

Town of Norwich, Vermont
Minutes of the Selectboard Meeting
Wednesday, May 27th, 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), John Carroll (Town resident), Doug Wilberding (Town member), Carol Loveland (Norwich Women's Club), Cheryl Lindberg (Lister & Treasurer), Kirk Williams (Town member), Pam Smith (Trustee of Public Funds)

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

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

The meeting was called to order by Chair Kimo Griggs at 6:35 pm.

[YouTube Timestamp: 1:05:22](#) (same video as special meeting)

1. Agenda

Timestamp: 1:06:42

Griggs shared that he was not ready to have a communications discussion that day.

I move to approve the agenda amended to exclude item 12, the communications update. – Classon moved (2nd Layton) Vote: yes (unanimous)

2. Chair's Report

Timestamp: 1:07:19

Griggs shared that he had (1) examined the state of construction repairs on the Moore Lane bridge, (2) spoken with concerned citizens about relocating the shed on the Green, (3) spoken with citizens interested in moving the rink components into the shed, (4) spoken with the citizens caring for the garden at Main and Church St about a more convenient water supply, (5) taken part in the first softball game of the season at Huntley Meadows, (6) celebrated the handover of a new shed at Huntley Meadows given by the Lions Club, (7) worked on proposed responses to the Katucki lawsuit, and (8) further collated and prepared proposed Town Manager goals.

3. Public Comments for Items not on the Agenda

Timestamp: 1:09:08

[John Carroll pointed out that the request from Katucki to continue working on responding to his notice of violations was not on the agenda.](#)

Griggs said that it was a mix-up on his part.

Classon highlighted two matters of public interest, specifically a case regarding Layton and a separate suspicious death case involving the Neely family. Classon stated that “the function of this board is to observe the traditional legal maxims of presumption of innocence and the burden of proof. Other than that, this board has no position and makes no comment on either case.”

Layton thanked Classon for his comment.

Doug Wilberding shared that he had emailed Griggs and Classon about Layton’s case and that it appeared the Selectboard’s position was to not act. Wilberding voiced concern about the events relating to Layton’s case and pointed out that Layton had signed Addendum B of the town’s personnel policy. Wilberding asked that Layton resign.

Co-President of the Women’s Club Carol Loveland asked if anyone had looked into the water situation at Tracy Hall, and whether the connection issue for the faucet closest to the garden was related to structural or financial matters.

Duffy shared that there were two working faucets on either side of the building and that he believed the faucet being discussed had been inoperable for a long time.

Loveland explained that the existing working faucet was 150 feet from the garden and that they hoped to get one closer. Loveland shared that Liz Guest oversaw the garden and her husband had offered to try finding another solution. Loveland further noted that the Women’s Club had donated to the town previously and could contribute if finances were the issue.

Jaan Laaspere highlighted a grant application for the July 10th meeting and requested the Selectboard come prepared that day to move forward due to the grant deadline.

4. NFD Spending Request for New Turnout Gear from Fund #26
Timestamp: 1:19:50

I move to approve expenditures not to exceed \$28,750.00 from Fund #26 for the purchase of new turnout gear for newer members of the Norwich Fire Department. – Layton moved (2nd Gere) Vote: yes (unanimous)

5. Listers’ Extension Request for June 4, 2026 Abstract
Timestamp: 1:21:31

Swett highlighted that this was the second year in a row with an extension and asked if it was reasonable to expect the next year’s abstract to be on time.

Lindberg explained that she hoped so and highlighted the series of unavoidable situations over the last three years. Lindberg shared that the open permit process would be completed in the next week.

I move to approve the Listers request for an extension of 30 days from the State of Vermont Department of Property Valuation and Review order to prepare the most accurate 2026 Grand List Abstract as voted for by the

Listers on May 20, 2026, and requiring Selectboard Approval. – Layton moved (2nd Classon) Vote: yes (unanimous)

6. Review and Approval of Sullivan, Powers, & Co., P.C. Audit Scope and Objectives
Timestamp: 1:25:29

Layton stated that it seemed normal to have a series of disclaimers but that she would like to discuss the “management override of controls” listed on page three, as she did not understand why it was included.

Duffy stated that he remembered a similar question last year, that he thought this was a boiler-plate contract, and that there could be outreach to get an explanation.

Gere hypothesized that the line was referencing the fact that the lack of control on cash at the transfer station had been noted and overridden for years.

Griggs requested outreach; Duffy responded that he would research it and have a memo in the packet for the 10th.

