

**Town of Norwich, Vermont**  
**Minutes of the Selectboard Meeting**  
**Wednesday, March 25<sup>th</sup>, 2026**

**Active Participants at Tracy Hall:** Kimo Griggs (SB Chair), Brendan Classon (SB Vice Chair), Matt Swett (SB member), Mary Layton (SB member), Rob Gere (SB member), Brennan Duffy (Town Manager), Cheryl Lindberg (Lister and Treasurer), Chet Clem (Norwich Baseball Association), Michael Costa (Norwich Baseball Association), Priscilla Vincent (Town member), Doug Sonsalla (Studio Nexus), John Carroll (Town member), Pam Smith (Lister and Trustee of Public Funds), Margaret Merrens (Town member), Jonathan Frishtick (Town member), Nick Krembs (Town member), Jim Faughnan (Town member), Chris Rimmer (Town member)

**Active Participants on Zoom:** Linda Gray (Town member), Alex Gottlieb (Town member), Mary Albert (Town member), Jaan Laaspere (Town member), Chris Kaufman (Public Works Director)

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

*Public comment noted in blue.*

**The meeting was called to order by Chair Kimo Griggs at 6:32 pm.**

**YouTube Timestamp: 0:42**

**1. Agenda**

**Timestamp: 2:24**

Lister Cheryl Lindberg asked that the Lister agenda item be moved up; Griggs offered to review the Lister item after item five.

*I move to approve the agenda as modified. – Swett moved (2<sup>nd</sup> Layton) Vote: yes (unanimous)*

**2. Chair's Report**

**Timestamp: 3:54**

The Chair (1) met with town staff about the agenda, methods of collaboration, and Executive Session processes, (2) met with John Carroll and invited him to attend that night's meeting, (3) met with the Town Manager, (4) met with the Recreation Director, and (5) communicated with town residents, including about speeding in town.

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

**Timestamp: 4:54**

Chet Clem asked on behalf of the Norwich Baseball Association that the maintenance schedule be revisited for the baseball field at Huntley Meadow. Clem highlighted the dangers to players and emphasized the limited window of opportunity for the spring maintenance of the field coming out of mud season ahead of the May 1<sup>st</sup> opening day.

Griggs shared that contractors had been especially busy in recent years and materials scarce but emphasized that it was not an excuse.

Duffy explained that Recreation Director Brie Swenson met with the original contractor hired to do the field resurfacing and shared that he understood that they planned to finish or touch-up the work before the start of the season. Duffy noted that the town now had a building and grounds technician who they did not have last year.

Michael Costa of the Norwich Baseball Association reiterated that the field was in rough shape, shared that the Norwich Baseball organization had grown in size and formality over the past three years, and highlighted that a baseball field cannot be adequately maintained without running water.

Priscilla Vincent stated that the baseball discussion should have been an agenda item.

**4. Studio Nexus Architects**

**Timestamp: 15:22**

Griggs introduced Doug Sonsalla of Studio Nexus and gave background on the feasibility study for Tracy Hall that Studio Nexus produced in 2024. Griggs explained that Sonsalla was at that night's meeting to discuss next steps for the Tracy Hall project.

Sonsalla offered to give a recap of last fall's discussion and shared a slide deck of the feasibility study. Sonsalla highlighted that the boiler replacement was a step in the right direction towards updates but that all of the terminal systems in the building were "being held on by duct tape."

Sonsalla noted issues with the septic tank and a missing handicapped parking space. Sonsalla shared that his team had spoken with town staff about deficiencies in the building, and that the most consistent complaints were associated with the mechanical system not maintaining the temperature, as well as the building being drafty and leaky.

Sonsalla stated that the roof was a high priority and that the town had made progress in those repairs. Sonsalla added that they thought they could use the chimney when putting in the propane tank, but that the chimney repair would have been very expensive.

Classon asked if the chimney was in danger of structural failure. Duffy and Sonsalla explained that there had been debris falling from the bricks. Selectboard members and Sonsalla discussed possibilities for chimney updates.

Sonsalla highlighted issues with the dripline of the roof and associated consequences to the basement windows.

Sonsalla briefly explained possible floorplans for Tracy Hall and outlined three options for next steps: (1) limited short-term improvements, (2) improvements to meet energy code and programming, and/or (3) net zero ready and meeting long-term programmatic needs.

Classon asked whether the septic issues were optional updates or defects in the existing system; Sonsalla suggested an incremental step of taking care of the bend of the pipe into the main tank and then seeing what happens.

Selectboard members and Sonsalla discussed the pumping of the septic tank.

Griggs wondered if it would make sense to add onto the building and explore creative solutions to the building's challenges.

