

Town of Norwich, Vermont
Minutes of the Selectboard Meeting
Wednesday, March 11, 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 (Treasurer and Lister), Pam Smith (Lister), Lily Trajman (Town Clerk), Aaron Lamperti (Town member), Jack Cushman (Town member), Lynnwood Andrews (Town member), Steven Hepburn (Finance Committee)

Active Participants on Zoom: Linda Gray (Town member), Brian Riordan (Town member), Chris Kaufman (Public Works Director), Alex Northern (Fire Chief)

Key: *Motions noted in italics.*
Public comment noted in blue.

The meeting was called to order by Chair Kimo Griggs at 6:34 pm.

YouTube Timestamp: 0:29

1. Agenda

Timestamp: 0:29

Layton highlighted that item five had to do with the Public Records Act and suggested a future agenda item on the adoption of a policy to deal with public records requests.

Layton suggested a policy template from the VLCT as a jumping off point.

Swett suggested covering items seven and 13 back-to-back to streamline the Fire Chief's time.

Griggs shared that six had been moved ahead of five at the request of counsel.

Cheryl Lindberg highlighted an email in the packet from Pam Smith requesting consideration for the Lister role. She wondered if it would be discussed that night.

Classon noted he had seen a partial email but not an actual application in the packet.

Pam Smith said she sent the application.

Duffy recounted that there was a directive at the last Selectboard meeting to advertise all of the March appointments, which was sent out on Monday. Duffy shared that Smith

submitted an application on Thursday, and there was another application for an appointment submitted before the organizational meeting. Duffy voiced confusion about the timing of the Lister appointment given his understanding that the Selectboard had agreed to hold all appointments until the meeting on March 25th and advertise those positions with a deadline of March 18th.

Selectboard members and Duffy discussed the timeline of the appointments and plan for that night's agenda item on committee and subcommittee appointments.

Smith explained that she had submitted her application last Thursday, there would be new software deployed shortly, and training would begin very soon. Smith noted multiple other upcoming trainings through the VLCT and Property Valuation Review that could only be attended by Listers, which prompted her request for expedited consideration.

Gere and Layton voiced support for adhering to the March 18th deadline to be consistent.

Griggs stated that he remembered that the roles would be advertised at the same time but not that necessarily filled at the same time. Griggs shared that he had learned through the VLCT that there were no statutes governing committee appointments and elections.

Swett asked to discuss the matter further at the dedicated agenda item.

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

2. Chair's Report

Timestamp: 14:53

The Chair (1) met to discuss the agenda, (2) intends to take most meetings with Duffy to foster trust and transparency, (3) was present at the Town Manager's Office during a public records review by Pam Smith, (4) was in touch with citizens, (5) met with Matt Swett and Steven Hepburn on the role of the Finance Committee, (6) met with Rob Gere, (7) attended a potluck at Tracy Hall, and (8) responded to an email from John Carroll offering to brief the Selectboard on various subjects.

3. Public Comments for Items not on the Agenda

Timestamp: 16:06

[Aaron Lamperti spoke to a letter in the packet reminding the Selectboard that the town overwhelmingly voted for Article 36 in 2019, advising the Selectboard that they wished](#)

to eliminate fossil fuel use in town operations over approximately 20 years. Lamperti shared that he did not see any evidence of progress towards the goal and encouraged the Selectboard to take the concern seriously.

Lister Lindberg gave an update that the AP5 upgrade was underway, the data had been pulled from the server, and the data review process was ongoing. Lindberg noted delays in the process with Catalyst, highlighted the approaching April 1st grand list deadline, and noted that they would continue work on the list until the June 4th abstract is filed. Lindberg shared that owners in the grand list freeze on April 1st and any sales after April 1st would be reflected in the next grand list.

Gere asked if the current software could be used in the same manner as previous years.

Lindberg explained that the database was frozen in the process of updating the software to cloud-based, and they therefore have not been able to work since early February.

Jack Cushman spoke in support of Lamperti's recommendations. Cushman shared that he and others are ready and eager to support the Selectboard.

Swett suggested an agenda item on Article 36 for a future meeting.

Gere requested it be added to the March 25th agenda.

Lynnwood Andrews suggested the Selectboard consider having goals in town employee contracts outlining progress on reducing fossil fuels in town. Andrews shared that she thought it would be difficult for the DPW and Police Department to move to all-electric vehicles if they do not have level three charging stations in place.

Linda Gray echoed the comments from Lamperti, Cushman, and Andrews.

