

Town of Norwich, Vermont
Minutes of the Selectboard Meeting
Wednesday, Dec 10, 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 and Treasurer), Lily Trajman (Town Clerk)

Active Participants on Zoom: Jaan Laaspere (Town member), Pam Smith (Lister), Barrie Rosalinda (Finance Director), Tricia Spellman (Finance Committee)

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: 44:14

1. Agenda

Timestamp: 44:33

I move to approve the agenda as presented. – Swett moved (2nd Griggs) Vote: yes (unanimous)

2. Chair's Report

Timestamp: 45:04

The Chair met with the Town administrators and online with the Selectboard to set the agenda.

3. Public Comments for Items not on the Agenda

Timestamp: 45:19

[Jaan Laaspere reminded the Selectboard that he had spoken a few meetings ago on speeding in town and highlighted that in the time since, several townspeople had independently spoken up with similar concerns. Laaspere asked the Selectboard how townspeople should go about trying to influence police priorities and their approach to the issue of speeding.](#)

The Town Manager responded that he thought the Police Chief had heard the concern, that there are some temporary signs collecting data on speeding to verify the perception of excessive speeding, and that he thought it would be possible to increase focus on speeding tickets but that the Police Chief has not necessarily heard it as a mandate. The Town Manager thought it could make sense to have a future agenda item after the budget is finalized to hear the strategy from the Police Chief on combatting speeding.

Calloway shared that she would be in support of the agenda item and that she would like the Town to investigate camera ticketing.

Swett and Vincent voiced their support for discussing the matter.

Cheryl Lindberg urged the replacement of the bulletin board in front of Tracy Hall as it is “in rough shape.”

Griggs suggested discussing the general space around the bulletin board further to make it a more inviting space.

4. FY26 Listers’ Wages

Timestamp: 51:50

Vincent stated that she found the memo from the Listers to be very clear.

Swett thanked the Listers for their work and acknowledged that the work ballooned over the course of the reappraisal. Swett noted that it looked as though there was \$16,000 underspent in contract services in the 2025 budget and asked why it was underspent.

Lister Cheryl Lindberg responded that during the time of the reappraisal, they did not feel the need to have an additional professional individual in the office and that any time there were any questions, KRT was the “go-to.”

Swett highlighted that the Listers had to do a lot of the grievance inspections because KRT refused to do them. Swett asked if KRT was contracted to do that and refused or if it was not in their contract.

Lindberg responded that the contract stated that KRT would defend all values through the grievance process and to any appeals to the BCA. As part of the grievance process when a property had not been inspected, Lindberg continued, the Listers are reluctant to make a decision without an inspection. Lindberg stated that KRT chose the position that they are not required for a grievance to have an inspection and they therefore “stepped aside”

from inspecting any properties that they had not been to during the reappraisal. Lindberg added that sometimes a property owner grieving asked for an inspection, and the Listers did not deny those requests. Lindberg stated that KRT did not attend any of the inspections during the BCA process either.

Swett highlighted one of the suggestions from the Listers that one way to remedy the payroll issue would be a distribution from the reappraisal fund to cover certain parts. Swett asked for confirmation that the fund had sufficient money in it to make the distribution.

Lindberg responded that the Listers had engaged over email with the Finance Director to confirm the accuracy of the numbers for the reappraisal fund and projections going forward. Lindberg shared that the rough calculation of the projected reappraisal fund in 2031 when the next reappraisal takes place would be \$266,915, unless the Town's numbers fall to a point where the State will mandate another reappraisal sooner.

Swett asked if using \$26,170 from what is currently in the fund would be okay. Lindberg stated that the current fund balance is \$102,584, and that if the amount is deducted and the reappraisal is approved by the State, leading to the Town to owe \$9,500 more to KRT, that would bring the fund to \$66,915 at the end of this fiscal year, and then to \$266,915 if the Town contributes the projected \$40,000 annually.

The Chair asked what the proposed hourly rate of compensation was based on. Lindberg explained that they moved the Listers to the same grade as the other elected official and then determined the steps by the approval from the article in the August 24 Town Meeting. Lindberg continued that they reviewed experience levels and Chair designation, which helped determine which step to pick, and that she believed they were in the ballpark of where they should be relative to the State range.

The Chair asked about the wage relative to that of an assessor, to which Lindberg explained that there is very little that she does not know at this point compared to an assessor. She added that an assessor is not an elected individual, unless they do it for their town, and are typically trained with additional areas that may be useful for commercial buildings. Lindberg noted that the Listers handled the grievances for commercial grievances without additional support from KRT and felt they were successful at getting the assessments in line. Lindberg noted that there are three software packages that need to be managed and that the Listers are capable of successfully using the packages. Lindberg highlighted that beginning on January 1st, they will be required to take a training to continue to serve as a Lister.

