

Town of Norwich, Vermont
Minutes of the Selectboard Meeting
Wednesday, April 22, 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), Steven True (Planning Director), Diane Miller (Town member), Irv Thomae (Town member), Miller Nuttle (Town member), John Carroll (Town member), Jenny Tolman (Minutes taker), Jess Phelps (Town member), Doug Hardy (Town member), Cheryl Lindberg (Treasurer and Lister)

Active Participants on Zoom: Brennan Duffy (Town Manager), Jaan Laaspere (Planning Commission Chair), Alex Northern (Fire Chief), Kris Clement (Town member), Peter Orner (Town member), Jordan Mueller (Town member)

Key: *Motions noted in italics.*
[Public comment noted in blue.](#)

The meeting was called to order by Chair Kimo Griggs at 6:31 pm.

YouTube Timestamp: 0:32

1. Public Hearing to Solicit Testimony on the Proposed Interim Bylaw to Regulate Short-Term Rentals in the Town of Norwich
Timestamp: 0:47

Griggs invited Planning Commission Chair Jaan Laaspere and Planning Director Steven True to begin the hearing.

Laaspere clarified that the purpose of the public hearing was for the Selectboard to hold the public hearing and that the Planning Commission had a number of meetings with the public.

[Diane Miller shared that she owns a sort-term rental on Hopson Road, supports doing something about short-term rentals, and sought clarification on what rentals the proposal could address.](#)

Steven True shared that if a rental was lawful under prior regulations, it can exist in its form. True added that it would, however, be helpful to have regulations to point to invite people into conformity.

True and Miller discussed how to navigate pre-existing nonconformity.

Swett shared his understanding that a short-term rental on an owner-occupied lot constituted allowed use and that non-owner-occupied short-term rental would not be allowed.

True explained that a house not being owner-occupied would be a reason to deny an application.

Layton highlighted a communication from Fire Chief Alex Northern about fire safety in short-term rentals and associated request that fire safety recommendations be adopted.

True suggested amending the document to attest compliance with fire safety requirements on an annual basis.

Northern shared that the Fire Department and Police Department have no real idea which houses are short-term rentals and recommended adding some language that codifies the responsibility of a short-term rental owner to send a form annually regarding fire safety code.

Irv Thomae voiced confusion as to why this proposal limited short-term rentals to owner-occupied rentals. Thomae shared a personal anecdote of his extended family renting a house in Norwich and the Airbnb owner being unresponsive to property maintenance needs like timely plowing. Thomae asked if the town had any recourse against an irresponsible out-of-town property owner.

Laaspere shared that the limitation to owner-occupied was the major policy decision incorporated into the proposed interim two-year regulation so that a person wanting to set up a non-owner-occupied rental property in six months would know that that is not an option. Laaspere added that investor-owned short-term rentals could additionally skew finances and jack up property values.

Laaspere clarified that only owner-occupied would be an allowed use and all else would not be allowed.

Kris Clement highlighted that there was no supporting documentation for this agenda item. Clement asked what constitutes short-term duration.

Laaspere explained that it is the state's definition, which is for rentals shorter than 30 for more than 14 days in a year.

Clement asked how the proposal would apply to a property with two dwellings.

Laaspere explained that the “owner-occupied” statement applied to the lot, not the dwelling unit.

Griggs noted that the planning meeting was separately warned and included information on how to get supporting documentation.

Swett asked how two lots in common ownership would be considered with regard to being owner-occupied.

True explained that they would need to become contiguous lots merged through a consolidated deed.

Selectboard members discussed whether to vote on the document that night or at the next meeting. Griggs and Swett spoke in favor of voting at the next meeting.

True noted that an interim bylaw would go into effect immediately upon a positive vote.

I move to close the Selectboard public hearing on short term rentals. – Layton moved (2nd Swett) Vote: yes (unanimous)

2. Agenda

Timestamp: 31:48

Griggs shared that there would not be a communications study report at the meeting.

Layton requested a break at some point if the meeting continued on for a long period.