Sonsalla explained that it would be a significantly more complex project with traffic flow, water, etc. He suggested bringing on a construction manager to help think about costs of each option. Sonsalla noted that the offices were linear and elongated in an L-shape, making it challenging to create a cohesive office space.

Layton suggested that the public would want to know the aesthetics of possible additions to the building.

Sonsalla explained that the challenge would be how to add onto a civic building without diminishing the iconic stature.

Swett asked what the next steps would be to move the project along.

Griggs shared that he would like to form a working group focused on developing ideas with Duffy and Sosalla.

Sonsalla explained that that was a typical format for making progress on that sort of project.

Gere highlighted that items listed in the document from Studio Nexus like the basement windows require overdue maintenance or replacement that had been allowed to slide in the past, and that those updates would need to be completed efficiently and would not necessarily interfere with future plans for the building.

Griggs and Sonsalla suggested having further discussions in the steering committee.

Linda Gray spoke in favor of selecting the option that includes the most energy improvements. Gray clarified that the parking lot was not owned by the town, which would need to be considered with any expansion. Gray highlighted that the Municipal Energy Resilience Program (MERP) would soon include a revolving loan fund, which the town should keep in mind.

Duffy raised concern about the elevator's recurrent outages and highlighted the annual service contract of approximately \$4,000, as well as additional work outside the contract scope of around \$6,000 from the start of FY2025 through present. Duffy suggested moving quickly on replacing the elevator due to ADA compliance requirements, despite the \$180,000-\$200,000 cost.

## **5. Presentation by John Carroll on Open Meeting Law**

**Timestamp: 54:13**

Kimo Griggs introduced John Carroll and explained that he had invited Carroll to the meeting to discuss Open Meeting Law and Executive Sessions.

Carroll thanked the Selectboard for their work and explained that the legislature writes the rules that guide the Selectboard's work.

Carroll emphasized the importance of Open Meeting Law, though acknowledged the need to discuss some topics before they're "ready to be public" that "need to be talked about offline in private," which is what Executive Sessions were created for. Carroll shared that the "default behavior of all public boards, including this one, is openness, and the rare exception is to be a private conversation." Carroll noted that he is not an attorney but has experience with the law.

Carroll highlighted that previous iterations of the Norwich Selectboard had held many executive sessions. Carroll shared that from March 2022 to February 2023, there were 33 executive sessions, averaging roughly one executive session per meeting. From March 2023 to February 2024, there were 35 executive sessions. From March 2024 to February 2025, there were four executive sessions, and from March 2024 to February 2026, there were 12. Carroll reflected that there is a downward trend in frequency, which he regarded as healthy, but that the Selectboard could still do better. He emphasized that Norwich citizens who care enough to attend a Selectboard meeting are left in an empty room during an executive session.

Carroll offered to review Selectboard procedures and discuss how they could be improved. Carroll suggested three areas of improvement, specifically the justification for entering executive sessions, the length of executive sessions, and the actions upon exiting executive sessions.

Carroll shared that a motion to enter executive session shall indicate the actual nature of the business of the session, as dictated by Vermont statute, whereas the typical motion of the Selectboard to enter executive session misuses the term “find,” and instead makes an unsupported assertion. Carroll raised that this constituted an unintentional violation of state law.

Carroll emphasized that the Selectboard must not withhold relevant information which is public and referenced multiple executive sessions about the Trussell v. Norwich case in which the Selectboard avoided naming the court case being discussed, despite it being in the public domain.

Carroll urged caution to enter executive session when encouraged by an attorney or town employee, as they have different interests and obligations from the Selectboard. He highlighted that executive session conversations must be limited to the topic they said they were entering to discuss and that they must not discuss information that is readily available to the public. Carroll emphasized that these discussions are “not like your conversations with the family at home.”

Carroll encouraged the Selectboard to make a provision to securely make available confidential documents to the Selectboard ahead of executive sessions to maximize efficiency. He additionally suggested erring on the side of making a public motion to show progress and advocated for the Selectboard to give a summary to the public, even if neither action can reveal many details.

Griggs asked if there was any reason to not invite a lawyer to join a public session; Carroll stated that it would be good action, assuming it does not step on confidentialities.

## 6. Review of Applications to Boards/Commissions and Appointments

**Timestamp: 1:37:38**

Pam Smith pointed out that there was an application for the ECFiber governing board but that she did not see it on the list of advertised positions. Smith advocated for it not to be voted on until properly advertised.

Gere concurred.

Smith asked if Selectboard members should be allowed to also serve as sitting voting members of committees, or if they should be liaisons rather than full members.

Griggs shared that his research found it would be okay to stay on a committee but one would have to recuse themselves if business from that committee comes before the board.

