

**TOWN/VILLAGE OF NORTHFIELD
JOINT BOARD MEETING
BOARD OF TOWN SELECTMEN
BOARD OF VILLAGE TRUSTEES
Minutes of June 23, 2009**

- I. **ROLL CALL:** Selectboard Chair Kenneth Johnson, Selectmen Melvin Adams, Kenneth Goslant, Charles Morse, and Gregory Sanders; Trustees Chair Samantha Baraw, Trustees Libby Hambleton, Doug Lawson, and Thomas McCarney. Also present were Municipal Manager Nanci Allard, Superintendent of Public Works William Lyon, Highway Foreman Peter G. Demasi, Highway Equipment Operator Chris Alger, Acting Clerk Kenneth McCann, Roger Dickinson (Lamoureux & Dickinson), Steve Gladczuk (Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission), Stephen Fitzhugh (Planning Commission), Robert Turner, Mark Richter, Mary Comiskey, Byrne Bernard, Donald Wallace, Bryan Marble, Ben Marble, Jane Bryant, Rita Clifford, Tom Clifford, Max Schlueter, Chris Bradley, Nate Freeman, Brad Reed, and Kathleen Lott (*Northfield News*).

A Public Hearing for the purpose of providing written or oral views on the feasibility of developing sidewalks/paths along Vermont Route 12 from Vine Street north to Northfield Falls and from Terrace Drive north to Crescent Avenue was warned to immediately precede the Joint Board Meeting.

The Public Hearing was called to order at 7:00 p.m.

Roger Dickinson of the engineering firm Lamoureux & Dickinson began by stating that this was the second public hearing for a "conceptual alignment analysis" of proposed sidewalk extension to the south and north of Northfield Village. The "northerly" part of this study focuses on connecting sidewalks from Northfield Village to Northfield Falls; the "southerly" part would extend sidewalks from Northfield Village towards and slightly beyond the intersection of Vermont Routes 12 and 12A. This study was funded by the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission (CVRPC), which is represented tonight by Steve Gladczuk. Mr. Dickinson stated that the need is there for additional sidewalks in Northfield as there is significant pedestrian traffic to the shopping center, schools, parks, etc. Mr. Dickinson then described the sidewalk proposal in some detail, beginning with the southerly section. He said that this section had some drainage issues that would require additional work (and costs). In addition, crosswalks would be situated at or near the intersection of Vermont Routes 12 and 12A. Some fire hydrants may need to be relocated but the utility poles should be fine. He emphasized throughout his presentation that this planning is in an initial phase and subject to significant revision if indicated. Some members of the public expressed their concerns over the proposed location of the aforementioned crosswalks, with pedestrian visibility being a major concern. Mr. Dickinson will look into this. He then turned to the northerly section of the plan. He noted that some new sidewalk had been installed on North Main Street last year during the Water Project. He felt that the best option was to extend this sidewalk from where it now ends (opposite the Cumberland Farms) towards the bridge by Dogwood Glen where it would then switch from the west side of the road to the east side and continue into Northfield Falls. He noted that the Water Project also removed some ledge from the east side of the road and this would facilitate the placing of sidewalks there. He noted that the shopping center also is located on the east side of the road. Mr. Dickinson said that some utility poles would have to be removed and some retaining walls sited in this area. He emphasized that the goal was to stay within the existing rights-of-way. Some residents expressed their concerns over the effect of the proposed sidewalk installation upon their front lawns. Also mentioned were drainage issues near the Falls General Store and the impact upon snow removal in the area. There was a suggestion that the engineers should be sensitive to the concerns of property owners in the affected area, as the rights-of-way sometimes extend well into front lawns, etc. When asked, Mr. Gladczuk stated that this proposal had its origins in an unsuccessful "Safe Routes to School" grant application, which subsequently was expanded into the current proposal. Mr. Dickinson then provided some costs estimates for the southerly (\$1,300,000) and northerly (\$990,000) sections. These estimates also were broken down into sub-sections. He suggested that it might be a good idea to do this kind of project in phases. As for funding, he noted that there is some federal and state money available for such projects, including a number of programs like Safe Routes to School. Selectman Adams, speaking for the Boards, stated that there was no plan to implement this study in the near future due to the current poor economy. However, this proposal was a good start for allowing the Boards to prioritize sidewalk extension should conditions improve. Mr. Dickinson stated that the next step would be a written report that would reflect some of the concerns expressed tonight. Copies of this report would be provided to the Municipality, the State, and other interested parties.

