

Town of Norwich, Vermont
Minutes of the Special Selectboard Meeting
Wednesday, Nov 19, 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), Miller Nuttle (Town member), Cheryl Lindberg (Treasurer and Lister), Pam Smith (Lister), Steven True (Planning and Zoning Director), Brie Swenson (Recreation Director), Alex Northern (Fire Chief), Jordan Mueller (Solid Waste Committee)

Active Participants on Zoom: Barrie Rosalinda (Finance Director)

Key: *Motions noted in italics.*
[Public comment noted in blue.](#)

The meeting was called to order by Chair Mary Layton at 6:29 pm.

[YouTube](#) Timestamp: 42:36

1. Agenda

Timestamp: 42:58

The Chair noted a request to add an item for approving the renewal of a CD.

Vincent questioned whether the Selectboard needed to discuss the item on Board of Listers Legality of Self-Approved Wages.

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

2. Chair's Report

Timestamp: 44:36

The Chair had no items to report.

3. Public Comments for Items not on the Agenda

Timestamp: 44:48

[Miller Nuttle shared that he had a background in bike and pedestrian safety and spoke in favor of making access to the school and other popular community areas safer for walkers and bikers. Nuttle suggested convening a meeting to solicit information from the](#)

community on where they would like to see safer streets for walking and biking and encouraged the pursuit of funding from the State to create a study to review a corridor that could be improved. Nuttle further suggested setting aside money in next year's warrant for a match for a state grant. Nuttle distributed a letter to the Selectboard.

The Town Manager suggested engaging with the Planning Commission and shared that there was a grant application already out for something that might be similar to what Nuttle was envisioning.

Griggs asked whether Nuttle was envisioning only paved areas or also projects in the woods or fields, to which Nuttle responded that he was flexible and wanted to get the community together to identify ideas.

The Town Manager shared that he had filed with the State an application for a commercial appraisal and litigation assistance program on Monday at the advice of Counsel to move the process along. The Town Manager explained that there was an appeal from Great River Hydro LLC and that he had reached out to SP&F for legal assistance, who in turn spoke with the State and learned about a program that gives support via the State to defend the evaluation of an appeal.

The Town Manager noted that he signed as the Town Manager, though the form requested the "signature of the Selectboard Chairperson." He noted that he had wanted to expedite the process and wrote Town Manager to disclose who was signing the document, and that the acknowledgement of receipt of the document likely implied that the Town Manager was also an approved entity of the municipality.

The Chair shared that she agreed with the decision.

The Town Manager highlighted that the Building and Grounds Technician position had been filled.

4. CD Approval

Timestamp: 52:29

Cheryl Lindberg shared the available CD term options of 13 weeks and 26 weeks and noted that she was not sure about a longer timeframe. Lindberg suggested the 13 week/91-day option at 3.35%, as the 26 week/182-day option had a slightly lower rate. She stated that in 13 weeks, it might be known whether there are additional funds that could be invested at the same time at that renewal point when it "might be a little less hectic for everybody."

Lindberg added that the amount being discussed was \$1,024,658.84, which started on September 4th in a three-month CD.

Calloway asked what the other rates were, to which Lindberg responded that she did not have other rates as the money was in a program specific to large dollar investments, typically off the bank's rate sheets. Calloway referenced the other term options Lindberg mentioned earlier, and Lindberg explained that due to the quick notice to get the item on and renew it, she thought it would be most comfortable to do it for the term the money was already in. Lindberg read through the available rates and corresponding APYs.

Swett stated that he was comfortable going with what Lindberg recommended, which the Chair agreed with.

Calloway asked the Town Manager if he saw any need for the money being invested. He shared that he had received a forewarning that the renewal was going to be requested, and he thought it should be fine.

I move to roll over the current CD into a 13 week 3.35% APY CD – Swett moved (2nd Vincent) Vote: yes (unanimous)

5. FY27 Budget – Discussion/Possible Motion

Timestamp: 58:33

The Town Manager provided a summary of changes since the last meeting, including that moving forward, there will be a date on each amended draft to keep updates straight. He noted an increase in the increase from last year to this year from 2.04% to 2.07% due to another monetary article that they did not receive a request for until after the deadline.

