

**Town of Norwich, Vermont**  
**Minutes of the Selectboard Meeting**  
**Wednesday, June 11, 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), Kirk Williams (Town member), Kristine Williamson (Town member), Matthew Romei (Police Chief)

**Active Participants on Zoom:** Chris Kaufman (Public Works Director), Lily Trajman (Town Clerk), Cheryl Lindberg (Town member), Pam Smith (Town member)

**Key:** *Motions noted in italics.*  
*Public comment noted in blue.*

**The meeting was called to order by Chair Mary Layton at 6:30 pm.**

**YouTube Timestamp: 38:41**

**1. Agenda**

**Timestamp: 39:03**

The Chair noted a late addition to the agenda (#7) at the request of the Town Manager relating to a weather event.

*I move to approve the agenda as presented. – Swett moved (2<sup>nd</sup> Calloway) Vote: yes (unanimous)*

**2. Chair's Report**

**Timestamp: 41:55**

The Chair (1) put together the agenda, (2) talked with Hartford Selectboard Chair Mary Erdei about fostering civic engagement in meetings, (3) reviewed the Vermont Secretary of State Code of Ethics for Public Servants webinar, and (4) noted a request from the Town Manager to remind people to supply their first and last name to enter the online Zoom meeting.

Vincent shared a suggestion from a member of the public that it be noted in meetings that comments should be addressed to the Chair and kept to three minutes.

**3. Public Comments for Items not on the Agenda**

**Timestamp: 43:24**

Kirk Williams shared his family's experience of a significant rise in their taxes since they bought their house in 2016. Williams acknowledged that he did not know what could be done by the Selectboard but requested delaying the reappraisal figures going into effect until next year. Williams highlighted that houses out of town are "really being hit hard." Williams further noted changes on the state level, including the lowering of the income adjustment maximum.

Kristine Williamson voiced her frustration with state tax rates and the slow work of the State House. Williamson stated that she understood the statute to require the Town Clerk to certify that the assessment is correct and requested that the Selectboard review the appraisal and consider putting it off until the numbers can be verified and the State can straighten things out.

Selectboard members, Williams, and Williamson discussed municipal tax rates, state tax rates, and precedent for an extension to the assessment.

#### **4. Spending Request: Norwich Police Department Cruisers**

**Timestamp: 1:00:07**

The Police Chief outlined the status of the existing vehicle fleet. He described updated maintenance practices, including undercoating and detailing vehicles, and shared the goal of a five-year replacement cycle.

The Selectboard, Police Chief, and Town Manager discussed renting versus leasing vehicles, emergency vehicle mechanics and software, personally assigning cruisers, and the alignment of the request with capital planning.

*I move to authorize the sale at auction of the former police cruiser 2017 Ford Interceptor via GovDeals and to place any proceeds from the sale into Fund 11 – Police Cruiser Fund. – Vincent moved (2<sup>nd</sup> Calloway) Vote: yes (unanimous)*

*I move to approve the expenditure of not more than \$90,000.00 from Fund #11 – Police Cruiser Fund for the purchase and upfit of a 2025 Chevrolet Tahoe. – Calloway moved (2<sup>nd</sup> Griggs) Vote: yes (unanimous)*

The Selectboard agreed to discuss a funding request for police radios at the next meeting.

#### **5. Spending Request: Hartford Dispatch Contract Renewal**

**Timestamp: 1:32:10**

The Police Chief described existing dispatching practices for the Town of Norwich. The Police Chief noted a one-year notice requirement to not renew the current dispatching contract. He broke down the funding formula, including a two-year delayed call-based billing procedure, meaning that the charge for Fiscal Year 2026 is based on the number of calls generated in FY24, the period when the Norwich Police Department was severely understaffed. The Police Chief explained that during this understaffed period, discretionary and proactive calls were eliminated, resulting in a significantly lower number of calls in FY24. Therefore, the expected bill for FY26 is substantially lower than the line item in the budget. The Police Chief added that the next budget will be the first he gets to build for the Norwich Police Department that he has the institutional knowledge to prepare.

