

Town of Norwich
Finance Committee Special Meeting
August 11, 2025, 7:30pm
Multi-purpose Room, Tracy Hall

Committee Members Present: Steven Hepburn, Chair, Christie James, Vice-Chair, Cheryl Lindberg, Treasurer and Russell North

Committee Members Absent: Nicholas Wood and Tricia Spellman

Public present: Priscilla Vincent, Selectboard Member

1. Call meeting to order –
 - The Chair called the meeting to order at 7:36 PM.
2. Approve minutes – discussion/motion
 - James made a motion to approve the minutes from June 9th and July 14, 2025. Hepburn seconded the motion. The motion passed – Hepburn and James YES, Russell Abstained.
3. Selectboard response to memos – discussion
 - Hepburn presented the proposed Rules of Procedure to the SB. The SB feedback reiterated that the Finance Committee is to operate under the specific charge adopted in the April 9th, 2025 Selectboard meeting.
 - The Town Treasurer is an ex officio member of the Finance Committee with no voting rights was discussed. Some members of the SB considered there may be a conflict of interest if the Treasurer was given voting rights. This has been tabled to a future date for consideration by the Selectboard.
 - As of August 11th, the Finance Committee has not been given a task by the SB.
4. Duplicated/outdated Town website pages – discussion
 - Steven will contact Miranda Bergmeier, Assistant Town Manager, to correct some inaccuracies regarding the Finance Committee and certain policies on the official website of the Town of Norwich.
 - There is still a 'historical' Finance Committee page showing the old Finance Committee members.
 - It was also noted that the Selectboard policies page still contains reporting of Committees appointed by the Selectboard; May 2018.
 - Hepburn will also question if all the policies on the website are up to date and accurate

5. FY25 Budget Review – discussion
 - Lindberg noted there are unaudited financial reports in the July SB packet. The actual numbers are subject to change for up to 45 days after the end of the fiscal year per the financial policy. There are usually no updated financial reports to the public until the audit report is made public in January or February.
 - James requested to discuss the FY25 budget at the next FC meeting
6. School District Budgets – discussion
 - Norwich School Board Meeting will be Thursday August 14th. Steven will meet with the NSB and introduce himself and the Norwich Finance Committee. The message to the school district boards is the Norwich Finance Committee now exists, again. How might we help? Garrett Palm is the Chair. Garrett and Neil Odell form the Norwich School Budget Finance Committee and will be pulling together their annual budget guidelines for the next meeting in September.
 - The Dresden School Board Meeting is on Tuesday 8/19 at the High School Library. A representative from the Norwich Finance Committee will summarize any discussions from the Norwich Board Meeting.
 - Hepburn reached out to Greg Snyder of the Hanover Finance Committee and informed him that the Norwich Finance Committee is up and running and requested to meet jointly as the Hanover Finance Committee to review the Dresden School Board Budget. Greg Snyder will put the NFC on the agenda for September 25 at 5:00pm to possibly discuss a collaboration plan.
7. Information and Data useful for Budget Review – discussion/motion
 - Hepburn presented several possible SB requests that would be useful for the FC and ultimately helpful for the SB for financial decision making.
 - Hepburn will send the SB a memo requesting various data and informal reports to assist with Budget reviews.
 - North made a motion to have Hepburn send the SB a memo requesting data and informal reports. James seconded the motion. The motion passed with unanimous consent.
8. Updated Rules of Procedure – discussion/motion
 - James made a motion to approve the most recent edits of the Norwich Finance Committee – Rules of Procedure (2025) that includes the specific charge from the Selectboard adopted on April 9th, 2025. North seconded the motion. The motion passed with unanimous consent.
9. Areas of Research or Analysis to propose to Selectboard – discussion/motion
 - The Finance Committee proposes that the Selectboard invite the Committee to identify and select a set of comparable Vermont towns for future compare-and-contrast analysis. This work would focus on reviewing and reporting on areas such as:

- Overall budget size and growth trends
 - Service levels and staffing structures
 - Capital planning and reserve fund policies
 - Tax rates and revenue sources
- Having a set of benchmark towns offers valuable context for Norwich's budget decisions. It can help frame budget increases, identify spending gaps or efficiencies, clarify service levels, and support communication with the public. While differences between towns will always exist, well-chosen comparisons can provide practical insight and inform both short-term decisions and long-term planning.
- North made a motion to request the SB to task the FC to identify 3- 5 comparable towns to benchmark predetermined criteria to assist the town in financial decision making. James seconded the motion. The motion passed with unanimous consent.

10. Public Comments for items not on the agenda –

- There were no public comments.

11. Adjourn –

- James made a motion to adjourn. North seconded the motion. The motion passed with unanimous consent. The meeting adjourned at 9:27 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Stephen Hepburn, Chair
Norwich Finance Committee