Lister Pam Smith stated that she found the proposed Lister wages to be fair.

Griggs asked if the additional required training was due to difficulty finding professional assessors in VT towns.

Lindberg explained that Listers feel diminished by poor pay despite having developed significant skills, and that assessors are not that much more knowledgeable than Listers.

The Chair asked about the future trajectory of Listers given Act 73 and the possible shift to a countywide reassessment.

Lindberg noted that a portion of work always comes back to the Town and explained that from the discussions she recalled, they will want the Listers to handle grievances even though the Listers would not determine assessments.

Swett asked what the previous lister wage was, to which Smith shared that it was in the range of \$27 to \$28.

Smith added that the State does not know how the appraisal system will play out.

Swett asked how many, if any, Lister positions are currently open. Lindberg responded that there were three positions in total, that one person will fulfill the final year of a three-year term, and that there are two positions opening up.

Calloway stated that the Listers are elected officials, not employees, and that “we don’t have any jurisdiction to negotiate well over and above what the voters have approved for compensation.”

Calloway stated that the matter should go on the March warrant, which would be transparent and within the jurisdiction that is allowed by statute and case law. Calloway highlights that there were no requirements before January 1st, 2026 for Listers, but there will be moving forward.

Griggs shared that the staff attorney claims that the Selectboard has the budget discretion to supplement additional paid hours and asked Calloway how she squares the two matters.

Calloway stated that they could give bonuses but that there are guardrails.

Griggs pondered what the best thing for Norwich would be, and shared that he thought the best thing would be to pay the Listers for the extra work.

Vincent highlighted the retirement of the previous Town Clerk, when the Selectboard at the time voted to pay out her vacation despite it not being in the budget.

Swett quoted a communication with the VLCT in a memo from Calloway on the ability of the Selectboard to reallocate funds and noted that he interpreted the language to state that the Selectboard does have authority to reallocate while simultaneously having the responsibility to the taxpayers to use their money frugally and appropriately.

The Chair shared that she thought there were three choices, including to do nothing, to decide on the reallocation and pay raise, or to put it on the warrant for the voters.

Griggs asked if the listers would be paid in the meantime if the Selectboard decides to put the issue to the voters, to which the Chair stated that they probably would not be paid until July 1st.

Griggs asked if it would be possible to have two votes, one to put the matter to the voters and one to pay the Listers in the meantime, to which the Chair stated that it's "either us or them."

Vincent highlighted that there is money in the current budget, she believes the Selectboard has the authority to make the decision, and that she is prepared to make a motion.

The Town Manager noted that the agenda item was added as discussion only; Selectboard members pointed out an inconsistency between the agenda and motion sheet on the option to move.

The Town Manager highlighted that two cases have been appealed to the Superior Court and that he did not think there was further thought as to how the defense would be paid for, but that he thought there were two line items that could be directly applicable to paying legal costs to defend the reappraisal.

He shared that it is "generally a difficult position," as the work that happened at the end of FY25 and through the first two months of FY26 had exceeded the amount that was budgeted for the entire year. He further noted that he had made comments in May about work timelines relating to tax bills. The Town Manager highlighted that some of the work

that KRT was contracted to do ended up being taken on by the Listers, leading to more hours incurred by the Listers.

Vincent shared that she found it unfair to suggest that the Listers did not try to push forward to accomplish their work as fast as possible. Vincent noted that she believed the Town Manager was in charge of managing the contract with KRT.

Lindberg pointed out that the Selectboard took the authority in the past to pay an elected official above the wage line item. Lindberg stated that one could have an article on the warning for every wage line item, and that there was no separate article in the last Town warning to pay the Listers a maximum amount. She highlighted that in an open meeting law webinar from VLCT that day, a question was asked about motions being on the agenda and they recommended not doing so as it was unnecessary to comply with open meeting law.

Town Clerk Lily Trajman stated that there have been instances of things being on the ballot that have requested allocation of monies in that fiscal year immediately effective after the vote in March.

Smith reiterated that the Town votes a total budget, not line items, and quoted statute on compensation that could be interpreted as dictating that no Town employees should be paid more than what is in the budget for their position, despite it having happened “many, many times.”

Griggs voiced frustration that had he not seen that a possible motion was listed, he would have asked to have a motion added to the agenda item when developing the agenda.

5. FY27 Budget – Discussion/Possible Motion

Timestamp: 1:41:48

The Town Manager shared that FY24 numbers had been added to the current draft of the budget, as well as FY25 pre-audit numbers that have been reviewed by the auditor. He suggested talking about immediate thoughts or changes that the Selectboard would like to have for the next week’s meeting. He stated that he did not have a definitive date on when they will have the completed audit, but that he thinks it will be before January 1st, and that a special meeting might be needed for the budget and warrants to be ready for January 21st.