John Carroll asked if item seven was still on the agenda; Griggs stated that it was.

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

3. Chair’s Report

Timestamp: 33:15

The Chair shared that (1) a special meeting took place on April 16th to consider how to respond to the Katucki complaint, (2) he met to set the agendas for both meetings, (3) he warned and held an initial meeting for the Tracy Hall working group, (4) he investigated

a continuing ground water issue on Main Street, and (5) he communicated with many citizens about the Katucki response, goal setting, Tracy Hall, and short-term rental bylaws.

4. Public Comments for Items not on the Agenda

Timestamp: 35:18

Jenny Tolman requested that trash be removed from the meeting room on a consistent basis.

Peter Orner highlighted that the Moore Lane Bridge work would begin in a few days, that over \$250,000 had been spent already, and encouraged the Selectboard to ask more questions when reviewing projects than had been asked in the past.

5. Appointments to Boards/Commissions

Timestamp: 39:30

Miller Nuttle spoke to Aviva Tevah's application to the Affordable Housing Subcommittee of the Planning Commission.

I move to appoint Aviva Tevah to the Affordable Housing Subcommittee of the Planning Commission for a term expiring 30 April 2029. – Layton moved (2nd Swett) Vote: yes (unanimous)

Steven True spoke to Brian Loeb's application to the Affordable Housing Subcommittee of the Planning Commission.

I move to appoint Brian Loeb to the Affordable Housing Subcommittee of the Planning Commission for a term expiring 30 April 2029 – Layton moved (2nd Swett) Vote: yes (unanimous)

Steven True spoke to Alec Orenstein's application to the Development Review Board.

I move to appoint Alec Orenstein to the position of Development Review Board for a term expiring 30 April 2029. – Swett moved (2nd Classon) Vote: yes (unanimous)

Irv Thomae gave a brief history of EC Fiber and spoke to his application to its governing board.

I move to appoint Irv Thomae to the position of Governing Board Rep for East Central Telecom District (EC Fiber) for a term expiring 30 April 2027. – Swett moved (2nd Classon) Vote: yes (Classon, Layton, Griggs, Swett), recuse (Gere)

Griggs shared that he did not see any conflicts of interest with Gere applying for an EC Fiber Governing Board position.

Gere spoke to his application for the EC Fiber Governing Board.

I move to appoint Rob Gere to the position of alternate to the EC Fiber Governing Board for a term expiring 30 April 2027 – Swett moved (2nd Layton) Vote: yes (Classon, Layton, Griggs, Swett), recuse (Gere)

Jordan Mueller spoke to his application to the Greater Upper Valley Solid Waste Management District.

I move to appoint Jordan Mueller to a position on the Greater Upper Valley Solid Waste Management District for a term expiring March 31, 2028. – Layton moved (2nd Gere) Vote: yes (unanimous)

Jess Phelps spoke to his application to the Norwich Historic Preservation Commission.

I move to appoint Jess Phelps for a position on the Norwich Historic Preservation Commission for a term expiring 30 April 2029. – Layton moved (2nd Swett) Vote: yes (unanimous)

Miller Nuttle spoke to his application to the Norwich Planning Commission.

I move to appoint Miller Nuttle for a position on the Norwich Planning Commission for a term expiring 30 April 2030. – Layton moved (2nd Swett) Vote: yes (unanimous)

Jaan Laaspere spoke to Vince Crow's application to the Norwich Planning Commission.

I move to appoint Vince Crow for a position on the Norwich Planning Commission for a term expiring 30 April 2030. – Swett moved (2nd Gere) Vote: yes (unanimous)

Classon spoke to Anna Connolly's application to the Recreation Council.

I move to appoint Anna Connolly to a position on the Recreation Council for a period expiring 31 March 2029. – Classon moved (2nd Swett) Vote: yes (unanimous)

Jordan Mueller spoke to his application to the Norwich Solid Waste Committee.