Brian Riordan shared that he had emailed the Police Chief multiple times requesting speed reader and infraction data but had received no response, highlighted that there was supposed to be follow-up on the pedestrian-friendly community discussion, and shared that a traffic engineering survey had been completed in 2018, which informed the reduction in speed limit on Union Village Road.

4. DPW Director Requests **Timestamp: 2:29:37**

Public Works Director Chris Kaufman explained that these motions would enable the town to get grants and fulfil state requirements.

Kaufman highlighted that there were new town bridge standards and that the state now recommends that cross culverts have a minimum diameter of 18 inches.

I move to approve the Annual Financial Plan – Town Highways, as included in the Selectboard meeting packet. – Swett moved (2nd Layton) Vote: yes (unanimous)

I move to approve the Certification of Compliance for Town Road and Bridge Standards and Network Inventory, as included in the Selectboard meeting packet. – Swett moved (2nd Layton) Vote: yes (unanimous)

I move to adopt the Town Road and Bridge Standards, as updated by the DPW Director. – Swett moved (2nd Layton) Vote: yes (unanimous)

5. Public Records Act Accommodation Review

Timestamp: 1:16:23

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. – Layton moved (2nd Swett) Vote: yes (Layton, Gere, Swett, Griggs), no (Classon)

Classon voiced concern about direct or inferred potential conflict between public records and executive sessions.

Griggs explained that he understood it to be that the Selectboard would like to provide public records but that it was complicated due to the conditions of the person asking and their inability to view them in-person.

Classon asked what types of transmission the open meeting law allows, the longevity of the issue, and whether there was any history of Selectboard discussion.

Layton explained that there were questions on how the Selectboard would navigate special accommodation.

Lindberg asked the Selectboard where the public records request policy was located, for which an accommodation would be made.

Layton referenced her earlier comments that there had not been a policy but that she had requested an upcoming agenda item to develop one.

Selectboard members discussed possible request and accommodation procedures.

Under 1 V.S.A. §313(a)(1)(F), I move to enter executive session for attorney-client communications, and to invite legal counsel and the Town Manager. – Layton moved (2nd Swett) Vote: yes (unanimous)

Time entered executive session: 7:58

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

Time entered public session: 9:03

Griggs shared that the Selectboard received legal advice from counsel on how to respond to a specific public records request.

6. Review Pending Litigation with Legal Counsel

Timestamp: 28:53

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. – Layton moved (2nd Swett) Vote: yes (unanimous)

Under 1 V.S.A. §313(a)(1)(E) and (F), I move to enter executive session for attorney-client communications regarding litigation, and to invite legal counsel and the Town Manager. – Layton moved (2nd Swett) Vote: yes (unanimous)

Time entered executive session: 7:05

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

Time entered public session: 7:49

Griggs shared that the Selectboard had received guidance regarding a potential lawsuit, work is ongoing, and no decision was made.

7. Fire Department Spending Request: Fire Equipment Fund

Timestamp: 2:35:20

I move to authorize the expenditure of an amount not to exceed \$9,800 from Fire Equipment Fund #26 for the purchase of new fire helmets and shields. – Layton moved (2nd Gere) Vote: yes (unanimous)

8. TM Recommendation to Support Trails Committee Trail Improvement Project

Timestamp: 2:38:58

The Town Manager explained that they would need to submit and receive a grant, in which case the town would pay for the money up-front and then be reimbursed through the grant.

I move to approve the Trails Committee request to solicit a grant for \$2,575 from the Norwich Women's Club for the purpose of repairing stone steps on the Ballard Trail. – Layton moved (2nd Gere) Vote: yes (unanimous)

9. Discussion of Organizational Meeting Topics

Timestamp: 2:40:24

Layton, Gere, and Swett spoke in favor of the Chair's report.

Duffy explained that Addendum B of the Personnel Policy was put in place when the policy was updated in October 2024 as a way for elected officials to agree to adhere to many of the provisions in the policy that are applicable to the employees of the town. Duffy noted that it is not a requirement to sign it but that if Selectboard members do not, they should explain why not.

Griggs explained that he did not sign it last year because the VLCT stopped recommending the form and that he was told the form might protect the town from certain types of lawsuits but that he did not find the explanation convincing. Griggs shared that he found it a potential conflict of interest to be able to amend provisions of a policy that he is subject to. Griggs highlighted that the policy would be administered by the Town Manager, who is under his guidance, which could be an additional conflict of interest, and reflected that treatment of town staff did not vary noticeably between those who did and those who did not sign the policy.

