

Town of Norwich, Vermont
Minutes of the Selectboard Meeting
Wednesday, Jan 21, 2026

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), Lily Trajman (Town Clerk), Cheryl Lindberg (Treasurer and Lister), Lindsay Putnam (Town member), Peter Stanzel (Town member)

Active Participants on Zoom: None.

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: 38:47

1. Agenda

Timestamp: 39:10

The Chair highlighted a time-sensitive request for a Selectboard letter of support from Peggy Allen.

The Town Manager explained that the Norwich Farmer's Market had requested a letter of support as they pursue a small grant, which might lead to a larger catalyst grant through the Northern Borders Regional Commission in the near future. The Town Manager suggested adding the topic to the January 28th agenda.

Griggs asked if the matter was discussed at a Planning Meeting and wondered if the Selectboard could act on the request that night as it had already been reviewed in public.

Selectboard members and the Town Manager agreed to put the topic on the next week's agenda.

The Chair shared that she might send a general agenda-organizing request to the Selectboard to review the "parking lot" of discuss topics for the coming meetings.

Calloway suggested the Selectboard consider a charter.

The Chair raised that an agenda item for January 28th covers the Fire District and shared that Calloway would like to submit a memo to possibly be reviewed in executive session.

Calloway clarified that she did not think it had to be reviewed with counsel and that the justification for executive session could be pending or probable litigation.

The Chair noted that she had asked Administrative Assistant Brita Vallens to put the possibility of an executive session on the agenda for January 28th, but that the ultimate decision could be made at the meeting.

Calloway added that she would not put her memo in the packet.

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

2. Chair's Report

Timestamp: 48:02

The Chair worked on agenda-related items.

3. Public Comments for Items not on the Agenda

Timestamp: 48:12

Griggs raised that it was Planning and Zoning Assistant Pam Mullen's last day and thanked her for her service to the town.

4. Review and Approval of Town Warrant Articles

Timestamp: 49:05

The Chair raised that she brought in materials about the Root Schoolhouse.

Calloway commented that VSA should be written as V.S.A.

Calloway questioned the language in Article 13, specifically the inclusion of the word "partial."

Town Clerk Lily Trajman reminded the Selectboard that petition article language cannot be edited.

Swett questioned the tax due date of Wednesday, August 26th, 2026, listed in Article 28, based on the previous meeting's discussion about having taxes due on a Thursday.

The Town Manager responded that August 27th should be the amended date.

Trajman noted that she did not think she could fix the schoolboard articles that had V.S.A. without periods in between the letters as they had been approved by the schoolboard as they were. Trajman additionally highlighted that there were italics under Article 29 in the draft warrant, but that it was not the practice to include those italics on the ballot.

Swett asked if it was still the case that there would not be any surplus now that the town was at the end of the audit.

The Town Manager confirmed that it was still the case.

I move to approve the Warning of Annual Town Meeting as amended to correct the date of August property tax and citations of statute. – Griggs moved (2nd Calloway) Vote: yes (unanimous)

Lindsay Putnam gave the Town Manager a pamphlet about the Beaver Meadow Schoolhouse and Chapel.

The Chair suggested that additional information could be submitted for the next meeting's packet of correspondence.

Beaver Meadow Schoolhouse President Peter Stanzel asked about the logistics of submitting to the Selectboard packet.

The Chair and Town Manager explained the process for contributing to the packet.

Stanzel asked if the warrant article was worded similarly to previous years.

Swett explained that the warrant articles had been approved and that the Beaver Meadow Schoolhouse was included. He noted that any further material provided would be for public consumption.

The Chair reflected that the five-year renewal could be surprising and that there was a clear process for petition but not for the Selectboard to notify people and provide guidance for renewal, as it had been informal and disorganized.

Calloway explained that the Selectboard had seen fit to put the Beaver Meadow Schoolhouse renewal on the warrant and that it was now up for the public to vote. Calloway suggested attending the information session and speaking on behalf of the schoolhouse article.

Stanzel explained the history of the Beaver Meadow Schoolhouse ownership and deed.

Trajman noted that she thought Stanzel's comments would be more appropriate at the informational hearing, which would have a broader audience.

Stanzel stated that it was somewhat ambiguous what approval of the warrant would mean in terms of which taxes would be waived, but that for 40 years they had had to pay zero education and zero municipal tax.

Trajman explained that when their educational taxes were set to zero, it simply meant that the taxes would be spread out over every other taxpayer in town.

Treasurer and Lister Cheryl Lindberg questioned whether the article would eliminate just the municipal tax, because "all we can do is vote to eliminate the municipal tax." Lindberg wondered how that "leaps over to both the municipal and education taxes for this article" and shared that some towns go through the process and do not have the municipal tax on the tax bill but do have the education tax.

The Chair explained that the Root District tax bill had been zero "for many years as well" and that the two schoolhouses were in the same situation of trying to get the five-year exemption on the ballot. The Chair added that she believed the waiver had been coming up every five years for "quite a number of years" and that it had not been an issue as long as she could remember.

Stanzel explained that it would be an issue if the Beaver Meadow Schoolhouse received a tax bill as they are a small organization and have received grants in the past to help maintain the building. Stanzel added that he believed it was limited by deed in use to a community function structure.

The Town Manager read through the articles for the two schoolhouses and shared that he interpreted the language as a five-year continuation of anything that had previously been exempted from taxes.

The Chair shared that she would do some research for making the five-year process clearer and would talk with the other members of the Root Schoolhouse about pursuing the longer process.

The Town Manager clarified that there would be information in the next packet about both schoolhouses.

5. Adjournment

Timestamp: 1:14:43

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

Meeting adjourned at 7:06 pm.

Minutes taken by Jenny Tolman.

Minutes approved on January 28, 2026

Mary Layton, Selectboard Chair