The Town Manager explained the Town administration expenditure budget. He noted that the Administrative Assistant line was only half of the salary since the position is split between the Town Manager's office and the Department of Public Works.

He noted that the Town Manager relocation expense had \$10,000 budgeted last year that was not used and would be kept for the FY27 budget. He further highlighted that the legal line was reduced from \$100,000 in FY25 to \$80,000 in FY26, which they would keep level for the FY27 proposal. He shared that the total amount of increase in the proposed budget was 4.34%.

Vincent stated that it would be helpful to have FY25 actuals incorporated into the document. She highlighted that in FY25, less than \$22,000 was spent on legal expenses.

The Town Manager shared that that is a difficult to predict budget item and that there have been years where the expense was higher.

The Town Manager stated that the question of actuals was discussed at the last meeting. He explained that there are internal actuals that they used with department heads when working on the budget over the last two months, that there is an ongoing audit, and that they are hoping to have some audited final numbers to include hopefully for the next meeting on Dec. 10th. He noted that he thought it made sense to keep the line blank for now rather than put in numbers that might change or give people a false impression.

Vincent pointed out that salaries were up more than 6%, above the target increase. The Town Manager asked Vincent to read the executive summary in the packet for the meeting and noted that the Finance Director had done a nice job of explaining the changes.

Vincent shared that she had looked at actuals for FY25 and compared them to the FY27 request and found that it's "a whole lot more" and "looks worse than maybe it is." She noted that her ambition is to have a budget that meets the town needs and treats the taxpayer fairly.

The Town Manager asked Vincent if she was aware of the total increase year-to-year that was being proposed in the budget. Vincent responded that she knew there was a target of 6% and that the document says it will be only 2%.

Swett stated that he understood the reason for not including the unaudited FY25 actuals and that he expects them to be in the packet in December. He explained that he is approaching the process by hearing what the departments have to say and then plans to pick through the items with more background in the two December meetings.

Lindberg highlighted that it would be 30 years for her in her role as Treasurer in March. She shared that she has asked around town for people who might be interested in serving in that capacity and could not find much interest in the work "without some compensation." Lindberg noted limited growth in the position's stipend, voiced support for keeping the conference dues and expense line item, and suggested possibly making a warrant article up for "a treasurer payment of some sort that changes from this" if she steps down and a new person fills the role.

Finance Director Barrie Rosalinda introduced the proposed Finance Department budget. Rosalinda explained that the professional services line is used for software projects, auditor questions outside of the audit, and the outsourcing of the printing and mailing of tax bills. She shared that the independent audit does not cost as much as its line item but would go up significantly if there is a single audit, and that it is unknown if there will be a single audit or not. Rosalinda shared that the accounting software NEMRC had increased their rate, and that the overall increase for the Finance Office is 5.97%.

Swett asked about the different types of audits, to which Rosalinda explained that it depends on how much federal money is received and that above the threshold requires a different level of work and extra filing.

The Town Manager added that the town would likely have a single audit in the coming year due to the FEMA funds they received.

Rosalinda highlighted that the Finance Office has spent significant time and energy working through the accounting software and that it is a place where the effects of turnover and changing procedure have surfaced. She noted that they had been going through each module to clean them up and simultaneously built guidance and documents for each area. Once they update the payroll module, Rosalinda added, they will be able to bring the W2s back in-house.

Rosalinda shared that March, April, and May is when the office typically focuses on special projects, and that they are getting closer to a consistent approach to the budget process with an established template. Rosalinda added that there is not written documentation on steps that need to happen through the year but that they are looking to document processes. She added that another project would be to go through town reports and identify the funds that are designated or reserve and change the names in the general ledger chart of accounts. In the last year, the office has completed 10 years' worth of tax warrants that had not been addressed.

The Chair asked the Finance Director to explain what should be filed for tax warrants each year. Rosalinda explained that at the end of the tax cycle, the office produces a delinquent tax warrant for the treasurer that gets filed with the Town Clerk. When the Town Clerk put all of the information online, people thought they had a tax lean on their property, but in reality, their paperwork had never been completed.

Calloway thanked Rosalinda for her work.

Griggs asked if the guidance and templates Rosalinda referenced are being done generally across departments. The Town Manager responded that the items Rosalinda was referring to were specific to the Finance Office. Rosalinda added that their work is making processes more efficient and cost-effective.

