

Town of Norwich, Vermont
Minutes of the Selectboard Meeting
Wednesday, Dec 17, 2025

Active Participants at Tracy Hall: Mary Layton (SB Chair), Priscilla Vincent (SB member), Marcia Calloway (SB member), Matt Swett (SB member), Brennan Duffy (Town Manager), Cheryl Lindberg (Treasurer and Lister), Pam Smith (Lister)

Active Participants on Zoom: Kimo Griggs (SB Vice Chair), Lily Trajman (Town Clerk), Barrie Rosalinda (Finance Director), Matthew Romei (Police Chief)

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: 28:11

1. Agenda

Timestamp: 29:57

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

2. Chair's Report

Timestamp: 31:02

The Chair had nothing to report.

3. Public Comments for Items not on the Agenda

Timestamp: 31:07

There were no public comments.

4. Meeting w/Town Counsel re: Possible Litigation (executive session possible)

Timestamp: 31:16

I move to find that premature public knowledge of attorney-client communications would place the Selectboard at a substantial disadvantage, including by potentially waiving attorney-client privilege and disclosing confidential information. – Calloway moved (2nd Vincent) Vote: yes (unanimous)

Under 1 V.S.A. §§313(a)(1)(E) and (F), I move to enter executive session with the Town Manager and legal counsel. – Calloway moved (2nd Vincent) Vote: yes (unanimous)

Time entered executive session: 6:33

I move to enter public session. – Vincent moved (2nd Swett) Vote: yes (unanimous)

Time entered public session: 7:34

Lindberg asked if there was anything to share from the executive session.

The Chair said that they went over “some legal matters.”

5. FY27 Budget

Timestamp: 1:33:46

The Town Manager shared that this was the fourth budget meeting and highlighted that the Listers’ budget and the Town Clerk’s two step salary increase had been updated in the draft budget. The two changes had reduced the budget slightly to a 2.06% increase from last year.

The Town Manager shared that the petition deadline is January 15th at 5:00 pm. He proposed holding regular meetings on January 14th and 28th, plus a special meeting on January 21st. He noted that Finance Director Rosalinda had reached out to the auditing firm to try to determine when they can expect final numbers for 2025 but had not yet heard back.

Griggs asked for clarification on the “Hold Harmless State Revenue” line of the budget.

Rosalinda explained that there has been confusion on the line item in the past. Treasurer Lindberg added that the money is used for current use.

Swett pointed out that bank interest had increased significantly.

Rosalinda explained that the interest looks higher in part because of the CD that was closed and constituted interest from more than one year.

Swett asked if the legal line item should be maintained at \$80,000 or lowered.

The Town Manager noted that it had been reduced from \$100,000 and that it is difficult to predict what might be faced in the next year.

Vincent shared that “looking at some of the things that appear to be coming up,” she thought it might make sense to stay at \$80,000.

Swett asked about the uses for fund 51, operational performance and development.

Pam Smith explained that it is for studies and for matching funds.

Griggs noted that in the town administrative expenses, the cost of health insurance is going up 1%, which he found very optimistic.

Rosalinda noted that it could have to do with the coverage that employees have and offered to review the line further.

Swett highlighted the request to put \$25,000 into the police station fund and pointed out the existence of two similar funds, fund 10 for the police station fund and fund 47 for the public safety facility.

The Town Manager shared that the funds had been reclassified in a previous year.

Rosalinda noted that the software does not allow her to remove funds even if they have a zero balance.

Police Chief Romei noted that he combined the money from a few funds into the public safety facility fund last year.

Swett highlighted the intent to put \$25,000 into the speeding sign line item to get mobile digital message boards and shared that he preferred the aesthetic of the existing rustic signage. Swett shared that he thought it was worth discussing the digital signs as it is “potentially a want instead of a need.”

The Chair and Calloway shared that the sign could be placed on a peripheral road.

Lindberg asked the quantity of speed signs being requested.

The Police Chief stated it would likely be one sign but would depend on pricing and the model chosen.

Swett noted a clerical error on page eight of the packet under capital expenditures.

Griggs shared that a couple town employees had asked him about the possibility of the town getting a membership at UVAC, which would give employees and their families up to a 50% discount on membership.

Rosalinda noted that she thought there had been some internal discussion about the possibility.

