

**Town of Norwich, Vermont**  
**Minutes of the Selectboard Meeting**  
**Wednesday, Jan 28, 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)

**Active Participants on Zoom:** Jaan Laaspere (Planning Commission)

**Key:** *Motions noted in italics.*

**Public comment noted in blue.**

**The meeting was called to order by Chair Mary Layton at 6:34 pm.**

**YouTube Timestamp: 29:38**

**1. Agenda**

**Timestamp: 30:00**

Vincent requested that the executive sessions for item six (Fire District Tax Exemption Agreement) and item eight (Draft Audit Process Question) be removed.

The Chair responded that the language on the agenda would give the Selectboard the possibility of an executive session but that they did not have to take it.

Vincent commented that there was only five minutes for department reports and wanted to acknowledge the work done by the Finance Department.

*I move to approve the agenda as presented. – Calloway moved (2<sup>nd</sup> Griggs) Vote: yes (Calloway, Griggs, Swett, Layton), no (Vincent)*

**2. Chair's Report**

**Timestamp: 32:04**

The Chair put together the agenda.

**3. Public Comments for Items not on the Agenda**

**Timestamp: 32:14**

Vincent thanked Brita Vallens for responsiveness relating to an unplowed downtown sidewalk.

Laaspere shared that the Planning Commission had had a meeting on Monday to discuss the possible proposal for the Selectboard to request the village center or village center and village area be designated Tier 1B. Laaspere noted that there would be a letter from Two Rivers in the packet for the February 11<sup>th</sup> meeting, that the Planning Commission would discuss the matter at their Feb. 10<sup>th</sup> meeting, and that the Commission would be ready to discuss with the Selectboard on Feb. 11<sup>th</sup>.

Calloway stated that she would like to know exactly what is being proposed in reference to the village center versus village area. Calloway further shared concern about environmental damage and the possibility of the suggested designation triggering the need for a sewer system for the town.

Laaspere referenced the letter from Kevin Geiger to the Selectboard and the accompanying map, and shared that the Tier 1B ask was in relation to the village center and village area as drawn on the draft Two Rivers future land use maps. Laaspere noted that the town could ask to move lines in the next few months.

Relating to septic, Laaspere highlighted that every project would still have to go through local zoning, subdivision, and permitting processes. Laaspere clarified that it would be “more than ten units on less than ten acres” that would be exempt from Act 250 review, which would be very few parcels in Norwich.

Laaspere suggested that additional questions be submitted to Steven True so that background information could be included in the Selectboard packet for Feb. 11<sup>th</sup>.

Laaspere highlighted a correspondence to the Selectboard relating to the Energy Plan Working Group that the Planning Commission set up and noted that it was specifically set up as a working group, not a subcommittee, and had members chosen from established town groups so that there would not be anyone in the group who had not been appointed by the Selectboard. Laaspere added that it was a “temporary, task-based working group assisting the Planning Commission.”

Calloway pointed out that “this is what triggered Katucki in the first place” and shared that the Selectboard would need to get something from whatever group wanted to create a subgroup, which the Selectboard would then pass to the Town Manager’s office to ensure transparency. Calloway stated that the Katucki settlement agreement made clear that any

group like that would be a public body that would need to have minutes, but that she did not see any minutes from this group.

Laaspere shared that the group should be following open meeting law and that he would check on the matter. He offered to submit the charter to the Town Manager's office.

Calloway stated that the group should also be added to the Selectboard Handbook.

**4. Approval of 2026 Highway Mileage Certificate**

**Timestamp: 43:17**

The Town Manager explained that this was an annual mandatory report that would be submitted to VTrans on the number of miles of road by class in Norwich.

*I move to approve the 2026 Highway Mileage Certificate as presented. – Calloway moved (2<sup>nd</sup> Vincent) Vote: yes (unanimous)*

**5. Upper Valley Agricultural Association Request for Letter of Support**

**Timestamp: 44:33**

The Town Manager explained that it was a grant support letter for a REDI grant for the Norwich's Farmers' Market, which would be a precursor to a larger grant.