Swett echoed the thanks to Rosalinda for her thorough work and explanation.

The Town Manager introduced Planning Director Steven True.

True shared this has been his first full year in the position and that the changes noted in the budget proposal reflect his learning.

Vincent hypothesized that someone before True had underestimated how much time his assistant needed to keep the office running. True noted that Pam Mullen had been working additional hours when he started, and he saw no reason to change that.

Griggs asked how \$500 was sufficient for software, to which True shared that he typically uses open-source software and that the line is for Adobe Acrobat Pro.

True highlighted that advertising has become expensive and that it is needed for the announcement of Development Review Board public hearings.

True explained that the mapping line is for annually updating the parcel map, including subdivisions, boundary line adjustments, and mergers, which are outsourced to be processed.

Calloway asked if True would use Two Rivers for other mapping, to which he shared that he would approach them if he needed complicated cartography.

Vincent shared her appreciation for True, and True noted that the Finance Director was fantastic.

Griggs asked if True anticipates the Town applying for grants in the future for specific projects. True responded that he does on a case-by-case basis and that the set-aside is for the typical 10% match.

Calloway asked True if he feels he has sufficient tools having now been in the role for a year, to which he shared that he feels well supported.

The Town Manager introduced Recreation Director Brie Swenson.

Swenson noted that there were not many changes with the Recreation Department budget and that most of the adjustments were cleanup to line items names.

Swenson highlighted a decrease to recreation field care because they aerated and overseeded this fall and applied compost twice; she added that they will not compost next year due to cost but will overseed and aerate.

Swenson shared that this is an off-liner year for the ice rink, meaning that a liner was purchased last year, there will be a big rink this winter, and next winter the rink liner will be cut down to get rid of holes and be used as a smaller rink.

Swenson highlighted that she increased the equipment and supplies line since aftercare reopened this year. She noted increased rental facility fees because they are now paying the Congregational Church \$170 per week for two rooms for the aftercare program, which does include cleaning.

Swenson shared that the portable toilets line is increasing because they would like to add a toilet to Ballard Park, the only trail system right now that does not have one.

For water usage, Swenson noted a planned upgrade of the Huntley Meadows fountain to a water bottle filling station that does not use electricity.

Swenson noted that the entire budget had risen by under 5%, but also that expected revenue is projected to increase by 34.78%, and that they are currently \$20,000 ahead of their FY25 revenue.

For the capital budget, Swenson shared that they are on schedule with the rebuild of the tennis courts, on task with a new trail groomer that will be a dual rescue vehicle, planning to replace the siding and shingles of the Huntley Meadows playhouse, and exploring replacement options for the Huntley Meadows play structures while retaining the double helix structure for now.

Swenson noted that the next regrade of the Girard baseball and softball field is not until 2034 but acknowledged that they are not doing a great job with upkeep, and she is therefore looking at a contractor to keep the fields playable.

Swenson responded to Selectboard questions on the groomer and the Huntley kiosks.

Fire Chief Alex Northern explained that there were not many increases to the Fire Department budget.

The Fire Chief shared that they had three or four new EMTs, meaning more EMTs coming to drills, and therefore requiring an increase to the drill wage. Under tools and equipment, they added more to cover the cost of equipment wearing out. For fire truck repair and maintenance, the slight bump would be to cover increasing costs of keeping things running.

Vincent asked if debt service is zero because the debt has been paid off completely, which the Fire Chief confirmed. She further noted that nothing is being paid to the fire district for hydrant rentals.

Griggs stated that he knows the Fire Department is a mostly volunteer organization and that when people go out on calls, they get paid. He asked if all that pay is within the \$32,000 allotted for firefighter wages, which the Fire Chief confirmed.

The Fire Chief highlighted an increase in emergency management supplies. He reminded the Selectboard of last year's drill, which was part of a three-year grant-funded set of tabletop exercises. He noted that the line item reflected items they need to purchase based on the recommendations that came out of the after-action review.

Griggs asked if they are able to receive calls across town, to which the Fire Chief explained that it varies by area but that it has lately been fine. Griggs asked if this means that they do not need to think about spending money on technology to ensure connectivity, which the Fire Chief confirmed.