Finance Director Barrie Rosalinda explained that FY25 ended with a deficit, meaning that revenues for the year were less than expenses, and that the biggest contributing factor

was the decision made last year to reduce the amount of property tax that would be collected by \$700,000, using surplus monies from a prior year to balance the budget, meaning that the year started with \$700,000 less in revenue. Rosalinda continued that the opioid money that was moved further reduced revenue, along with two CDs that closed, which was money recorded as revenue in a prior year.

Rosalinda explained that the deficit was not due to department heads overspending their budgets, and that a deficit only needs to be built into future tax bills when it is a deficit for the whole fund balance, but Norwich only has a deficit for the year, and a positive fund balance.

Rosalinda explained guidance from VLCT that informed the movement of the opioid settlement money.

Tricia Spellman asked for clarification on the classification of the \$700,000 in the budget.

Rosalinda explained that it was put in the budget as a surplus infusion to demonstrate a balanced budget, but that she did not personally do it.

Spellman asked about the policy for moving interest from CDs.

Rosalinda responded that it is percentage of the whole and that it is all earned interest.

Rosalinda and Lindberg discussed the classification of the opioid funds.

Rosalinda highlighted that the removal of FEMA expenses and CD interest would bring the increase to 2.04%. Rosalinda further noted a mispost that was made to a wrong account and caused the deficit not to show in the reports.

Trajman explained that there are three separate budgets for her office. For the Board of Civil Authority/Board of Abatement budget, Trajman noted that she had removed the justice stipend and associate taxes, reduced postage slightly, and increased the dues, meetings, and education line.

Trajman explained that Statutory Meetings are for elections and that it is a cyclical budget. She noted that she removed the poll worker stipend, added an election day expenses line for food for poll workers, and removed the voting machine and voting machine maintenance as the State now pays for it.

Rosalinda explained that “election day expenses” is new language for an account that existed.

Trajman asked for a two-step wage increase for the next year, as she will have achieved her certified municipal clerk designation and certified Vermont Clerk designation. If the Selectboard agreed, Trajman continued, it would go into effect in March 2027 and have four months in that budget cycle at that level and be under \$500.

Trajman noted that the only other major increase in the Town Clerk Expenditures is in training, as her new assistant wants to be a member of clerk associations and attend trainings.

Swett asked if the wage increase was reflected in the FY27 request, to which Trajman said it was not.

Swett noted that the health insurance had increased significantly. Trajman explained that she did not have insight into the number. Rosalinda stated that the number is informed by current cost and increased based on information from Blue Cross Blue Shield, but that it can shift based on unfilled positions and unknown insurance selections.

Calloway asked the Town Manager to explain how the cost of living adjustment works in the budget. He explained that there is a COLA adjustment annually on July 1st that is based on a rolling average of the consumer price index and that the wage chart that is used for employees is what the wage scales seen in the budget have been built on.

Spellman asked for clarification on the healthcare costs and whether it was for premium costs, as well as whether it was specific to those individuals.

Rosalinda confirmed that it is the premium cost to the Town and specific to those individuals.

Trajman shared that she needs to buy a new map cabinet and will need a new set of rolling shelves in the next ten years or so.

Trajman asked if she could get consensus on whether she can ask for an increased step.

The Chair shared that it would probably be at a future budget meeting but that she did not foresee significant resistance.

Lindberg explained that based on the agenda item earlier, the Listers had developed a new budget document, which was included in the packet. She shared that the wage line item changed, along with the associated wage item taxes, from what was in the original columns, but that the remaining items have only small changes.

Smith highlighted that the original request showed an increase of 5.99% while the revised budget requests a 4.5% increase over last year.

Calloway noted “massive jumps” in the budget and pointed out that that there would not be a reassessment in the coming year.

Lindberg explained that the \$58,200 would go towards getting a grand list prepared for another year, processing property transfers, processing current use, and handling three software packages.

The Chair, Calloway, Lindberg, and Smith debated Lister pay and roles.

Swett reflected that he thought the group was “fumbling through transitioning a Lister’s office from being an inappropriately low stipend to trying to figure out what is good compensation for this work.”

Swett asked how the listers planned to charge hours for the coming year given that it will not be a reassessment year and suggested the possibility that they could come in under budget on the wage item.

Lindberg highlighted that there is a small level of disturbance following this past year’s assessment, that “we don’t know what we don’t know,” and that it is possible to have unanticipated grievances.