Layton emphasized a positive framing of the discussion and addendum, specifically that signing the addendum shows that one has endorsed the document. Layton noted that signing the agreement does not constitute a contract of employment.

Swett shared that he viewed signing it as acknowledging an established set of rules for conduct.

Gere explained that the policy and addendum were in line with his view of the responsible chain of command in management.

Classon reflected on the oath of office taken to serve as a Selectboard member, which transcends other considerations. Classon highlighted that the Section 10 line on prohibiting political activity during work was incongruous with Selectboard roles. Classon shared that he would “elect not to take any further, personally” the document.

Griggs wondered if it was worth reworking the document.

10. Planning for Selectboard & Town Manager Goals

Timestamp: 2:51:55

Griggs explained that he would send an email to Selectboard members requesting goals for the Selectboard and Town Manager.

Selectboard members discussed the timeline and expectations for setting Town Manager goals. Griggs shared that he did not think the Selectboard had established goals that they would review in September or October.

Duffy shared that over the last two years, there had not been time or bandwidth to set annual goals closer to the anniversary date, and the goal-setting conversations in the past two years had taken place in May. Duffy asked that the goals be completed in October ahead of the start of budget season in November.

Griggs suggested holding a discussion in two weeks about what goals would be appropriate for the Town Manager.

Swett suggested discussing Selectboard goals first, which could cascade down to the Town Manager goals.

Selectboard members discussed the Selectboard goal setting and measurement process. Members agreed to each submit a memo to the next Selectboard packet.

Griggs expressed particular interest in the individual Selectboard member goals, from which working groups could develop. Griggs additionally requested potential goals for the Town Manager in a separate memo.

Duffy spoke in favor of separating the two discussions and bringing in the Town Manager goals second.

Classon highlighted that setting Town Manager goals in May and evaluating them in September would only give four months for the goals to be realized.

11. SB Chair/Vice Chair Request to Form Working Groups

Timestamp: 3:05:50

Griggs requested the Selectboard's permission to form working groups in which Selectboard members could meet with members of the public and town employees and ultimately move forward efficiently on topics. Griggs highlighted that these would be public, warned meetings, and that he would present a template for these meetings at the next meeting. Griggs gave the example of public safety and Tracy Hall renovations as possible topics.

Layton reflected that the idea sounded reasonable but that it should be used judiciously and cautioned that there would be additional administrative time for each additional working group. Layton emphasized that it was important to assign a charge and timeline. Layton suggested that some topics were limited enough to be conducted as queries.

Classon spoke in favor of Grigg's plan since it could foster town engagement.

12. Selectboard Tasks for the Finance Committee

Timestamp: 3:11:09

Griggs shared that he and Swett had met with Steven Hepburn and that he would like to find opportunities for the Finance Committee to contribute to the town more actively.

Swett explained that the current charge prevented the Finance Committee from talking to anyone in the town government without the Selectboard's tasking, and that beginning to engage the Committee in a positive way would help set it up for long-term success. Swett suggested starting with a dialogue between the Finance Committee Chair, the Finance Director, and Town Manager to explore how a Finance Committee might be able to support the town. Swett additionally highlighted the need for the Finance Committee to interact with the Norwich Schoolboard.

Layton spoke in favor of the effort, specifically that it would be just the Finance Committee Chair to ensure a “more low-key entry.” Layton advocated for beginning the relationship building now, as opposed to at the start of budget season. Layton suggested having someone on the Finance Committee who is familiar with NEMRC due to translation challenges between NEMRC and Excel.

Classon wondered whether the Town Treasurer should be included in the group.

Swett suggested beginning with the initial three people suggested.

Classon discouraged the assignment of busywork to the Committee.

Selectboard members discussed the town comparison project tasked to the Finance Committee.

I move to task the Finance Committee Chair to discuss with the Finance Director and the Town Manager how the three of them can work together collaboratively over the coming year. – Swett moved (2nd Layton) Vote: yes (unanimous)

Steven Hepburn shared that he is looking forward to having conversations to see how the Committee can work with Town Management and the Schoolboard. Hepburn clarified that there would be a reorganizational meeting next month, after which he may or may not be the Committee Chair.