Selectboard members and the Fire Chief discussed communication towers and connectivity.

Calloway asked if the Road Captain program was continuing. The Fire Chief shared that it worked well during the relative population stability of the pandemic, but that it has become more challenging to keep track of people willing to participate as the population has become less consistent.

Calloway asked how the Fire Department pays for the hot dogs at Halloween, to which the Fire Chief explained that it was funded through a nonprofit called the Fire Company.

The Town Manager highlighted that there are many expensive pieces of equipment that have been thoughtfully thought-out by the Fire Department and that they are trying to

keep funds coming into designated funds to allow them to make purchases when needed, especially given current wait times for orders.

The Town Manager shared that for the next meeting, the two elected official offices, the Town Clerk and the Listers, would present, and that they are hopeful they will have the audited actuals for the FY25 but that they cannot guarantee it.

6. Appointment to the Board of Supervisors of the Greater UV Solid Waste Management District – Alternate

Timestamp: 1:53:39

Jordan Mueller shared that he had been on the Solid Waste Committee for about three years and is currently the Vice Chair. Mueller reflected that solid waste is an important matter that is not appreciated until it does not work well.

Calloway noted that Mueller's three-year term ends in 2026 and asked if he was okay with the overlap of roles, to which Mueller noted no concerns.

I move to appoint Jordan Mueller as Alternate Representative to the Greater Upper Valley Solid Waste Management District Board of Supervisors for the remainder of a two-year term to expire on March 31, 2026. – Swett moved (2nd Griggs) Vote: yes (unanimous)

7. Board of Listers Legality of Self-Approved Wages

Timestamp: 1:57:09

The Chair shared that she was struggling emotionally with the topic but that the voters need to approve what funds are spent on. She stated that she finds it appropriate for the Listers to advocate for whatever wage they find appropriate, but that it makes more sense to have the matter within the budget cycle. She further noted that the Listers worked very hard on the reappraisal, but that putting the wage much higher and still needing to complete the same work "is a recipe for overspending the amount that the voters have approved."

The Chair referenced a memo from Calloway, acknowledged that it was an uncomfortable topic, and shared recognition of the Listers' technical knowledge and devotion to the Town. She shared that she would like to understand how to work it out through the budget process and recommend to the voters a reasonable wage for the Listers, or an alternative method for the voters to make the decision.

Griggs noted that there was nothing about budget in the agenda item and that he would therefore “push that off to the side.” He read a prepared statement expressing disappointment at the naming of the agenda item, asserted that it was a simple oversight and that no party behaved irresponsibly, and encouraged everyone to work together to get through the matter.

Griggs stated that it was up to the Selectboard to determine the Listers’ wage and present it to the voters, and that the Selectboard failed to do that. He stated that after the Selectboard did not follow through on its duty to set the wage, “it seems fair for them to assume that they were able to adjust their wage.” To make up for the Selectboard’s prior oversight in not listing a wage schedule to be approved by the voters during the special meeting in August 2024, Griggs stated that he would like to move that the voters of Norwich be provided with the chance to approve an hourly wage for Listers at the level of Grade 18 and with a yearly step increase.

The Chair asked if Griggs would be willing to provide his extended remarks in writing, which Griggs said he would. The Chair asked if Griggs was suggesting when he said that he moved that he would like to pull the decision of a wage structure for the Listers into a warrant article, to which Griggs responded that he was suggesting that.

The Chair stated that it is awkward how the item was on the agenda and shared that she would “take ownership of that.”

Griggs stated that he moved.

Calloway countered that the only issue tonight is whether the Selectboard wants to take money from somewhere else “to continue paying the Listers more than the voters approved.”

The Chair, Griggs, and Calloway debated the guidance of the VLCT, the form of pay for the Listers, the historical timeline of related events, the distinction of hired employees versus elected officials, and the jurisdiction of a pay raise.

Swett interjected that he was hearing the same things repeated and that it could be helpful to hear from the Listers. Swett shared that he viewed this as an information-gathering conversation ahead of the Listers’ budget conversation at the next meeting.

Pam Smith shared that the Selectboard would not vote when the budget was put together to compensate the Listers at an hourly wage. Smith detailed the timeline, including her recollection that one of the Selectboard members asked the Listers how they planned to

set their hourly wage. Smith stated that this was an abdication of 24 VSA 932 and hypothesized that this happened because no one on the Selectboard knew about the statute at that time.