Swett asked about the software maintenance line item fluctuation, which Lindberg explained included a one-time transition fee and training in FY26, followed by a new cloud service in FY27.

Calloway asked for guidance from the Town Manager on the legal services line item for the Listers budget, to which he shared that he could not predict any as he thought the reappraisal court cases would be settled by that point.

Smith noted that legal services had been taken out of all departments and put under administration at one point, which included any challenges that went to the superior court

or the BCA, and shared that she thought they would follow the tradition and stay with the legal services line in the Town Manager's budget for those expenses.

The Town Manager noted that there would be a condensed timeline for getting updates into another draft of the budget for the December 17th meeting. He noted that both the Listers and the Town Clerk requested changes and asked the Selectboard how they would like to proceed.

Calloway noted that Trajman was still in the process of getting her certification. Calloway added that she was not very comfortable with the process.

Calloway asked if tasers should be added to the draft budget. The Town Manager shared that he did not think there was a definitive budget number for them.

The Selectboard agreed to include the Town Clerk's salary and the Listers' updated budget in the December 17th draft budget.

Calloway asked if it would be possible to include speed sign ticketing in the budget. The Town Manager suggested asking the Police Chief if they are legal in VT.

Griggs asked if the Tracy Hall designated fund was in the budget. Rosalinda explained that an article has funded that fund for the past couple of years.

6. Opioid Fund – Uses of Funds

Timestamp: 2:54:17

The Town Manager explained that a new fund has been created and the money collected in FY25 and so far in FY26 has been moved into the fund.

I move to transfer from the general fund to the new designated opioid fund via a journal entry the FY24 revenue estimated to be \$13,229.36 – Calloway moved (2nd Griggs) Vote: yes (unanimous)

The Chair suggested reaching out to potential fund recipients to understand how the money would be used.

Calloway suggested contributing money to an organization that the Town regularly sends people to, specifically somewhere in Springfield.

Selectboard members and the Town Manager discussed next steps.

7. Town Manager Report

Timestamp: 3:03:48

The Town Manager shared that (1) the master plan grant was submitted and awarded, (2) the winter season has begun for DPW with a young crew, (3) there is a triage of roads to be cleared following a storm, (4) the Freightliner plow truck has been received, (5) the Buildings and Grounds Technician began working in early November, (6) the Equipment Operator who left has returned, (7) the FEMA grant closeout documents have been submitted, (8) the VTrans fund grant has been awarded, (9) budget work will continue for about a month, (10) there have been meetings with the Emerald Ash Borer Subcommittee and they have decided to push back tree removal to April, (11) the grant request to assist with the Great River Hydro reappraisal appeal has been accepted, and (12) requested an executive session at the next Selectboard meeting.

Griggs asked if the crosswalk intersections with the sidewalks could be plowed.

Griggs thanked the Town Manager for clarifying the process and requirements for private work projects in town right of ways.

Rosalinda shared that “quite a bit” of delinquent taxes have been collected in the last year.

8. Department Reports

Timestamp: x

9. Approve Minutes

Timestamp: 3:17:39

Item four on CD approval involved Town Treasurer Cheryl Lindberg. The minutes did not include her title.

Item five on the FY27 budget misspelled lien, in reference to a tax lien.

I move to approve the minutes for November 19th, 2025 as amended. – Calloway moved (2nd Griggs) Vote: yes (unanimous)

10. AP Warrants

Timestamp: 3:19:30

I move to approve AP Warrant #1425 in the amount of \$59,058.21 to be paid from the General Fund; AP Warrant #1426 in the amount of \$218,933.00 to be paid from the Highway Equipment Fund; AP Warrant #1427 in the amount of \$1,575.00 to be paid from the Records Restoration Fund; AP Warrant #1428 in the amount of \$165.50 to be paid from the General Fund; AP Warrant #1429 in the amount of \$391.42 to be paid from the General Fund; AP Warrant #1430 in the amount of \$441.52 to be paid from the General Fund; and AP Warrant #1431 in the amount of \$19,792.53 to be paid from the General Fund. – Calloway moved (2nd Swett) Vote: yes (unanimous)

Lindberg expressed surprise at the expense of \$638.77 for Halloween candy.

11. Receipt of Correspondence

Timestamp: 3:23:10

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

12. Plan Agenda for December 17, 2025 Meeting

Timestamp: 3:24:04

Selectboard members discussed agenda items for the next meeting.

Lindberg asked if the Selectboard required any further materials from the Listers. Selectboard members said they did not. Lindberg added that there might be a discussion about a software contract.

13. Adjournment

Timestamp: 3:26:09

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

Meeting adjourned at 9:13.

Minutes taken by Jenny Tolman.

Minutes approved on December 17, 2025

Mary Layton, Selectboard Chair