I move to appoint Jordan Mueller to a position on the Solid Waste Committee for period expiring 30 April 2029. – Layton moved (2nd Classon) Vote: yes (unanimous)

Duffy explained that the next two individuals were incorrectly appointed to the Conservation Committee at the last meeting and had intended to join the Trails Committee.

Doug Hardy spoke to Jim Faughnan and Nick Krembs's applications to the Trails Subcommittee.

I move appoint Jim Faughnan to a position on the Trails Sub Committee for a period expiring March 31, 2029. – Layton moved (2nd Swett) Vote: yes (unanimous)

I move appoint Nick Krembs to a position on the Trails Sub Committee for a three-year term, expiring March 31, 2029. – Layton moved (2nd Classon) Vote: yes (unanimous)

Cheryl Lindberg asked if the two people would be unappointed from their previous appointments; Griggs confirmed they would.

I move to rescind the appointments of Jim Faughnan and Nick Krembs from the Conservation Commission for terms expiring March 31st, 2029. – Classon moved (2nd Swett) Vote: yes (unanimous)

Doug Hardy spoke to his application to the position of Deputy Tree Warden.

I move to appoint Doug Hardy to the position of Deputy Tree Warden for a period to expire 31 March 2027. – Swett moved (2nd Classon) Vote: yes (unanimous)

Griggs shared that there was an application that did not appear on the list of open positions because it was for a management group.

Hardy spoke to David Hubbard's application to the Emerald Ash Tree Borer Management Group Subcommittee.

Cheryl Lindberg reminded the Selectboard of a previous town vote to not allow non-residents to participate on committees and boards.

Selectboard members debated whether the type of position being applied to was included in the decision and how to proceed with the appointment. The Selectboard agreed to table the appointment of David Hubbard to the Emerald Ash Tree Borer Subcommittee.

Lindberg highlighted that none of the appointments made in March by the Selectboard had been updated on the town's website, aside from the Selectboard. Lindberg shared that she thought there was previously a process for writing to town members thanking them for applying and getting involved in town government. Lindberg further noted that the Finance Committee has a position expiring this year that had not yet been advertised.

Griggs asked that Lindberg write a memo about the updates needed.

**6. Consider Proposed Response to Alleged Open Meeting Law Violations by Christopher Katucki –Potential Proposed Executive Session
Timestamp: 1:32:33**

Griggs referenced the executive session earlier in the evening and shared that he thought the Selectboard was ready to respond.

Selectboard members debated how to organize the responses to Chris Katucki, including whether to combine responses to the first two alleged violations.

Pam Smith reiterated her comment from the last meeting that it was difficult for the minute-taker to take minutes when Selectboard members speak without order.

John Carroll encouraged the Selectboard to respond to Katucki's notice of violation in the same form that Katucki wrote it. Carroll pointed out that item one and item two each had two specific violations mentioned within them, bringing the total to seven specific violations to respond to.

I move to acknowledge that the description in the meeting agenda for the Selectboard meeting dated January 28th, 2026 regarding item 6 did not contain sufficient detail concerning the specific matters to be discussed, under 1 V.S.A. Section 312(d)(3). – Classon moved (2nd Swett) Vote: yes (unanimous)

I move to acknowledge that the meeting agenda for the Selectboard meeting dated January 28th, 2026 did not adequately identify the matter as a "proposed" executive session and did not adequately indicate the nature of the business for which the Board would invoke § 313(a)(1)(E). – Griggs moved (2nd Layton) Vote: yes (unanimous)

I move to acknowledge that the description in the meeting agenda for the Selectboard meeting dated January 28th, 2026 for item 8 did not contain sufficient detail concerning the specific matters to be discussed, under 1 V.S.A. Section 312(d)(3). – Classon moved (2nd Swett) Vote: yes (unanimous)

I move to acknowledge that the meeting agenda for the Selectboard meeting dated January 28th, 2026 for item 8 did not adequately identify the matter as a “proposed” executive session and did not adequately indicate the nature of the business for which the Board would invoke § 313(a)(4). – Classon moved (2nd Gere) Vote: yes (unanimous)

