selectboard, as included in the Selectboard meeting packet. -- Priscilla moved (2nd Marcia) Vote: yes (unanimous)

7. **(Reordered) Cell Phone Antenna at DPW Tower**
   Timestamp: 2:20:36

   The Town Manager provided background information on the potential project and stated that the next step would likely be issuing an RFP. The Selectboard and Town Manager discussed the infrastructure of the tower and the possible benefits of the project for the town.

   Public Comment:

   - Barry Rotman expressed support for installing a cellphone antenna at the DPW Tower.

   I move to direct the Town Manager to investigate options and issue an RFP as appropriate for cellphone antenna service at the DPW Tower. -- Marcia moved (2nd Matt) Vote: yes (unanimous)

8. **(Reordered) 1st Read of Animal Control Ordinance**
   Timestamp: 2:34:00

   Police Chief Matthew Romei provided an overview of draft updated guidance and shared that there was significant supplemental information available on the Town website. The Police Chief requested feedback from the Selectboard. Marcia provided feedback on limits, language, and fees.

The Town Manager outlined an updated plan for leashing regulations at recreational fields and trails owned by the Town, informed by past concerns and liability. The Town Manager shared that Brie Swenson is working with an Eagle Scout to possibly establish a dog park in conjunction with the updated regulations. The Police Chief stated that these proposed regulations would bring the Town in line with generally accepted rules of athletic fields.

The Selectboard, Town Manager, and Police Chief discussed impoundment procedures, the inclusion of cats in draft guidance, and regulations on recouping care costs for injured animals found in public. Priscilla suggested outreach to Dr. Christine Pinello of River Road Veterinary Clinic to get her feedback on the proposed policies.

Public Comment:

- Betty Barba expressed concern about the possibility of a dog park and requested the Selectboard consider allowing dogs off-leash on Huntley Meadows at set hours.

The Selectboard agreed to add this topic to the April 23rd meeting agenda.

9. **Selectboard Town Goals**
   Timestamp: 3:03:54

The Chair provided an overview of the proposed projects, specifically the (1) Tracy Hall heat plan, (2) Tracy Hall renovation, (3) Town Manager goals, (4) purchasing policy, (5) gifts policy, and (6) Selectboard communications. The Selectboard and Town Manager discussed the merits and risks of delegating research to individual members.

Marcia highlighted contractual regulations surrounding the Town Manager evaluation and suggested a goals timeline. Matt expressed support for delegating research to individual Selectboard members or pairs to support decision making. Matt additionally expressed interest in researching how to improve communications. Marcia stated the need for frequent check-ins between the Selectboard researchers and the larger Selectboard to ensure continued concurrence on research path and vision.

Kimo stated his interest in researching the Tracy Hall heat plan. The Town Manager stated support for moving forward with heat plan next steps. The Town Manager and Kimo will meet offline to discuss next steps on the project.

The Chair will review the purchasing policy and meet with the Town Manager to discuss it. Marcia requested the Selectboard review the handbook. The Selectboard tabled the agenda item and will revisit it at the next meeting.

10. Town Manager Report
Timestamp: 3:31:37

The Town Manager highlighted that (1) the Town received the two new cruisers, (2) DPW executed contracts for the two major projects reviewed at the last meeting, (3) the Town has various open positions and recently filled an Administrative Assistant role, (4) the Windstream Communications billing issue has been resolved, and (5) the townwide reappraisal appears to be on schedule.

11. Department Reports
Timestamp: 3:36:18

None.

12. Liquor License Renewals
Timestamp: 3:36:51

I move to recess the meeting of the Selectboard at 9:51 pm o'clock for the purpose of executing the duties of the local liquor control commissioners under the authority of 7 VSA §167 et seq.. -- Priscilla moved (2nd Marcia) Vote: yes (unanimous)

I move to approve the First Class License application #55651, for King Arthur Baking Company, Inc.; the Outside Consumption Permit application #55652 for King Arthur Baking Company, Inc.; and the Outside Consumption Permit application #55653 for King Arthur Baking Company, Inc. -- Marcia moved (2nd Kimo) Vote: yes (unanimous)

I move to close the Norwich Liquor Commission session at 9:52 pm o'clock and reconvene the Selectboard meeting .-- Priscilla moved (2nd Marcia) Vote: yes (unanimous)

13. Approve Minutes – Mar. 12, 2025
Timestamp: 3:39:12

Selectboard members requested the continued use of timestamps in the minutes.

I move to approve the minutes for March 12, 2025 as presented. -- Priscilla moved (2nd Marcia) Vote: yes (unanimous)

14. **AP Warrants**
    Timestamp: 3:40:07

    Priscilla asked for clarification on the policy for paying poll workers and the details of a financial services company referenced.

    I move to approve AP Warrant #1256 in the amount of $224,625.65 to be paid from the General Fund, AP Warrant #1257 in the amount of $26.50 to be paid from the General Fund and AP Warrant #1258 in the amount of $344.87 to be paid from the General Fund. -- Priscilla moved (2nd Matt) Vote: yes (unanimous)

15. **Receipt of Correspondence**
    Timestamp: 3:44:13

    I move to accept all correspondence. -- Matt moved (2nd Priscilla) Vote: yes (unanimous)

16. **Adjournment**
    Timestamp: 3:47:52

    I move to adjourn the meeting. -- Priscilla moved (2nd Matt) Vote: yes (unanimous)

Meeting adjourned at 10:02 pm.

Minutes taken by Jenny Tolman.