Classon emphasized that the Selectboard members are the primary recipients of the document, and therefore they should know if there are any management control concerns affecting the Selectboard.

Treasurer Lindberg commented that it was the Selectboard’s audit and that the document was something that the Selectboard should receive efficiently. Lindberg recommended the Selectboard ask for a more timely end result.

Swett asked if Lindberg suggested getting the report before it was a final draft; Lindberg responded that she did recommend that because it was the Selectboard’s report “on what’s going on.”

Lindberg highlighted her past recommendations, including the inclusion of the Cemetery Commission and Trustees of Public Funds, that would help in the process of getting a combined set of financials.

7. Setting of Transfer Station Fees for FY27
Timestamp: 1:35:19

I move to accept the recommendations of the Solid Waste Committee and raise the cost of Transfer Station for Fiscal Year 2027 stickers to \$45 for Residents and \$85 for Non-residential, effective July 1, 2026. – Layton moved (2nd Gere) Vote: yes (unanimous)

Layton shared appreciation for the work of the Solid Waste Committee.

8. Opioid Settlement Funds Distribution
Timestamp: 1:37:19

Swett shared that the town had been collecting opioid settlement funds over time in a settlement fund and that a series of groups had joined a previous Selectboard meeting to explain how they could use the money if granted. Swett highlighted exhibit E, linked to in his memo in the packet, which explained the guardrails on how the

money could be spent. Swett suggested donating to Upper Valley Turning Point and tasking Duffy with figuring out the technicalities of making the donation.

Layton encouraged consideration of the Good Neighbor Health Clinic and the Norwich Fire and Police Departments, and thanked Chris Katucki for nudging the matter forward.

Kirk Williams shared his experience as a prosecutor and public defender seeing many lives destroyed by drug use. Williams encouraged contributing to EMS, the Fire Department, and the Police Department, to fund Narcan kits, ongoing trainings, and drug recognition expert (DRE) trainings. Williams spoke in favor of keeping the contributions in the town.

Classon asked how Williams viewed the effectiveness of abatement strategies within the state.

Williams explained that there were many different ongoing strategies but that it was such an individual response and there was likely mapping of hotspots.

Layton spoke in favor of broadening the geographic span of the support beyond Norwich.

Swett highlighted that the state provides a lot of support in the form of Narcan and overdose training, but that the DRE training could be useful. Swett shared that they had looked into getting more AEDs for the town's squad but that it did not fit the narrow criteria of how the money could be spent and hypothesized that using the money for homelessness might also fall outside the criteria.

Selectboard members agreed to ask Duffy to take on the task of reaching out to possible recipient organizations for specific proposals of work.

Duffy suggested that the Selectboard review the nuances of addendum E and the allowed uses, and shared that he was not entirely clear what they were trying to learn from their outreach.

Griggs, Swett, and Layton suggested questions for the potential recipients relating to the logistics of accepting money and how they would use the money given its earmark for opioid addiction and remediation.

Classon asked about the inflow of settlement money; Swett explained that they had received two large sums and would get much smaller sums over the next few years.

Swett offered to maintain focus on the topic.

9. Town Manager Report

Timestamp: 1:59:45

Duffy shared that (1) Jonathan DeLaBruere had accepted the role of Finance Director and they were looking to backfill the assistant role, (2) the Mitchell Brook Rd. culvert project had been completed, (3) the Moore Lane Bridge membrane, paving, and guardrail repair project was underway, (4) street sweeping was underway, (5) Rte. 132 culvert work would begin in mid-June, (6) roadside ash tree removal would begin in June, (7) they had received two grant awards in the last month, (8) the shed on the Green had been moved, and (9) he was

supporting the response to a request for petition from the United Federation of Police Officers, who are seeking to replace the NEPBA.

Classon asked when the COLA adjustment would take effect; Duffy shared that it would be July 1st. Classon referenced a question at the Town Meeting regarding the COLA adjustment and general salary increases.

Swett asked about the status of the Moore Lane Bridge work and whether they would need to use the extra money set aside for taking out more of the bridge. Duffy explained that they were not yet at the point of giving a good estimate. Swett asked whether there would be a raised sidewalk, to which Duffy explained that there would be no raised sidewalk, just a large visible stripe demarcating the pedestrian walkway.

Peter Orner highlighted that the work being done now on the Moore Lane Bridge was what the town had previously been told over the last eight years was not possible. Orner questioned the removal of the ledger board and estimated that the total cost of the work so far was at least \$300,000. Orner asked when the strike would be put on and emphasized the high amount of speeding on Moore Lane.