The Board acknowledges that the public explanation and motion to enter executive session during the discussion of agenda item 6 on our meeting on January 28th, 2026 did not adequately indicate the nature of the business as required by 1 V.S.A. § 313(a). Nor did it satisfy the requirements of section 313(a)(1) that the Board make a “specific finding” or of Trombley v. Bellows Falls Union H.S. that the Board make a “careful analysis”. – Swett moved (2nd Classon) Vote: yes (unanimous)

The Selectboard acknowledges that on our meeting on January 28th, 2026 our public explanation and motion to enter executive session during the discussion of agenda item 8 did not adequately indicate the nature of the business as required by 1 V.S.A. § 313(a). – Swett moved (2nd Gere) Vote: yes (unanimous)

The Board acknowledges that the Jan. 23 to 26, 2026 email exchanges appears to have exceeded the limited exception in 1 V.S.A. § 310(5)(B). – Swett moved (2nd Layton) Vote: yes (unanimous)

Griggs shared that he would ask for a possible extension to the next meeting, which would take place in three weeks, but that they would have a special meeting if it was not agreeable.

7. Discussion of Goals/Evaluation for the Town Manager

Timestamp: 2:00:00

John Carroll asked when the Town Manager was last evaluated; Selectboard members shared that he had last been evaluated last fall.

Selectboard members and Carroll discussed the timeline of goal setting and evaluation.

Carroll shared that goal setting should have happened immediately following the evaluation in the fall. Carroll voiced concern that there was language in statute outlining

that, in all matters, the Town Manager shall be subject to the direction and supervision of the Selectboard. Carroll emphasized that the Selectboard is the Town Manager's boss and that he senses there had been ambiguity over it.

Carroll explained that the Selectboard has authority over policy, outcomes, timing, and overall expenditure, whereas the Town Manager has authority over the performance of all town employees and budget preparation. Regarding the budget, Carroll emphasized that it is the Selectboard's budget to be presented to the townspeople, not the Town Manager's.

Carroll cautioned that the Selectboard must not tread upon the Town Manager's work and gave the example that Selectboard members cannot speak with the Finance Director or Police Chief, as that line of communication should go through the Town Manager. Carroll further noted that communications from committees should go through the Selectboard with any requests regarding Town Office assistance.

Carroll applauded the Selectboard's work to draft goals for the Town Manager and distributed guidance on effective, measurable goalsetting.

Gere asked what manner of communication the Selectboard should use to direct the Town Manager.

Carroll shared that verbally in a Selectboard meeting should be sufficient. He noted that the Town Manager has the right to respond and challenge Selectboard demands and expectations.

Gere asked whether the board as a group should make the communications or individual members.

Carroll urged the Selectboard to formally designate one person, possibly the Chair, to speak on behalf of the Selectboard with the Town Manager. Carroll noted that most requests would be clearly provided in statute, meaning that there was little risk of a rogue spokesperson.

Griggs shared that he did not have enough time since receiving the packet and the Town Manager's goals included within it to make any decisions that night.

Classon highlighted that the current version of the Town Manager job description on the town's website included 50-60 individual points and seemed to be a document of "very murky provenance." Classon highlighted that the previous versions of the job description he found on the website stated that "none" was listed under supervisory controls, whereas

the current version states that the Town Manager works under the direction of the Selectboard.

Classon quoted phrases from the current job description version regarding staffing the Selectboard and facilitating the development of and execution of their policy decisions.

Griggs highlighted that the document was not in the packet and that no one else had had an opportunity to review it yet, and requested they discuss it at the next meeting.

Classon stated that the Selectboard collated and sent to the Town Manager many pages of goals on April 14th with a request for him to review them, and that the Town Manager did not address them in his submission to the next meeting's packet. Classon emphasized that the "disconnect between our requested goals and our suggestions is so irreconcilably different from his submission," that the topic should not be discussed that night.