The Police Chief responded to Selectboard questions about calls for service, dispatch service selection, and insurance. Griggs noted a lack of costs written in the dispatch agreement, to which the Police Chief responded that the starting point for cost is not known but that he can share past years' costs. The Police Chief added that this contract additionally covers the Police Department's entire records management system.

*I move to authorize the Town Manager to sign the Agreement Between Town of Hartford, Vermont and the Town of Norwich, Vermont for Provision of Emergency Dispatch Communications Services, as included in the Selectboard meeting packet. – Griggs moved (2<sup>nd</sup> Vincent) Vote: yes (unanimous)*

## **6. Spending Request: DPW Freightliner Trucks**

**Timestamp: 1:48:57**

Chris Kaufman reviewed the content of his memo included in the Selectboard packet. Kaufman noted severe backlogs in the manufacturing process of trucks, rising costs of maintenance, and the "elderly" status of the existing fleet.

Vincent expressed confusion over what "getting in the queue" for a truck means for the price of the truck. Vincent noted that the numbers do not line up in the estimate from Freightliner.

Kaufman clarified that not getting in line to get a manufacturing slot means that other customers' orders will be manufactured first and the town's order would be pushed years down the line. Kaufman added that no money needs to be paid until the truck is delivered and that the price listed is approximate and meets the budget.

Calloway suggested the Selectboard consider storage methods of maintenance vehicles to increase their lifespans. Calloway stated that she would prefer signed and dated letters that include references to the quotes given.

Swett asked if there is a used market for the trucks, to which Kaufman responded that it is not common practice to purchase these vehicles used given the intense wear over their lifetimes.

Kaufman noted that this expense has already been planned and approved, and that this request is purely to hold a spot in line for manufacturing. Kaufman explained that he will return to the Selectboard for approval at a later point once the manufacturing company reaches the point of production and presents an exact cost.

Calloway highlighted that it is a statutory mandate to keep roads “up to date” and that the Town would have to rent vehicles if the Town does not have them. She reiterated Kaufman’s statement that this expense was included in the capital budgeting.

*Pending receipt of new letters signed by ATG and Viking Cives of Vermont which are dated and signed, I move to authorize the Public Works Director to order two new Freightliner trucks in order to hold a manufacturing slot and replace current Town trucks #4 and #5 in the next four years, as anticipated by the existing capital budget. – Calloway moved (2<sup>nd</sup> Griggs) Vote: yes (Calloway, Layton, Griggs, Swett), abstain (Vincent)*

## **7. June 6th Weather Event - State Emergency Grant**

**Timestamp: 2:04:34**

Kaufman described the effects of the June 6<sup>th</sup> weather event, including damages to the areas by Mitchell Brook and Chapel Hill. Kaufman shared that he met with VTrans and petitioned for the State emergency grant, which they have agreed to move forward with. The grant is a 90/10 grant, Kaufman continued, meaning that the State would own 90% of the cost and the Town would own 10% of the cost. Kaufman shared that he had hired a contractor, Chase Site Services, and the work will continue through next week. He does not have a detailed cost at the moment but has met the threshold of 10% of non-winter cost items, around \$60,000.00. Kaufman added that there will probably be a few other issues that likely won’t be covered by VTrans, including removing the abandoned bridge at the end of South Chapel Hill.

Kaufman responded to Selectboard questions on culverts. He noted that the culverts will eventually be upsized but that in the meantime they are doing emergency repairs and opening the culverts in anticipation of rain this weekend.

*I move to approve moving forward with the Vermont state emergency grant. – Calloway moved (2<sup>nd</sup> Griggs) Vote: yes (unanimous)*

Griggs highlighted recent tire punctures on Dutton Hill Road and Bragg Hill Road following new stone being put down. Kaufman responded that he had heard a few comments about problems but did not see any significant issues on the road.