Selectboard members and Smith discussed the difference between a liaison and full committee member and potential conflicts of interest.

Gere shared that he would be fine as a liaison.

Alex Gottlieb spoke to his application to the Norwich Conservation Commission.

Margaret Merrens spoke in favor of Andy Torkelson's application to the Norwich Conservation Commission.

*I move to appoint Alex Gottlieb and Andy Torkelson to the Conservation Commission for terms expiring March 31, 2030. – Layton moved (2<sup>nd</sup> Classon) Vote: yes (unanimous)*

Jonathan Frishtick, Margaret Merrens, and Alex Gottlieb spoke to their applications to the Emerald Ash Borer Management Group.

*I move to appoint Alex Gottlieb, Jonathan Frishtick, and Margaret (Peg) Merrens to the Emerald Ash Borer Management Group for terms expiring March 31, 2029. – Classon moved (2<sup>nd</sup> Swett) Vote: yes (unanimous)*

Mary Albert spoke to her application to the Energy Committee.

*I move to appoint Mary Albert to the Energy Committee for a term expiring March 31, 2029. – Swett moved (2<sup>nd</sup> Classon) Vote: yes (Griggs, Classon, Layton, Swett) recuse (Gere)*

*I move to appoint John Farrell as Town Service Officer for a term expiring March 31, 2027. – Swett moved (2<sup>nd</sup> Classon) Vote: yes (unanimous)*

Nick Krembs and Jim Faughnan spoke to their applications to the Conservation Commission.

*I move to appoint Jim Faughnan and Nick Krembs to the Conservation Commission for terms expiring March 31, 2029. – Classon moved (2<sup>nd</sup> Swett) Vote: yes (unanimous)*

Chris Rimmer spoke to his application for Tree Warden.

*I move to appoint Chris Rimmer as Tree Warden for a term expiring March 31, 2027. – Swett moved (2<sup>nd</sup> Classon) Vote: yes (unanimous)*

Trustee Pam Smith spoke on behalf of Megan Anderson's application to the Trustees of Public Funds.

*I move to appoint Megan Anderson as a Trustee of Public Funds for an interim term expiring March 2, 2027. – Swett moved (2<sup>nd</sup> Gere) Vote: yes (unanimous)*

Lindberg highlighted her email in the Selectboard packet about the Land Management Council position.

## **7. DPW Recommendation for Route 132 Culvert No. 18 Replacement Project**

**Timestamp: 2:02:31**

Public Works Director Chris Kaufman explained that the proposed project was for critical rework of a culvert on Route 132.

Kaufman highlighted an eventual need for significant paving projects, including Main Street, as well as updates to the DPW building.

Griggs suggested adding an agenda item to address the additional items Kaufman raised.

Jaan Laaspere explained that the village master plan project would be a good setting for looking at the village in a holistic way, including updates to Main Street.

*I move to expend an amount not to exceed \$200,000 from the Culvert Designated Fund #54 to replace Culvert #18 on Route 132. – Swett moved (2<sup>nd</sup> Gere) Vote: yes (unanimous)*

## **8. Sweetland Farm Licensing Agreement**

**Timestamp: 2:10:03**

*I move to authorize the Town Manager to execute the License Agreement between the Town of Norwich and Norah S. Lake and Christopher M. Polashenski, as included in the Selectboard meeting packet. – Swett moved (2<sup>nd</sup> Layton) Vote: yes (unanimous)*

## **9. Discussion Regarding the Formation of Working Groups**

**Timestamp: 2:12:09**

Griggs referenced his proposal included in the packet regarding the formation of working groups.

Selectboard members and Duffy discussed the details of the possible working groups, specifically the accompanying templates to ensure standardization.

Layton wondered whether there would be some instances when a working group could be cumbersome, but that the nature of a working group could vary depending on the task and number of people that need to give input.

Gere shared that this seemed like a formalization of what had been done historically. Gere asked how one might request input without overstepping open meeting law.

Selectboard members discussed the open meeting law bounds of working groups, the lifecycle of working groups, and the delineation between a working group, query, and committee.

*I move to approve the formation of Working Groups, as per the proposal included in the Selectboard meeting packet. – Classon moved (2<sup>nd</sup> Layton) Vote: yes (unanimous)*

## **10. Discussion of Selectboard Goals**

**Timestamp: 2:25:14**

Griggs asked if the Selectboard felt ready for the goals discussions or if they would like more time. Griggs noted that the setting of goals “are not equal to or equivalent to the tasks that we have ahead of us.”

Layton asked Duffy to clarify the Town Manager goal to provide assistance to the Auditor of Accounts and Town Treasurer to ensure the Selectboard receive a summary of internal financial controls, as she was unaware that they were reviewing internal financial controls except in the context of the audit.

