

Town of Norwich, Vermont
Minutes of the Selectboard Meeting
Wednesday, July 9, 2025

Active Participants at Tracy Hall: Mary Layton (SB Chair), Priscilla Vincent (SB member), Marcia Calloway (SB member), Kimo Griggs (SB Vice Chair), Matt Swett (SB member), Brennan Duffy (Town Manager), Cheryl Lindberg (Lister), Alexa Manning (Town member), Justin Krawitt (Town member), Kris Clement (Town member), Terry Boone (Town member)

Active Participants on Zoom: Jaan Laaspere (Town member), Alex Northern (Fire Chief), Watt Alexander (Town member), Pam Smith (Lister)

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: 42:45

1. Agenda

Timestamp: 43:20

Vincent requested the removal of Item 11, Lister Contract Extension/Post Reappraisal Listers Budget Implications, due to her belief that the Selectboard did not have authority to discuss it. Vincent quoted the Selectboard Handbook.

Calloway countered that this was a budget issue and therefore within the purview of the Selectboard. Swett shared that he did not find it unreasonable for an employee to ask their employer for guidance if they feel there is an issue. Griggs did not see an issue if the Listers stay within their budget.

The Chair reflected on the awkwardness of the situation given the Town Manager's lack of managerial authority over the elected officials and the other matter of the Listers giving themselves a raise.

I move to strike number 11, lister contract extension, from the agenda. – Vincent moved (2nd Griggs) Vote: yes (Griggs, Vincent), no (Calloway, Swett, Layton)

Cheryl Lindberg explained that it is in the master financial policies to allow the signing of the contract of the dollar amount within the budget and highlighted the lack of communication from the Town Manager with the Listers.

The Town Manager requested adding to the agenda a review and approval of an increased amount of money for the Tracy Hall boiler replacement project.

Vincent questioned the legality of adding an item to the agenda when the agenda has been warned without it. Calloway suggested discussing the matter under Tracy Hall Improvements agenda item.

I move to approve the agenda as amended. – Calloway moved (2nd Griggs) Vote: yes (Calloway, Griggs, Swett, Layton), no (Vincent)

2. Chair's Report

Timestamp: 53:25

The Chair (1) met to establish the agenda, (2) conducted research on a future purchasing policy to likely bring before the Selectboard in August, and (3) highlighted the potential for correspondence topics to be future agenda items.

Vincent noted a report from the Town Clerk with a list of unlicensed and potentially unvaccinated dogs and encouraged further steps on the matter.

3. Public Comments for Items not on the Agenda

Timestamp: 55:52

Vincent thanked Officer Foucher for assisting with her cellphone.

4. Animal Control Ordinance

Timestamp: 56:42

Vincent voiced her appreciation for Calloway's clarifications.

The Chair shared her belief that a conversation still needs to happen after the passage of the dog ordinance.

Swett recapped the progression of the dog discussion and shared his support for defined off-leash or on-leash hours at Huntley Meadows, which could be articulated at kiosks at entrance points to the Meadows. He emphasized his belief that the first round of leashing time regulations should be passed in conjunction with the passage of the dog ordinance, though not be written into the dog ordinance.

Calloway stated that the ordinance needs to remain flexible and reminded the Selectboard of the 60-day period before the ordinance would become effective. Calloway suggested the formation of a committee to determine leashing hours in the 60-day period.

Selectboard members discussed the appropriateness of passing the ordinance without established leashing guidelines, the designation of the responsibility to post reasonable notice, and the best locations for posting reasonable notice.

Swett highlighted the knowledge of Recreation Director Brie Swenson in informing possible leashing hours.

Griggs advocated for pursuing version nine of the ordinance and forming a committee to work on definitions and rules.

Vincent asked that Swett write up his proposed hours and include it in the next Selectboard Packet. Swett agreed to write up his proposed hours and take comment.

Calloway clarified that the ordinance should include the definitions and that the additional component would be a schedule.

Selectboard members and the Town Manager discussed adjustments to language in the ordinance, including to the specificity of posting requirements and the definition of a dog owner.

Manning thanked Swett for his work. Manning advocated for voting on the dog ordinance and associated rules at the same time. She emphasized that the sixty-day period is for public comment, not waiting for the rules to be developed. Manning expressed concern about the wording in the ordinance about a dog crossing a white playing line.

Swett offered an example of existing driving speed limits and the ability of the police to take the matter in context and not always issue a ticket or violation.

Justin Krawitt recommended that the ordinance focus on other town-owned recreation areas beyond Huntley Meadows. Krawitt asked how the ordinance would apply to hunting dogs.

Swett clarified that this draft ordinance only applies to town-owned spaces, which include Gile Mountain Fire Tower and Milton Frye Nature Area, and does not apply to Fire District property or privately owned land.

Kris Clement suggested sending the list of ordinance rules to the list of dog owners in town. Clement encouraged using statutory language less intense than “banning” or “prohibiting” and merging Section 13a and 13b.