## **8. Spending Request: Town Clerk from Fund 45**

**Timestamp: 2:15:47**

*I move to authorize the expenditure of up to \$419.49 from Fund #45 to purchase mylar envelopes for the Town's map cabinet. – Griggs moved (2<sup>nd</sup> Vincent) Vote: yes (unanimous)*

## **9. Dissolution of Audit Committee**

**Timestamp: 2:17:48**

Vincent questioned the need to dissolve the committee given that no one is on it and the possibility of someday needing it.

Calloway explained that the master financial policy says it is done a different way, and that this matter came up when things “weren’t going well with a particular Town Manager.” Calloway stated that she thought it reasonable to dissolve the committee since the statute allows for a professional auditor and they currently have a good auditor. She considered it a “bad bandaid at a bad time.”

The Chair agreed with Calloway that the charge developed was inappropriate, as soliciting bids for an auditor should be done by the Town Manager. The Chair questioned what an audit committee would do and how it would work in parallel with the process of a professional auditor.

Vincent clarified that she had envisioned the committee reading the audit and distilling it for the Selectboard.

*I move to dissolve the Audit Committee. – Calloway moved (2<sup>nd</sup> Swett) Vote: yes (unanimous)*

## **10. 2026 Vermont 250th Anniversary Commemoration**

**Timestamp: 2:22:40**

The Chair shared the statewide effort to celebrate the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the formation of the country. Selectboard members discussed ways of celebrating the anniversary.

## **11. Selectboard Handbook**

**Timestamp: 2:25:39**

Calloway explained the memo included in the Selectboard packet on the draft Selectboard Handbook, which included a recap of updates she had made to the draft based on the last meeting's discussion and other town input.

Calloway suggested looking at a draft of a new committee reporting policy at the next meeting. Calloway requested that Selectboard members send her ideas so that she may compile them ahead of the meeting. Calloway pondered whether the Affordable Housing Subcommittee, currently a subcommittee of the Planning Commission, merited its own committee. Calloway concluded that "it's time that we start thinking about how we as the legislative body deal with those groups that we have created, or which are statutorily created and are working with us for the town."

The Chair suggested Selectboard members create memos on the reporting policy for how it would work. She reflected that progress can be generally tracked through committee minutes but that minutes do not capture the whole story.

Vincent questioned the alignment of the Emerald Ash Borer Fund with the new gift policy. Calloway countered that she did not see the activity as a gift, as there is no guarantee of a benefit.

Griggs proposed the possibility of a meeting of committee chairs to share information and establish priorities and standards. Selectboard members considered ways of staying informed with committee activities while aligning with open meeting laws.

The Chair suggested Selectboard members draft memos reflecting on the existing committee reporting policy, whether the policy workable, and whether the policy is necessary.

Calloway confirmed the item's next steps of discussing committee reporting, scheduling the Affordable Housing Subcommittee to meet with the Selectboard, and reviewing the entire handbook.

## **12. Fire Protection Fee**

**Timestamp: 2:47:29**

*I move to find that premature general public knowledge about contract negotiations would clearly place the public body or a person involved at a substantial disadvantage. – Calloway moved (2<sup>nd</sup> Swett) Vote: yes (Calloway, Layton, Griggs, Swett) no (Vincent)*

Vincent questioned why this matter required an executive session, as it looked like a memorandum of understanding as opposed to a contract. Vincent wondered “why we’re not more collegial in reaching out to the Fire District and including them in the discussions that we’re having.”

Cheryl Lindberg asked why the Selectboard did not enter executive session to discuss the dispatch contract covered earlier in the meeting and shared that the document has been public in the past.

The Chair responded that there was no negotiation for the dispatch contract. Calloway added that the dispatch contract is a contract of adhesion, which does not require an executive session.

Swett stated that the discussion of the amount that might be paid for fire hydrant rentals in open comment would “put us at a disadvantage” and offered a reminder of the Town Manager’s previous comment that the Fire District entered executive session to create the proposal.