The Public Hearing closed at 8:05 p.m. The Joint Board Meeting, after a five minute recess, began at 8:10 p.m.

II. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:**

- a. **Robert Turner: Road Surface Management Software (RSMS) Program.** Mr. Turner, who is a consultant hired by the CVRPC, provided a presentation on the RSMS Program would allow Northfield to budget its capital expenditures on road repairs and maintenance over a ten year period. With the assistance of the Northfield Highway department, an inventory of Northfield roads has been completed along with suggested treatments (with cost estimates) of certain roads. If left untreated, a roadway will completely deteriorate in sixteen years. However, if routine maintenance is provided on a regular basis, the level of rehabilitation costs is much lower. The focus should be on preventative maintenance. The database has information on each road, indicating its condition and when specific rehabilitation and/or repairs should be scheduled (by fiscal year). The program

will indicate how cost estimates will change if certain repairs are rescheduled should special concerns arise. Prioritizing is an important part of the program, with emphasis given to maintaining good roads to lower maintenance costs rather than spend too much on expensive bad roads. Gravel roads are handled by a system-wide analysis, which divides them by how heavily trafficked they are. Mr. Turner then discussed the use of liquid calcium chloride and gravel replacement; spending more on the calcium chloride seems to be more cost effective in the long term. Selectman Adams asked if this was now being done with Town equipment. Superintendent Lyon said that it was being done on a small scale now but additional equipment would have to be purchased if the program was expanded. Mr. Turner stated that the program will be able to provide rationales should the Boards need to defend their road maintenance policies to the public, i.e. improved safety, cost reductions, etc. Although the program itself cannot make decisions, it can suggest alternatives that reflect the Boards' priorities. Selectman Morse would like some additional input from the Highway Department's operators before making any decisions. Selectboard Chair Johnson said that he saw this as an additional tool in addition to the Highway Department's own observations. Manager Allard stated that the Highway Subcommittee has already looked at this year's paving list; perhaps it should meet again to discuss this program. Trustee McCarney felt that the subcommittee should meet no later than this October so that its recommendations can be provided before the Town and Village budget sessions commence. Mr. Turner stated that the Boards will need to authorize a general plan that will guide these long-term projections. The Boards thanked Mr. Turner and the Highway Department for their work on this program.

- b. **Stephen Fitzhugh, Planning Commission: Municipal Plan.** Mr. Fitzhugh stated that the Planning Commission had held a Public Hearing the previous Friday (06/19/09) and had made some revisions based upon that session. The revised version was distributed to the Selectmen and Trustees. The plan has also been reviewed by the CVRPC, which had some concerns on the "build out requirement," i.e. whether Northfield will provide sufficient new housing to allow the proper distribution of the estimated increase of the Central Vermont population. This concern has been addressed in the current version. There will be two additional public hearings before the Selectmen and Trustees on (respectively) Monday, July 27, 2009 and Tuesday, August 11, 2009. It is anticipated that, if all goes well, the plan will be adopted after the second public hearing.

III. BOARD OF TOWN SELECTMEN

- a. **Approval of Minutes: June 8, 2009 (Regular Meeting).** Motion by Selectman Morse, seconded by Selectman Goslant, to approve the minutes. **Motion passed 4-0-1, with Selectman Morse abstaining.**
- b. **Approval of Bills:**
 1. **Warrant #25-09.** Motion by Selectman Morse, seconded by Selectman Sanders, to approve Warrant #25-09 in the amount of \$943,101.26. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
 2. **Warrant #01-10.** Motion by Selectman Morse, seconded by Selectman Adams, to approve Warrant #01-10 in the amount of \$32,847.00. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
- c. **Ambulance Billing Abatements.** Motion by Selectman Morse, seconded by Selectman Adams, to abate the uncollectable Ambulance Bills (totaling \$8747.72) as recommended by Management. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
- d. **Chief Shaw.** Manager Allard wanted it made clear that while the State has acted to decertify Chief Shaw for three weeks, the Town of Northfield itself has taken no action. She has some additional information that she would like to share with the Selectmen on this matter. A Special Selectboard Meeting was scheduled for Monday, June 29, 2009 at 5:00 p.m. in the Municipal Building.