Terry Boone reflected on the use of acreage at Huntley Meadows and suggested a heightened focus on what the designated areas for off-leash dogs will be.

Jaan Laaspere urged a clear process and low threshold for reporting interactions with dogs to enable accurate tracking of dog offenses.

Calloway suggested including the list of town-owned properties in the ordinance, as referenced previously by Swett. Calloway stated the need for an applicability section due to confusion among residents over what areas the ordinance applies to.

Selectboard members and the Town Manager contemplated the meaning of “recreation areas” and the inclusion or exclusion of specific areas in the ordinance.

Laaspere clarified that the ordinance applies to the entire town, and that Section 13 is a narrower regulation on a specific area of land.

Manning asked for clarification as to whether Swett was responsible for drafting the rules.

Swett emphasized that his email is always open for feedback and ideas. Griggs added that the Selectboard has asked Swett to write up the rules from the group’s extensive discussion, and that it will be reviewed as a group.

5. Jones Circle Historic District National Register Nomination

Timestamp: 2:06:23

I move to approve the Certified Local Government National Register Nomination Final Review and Recommendation Report, as included in the Selectboard meeting packet. – Griggs moved (2nd Vincent) Vote: yes (unanimous)

6. Hanover Ambulance Contract

Timestamp: 2:07:29

I move to approve the Hanover Emergency Ambulance Service and EMS Transport Agreement, as included in the Selectboard meeting packet, and authorize the Town Manager to sign the same. – Calloway moved (2nd Swett) Vote: yes (unanimous)

7. Tracy Hall Improvements

Timestamp: 2:09:12

The Town Manager explained that ARC Mechanical was the sole bidder and had a proposal above the \$219,000 that had been approved for the project. He highlighted some uncertainty about the structural integrity of the upper chimney, which could require additional specialist work.

The Town Manager shared that there was approximately \$889,000 in the Tracy Hall Improvement fund.

I move to authorize the expenditure of up to \$239,000 for the replacement of the Tracy Hall boilers. – Calloway moved (2nd Swett) Vote: yes (unanimous)

Griggs suggested reengagement with the architect to help inform next steps for Tracy Hall improvements.

The Chair suggested the addition of solar, greater insulation of the roof, and updates to the elevator for Tracy Hall next steps.

Vincent shared her belief that the Selectboard lacked vision for the town and Tracy Hall.

Swett agreed that involving an architect would be important to ensure a holistic view.

Selectboard members and the Town Manager discussed future uses of Tracy Hall, the value of flexibility in usability, necessary maintenance vs. reimagining the space, and specifications of an elevator update.

The Town Manager noted that any money that was left as a balance on the Studio Nexus contract was rolled into the boiler project, and reengagement with the architect would likely require a new scope of work and commission.

The Town Manager suggested the elevator, slate roof, stage updates to include storage space and a ramp for ADA compliance, and lighting as potential projects. He highlighted the upcoming disruption of the boiler project for the simultaneous management of the business use of the space.

Griggs suggested the use of interior ramps on the Norwich Green side of the building to possibly replace the elevator, and more generally advocated for not limiting potential projects to solely interior projects.

I move to direct the Town Manager to investigate replacement cost for an elevator, to procure an estimate to determine the condition of the slate roof, and to request a consultation with Studio Nexus for the Selectboard to discuss the future vision for Tracy Hall. – Calloway moved (2nd Griggs) Vote: yes (unanimous)

8. Committee Reporting

Timestamp: 2:58:36

Selectboard members and the Town Manager pondered reporting requirements, charges, and guidance for committees. Selectboard members debated next steps, including inviting a committee to test out the draft form and provide feedback, providing a general communication to committees about a new reporting structure, or tabling the matter until a later date.

I move to rescind the Policy Governing Reporting of Committees, Commissions, Task Force, or Other Groups/Individuals Appointed by the Selectboard that was adopted on May 23rd, 2018. – Layton moved (2nd Griggs) Vote: yes (unanimous)

9. Selectboard Handbook

Timestamp: 3:27:20

Selectboard members discussed adjustments to the Handbook language suggested by Chris Katucki.

Watt Alexander shared that the adoption of a Town Manager form of government had been more of a source of conflict between the Selectboard and the Town Manager than a clarification of role and scope of authority of the Selectboard in managing town affairs. Alexander emphasized that a clear understanding of designation of responsibilities is essential for the two bodies to work together successfully, and that the draft language is unclear.

Calloway explained that “interference in town duties” is to prevent overreach of the Selectboard in Town Manager duties. Selectboard members and Alexander discussed adjustments to Handbook language to clarify the relationship and designation of responsibility between the Selectboard and Town Manager.

Selectboard members discussed updates to open meeting laws, the Selectboard's ability to adjust committees, and handbook language pertaining to subcommittee vs. committees.

10. Strategic Planning

Timestamp: 3:55:58

Calloway shared her lack of understanding of the matter historically, since the strategic direction is determined through the budgeting process and the Planning Commission is charged with town plan and zoning bylaws.