Swett shared that it was important to reset the timeline of the Town Manager goals and evaluation. Swett reflected that the existing structure of the evaluation and goals took a long time to develop and that he thought they had loosely decided to continue using it as the template for the next five months, which could explain the Town Manager's decision to return with small modifications to the existing template.

Griggs asked for the chance to try to reconcile the format of the goals, processes, and procedures.

Selectboard members discussed the goals process and format.

Griggs highlighted Duffy's comment at the last meeting about autonomy and asked for further detail on the comment.

Duffy reflected that it is important for the Town Manager "to be given the flexibility to make judgements and not be micromanaged by a Selectboard" and that the Town Manager's success in some cases relies on alignment with the Selectboard in making progress.

Griggs asked if there were specific experiences that suggest he did not have the autonomy or too much autonomy.

Duffy shared that in reading the goals from the Selectboard in the prior packet, some seemed to "be controlling of the Town Manager and his duties or his daily schedule" and advocated for a clear demarcation of duties.

Lindberg encouraged recollection of Carroll's comments and the budget when developing goals. Lindberg suggested quarterly check-in on financials.

Swett shared appreciation for the existing finance overview, which was provided upon the request of the Selectboard.

8. Town Manager Report

Timestamp: 2:38:03

Griggs asked Duffy if there were any highpoints to mention from the report. Griggs shared that he had noticed recent speeding ticketing.

Duffy shared that the slate roof work had been completed.

Duffy highlighted a petition request from the Vermont Labor Review Board relating to a new labor union called the United Federation of Police Officers, and that the town would be required to post a petition in areas of town where the collective bargaining agreement workers congregate.

Layton asked how it might affect the current agreement; Duffy shared that he planned to look into it.

Layton asked if there was interest in the open Finance Director role.

Duffy stated that the town had advertised the role in a number of places and would start the interview process when they have qualified candidates. Duffy shared that Finance Director Barrie Rosalinda had agreed to stay with the Town through June 30th and may be willing to help out in July.

9. Department Reports

Timestamp: 2:43:25

Swett noted that the actual in the plowing and sanding line item appeared to be significantly under budget and wanted to confirm that it was because of the new contract with the plowing company.

Duffy shared that it was.

Swett asked for a description of a line item on page 75 under tax expenditures noting a transfer out of surplus.

Duffy stated that he would check with Rosalinda.

Lindberg shared that some of the line items being on a cash basis could affect the numbers.

Lindberg reminded the Selectboard that there was a transfer from fund 12 of \$26,000 of revenue under the area of miscellaneous revenue, which was not how she expected it would be booked, and would make the lister budget look “out of whack.”

10. Approve Minutes

Timestamp: 2:47:50

Layton noted a typo in which Article 36 was incorrectly written as Article 39.

I move to approve the minutes for April 8th, 2026 as presented, amending Article 39 to Article 36. – Gere moved (2nd Classon) Vote: yes (unanimous)

11. AP Warrants

Timestamp: 2:50:20

I move to approve AP Warrant #1480 for \$50.00 to be paid from the General Fund; AP Warrant #1475 for \$88.79 to be paid from Fund 45 for records restoration; and AP Warrant #1476 for \$132,445.13 from the General Fund. – Griggs moved (2nd Swett) Vote: yes (unanimous)

12. Receipt of Correspondence

Timestamp: 2:52:11

Layton read through the list of correspondence.

Griggs shared that he would be attending the TRORC bicycle and pedestrian program meeting.

Lindberg spoke in favor of the request to move the shed away from the Gazebo.

Griggs explained that it was school property but that he was engaged in conversations about the matter.

Duffy shared that the shed would be moved soon but did not have a specific timeline.

Classon asked for clarity on which day Green Up Day would be held; Duffy suggested reviewing the related information in the hallway.

Swett spoke in favor of spreading awareness of the upcoming activity and the presence of people on the shoulders of roadways.

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

13. Adjournment

Timestamp: 3:01:26

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

Meeting adjourned at 9:33.

Minutes taken by Jenny Tolman.