Griggs noted that there was not yet public documentation and suggested providing more documentation in the next packet ahead of further discussion.

Selectboard members discussed how to conceptualize Selectboard goals, scale of goals, and concrete versus abstract goals.

Lindberg spoke in favor of the Selectboard developing policies and utilizing the VLCT models, therefore facilitating the evaluation of town employees.

## **11. Discussion of Goals for the Town Manager**

See above.

## **12. Town Manager Report**

**Timestamp: 2:41:08**

Duffy raised that (1) there would be a request from the Finance Office at the next meeting for allowing a phone or electronic credit card payment as needed, (2) there would be a public meeting about the short-term rental bylaw adoption on April 22<sup>nd</sup>, and (3) there would likely be an upcoming citizen assistance request.

Swett noted a significant difference between the 2022-2023 and 2023-2024 outstanding tax collection and shared appreciation for the updated financial information format.

## **13. Department Reports**

See above.

## **14. Board of Listers' Request: Closure of Past Grand Lists**

**Timestamp: 1:33:25**

Lister Cheryl Lindberg referenced the memo in the Selectboard packet regarding the closing of prior year grand lists. Lindberg reminded the Selectboard that the Town Clerk is the official keeper of the grand list.

*I move that the Selectboard approve closing past grand lists from 2011, 2012, 2015, 2016, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2022, 2023, and 2024 – Layton moved (2<sup>nd</sup> Swett) Vote: yes (unanimous)*

## **15. Green Visions Liquor License Renewals**

**Timestamp: 2:45:08**

*I move to recess the meeting of the Selectboard at 9:15 PM for the purpose of executing the duties of the local liquor control commissioners under the authority of 7 VSA §167 et seq. – Classon moved (2<sup>nd</sup> Layton) Vote: yes (unanimous)*

*I move to approve the Outside Consumption Permit, application #71810, for Green Visions, LLC, d/b/a the Norwich Inn; the First Class Restaurant/Bar License, application #71807, for Green Visions, LLC, d/b/a the Norwich Inn; the Second Class License, application #71808, for Green Visions, LLC, d/b/a the Norwich Inn; and the Third Class License, application #71813, for Green Visions, LLC, d/b/a the Norwich Inn. – Layton moved (2<sup>nd</sup> Classon) Vote: yes (unanimous)*

## **16. King Arthur Baking Company Liquor License Renewals**

**Timestamp: 2:47:37**

*I move to approve the First Class Restaurant/Bar License, application #72268, for King Arthur Baking Company, Inc, d/b/a the King Arthur Flour Company; the Outside Consumption Permit, application #72271, for King Arthur Baking Company, Inc, d/b/a the King Arthur Flour Company; and the Outside Consumption Permit, application #72272, for King Arthur Baking Company, Inc, d/b/a the King Arthur Flour Company. – Layton moved (2<sup>nd</sup> Classon) Vote: yes (unanimous)*

*I move to close the Norwich Liquor Commission session at 9:19 and reconvene the Selectboard meeting. – Classon moved (2<sup>nd</sup> Layton) Vote: yes (unanimous)*

## **17. Approve Minutes**

**Timestamp: 2:48:56**

*I move to approve the minutes for March 4th and March 11th, 2026 as presented to the Selectboard. – Gere moved (2<sup>nd</sup> Layton) Vote: yes (unanimous)*

Gere requested the addition of “unlike previous Selectboards” to Classon’s comments under agenda item four on the March 18<sup>th</sup> minutes.

*I move to approve the minutes as amended for March 18th, 2026. – Layton (2<sup>nd</sup> Swett)  
Vote: yes (unanimous)*

## **18. AP Warrants**

**Timestamp: 2:54:08**

*I move to approve AP Warrant #1465 in the amount of \$141,990.45 to be paid from the General Fund; AP Warrant #1466 in the amount of \$121.50 to be paid from the General Fund; and AP Warrant #1467 in the amount of \$3,799.09 from the General Fund. – Layton moved (2<sup>nd</sup> Swett) Vote: yes (unanimous)*

Lindberg highlighted a payment to NMERC that had been expensed to the Listers’ Office but noted that she did not recall approving the invoice and thought it belonged in the Zoning Office.

Duffy offered to look into the payment coding.

## **19. Receipt of Correspondence**

**Timestamp: 2:56:57**

Griggs summarized the list of correspondence included in the packet.

Swett raised a potential future agenda item on creating a policy for requests for public records; Griggs shared that it was in the parking lot of topics.

Layton suggested finishing the discussion on the opioid funds.

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

## **20. Adjournment**

**Timestamp: 2:59:37**

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

Meeting adjourned at 9:31.

Minutes taken by Jenny Tolman.