The Chair asked for Selectboard reactions to the letter; members responded that it looked fine and straightforward.

*I move to approve the draft letter in support of the Norwich Farmers' Market REDI grant application and authorize Chair Mary Layton to sign said letter. – Calloway moved (2<sup>nd</sup> Swett) Vote: yes (unanimous)*

**6. Fire District Tax Exemption Agreement**

**Timestamp: 46:45**

The Chair stated that she would welcome the chance to discuss the letter in executive session due to legal questions.

Vincent shared confusion at the interest in entering executive session, as the letter just laid out a sequence of events that had happened and it seemed as though it was settled.

The Chair responded that it was a transition and a difference historically in the relationship between the fire district and the town.

Calloway stated that there were no approved Lister minutes, only draft minutes, and the draft minutes from April 10<sup>th</sup>, 2024 and June 19<sup>th</sup> 2025 referenced a deliberative session on PVR 317. Calloway explained that she wondered how the final decision was arrived at and whether the Listers got advice of counsel on PVR 317. Calloway noted seven properties listed on Patriot Properties that were “exempt oth” for the fire district. She added that it would be helpful for a future meeting to have the results of the deliberative session minutes and the PVRs filed by the district, and that the rest of the matter should be discussed in executive session.

*I move to find that premature public knowledge of potential litigation would place the Selectboard at a substantial disadvantage, including by potentially disclosing confidential information. – Calloway moved (2<sup>nd</sup> Griggs) Vote: yes (Calloway, Griggs, Swett, Layton), no (Vincent)*

*Under 1 V.S.A. §§313(a)(1)(E), I move to enter executive session with the Town Manager. – Calloway moved (2<sup>nd</sup> Griggs) Vote: yes (Calloway, Griggs, Swett, Layton), no (Vincent)*

**Time entered executive session: 6:56 pm**

*I move to enter public session. – Calloway moved (2<sup>nd</sup> Griggs) Vote: yes (unanimous)*

**Time entered public session: 7:41 pm**

The Chair shared that the Selectboard would like counsel to review the decision for tax exemption of the fire district to explore the issues brought up in the letter sent to the Selectboard. The Chair further stated that the Selectboard would like to obtain a copy of the PVR 317 application form, to know whether there were any deliberative sessions on it, and that she would contact the Listers’ Office with a memo to request the items.

## **7. Selectboard Handbook Amendment Process, Amendments, Additions**

**Timestamp: 1:37:37**

Calloway shared that the Selectboard Handbook was assembled as a reference document to find relevant laws. Calloway highlighted that it was a tool that would need to be amended as changes take place, and she explained the five areas of future change that she had listed in her memo.

Vincent asked who served as the custodian of public records.

Calloway explained that the custodian overall was the Town Manager but could be a Lister or the Town Clerk in different circumstances. She noted that a public records request would go through the Town Manager.

The Town Manager explained to Vincent that open meeting law is followed and that the approach to the response depends on the complexity of the request. He noted that requests to other town employees would normally be referred to him given his role as the custodian of public records for the town.

Calloway explained that the handbook should be a “springboard” and that updates might come from the Town Manager, VLCT, the town’s lawyers, or others.

The Chair thanked Calloway for her work on assembling the handbook.

*I move to approve amendments to the Selectboard Handbook, as detailed in the January 21, 2026 memo from Marcia Calloway and further to include the new energy plan working group information. – Calloway moved (2<sup>nd</sup> Swett) Vote: yes (unanimous)*

Griggs expressed concern that people would take this document to be the law for Norwich and wanted to emphasize that it is a reference document, not the law.

Selectboard members discussed the wording and presentation of the handbook.

## **8. Draft Audit Process Question**

**Timestamp: 1:52:32**

The Chair explained that there was a question about confidentiality in the draft audit review process and that she would like an executive session to understand the matter.