Duffy and Orner debated the emulsion from the bridge, the steps of the project, and nuances of the cost of the project. Duffy agreed that \$300,000 was a fair estimate of the cost.

10. Department Reports (see above)

11. Town Manager Goals
Timestamp: 2:16:58

Griggs explained that he had tried to take the materials that Duffy gave the Selectboard and put them into a similar format to the one that Griggs put together from the original documents. Griggs reflected that the main document that has been used was somewhat confusing, including because of the inclusion of both the goals and performance evaluation, as well as the inclusion of the Selectboard in the title of the goals document. Griggs explained the updates he had made to the previous documents and his intent to separate out the goals and establish new goals.

Layton and Swett shared thanks for Griggs's work on the document and asked that they have the opportunity to review the document more in-depth.

Duffy stated that there was a confidential summary of a performance evaluation of his work included in the packet and asked for an explanation.

Griggs stated that he was unaware that it was confidential and apologized.

Duffy stated that they seemed to be trying to rewrite the process and existing template used for the last two years. Duffy pointed out that it was almost June and the evaluation was supposed to be conducted for the current year in the middle of September. Duffy stated that the process should have begun much earlier in the year and that the new version should go into effect for the next year. He reflected that the process seemed to be rushed, that it felt like a major change, and that it did not feel like a collaborative process.

Griggs explained that he was trying to begin collaboration by putting together something that he thought had greater clarity.

Duffy explained that there had been a previous discussion over a series of meetings in which it was understood that the Selectboard goals were not evaluated but that the town manager's success relied on a relationship and collaboration with the Selectboard. Duffy shared that he was not opposed to moving away from the existing form but that he would need time to review the document before discussing it in a public setting. Duffy pointed out that the motion sheet included a motion to accept the document as it was provided that day, which he found "wildly unusual."

Griggs explained that he only included the motion in case everyone happened to agree to move forward with the document.

Classon stated that Duffy was correct about the lead time for the document but that the process actually began on April 1st and that they have been struggling to reach alignment. Classon emphasized that the Selectboard's objective was to set Duffy up for success. Classon shared previous negative comments from Duffy in response to the Selectboard's effort to establish goals and reflected that he did not see a "like-minded effort" coming from Duffy in the effort to develop goals.

Duffy responded that Classon had earlier in the night at the special meeting made it appear that Duffy had "nefariously tried to redact statements from a document to make people look good or bad."

Griggs redirected the conversation to goals, recounted that he had produced a document on April 2nd with proposed goals and objectives for both the Town Manager and the Selectboard, and that Duffy's responding effort was an uncoordinated three documents that Griggs did not believe matched the Selectboard's efforts. Griggs encouraged everyone to review the proposal that he had compiled that incorporated the Town Manager's provided documentation and come back with written comments.

Griggs acknowledged that the goal setting could have started earlier but that all parties were culpable.

Gere asked whether the goal document format provided by Griggs would be used at the upcoming annual review or after that moving forward.

Griggs explained that he was just trying to set goals, and that once they set goals, they could decide how to analyze and judge performance.

Duffy stated that he thought the miscommunication was whether they were revising and redoing the existing template used for the past two years, which Duffy explained he thought they were, or whether it was an unacceptable document that should be changed. Duffy expressed frustration as to whether the thoughts and comments of one or two members of the Selectboard in an agenda-setting meeting constituted the will of the Selectboard as a whole.

Swett reflected that the Selectboard was very late in providing Duffy with fair goals for the upcoming assessment in three months, and he was therefore under the impression that they would use the previously used format with possibly some small upgrades, including adjustment to the grading system.

Griggs clarified that he was specifically talking about goals and that he had been told many times that the Town Manager's goals get set when there was a new Selectboard, which led to no goals between October and March.

Layton spoke in support of the Selectboard and Town Manager goals and Town Manager dual performance evaluation document, due to goals and evaluations being intertwined. Layton also noted though that the proposed document was more strategic and focused on overarching matters.

Selectboard members agreed to read the document and provide responses through memos.

Clement voiced disappointment at Duffy's response to the Town Manager goals and shared her memory of someone saying in September that goals should be set with a new Selectboard. Clement highlighted about the Town Manager that "it was brought to the public's attention that he may or may not be communicating with anybody during his remote days," and asked the Selectboard to address it.

Swett shared that he had had "plenty of communications" with Duffy on days when he was working remotely and had never had problems when he had questions or comments.