The Chair and Swett highlighted possible use of a SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) for planning matters. Swett emphasized that these analyses are only useful if the relevant spreadsheets are reviewed and updated.

Clement stated that everything referenced could be given to the Finance Committee.

11. Lister Contract Extension/Post Reappraisal Listers Budget Implications

Timestamp: 4:08:58

Vincent shared her belief that it was within the Town Manager's authority to sign the contract and that the activity of the Listers is not within the purview of the Selectboard. Griggs stated his alignment with this view.

Calloway stated that it is the Selectboard's responsibility to determine what is reasonable for funding the Lister's Office.

Swett reflected on his learning process in his role and the need to assume good intentions and ultimately shared that it is within the Town Manager's authority to sign the contract.

Griggs stated that he did not see the issue with giving a raise now as opposed to another time as long as it remains within the budget.

The Town Manager reiterated his discomfort with the contract and his concern about the six-month contract extension. He noted his preference for a shorter-term contract with a stronger emphasis on the search for an assessor.

Lindberg shared her frustration that this topic has been brought forward at the time of the reappraisal and the lack of communication from the Town Manager. Lindberg stated that bringing up the contract at the previous Selectboard meeting was an open meeting

violation. Lindberg further emphasized that it was the Listers who pulled off the reappraisal, despite numerous hinderances.

Vincent highlighted that the contract is within the budget and that the Listers do not work full time.

Clement thanked the Listers for their work, noted the applicability of the ongoing handbook discussion to this matter, and called out Calloway for encouraging the Selectboard to review the Listers at budget season. Clement noted that a discussion of budget line items should also apply to the Town Manager salary.

Calloway questioned the contractor's position and the lack of activity on an RFP for an assessor so far. The Chair shared that it is ultimately up to the voters to decide what is okay.

Lindberg highlighted that an eventual assessor would cost more money.

Vincent noted that the Listers have a small part of the overall town budget and that the Selectboard sets the tax rate.

I move to direct the Town Manager to sign the Lister contract. – Vincent moved (2nd Griggs) Vote: yes (Vincent, Griggs, Layton, Swett), no (Calloway)

12. Half Step Beer & Wine Liquor License Renewal

Timestamp: 4:38:48

I move to recess the meeting of the Selectboard at 10:26 pm for the purpose of executing the duties of the local liquor control commissioners under the authority of 7 VSA §167 et seq. – Calloway moved (2nd Vincent) Vote: yes (unanimous)

I move to approve the Second Class Restaurant/Bar License application #61454, for Uncle Jam Industries. – Calloway moved (2nd Vincent) Vote: yes (unanimous)

I move to close the Norwich Liquor Commission session at 10:27 pm and reconvene the Selectboard meeting. – Calloway moved (2nd Vincent) Vote: yes (unanimous)

13. Approve Minutes

Timestamp: 4:40:33

I move to approve the minutes for June 25, 2025 as presented. – Calloway moved (2nd Vincent) Vote: yes (unanimous)

14. AP Warrants

Timestamp: 4:41:23

Pam Smith questioned the use of General Fund money for designated fund projects and referenced the minutes from February 24, 2024.

Selectboard members, the Town Manager, and Smith discussed confusion over the warrant funding sources referenced in the motion. The Town Manager agreed to discuss the matter with the Finance Department the next day.

I move to authorize the Chair to sign the AP Warrant or warrants in the amount of \$297,168.53; then AP Warrant #1345 in the amount of \$1,062.75 to be paid from the Town Reappraisal Fund; AP Warrant #1345 in the amount of \$9,820.00 to be paid from the Police Special Equipment Fund; AP Warrant #1345 in the amount of \$3,121.50 to be paid from the Fire Equipment Fund; AP Warrant #1345 in the amount of \$3,747.85 to be paid from Expense/Emergency Reserve Fund; AP Warrant #1348 in the amount of \$209.50 to be paid from the General Fund; and AP Warrant #1349 in the amount of \$158.84 to be paid from the General Fund. – Calloway moved (2nd Swett) Vote: yes

15. Receipt of Correspondence

Timestamp: 4:59:55

Calloway suggested the inclusion of zoning bylaws as a future agenda item.

Calloway shared her experience of seeing excessive speeding in town and suggested the use of cameras to document and ticket speeders. Swett suggested the potential for crosswalks at points along Beaver Meadow Road to help slow traffic.

The Chair noted the topic of Town Treasurer as a non-voting member for a future agenda item.

I move to receive all correspondence. – Vincent moved (2nd Griggs) Vote: yes (unanimous)

16. Adjournment

Timestamp: 5:06:12

I move to adjourn the meeting. – Griggs moved (2nd Calloway) Vote: yes (unanimous)

Meeting adjourned at 10:54.

Minutes taken by Jenny Tolman.

Minutes approved on July 23, 2025

Mary Layton, Selectboard Chair