Swett asked if it was worth putting money into the budget for a website update.

Calloway voiced support for an updated website, including the possibility of consolidating committee and commission websites. Calloway suggested considering a warrant article to have a designated fund.

The Town Manager stated that the website update could fall under the professional services fund. He shared that he did not know a correct number, but that they could put possibly \$50,000 or \$100,000 into the fund.

Selectboard members and Lindberg discussed the funding levels in designated fund 51.

Trajman shared that from her research, she thought it would be possible to get started on a new website for under \$10,000.

The Town Manager noted that for purposes of the budget, the website discussion for that night was all set, and that the “how and when” can be discussed at a later date.

Lindberg asked if there was room in the budget for updating the bulletin board outside Tracy Hall.

The Town Manager shared that there is a Tracy Hall fund with a lot of funds currently untapped.

Calloway voiced that she was uncomfortable with the Town Clerk’s proposed two-step increase and felt the Listers’ 84.76% to be unreasonable.

Lindberg alluded to the next agenda item and shared that the 84.76% increase “would not look like that” and would be offset by the change in the professional services line.

Calloway responded that it is not a matter of offsets but “wages going into pockets” and that she thinks that is too much.

Griggs stated that he found the approximately \$33 per hour proposed pay rate with no benefits to be very reasonable, given the qualifications and expertise now required of a Lister.

Vincent stated that she has no problem with the Listers’ pay and budget reallocation or the Town Clerk’s wage increase.

The Police Chief shared that the contract for tasers would cost between \$4,800 and \$5,200 per year, which includes an instructor level training. He recognized they could be a bit of “a hot topic,” but that they support officers in not escalating to deadly force.

Swett asked if the Town could get two units instead of four or five.

The Police Chief explained that there are times when more than two officers are on duty and that a taser is supposed to be part of an officer’s wearable equipment.

Calloway spoke in favor of tasers for the police force.

The Town Manager shared that the budget request in FY27 would increase by \$5,000 under the training, supplies, and equipment line and would require reallocation of operating expenses in future years.

Selectboard members and the Town Manager agreed to proceed without a motion.

6. FY26 Listers’ Wages

Timestamp: 2:26:08

Selectboard members read their suggested motions.

Vincent read the following possible motions:

I move to authorize the use of \$26,169.37 of the reappraisal fund to cover the Listers’ wages for the reappraisal work from July 1st, 2025 through August 15, 2025.

I also move to reallocate \$22,000 from the professional assessor services line to the lister office wages line item.

Swett shared that he did not word his suggestion in a motion as he wanted to have a discussion first. He noted that it seemed the increase in the hourly rate at the beginning of the fiscal year accelerated the matter to the current point. He suggested going back to the hourly rate of \$27 to \$28 per hour for this fiscal year, and that the next fiscal year could be a different rate.

Calloway read the following possible motion:

I move to remind the Listers that by law elected officials' compensation is determined by voters and they must adhere to the dollar limit of compensation which voters approved for 2026.

Griggs stated that given the job has changed over the year and will continue to change, and that the difference between what is being asked for and what is being proposed is not very much, he would move to simply approve a retroactive increase in the Listers' pay.

The Chair noted that it bothered her that the wage matter came up outside of the budgeting process.

Calloway stated that there are laws about this and that elected officials cannot vote themselves raises, no matter how bad the workload gets.

Selectboard members discussed the uncertainty in Lister workload, departmental budget allocation, and reserve fund purposes.

Lindberg reiterated that the budget was created "back when we didn't know what was going to happen." She highlighted that any average pay in VT for a Lister is underpaid and that Norwich tends to pay more than other towns in the state and should therefore be on the on the higher side of the average.

Smith highlighted a December 2023 Selectboard discussion on the Lister's budget for FY25, when the Listers requested \$67,500, but the Selectboard voted to keep the amount at \$56,500. Smith stated that it was unfair to expect the Listers to work within the budget that was not what they had actually requested. Smith noted that she and Lindberg had come up with a rough estimate of 650 hours per Lister for work in the next year, which would become approximately \$19 per hour when multiplied by three people and divided into the \$31,500.

The Chair noted that she would like to keep the issue of the overage on the reappraisal as a slightly separate item from the goals for the future.

Lindberg noted that the Listers' efforts are graded annually through the grand list which marks a form of oversight.