Classon shared that it was variable and recounted a time in January when Griggs unsuccessfully tried to contact Duffy a series of times.

Duffy stated that he had read Priscilla Vincent's email on the Listserv and was "disgusted" as it was a false allegation, sharing that it was "so disheartening to have the same people come back time after time and try to cast dispersions" on his work.

Griggs explained the situation that Classon had referred to, detailing a series of unsuccessful efforts to contact Duffy in January, ending with Griggs bumping into Duffy on the street, Duffy telling Griggs that he had received Griggs's message, and Duffy explaining that he does not listen to his messages when he is "not here."

Duffy interrupted to respond that that was not what he said; Griggs said that he was still speaking and struck the gavel on the meeting table.

Griggs emphasized that he was "reporting the facts." Griggs stated that there were times when Duffy was hard to reach, that they do not have his cell phone number, and that these facts might have led to miscommunications.

Duffy explained that he had taken the day off on Friday and that Monday was a holiday. Duffy stated that he believed Griggs was calling him, not emailing him and not calling his cell phone, "which you do have, at least you do now." Duffy explained that he was not getting the voice messages left on his office line but that he had since figured out how to do a remote voicemail check for the town line and does so regularly. Duffy emphasized that the allegation that he has remote work and is not working is "very, very untrue."

Classon interjected that the allegation was not that Duffy was not working but that he was not contactable.

12. Communications (removed)

13. Approve Minutes
Timestamp: 2:55:20

Classon pointed out the requests for further detail about attorney invoices noted in item twelve of the May 13th minutes. Classon shared that he had not yet seen the invoices and that Griggs had offered to secure them.

Griggs said that he would make another effort to get them.

I move to approve the minutes for May 13th as presented. – Classon moved (2nd Layton) Vote: yes (unanimous)

14. AP Warrants
Timestamp: 2:58:20

I move to approve AP Warrant #1488 in the amount of \$160,927.60 to be paid from the General Fund; and AP Warrant #1489 in the amount of \$89,097.91 to be paid from Police Cruiser Fund 11. – Layton moved (2nd Gere) Vote: yes (unanimous)

15. Receipt of Correspondence
Timestamp: 2:59:34

Griggs read through the list of correspondence included in the Selectboard packet.

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

16. Discussion of June 10, 2026 Selectboard Agenda
Timestamp: 3:01:00

Gere requested a discussion on data gathering and recording of fossil fuel usage and consideration of the reactivation of the Article 36 task force to review the suggestions from 2021 to see if they are still relevant.

Griggs shared that both communications and Town Manager goals would likely be included on the agenda.

Classon requested an item for an expense and reimbursement policy, as well as revisiting the Stitzel, Page & Fletcher memo.

Layton asked that the agenda item regarding Stitzel, Page & Fletcher go beyond the memo. Layton pointed out the concerns about open meeting law violations, but also the most recent successful union negotiations.

Classon clarified that his concerns were restricted exclusively to open meeting law; Classon and Layton debated the framing of the topic.

Swett highlighted the two Katucki items: the public records request and the open meeting law curing.

Selectboard members agreed to hold a special meeting at 6 pm on Wednesday, June 3rd.

Duffy asked who should reach out to Counsel about the special meeting; Griggs said that he would do it.

Duffy shared requests to review the parking ordinance, the Planning Commission grant application, and a request for a loan from Star Lake Village.

Kris Clement suggested developing a public records policy and possibly delegating the task to a couple Selectboard members. Clement highlighted the template that she shared in a previous packet from the VLCT, which was put together by Stitzel, Page & Fletcher.

Layton shared that she was interested in working on the policy but did not know if she would have anything ready for the next meeting. Layton noted that they had previously started with templates and had collaborated with town employees on developing policies but was hesitant as to whether the meeting needed to be a working group.

Trustee of Public Funds Pam Smith reminded the Selectboard to continue the review of Sullivan and Powers and reiterated a request from the Trustees to be heard before July 1st regarding the absorption of the accounting for the Trustee of Public Funds into the Finance Office and the audit.

Swett suggested discussing the Cemetery Commission at the same time, and Smith offered to reach out to the Cemetery Commission to see if they would be interested.

Lindberg clarified that the auditors had recommended the action of bringing the financial responsibilities back into the town records, and that it did not need to be requested by the groups.

17. Adjournment

Timestamp: 3:24:32

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

Meeting adjourned at 8:54 pm.

Minutes taken by Jenny Tolman.