

DRAFT  
Town of Norwich  
Finance Committee Special Meeting  
September 8, 2025, 7:30 – 9:00 pm  
Multi-purpose Room, Tracy Hall

Committee Members Present: Tricia Spellman, Steven Hepburn and Cheryl Lindberg, Russell North, and Christie James

Committee Members Absent: Nicholas Wood

Public present: Priscilla Vincent and Matt Swett, Selectboard members

1. Call meeting to order
  - a. At 7:30 pm, Hepburn called the Finance Committee meeting to order.
2. Hepburn made a motion to add “Review of Open meeting Law Remedy” to the agenda and North seconded. The motion passed with unanimous consent.
3. Review of Open Meeting Law Remedy –
  - a. Town staff, who are generally responsible for posting meeting agendas on the town website, were not in the office when Hepburn asked them to post the agenda on Friday, September 5th for the September 8<sup>th</sup> meeting. Hepburn posted on the Norwich listserv himself last week. Once the staff were back in the office, they posted it on the town website – as of 11 am on September 8<sup>th</sup>. Paper copies of the agenda were posted by Lindberg on September 5th.
4. Approve minutes 8/11 – discussion/motion
  - a. James made a motion to accept the minutes, and Lindberg seconded. The motion passed with unanimous consent.
5. Selectboard response to memo “Finance Committee Concern Regarding Ex-Officio voting Rights of Town Treasurer” – discussion
  - a. It was noted that the Selectboard reinstated the voting rights for the Treasurer at their meeting on August 27<sup>th</sup>. The position remains as Ex-Officio.
6. Updated Rules of Procedure - discussion/motion
  - a. It was noted that the Treasurer’s voting rights needed to be added back into the document. Spellman made motion to approve the addition, and North seconded. The motion passed with unanimous consent.
7. Selectboard response to memo “Memo to selectboard on financial and strategic information” – discussion
  - a. There was a discussion about the memo and other correspondence with the Selectboard. It was noted that there was no discussion at the Selectboard meeting other than accepting the memo into the packet. There was an email correspondence with Mary Layton about the Finance Committee information

request. Layton suggested that the Finance Committee get started with the analysis work by using the publicly available town reports.

- b. There was a discussion about why the Committee would like to have the information that was requested, in a format that is easy to analyze (e.g. Excel): to conduct an overall financial review; to understand the town financial picture; to understand how things have evolved over time (3 years), and to analyze trends and variances.
- c. There was also a discussion about the capital budgeting spreadsheet. It was noted that there is an old version of the capital budget on the Town website.

8. School Districts Budgets - discussion

- a. Finance Committee members had interactions with two different school district budget committees recently – the Norwich School Board and the Dresden School Board.
- b. Hepburn attended a recent Norwich School Board meeting. At that meeting, there was a discussion about the history of the Finance Committee and the School Board. It was noted that there was an MOU between the School Board and Selectboard with a description of how it would work. The MOU expired or was dissolved (likely in 2021) and as far as the Norwich School Board was concerned, they had no knowledge of the Norwich Finance Committee being reinstated. The School Board Chair, Garrett Palm, is going to reach out to Mary Layton to discuss next steps. The Finance Committee will wait to hear from the Selectboard about next steps with the Norwich School Board.
- c. James attended a recent Dresden School Board meeting. That Board is looking to Garrett Palm and Neil O'Dell, from the Norwich School Board, for their perspective on the role of the Norwich Finance Committee.
- d. The Hanover Finance Committee has a meeting at the end of the month and Hepburn plans to attend that meeting.

9. Selectboard response to memo – “Memo to selectboard on comparable towns work request” – discussion

- a. It was noted that the Selectboard approved the memo with a wording modification.

10. Selectboard task – Suggest comparable towns

- a. The Finance Committee is tasked with identifying up to five comparable towns. Metrics discussed included size of town population, location, and annual town budget among other indicators.
- b. Hepburn already did a lot of the work on the worksheet based on the Gov HR compensation study.
- c. Two additional towns mentioned to be added to the worksheet were Sharon and Newbury.
- d. Finance Committee members were directed to review Hepburn's worksheet and provide edits and additions.

11. FY27 Town Budget – discussion

- a. It was noted that Norwich town departments have been asked to submit initial budget projections for FY27.
- b. It was noted that the School Boards already have draft FY27 budgets out – with assumptions called the “quick budgets.”

- c. Hepburn plans to go ahead and create an Excel worksheet for the Finance Committee with historical budget information that is currently publicly available.

12. Public Comments for items not on the agenda

- a. Swett asked about providing meeting packets and recording future Finance Committee meetings.
- b. Vincent noted that she is impressed by the perseverance and dedication of the Finance Committee.

13. Adjourn – motion

- a. Hepburn made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:00 pm. North seconded the motion. The motion passed with unanimous consent.