Swett stated that he thought it was an important distinction between the FY27 budget, which he supports, and the FY26 significant overage in wages. Swett further highlighted that the Selectboard has "a very low pay rate too." He reflected that there is a slow shift as the professional responsibilities are requiring more time and that a traditional stipend no longer makes sense.

I move to authorize the use of \$26,169.37 of the reappraisal fund to cover the Listers' wages for the reappraisal work done from July 1, 2025 through August 15, 2025. I also move to reallocate \$22,000 from the professional assessors' services line to the Lister Office wages line item. – Vincent moved (2nd Griggs) Vote: yes (Vincent, Griggs), no (Calloway, Swett, Layton)

The Town Manager shared that prior to June 19th, Lindberg was at \$28.16 per hour and Smith and Ciccotelli were at \$27.07 per hour.

Selectboard members, the Town Manager, Lindberg, and Smith discussed the Listers' wage and step scale.

Calloway expressed confusion as to why an elected official gets a COLA raise.

Swett stated that he was "perfectly comfortable paying them a good rate for good work."

Calloway stated that the town's voters lack the jurisdiction to vote to change the Listers from elected officials to employees.

Smith highlighted that Calloway was the Selectboard member who asked the Listers how they were going to set their pay rate at a previous meeting.

Calloway responded that "we had no budget from the Town" and that they were supposed to do so based on "what we got from the Town."

The Town Manager suggested possible language for a motion and clarified that it is not talking about grade and step, and that if the budget gets approved at the increased amount for FY27, the Listers need to figure out their pay.

Selectboard members discussed the possibility of being put in the same position and debate in future years, as well as the unanticipated situation of the current year.

Griggs stated that the Selectboard failed to set the Listers' pay rate to be voted on during the last town meeting and that they should have set the rate for the Town to vote on.

Griggs advocated for announcing the rate going forward and having the Town vote on it.

Selectboard members, the Town Manager, Lindberg, and Smith discussed the logistics and values of the line items being adjusted.

I move to authorize the use of \$26,000 of the reappraisal fund to cover the Listers' wages for the reappraisal work done from July 1st, 2025 through August 15th, 2025. I also move to reallocate \$22,000 from the professional assessor services line to the Lister Office wages line item. I also set the pay rate for the Listers at grade 15 step E for Pam and Ernie and grade 15 step G for Cheryl based on the FY26 scale going forward from November 8th, 2025. – Swett moved (2nd Vincent) Vote: yes (Swett, Vincent, Layton, Griggs), no (Calloway)

7. Listers' Multi-year Software Agreement – AssessPro Upgrade

Timestamp: 3:32:35

I move to approve a contract with Catalis to provide AssessPro software for the Board of Listers for a term of four years for a total cost of \$42,932.31. – Vincent moved (2nd Swett), yes (unanimous)

The Town Manager asked if the new software is cloud-hosted, to which Lindberg and Smith explained that it is.

8. Listers' Memo: Errors & Omissions

Timestamp: 3:35:13

I move to approve the Board of Listers request to correct the 2025 Grand List to set the value of Parcel #20-256-002 at \$719,300. – Vincent moved (2nd Swett), yes (unanimous)

9. DPW Spending Request: Equipment & Undercoating for new Freightliner

Timestamp: 3:35:58

I move to authorize the expenditure of \$2,020 from Highway Equipment Fund #7 to purchase equipment and undercoating for the Department of Public Works' new Freightliner truck. – Calloway moved (2nd Vincent), yes (unanimous)

10. Approve Minutes

Timestamp: 3:36:49

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

11. Receipt of Correspondence

Timestamp: 3:37:25

The Chair noted that she spoke with the Town Manager about jurisdiction of minutes for March informational meetings.

Vincent voiced support for an agenda item on whether minutes should be taken at informational meetings and who should take them.

Trajman noted that because Norwich is an Australian vote town, statute says that the Selectboard must warn the informational hearings and is responsible for the minutes.

The Chair suggested a future agenda item for the process for updating the Selectboard Handbook.

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

12. Adjournment

Timestamp: 3:42:24

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

Meeting adjourned at 9:43.

Minutes taken by Jenny Tolman.

Minutes approved on January 14, 2026

Mary Layton, Selectboard Chair