

**TOWN/VILLAGE OF NORTHFIELD
JOINT BOARD MEETING
BOARD OF TOWN SELECTMEN
BOARD OF VILLAGE TRUSTEES
Minutes of November 9, 2009**

- I. **ROLL CALL.** Selectboard Chair Kenneth Johnson, Selectmen Melvin Adams (absent), Kenneth Goslant, Charles Morse, and Gregory Sanders; Trustees Chair Samantha Baraw, Trustees Colin Bright, Libby Hambleton, Doug Lawson, and Thomas McCarney. Also present were Municipal Manager Nanci Allard, Acting Clerk Kenneth McCann, and Kathleen Lott (*Northfield News*).

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

- II. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:** None.

III. **JOINT DISCUSSION**

- a. **Town and Village Highway Maintenance Program.** Manager Allard stated that she has been working on updating the five-year plan since the last meeting of the Highway Subcommittee. The subcommittee will meet next this coming Thursday (11/12/09) at 7:00 p.m. The first year of the plan already has been changed significantly.
- b. **Identity Theft Prevention Policy ("Red Flags").** Manager Allard noted that the Village Trustees already have adopted this policy for the utility accounts. We have subsequently learned that this policy also needs to be adopted by the Town because of concerns about ambulance billing information. Selectman Morse saw that areas of concern include names and addresses; does this mean that the information openly available on Lister cards would violate this policy? Manager Allard stated that the cards themselves are public information; the Listers have been informed to restrict access to documents with Social Security numbers, etc. Trustee Lawson pointed out that the policy's statement of purpose refers to "covered documents;" presumably this would not include Lister cards or other similar public documents. Motion by Selectman Morse, seconded by Selectman Sanders, to approve and sign the Identity Theft Prevention Policy. **Motion passed 9-0-0.**
- c. **Personnel Policies & Procedures (Revised).** Manager Allard stated that this document that had been presented before to both Boards separately; only a few minor changes have been made since then. She asked if the Boards would like any additional changes before voting its approval tonight. The definition of "Lay-off" states that it was a "voluntary, non-disciplinary separation of an employee from his/her position;" Selectman Morse did not believe that this was always the case. The word "voluntary" will be deleted. In the section on "Reserve Employment," "consultants" was added to this category. Trustee McCarney thought that this might confuse people who thought that this might include contracted consultants not working directly for the Municipality. Trustee Lawson suggested changing the term to "hourly consultants." This wording was acceptable. There was some concern over the wording for the vacation time provided to a permanent part-time employee who had worked for a minimum of three (3) years. This section now states that this employee who works "an average of twenty hours per week" will earn "five days of prorated annual leave time..." Trustee McCarney believes that this wording is confusing; it should either say "hours" or "days." After further discussion, it was decided that the wording would be changed to "current weekly hours." Trustee McCarney also felt that the change in nomenclature from "Management" to "Non-union" was not entirely justifiable. He did not feel that employees who chose not to join the union should get extra benefits, such as accruing more vacation time in fewer years. Manager Allard stated that changing this wording would not affect any current employee's benefits. There also was some concern expressed that, under Disciplinary Guidelines," it stipulates that anyone convicted of a crime is subject to discharge. It was felt that this did not differentiate between traffic violations, for example, and more serious offenses. Despite this discussion, the wording was not revised. Trustee McCarney asked if this document had been forwarded to the Union for review; Manager Allard indicated that it had not. When asked why, Manager Allard said it was not necessary. Motion by Selectman Morse, seconded by Trustee Bright, to approve and sign the revised Personnel Policies & Procedures with the amendments indicated above. **Motion passed 8-0-1, with Trustee McCarney abstaining.**
- d. **Quit Claim Deed (Gross Property).** The Selectman already had authorized Manager Allard to hire an attorney to begin the quit claim deed process. This has been done. She noted that maps of this parcel, which indicated location and abutting properties, had been in the packets. Selectman Morse felt that the tax maps of the area were inaccurate and did not reflect the actual boundary lines. Trustee Lawson asked what the Town would gain by obtaining this property. Selectman Morse thought that highway debris and other material stored at the Northfield Falls Recreation area could be relocated to this site, thus freeing up more space for recreational use. Trustee McCarney asked how much in annual property tax revenue would be lost if this parcel became municipal property. Selectman Morse estimated around \$700. Trustee McCarney then asked why the Town was taking the lead in obtaining property that was clearly located in the Village. Selectman Morse stated that he had been approached directly by the property owner and this is why this matter was brought first to the Selectboard. Selectman Sanders added that he personally did not care if the property was owned by the Town or Village. Selectman Morse was asked if the property owner had a timeline for a decision to be made. He said that there was nothing definite. Kathleen Lott asked if this acquisition would require a public vote. She was told that it would not; a public vote would only be necessary should the municipality decide to sell the property in the future.

