

From: [Robert Pitiger](#)
To: [Nancy Kramer](#)
Subject: Special meeting held 8/30/11
Date: Wednesday, August 31, 2011 10:32:54 AM

Dear Norwich Selectboard. I attended the meeting last night and thought of a few questions/observations after the fact. Chip mentioned the board has spent a lot of time, working very hard to create an evaluation process for the town manager. I would imagine creating a good, unbiased set of evaluation criteria would be difficult. Since, I don't get the sense anyone on the Selectboard has a strong background in HR (if you do I stand corrected), it occurred to me that the VT League of Cities and Towns might offer a template already for this type of thing. If so, why try to invent the wheel, if the wheel has already been invented. I called Abby Friedman, the Human Resources coordinator at VLCT this morning to see what services in this area they did in fact offer. She told me they had numerous ways to help in this regard from advice as to how to create an effective evaluation, to providing examples of evaluation forms created by other towns among other things. I remember from having served on the 2 committees that addressed the question of town government how helpful their resources were. I asked her if she had been contacted by the Norwich Selectboard in this regard and she politely told me she wasn't at liberty to provide that information and I should talk to the Selectboard. So, I guess my question is: did you utilize the VLCT as a resource in crafting your evaluation process? I'm hoping the answer is yes, but, if no, could you explain why not or what other resources you may have relied on.

I also would like to make a few observations. There was a palpable amount of tension in the room last night from two perspectives. From the attendee side I think the main reason was people were a little baffled by the purpose of the meeting i.e. a potential vote not to renew the Town Managers contract (or in plain english you were meeting to discuss firing him). Where did this come from? On the surface the town seems to be functioning quite well. The warning process for the meeting though evidently done by the book had the appearances of being structured to minimize scrutiny. On the Selectboard side there also was obvious rancor between the chair and some other members. Of course, Steve Flanders was correct in suggesting public comments be taken before the meeting to discuss a vote. To do otherwise would have been ridiculous. I was embarrassed that a vote even had to be taken to assure that was done. If some members of the Selectboard can barely speak to each other I have doubts as to how effective you can be setting policy for the town.

Speaking for myself, it seems to me the Town is functioning better than ever. I think the primary reason for that is we have a qualified, hard working, professional town manager in Pete Webster. Selectboards come and go. It is the continuity of good management that endures. The tax rate in a difficult environment from the municipal side of the ledger has been held steady, the town's roads, playing fields, sidewalks, transfer station, all have been significantly improved. The police department seems to be functioning smoothly and has become a poster boy for community policing. Pete seems to have excellent relations with the town departments he oversees. I guess that's why I'm scratching my head as to why this issue of renewing Pete's contract is even an issue. The most significant negative issue detailed in the 2 town government committee reports revolves around the so called separation of responsibilities between the Selectboard and Town manager. In a nutshell, the TM runs day to day operations and the Selectboard is

responsible for policy. If a Selectboard intrudes or tries to micromanage in areas of the TM's statutory responsibility or the TM intrudes on the policy function of the Selectboard trouble ensues. Based on history and acknowledging I don't have any inside details, I'd put my money on the former not the latter.

Gentlemen and ladies, please resolve your differences for the towns sake.

Bob Pitiger