I move to task the Finance Committee Chair to discuss with the Norwich Schoolboard Chair how they can work together collaboratively over the coming year and agree to a framework to be memorialized in a memorandum of understanding between the Norwich Schoolboard and Norwich Selectboard. – Swett moved (2nd Layton) Vote: yes (unanimous)

13. Fire Warden Application & Appointment Discussion

Timestamp: 2:36:49

I move to approve the appointment of Alex Northern to the position of Town Forest Fire Warden for a term ending on June 30, 2028. – Gere moved (2nd Layton) Vote: yes (unanimous)

Lindberg asked if the position was advertised to the public.

Swett explained that it was advertised to the Fire Department and that the state has a policy that only a member of the Fire Department can occupy the role.

14. Plan for Committee and Subcommittee Appointments 2026

Timestamp: 3:22:38

Griggs shared that when the Selectboard discussed the topic the last time, he was under the impression that they were required to advertise the position and wait, and that he did not believe it would be decided at the same time, only advertised at the same time, as the other positions.

Griggs wondered why the Selectboard would not appoint a Lister, despite a qualified person having applied and the Selectboard not being bound by guidelines.

Layton explained that she understood the title of the agenda item to be the planning for appointments and that it was important to maintain the process.

Swett reflected that the State assumed that the Listers had already been elected and scheduled their educational programs with that assumption. Swett wondered if would be possible for Smith to sit in on the trainings without being appointed yet as a Lister.

Lister Cheryl Lindberg explained that they cannot work on anything until the cloud software AP5 is available and that they are working on a tight timeline.

Classon emphasized that no one petitioned for or won a majority for the Lister position in the election and that having the open position on the ballot could be considered having had it in the public domain.

Gere stated that “if we want to play favorites, then we can say yes, let’s go ahead and do it.”

Selectboard members debated adhering to publicized deadlines versus past opportunities to run for the Lister position.

Duffy shared that there was currently one applicant, Smith, and that one other person had inquired about the application process. Duffy stated that it was “very strange” they would not give other people the ability to apply for an open position “for the sake of two weeks.”

Selectboard members and Duffy debated the legitimacy of appointing Smith to the Lister position that night versus at the next meeting with the other appointed positions, as well as whether there were other ways to enable Smith to attend the required trainings.

Lindberg reiterated Griggs's earlier statements about the lack of guidance from the VLCT to advertise an elected position and that Selectboard statute for a vacancy is to appoint forthwith. Lindberg reminded the Selectboard that they had appointed a Recreation Council member on January 14th for a position that was not advertised with the applicant not present, showing inconsistent adherence to procedure.

Selectboard members discussed the lack of a warning on the agenda, the omission of Smith's application from the packet, and the future application deadline for the Lister role.

Griggs quoted communication from the VLCT that "only the notice must be posted" and that it can go out "even after someone is appointed to notify voters so they can petition for election if they choose."

Griggs spoke against breaking tradition again because they made a past mistake, in reference to the appointment of a youth member of a commission.

Duffy stated that "the optics around this are crazy bad right now" and quoted a ListServ post by Lindberg encouraging Lister applicants.

Lindberg explained that delays do not help with meeting the statutory deadlines of getting the grand list filed and lodged. Lindberg explained a range of ongoing Lister tasks and the possible ripple effects of not appointing someone efficiently.

Selectboard members discussed holding a special meeting the following Thursday for the Lister appointment.

15. Approve Minutes

Timestamp: 3:46:00

I move to approve the minutes for February 25, 2026 as presented. – Gere moved (2nd Layton) Vote: yes (unanimous)

16. AP Warrants

Timestamp: 3:46:35

I move to approve AP Warrant #1461 in the amount of \$94,788.02 to be paid from the General Fund; AP Warrant #1462 in the amount of \$2,808.22 to be paid from the Police Cruiser Fund; AP Warrant #1463 in the amount of \$9,500 from the Town Reappraisal Fund; and AP Warrant #1464 in the amount of \$700.50 from the Citizen Assistance Fund. – Layton moved (2nd Classon) Vote: yes (unanimous)

17. Receipt of Correspondence

Timestamp: 3:48:17

Griggs highlighted multiple correspondence on energy and speeding, which he thought could be working group topics.

Layton shared that there was typically a note about the people who submitted correspondence and the topics raised.

Griggs shared that he would do that in the future.

Swett reiterated that Act 36 would be a good future agenda item and spoke in favor of circling back on the speeding discussion.

Griggs noted that Smith had mentioned that her Lister application had been left off correspondence.

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

18. Adjournment

Timestamp: 3:50:27

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

Meeting adjourned at 10:24.

Minutes taken by Jenny Tolman.