IV. BOARD OF TOWN SELECTMEN

a. Approval of Minutes

1. **October 26, 2009 (Regular Meeting).** Motion by Selectman Morse, seconded by Selectman Goslant, to approve the minutes. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**

b. Approval of Bills

1. **Warrant #10-10.** Motion by Selectman Morse, seconded by Selectman Sanders, to approve Warrant #10-10 in the amount of \$60,164.45. Selectman Morse asked about the purchase of printed t-shirts. Manager Allard stated that these were for Town Highway employees. He then asked about a payment to Vermont Public Power Supply Authority (VPPSA) for a laptop computer. Manager Allard stated that the laptop had been purchased through VPPSA at a reduced price. It was for her so the cost had been split between Town and Village. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**

- c. **Site Visit & Public Hearing (Robinson Road): November 23, 2009.** Chair Johnson stated that this site visit and public hearing were the result of a request from residents to close off this road's eastern section from through traffic due to safety and other concerns. The site visit will be held at 8:00 a.m. (at the Robinson Cemetery) and the public hearing will be at 7:00 p.m. in the Brown Public Library (93 South Main Street).

- d. **Plowing & Sanding Bid Proposals.** Highway Superintendent William Lyon had provided a revised proposal after the last meeting that would reduce the number of roads covered from forty-two (42) to twenty-one (21); this revised number only includes one-house roads. After reviewing this new proposal, Selectman Goslant recommends going back to the original bid proposal from Hallstrom Excavating (minus one private road). The proposed cost, based upon an estimated twenty (20) snowstorms, would be \$58,000. Selectman Morse was concerned that this amount was not in the current budget. Selectman Goslant believes that subcontracting these roads would lead to some cost savings as well as save wear and tear on the Highway Department's equipment (and crew). It also will mean that roads would be taken care of sooner, perhaps eliminating overtime expenses for work done after the end of the regular work shift (3:30 p.m.). Manager Allard had thought that the Board would like take on a reduced number of roads for about \$16,000 this winter as a trial. Selectman Morse still did not see significant monetary savings but agreed that as a trial it may be worth the effort when it is budgeted for. Motion by Selectman Sanders, seconded by Selectman Goslant, to accept the bid proposal from Hallstrom Excavating to provide plowing and sanding services to forty-one (41) town roads for the estimated cost of \$58,000. **Motion passed 3-0-1, with Selectman Morse abstaining.**

e. Status Reports: Various Projects

1. **CVSWMD update.** Selectman Mel Adams, CVSWMD 's Northfield Representative Fred White, and Donald Wallace met earlier this week regarding the proposed CVSWMD budgets as well as other changes considered at the recycling center.
2. **Police Department update.** The Board welcomed back Sergeant Chris Outten to the Northfield Police Department. He had served previously but had to leave when his out-of-state house did not sell.