Smith further highlighted that when the FY26 budget was discussed, there was no way for the Selectboard or the Listers to know that there would be such slippage in the KRT schedule that they would end up doing all the grievance work after the start of the new fiscal year.

Lindberg referred to the Lister minutes that reflected that the Listers established that they would work with the Town's pay scale and that they went forward with their best understanding.

Smith highlighted that the Listers have been underspent for the last ten years and reiterated that they are in the situation that they are in now budget-wise because no one could have foreseen that the grand list would not be lodged until the drop-dead deadline of August 15, meaning that significant work had to be done in the first six weeks of the new fiscal year instead of the previous fiscal year, which has an unaudited surplus of over \$20,000.

Calloway, Griggs, and Lindberg debated the wording of the article on the Listers financials, including whether it was about the whole budget or solely compensation.

Vincent recounted that when her husband was a Lister, they were paid on an hourly basis, but that he quit upon the return to stipend payment because "he felt so unappreciated." Vincent added that it is difficult to find people as dedicated and knowledgeable as the current Listers and that this Selectboard has a history of treating the Listers with disrespect and a lack of appreciation. Vincent noted that it is hard for her "to be courteous at this point."

Calloway and Griggs debated further their respective discussions with the VLCT.

Swett shared that he understands it as the voters having approved the change from a stipend to an hourly wage, and that the way he understands budgeted is as the line item for wages budgeted. He added that he does not take away that the Selectboard is supposed to set an hourly wage and that it is instead up to the Department to figure out what an hourly rate is to work within the cap set by the voters.

Swett added that he understands the regulations to be that the Selectboard has the flexibility to find the money elsewhere if they think it is appropriate to continue paying at

the rate because the wages currently budgeted for the year have been exceeded, but that he is not sure if that was the Listers' budget or the budget more broadly.

The Chair advocated for finding a system for payment if the Selectboard agrees to go over the cap.

Lindberg noted that the Listers worked over a 40-hour week and unexpectedly got time and a half for all time over 40 hours.

Smith shared that in her reading of the Fair Labor Standards Act, elected officials are exempt from overtime. She shared that the Listers are willing to work with the Selectboard and work off the overtime that had been paid out.

Selectboard members, Smith, and Lindberg discussed the responsibility for knowing the law, the past review of compensation practices by Counsel, and the estimated remaining hours of work for the Listers through the end of the fiscal year.

The Town Manager stated that whatever decision is made, they need to be clear with the Finance Office as to how it will be handled, as the Finance Director felt the overtime was a federal obligation.

Selectboard members, the Town Manager, Lindberg, and Smith discussed next steps. Swett shared that he thought it would be fair for the Selectboard to ask the Listers to hold their hours, as offered by Smith, to pause the matter and offer "wiggle room" to figure out how to proceed.

8. Approve Minutes

Timestamp: 3:03:29

I move to approve the minutes for November 12th, 2025 as presented. – Griggs moved (2nd Calloway) Vote: yes (Calloway, Griggs, Swett, Layton), abstain (Layton)

9. AP Warrants

Timestamp: 3:04:12

I move to approve AP Warrant #1417 in the amount of \$82,856.53 to be paid from the General Fund; AP Warrant #1418 in the amount of \$35,769.00 to be paid from the Town Reappraisal Fund; AP Warrant #1419 in the amount of \$3,112.71 to be paid from the Police Special Equipment Fund; AP Warrant #1420 in the amount of \$14,685.71 to be paid from the Culvert Fund; AP Warrant #1421 in the amount of \$189.00 to be paid from

the General Fund; and AP Warrant #1422 in the amount of \$271.89 to be paid from the General Fund. – Calloway moved (2nd Griggs) Vote: yes (unanimous)

10. Receipt of Correspondence

Timestamp: 3:05:37

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

Swett noted that Katucki raised legitimate questions and suggested trying to answer them. The Town Manager shared that some of the questions were answered by the presentation of the budgets and that he received a message from Katucki saying thank you for the insight.

11. Adjournment

Timestamp: 3:08:30

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

Meeting adjourned at 8:55.

Minutes taken by Jenny Tolman.