Town of Norwich
Finance Committee Meeting
November 9, 2026, 6:30 PM
Multi-purpose Room, Tracy Hall

Committee Members Present: Steven Hepburn, Christie James, Cheryl Lindberg, Nicolas Wood

1. Call meeting to order
    a. The meeting was called to order at 6:34 PM.
2. Approve Agenda – discussion/motion
    a. Lindberg made a motion to approve the agenda, and Hepburn seconded. **The motion passed.**
3. Planning Commission Request for Support – discussion
    a. Selectboard supported the Finance Committee working with the Planning Commission on the development of a strategic capital planning process. The work, led by Planning Commission Chair Jaan.
    b. The Committee discussed the distinctions between strategic capital planning under 24 V.S.A. Chapter 117, operational capital budgeting, and capital asset accounting. Members noted that although the Town's Master Financial Policies call for an annually reviewed capital budget program, a comprehensive capital plan with identified projects, costs, and timelines does not currently exist.
    c. The Committee discussed the need for greater clarity regarding the purpose and use of existing reserve funds. Members noted that funds are allocated through the annual budget process without consistently documented plans for future expenditures. The Committee discussed the importance of identifying long-term capital needs, citing potential improvements to Tracy Hall as an example about distinguishing capital expenditures from routine operating expenses.
    d. Hepburn will follow up with Jaan to better understand the Planning Commission's proposed process and determine how the Finance Committee can best provide support. Hepburn will also share Vermont League of Cities and Towns (VLCT) materials regarding best practices for capital planning and budgeting.
    e. The Committee discussed the upcoming December 3 Village Plan event, scheduled from 6:30–8:30 PM at the school, as an opportunity for public participation in the planning process.
4. 4. Selectboard Update – discussion
    a. Discussion regarding the memorandum from the Town Manager regarding proposed Selectboard motions related to budget development and financial policies. The memorandum raised concerns about the proposed motions and indicated that portions of the existing Master Financial Policies are considered outdated or are not consistently followed.
    b. The Committee discussed the need to review and update the Town's Master Financial Policies to establish clearer expectations for budget development, financial oversight, and the administration of reserve funds. Members also discussed the importance of formal adoption of the revised Finance Committee Memorandum of Understanding to clarify the Committee's advisory responsibilities.
    c. The Committee reviewed the current budget development process and its limited involvement to date. Members noted that approximately five weeks remained before the anticipated approval of the budget and that the Committee had not received a formal assignment or direction from the Selectboard regarding its participation in the current budget cycle.

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    d. Members discussed the upcoming Selectboard budget meetings, including department head presentations scheduled for November 18. The Committee noted concerns regarding the clarity and consistency of budget presentation materials, including departmental expenditures and proposed reserve fund allocations.
    e. Given the limited time remaining and the absence of a formal charge, the Committee did not identify a substantive role it could undertake as a body during the current budget cycle.
5. ADA Compliance in Financial Reporting – discussion
    a. The Committee discussed the accessibility of financial information published on the Town's website, including anticipated ADA compliance requirements for municipal financial reporting.
    b. Members discussed the limitations of financial reports available exclusively in PDF format and the importance of providing information in accessible alternative formats, such as appropriately formatted spreadsheets or HTML, to improve public access to financial information.
6. Public Comments for items not on the agenda
    a. There were no public comments.
7. Adjourn – motion
    a. Lindberg made a motion to adjourn the meeting, and James seconded. **The motion passed.** The meeting adjourned at 7:47 PM.

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