V. BOARD OF VILLAGE TRUSTEES

a. Approval of Minutes

1. **October 27, 2009 (Regular Meeting).** Motion by Trustee Hambleton, seconded by Trustee Lawson, to approve the minutes. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

b. Approval of Bills:

1. **Warrant #10-10.** Motion by Trustee Hambleton, seconded by Trustee Lawson, to approve Warrant #10-10 in the amount of \$393,492.10. Trustee Lawson asked who would ultimately pay for a damaged utility pole. Manager Allard stated that the driver's insurance company would be billed. When the reimbursement arrives, it will be treated as income. Trustee McCarney asked about a payment to Stantec Consulting Services for "water plan update." Manager Allard stated that this was regarding the next phase (south) of the water project. Stantec was submitting applications early in order to get on the priority list for state funding. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

- c. **Trustees Retreat.** Chair Baraw stated that the original plan was to hold the retreat this month but there were too many time conflicts for the Board members. It will now be postponed until January 2010 (after the holiday season).

d. Status Reports: Various Projects

1. **Village Common Sidewalks update.** Trustee Lawson reported that both Senator Leahy and Senator Sanders' offices had been approached regarding possible funding. A representative from Senator Sanders' office had toured the sidewalks and agreed that something needed to be done soon. We also are pursuing grant applications for state funding through the Agency of Transportation (AOT); however, even if the grants are successful, the monies would probably not be available until 2011. Letters of support have been solicited and received from Norwich University and the merchants/property owners on the Common. He added that some work on the sidewalks on the south side will be a part of the current water project. He promised to keep the Board informed of any future developments. Trustee McCarney wanted to be sure that the Board will be included in the decision process before any work is done on these sidewalks, including the sidewalks on the south side of the Village Common to be upgraded during the current water project.
2. **TRANSCO Equity.** Trustee McCarney asked when he would receive the information he requested at the last meeting. Manager Allard stated that she was now focusing on the Town Budget process but would forward this information as soon as possible.
3. **Accounting Practices.** Trustee McCarney asked Manager Allard if she could reassure the public that there were safeguards in effect that would prevent a situation with overpayments, etc. as was recently revealed in Montpelier. Manager Allard stated that the Accounting Department is very particular in matching receipts to invoices and then to statements before any checks go out to vendors. In addition, bank balances are checked daily.
4. **NED Theft of Services.** Trustee McCarney believes that the Northfield Electric Department (NED) should be able to prosecute when a customer takes illegal action to receive free service. Selectman Morse suggested that the Village might want to create an ordinance that would allow collection of civil damages; the State would not consider this to be a high priority for criminal prosecution. Trustee McCarney would like Management to provide a recommendation on this. Manager Allard said that she would bring up this matter when she meets with the Public Service Board regarding NED's tariff case on November 16, 2009.

VI. MANAGER'S REPORT

a. Status Reports: Various Projects

1. **Northfield Ambulance Service.** Manager Allard stated that the memo in the Selectboard's packets was for the Board's consideration before the budget process begins.
2. **NED Tariff Case.** As previously indicated, this matter will come before the Public Service Board on November 16, 2009.
3. **2008 Water Fluoridation Quality Award.** Manager Allard reported that the Northfield Water Department received this award for maintaining the optimal range of the drinking water's fluoridation level for twelve (12) consecutive months.

VII. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: Non-agenda items

- a. **Kathleen Lott: Flood Plain Letters.** Ms. Lott noted that over three hundred (300) Northfield residents had been sent letters stating that they owned property in a Flood Hazard Zone. She asked if properties had been recently added to these zones. Manager Allard stated that the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) had come out with new flood plain mapping so the Municipality had to inform everyone with the potential of being included in a flood hazard zone. Anyone who has questions can contact Zoning Administrator Michele Braun or attend the public hearing on this matter to be held in the Northfield Municipal Building (51 South Main Street) on Monday, November 16, 2009 at 6:30 p.m.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT. Motion by Trustee Hambleton, seconded by Trustee Lawson, to adjourn. **Motion passed 9-0-0.**

The Boards adjourned at 9:34 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kenneth L. McCann

Kenneth L. McCann, Acting Clerk

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