*Under 1 V.S.A. §313(a)(4), I move to enter executive session to discuss the draft audit process and invite the Town Manager. – Calloway moved (2<sup>nd</sup> Swett) Vote: yes (Calloway, Griggs, Swett, Layton), no (Vincent)*

**Time entered executive session: 7:58**

*I move to enter public session. – Calloway moved (2<sup>nd</sup> Griggs) Vote: yes (unanimous)*

**Time entered public session: 8:58**

The Chair shared that the Selectboard listened to concerns that the Town Manager had with the process of releasing the draft audit to officials. She noted that they were not considering any action at the time.

## **9. Town Manager Report**

**Timestamp: 2:53:34**

The Town Manager highlighted that (1) the audit had been completed and time had been scheduled with the head auditor to review the audit at the Feb. 11<sup>th</sup> Selectboard meeting, (2) a future RFP for auditing services would likely be issued with the hope and expectation that Sullivan Powers would be one of the responders, (3) the Finance Director is transferring FY25 numbers into the Town Report, (4) Jonathan DeLaBruere started in the Finance Assistant role, (5) Pam Mullen resigned due to a move, (6) Officer Rebentisch completed his requirements to become a certified VT Level Three officer, (7) there is a road salt shortage, which is why DPW has been putting down sand on roads, (8) the Moore Lane bridge project solicitation had been reissued with the hope of starting construction once weather allows, (9) the Recreation Department has potluck dinners at Tracy Hall scheduled for Feb. 8th, Mar. 8<sup>th</sup>, and Apr. 5<sup>th</sup>, (10) planning is underway for the upcoming local election, (11) the Town Manager's Office is compiling the Town Report, (12) the Emerald Ash Borer Subcommittee is interested in attending a Feb. Selectboard meeting, (13) the local hazard mitigation plan is due to expire, Steven True has offered to take on the lead role for the process, and there will be a memo for the next meeting with a list of possible members for a steering committee, and (14) there was a third quote for the Tracy Hall slate roof that the Town Manager would like to move forward with.

The Chair shared that she thought it would be good to move forward on the roof and that the building likely did not need to retain the chimney. She suggested possibly taking the chimney down below the roofline.

Selectboard members and the Town Manager discussed the status of the Tracy Hall roof. The Chair highlighted the need to figure out the Selectboard's level of engagement with the Tracy Hall renovations.

## **10. Department Reports**

**Timestamp: 3:07:49**

Griggs highlighted an increase in assaults listed in the police report. The Town Manager suggested asking the Police Chief about the increase.

Vincent thanked DPW Director Chris Kaufman for his work on getting the town FEMA funds.

Vincent thanked Finance Director Barrie Rosalinda for the finance overview.

Swett thanked Rosalinda for including her explanations in a written format.

## **11. Approve Minutes**

**Timestamp: 3:11:30**

*I move to approve the minutes for January 14<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup>, 2026 as presented. – Griggs moved (2<sup>nd</sup> Calloway) Vote: yes (unanimous)*

## **12. AP Warrants**

**Timestamp: 3:12:07**

*I move to approve AP Warrant #1447 in the amount of \$160,068.23 to be paid from the General Fund. – Calloway moved (2<sup>nd</sup> Griggs) Vote: yes (unanimous)*

## **13. Receipt of Correspondence**

**Timestamp: 4:14:01**

A memo asked why the DPW budget was being cut; the Chair explained that she understood it as them managing to be very efficient and frugal. Vincent added that less money was going to be spent on outside contractors because the town has more CDL employees.

A memo asked why the Police Department requested tasers; the Chair suggested referring to the Selectboard meeting when the matter was discussed.

Swett shared that he hoped the Selectboard would take up the Finance Committee's suggestions; the Chair said she put it in the agenda "parking lot."

The Chair raised that different towns had been spending their opioid settlement funds and that the Selectboard should decide how to spend Norwich's funds.

*I move to receive all correspondence. – Griggs moved (2<sup>nd</sup> Calloway) Vote: yes (unanimous)*

**14. Adjournment**

**Timestamp: 3:18:07**

*I move to adjourn the meeting. – Calloway moved (2<sup>nd</sup> Swett) Vote: yes (unanimous)*

Meeting adjourned at 9:23.

Minutes taken by Jenny Tolman.