The Chair noted that she understood this matter to be a negotiation.

*I move to enter executive session under 1 VSA §313(a)(1)(A) to consider a pending Fire District proposed contract and invite the Town Manager and Fire Chief. – Calloway moved (2<sup>nd</sup> Swett) Vote: yes (Calloway, Layton, Griggs, Swett) no (Vincent)*

Time entered Executive Session: 8:47

*I move to enter public session. – Calloway moved (2<sup>nd</sup> Griggs) Vote: yes (unanimous)*

Time entered Public Session: 10:08

*I move to authorize the Town Manager to submit the Town's counterproposal to the Chair of the Norwich Prudential Committee. – Calloway moved (2<sup>nd</sup> Griggs) Vote: yes (Calloway, Layton, Griggs, Swett) recuse (Vincent)*

### **13. Approve Minutes**

**Timestamp: 4:17:41**

In the discussion of the existing gift policy, Calloway noted that the Planning Commission is also allowed to do certain things by statute; the minutes did not include “by statute.”

*I move to approve the minutes for May 28, 2025 as amended. – Calloway moved (2<sup>nd</sup> Swett) Vote: yes (unanimous)*

### **14. AP Warrants**

**Timestamp: 4:18:56**

*I move to approve AP Warrant #1325 in the amount of \$173,595.67 to be paid from the General Fund; AP Warrant #1317 in the amount of \$41,460.00 to be paid from the Expense/Emergency Reserve Fund; AP Warrant #1319 in the amount of \$46.98 to be paid from the Main Street Flags Fund; AP Warrant #1324 in the amount of \$39.62 to be paid from the General Fund; and AP Warrant #1323 in the amount of \$79.00 from the General Fund. – Calloway moved (2<sup>nd</sup> Swett) Vote: yes (unanimous)*

### **15. Receipt of Correspondence**

**Timestamp: 4:20:24**

Selectboard members discussed how to proceed with the list of unlicensed dogs provided by the Town Clerk. The Chair added the topic for a future meeting agenda.

Calloway pondered the procedures and regulations surrounding the acceptance of public correspondence when it includes pejorative or inflammatory language. Calloway suggested accepting all correspondence minus those from Kris Clement, due to the inclusion of language intended to inflame, specifically the reference to legal counsel as “the legal goon squad,” the suggestion that the Town is “lawyering up,” and the reference to extortion. Calloway shared her belief that “we are devaluing our community and our staff if we accept that language or behavior.”



Swett stated that it “could be a slippery slope” and that the use of inflammatory statements “reflects more of the person who’s writing it than on what they’re saying and who they’re saying it about.”

Selectboard members contemplated options for dealing with inflammatory correspondence. The Chair suggested the possibility of the Town Manager and Clement meeting face to face. Griggs asked how such language would be handled if spoken in-person at a meeting and highlighted the need to use the same standard for written correspondence as in-person. Calloway offered the possibility of revisiting protocol documents for guidance on accepting correspondence. Swett suggested changing the motion from “accept all correspondence” to “receive all correspondence.”

[Pam Smith encouraged the Selectboard to “receive” correspondence.](#)

The Town Manager shared that there will not be a police officer sitting in the room for the informal reappraisal hearings, but that the police force has been rescheduled to ensure that an officer will be in town on duty during the periods of time when the hearings are held. The Town Manager advised calling 911 if an incident occurs and that the officer on duty will respond.

*I move to receive all correspondence. – Swett moved (2<sup>nd</sup> Vincent) Vote: yes (Griggs, Vincent, Swett, Layton) no (Calloway)*

## **16. Adjournment**

**Timestamp: 4:39:18**

*I move to adjourn the meeting. – Vincent moved (2<sup>nd</sup> Griggs) Vote: yes (unanimous)*

Meeting adjourned at 10:31 pm.

Minutes taken by Jenny Tolman.

Minutes approved on June 25, 2025

---

Mary Layton, Selectboard Chair