IV. BOARD OF VILLAGE TRUSTEES

- a. **Approval of Minutes: June 9, 2009 (Regular Meeting).** Motion by Trustee McCarney, seconded by Trustee Hambleton, to approve the minutes. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**
- b. **Approval of Bills**
 1. **Warrant #25-09.** Motion by Trustee McCarney, seconded by Trustee Lawson, to approve Warrant #25-09 in the amount of \$24,223.14. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**
- c. **Water/Sewer Rates.** Trustee McCarney asked that approval of the proposed rates be tabled until they could be reviewed by the Inter-Local Agreement Committee. The meeting was scheduled for Wednesday, July 8, 2009 at 7:00 p.m. in the Municipal Building. If subsequently approved by the Trustees, the new rates would become effective with the August 2009 billing period (water usage for July/August).

- d. **Utility Billing Abatements.** Motion by Trustee McCarney, seconded by Trustee Hambleton, to abate the inactive utility accounts totaling \$12,791.86 (Electric: \$12,221.59, Water: \$232.65, and Sewer: \$337.62) with the understanding that if any of these individuals return to Northfield, they would have to repay these funds before opening a new account. **Motion passed 4-0-0.** Motion by Trustee McCarney, seconded by Trustee Hambleton, to abate the bankruptcy discharge or deceased utility accounts totaling \$1375.21 (all Electric) without the previous caveat. **Motion passed 4-0-0.** Motion by Trustee McCarney, seconded by Trustee Hambleton, to abate the small balance and/or no available address utility accounts totaling \$37.02 (all Electric). **Motion passed 4-0-0.**
 - e. **Village Trustee Vacancy.** No letters of interest were received by the deadline (06/18/09). The position will be advertised and applications will be accepted until the position is filled.
 - f. **TRANSCO Equity.** Manager Allard stated that the next VPPSA meeting will include a discussion of TRANSCO Equity; Northfield's current share in \$198,000. She will bring this matter back to Trustees for their approval at one of next month's meetings.
 - g. **NED Terms and Conditions.** The Trustees had a draft version in their packets. Dave Mullett (VPPSA) will be at the next regular meeting (07/14/09) to discuss this. Board approval is required by the end of July.
- V. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: Non-agenda items**
- a. **Kathleen Lott.** Ms. Lott had some questions regarding Chief Shaw's status, i.e. who to contact regarding the grant application that is under review. Manager Allard stated that those who have questions should either contact the Police Department or the Accounting Office for more information.
 - b. **Chris Bradley.** Mr. Bradley had some concerns regarding the recent contract renewal of the Municipal Manager and whether any Municipal policies or procedures had been violated in the process. Selectman Adams stated that the Municipality had the right to waive certain provisions during the contract negotiation process; this negotiation is separate from the Personnel Policy. Selectman Morse added that the Boards were not bound by policies approved by previous Boards if they had not been recently renewed. Mr. Bradley asked if there had been any public input allowed before the contract was renewed. He was told that there had not.
- VI. **EXECUTIVE SESSION:** Motion by Selectman Morse, seconded by Trustee Hambleton, to go into executive session to discuss a personnel matter (Annual Manager Review) without Manager Allard present. **Motion passed 9-0-0.**

The Boards went into executive session at 9:55 p.m.

Motion by Trustee Hambleton, seconded by Selectman Adams, to come out of executive session. **Motion passed 9-0-0.**

The Board came out of executive session at 10:14 p.m. No action was taken.

VII. **ADJOURNMENT.** Without objection, the Boards adjourned at 10:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kenneth L. McCann

Kenneth L. McCann, Acting Clerk

These minutes are subject to approval at the next regular meeting.