

**TOWN OF NORTHFIELD
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
Minutes of July 27, 2009**

- I. **ROLL CALL.** Chair Kenneth Johnson, Selectmen Melvin Adams, Kenneth Goslant, Charles Morse (absent), and Gregory Sanders. Also present were Town Manager Nanci Allard, Acting Clerk Kenneth McCann, Zoning Administrator Michele Braun, Stephen Fitzhugh (Planning Commission), Johnnie Stones (Planning Commission), Eileen Peltier (Central Vermont Community Land Trust), Terry Gray (Town Charter Committee), Sally Davidson (Town Charter Committee), Karen Hewitt, Doug Condit, Nelson Hoffman, and Kathleen Lott (*Northfield News*).

A Public Hearing for the purpose of providing written or oral views on the proposed Municipal Plan developed by the Northfield Planning Commission was warned to immediately precede the Selectboard's regular meeting.

Chair Johnson called the Public Hearing to order at 7:00 p.m.

Planning Commission Chair Stephen Fitzhugh stated that the commission had held its own Public Hearing on the proposed Municipal Plan on June 19, 2009. The hearing was not well attended. Since then, some minor changes have been made to the plan, such as the "build out requirement." The final Public Hearing will be held before the Village Trustees on Tuesday, August 11, 2009, with the expectation that the plan will be approved by the Town Selectmen and Village Trustees at the Joint Board Meeting that will follow immediately upon its conclusion.

Selectman Adams stated that he liked the proposed Municipal Plan and asked if there was a schedule for updating Northfield's Zoning Regulations to reflect any changes in the plan. Mr. Fitzhugh stated that this would probably happen in the fall after approval by the Boards and further review by the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission (CVRPC).

Chair Johnson also liked the plan but felt that some proposals, i.e. improved mass transit for Northfield, probably were long-term goals. Selectman Adams similarly felt that proposals to extend the sewer system and the sidewalks also were worthy goals but probably not fiscally possible in the near future.

Selectman Adams asked if there had been sufficient public input into the plan. Mr. Fitzhugh stated that five (5) monthly workshops had been held (starting in November 2008) at which individual revised chapters had been discussed. In addition, a survey regarding various issues in the plan had been distributed in utility bills and also made available through the Municipal website. He felt that these previous gatherings perhaps explained the poor attendance at the public hearing.

Nelson Hoffman noted that in the section entitled "Land Use Goals," the word "should" was used instead of "shall." He asked why there were land use suggestions rather than requirements. Mr. Fitzhugh stated that the consensus was that there should be some flexibility in the document. When the revised zoning regulations are written, they may reflect concerns on land use (especially in the downtown area). Selectman Adams added that since a municipal plan, unlike zoning regulations, was not an enforcing document, some flexibility was a good thing. Chair Johnson stated that was an old issue; this same "should" versus "shall" matter was discussed when the current plan was approved in 2004.

There being no further questions or comments, the Public Hearing closed at 7:13 p.m. The regular meeting began immediately.

II. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

- a. **July 13, 2009 (Regular Meeting).** Motion by Selectman Adams, seconded by Selectman Goslant, to approve the minutes. **Motion passed 3-0-1, with Selectman Sanders abstaining.**
- b. **July 20, 2009 (Special Meeting).** Motion by Selectman Adams, seconded by Selectman Goslant, to approve the minutes. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**

III. **APPROVAL OF BILLS**

- a. **Warrant #03-10.** Motion by Selectman Adams, seconded by Selectman Sanders, to approve Warrant #03-10 in the amount of \$37,973.03. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**

IV. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:** None.

V. MANAGER'S REPORT

a. Status Reports: Various Projects

1. **Athletic Fields Maintenance.** Manager Allard noted that there had been a complaint regarding the condition of the athletic fields. She will be meeting with the School Superintendent to discuss this matter.
2. **Road Surface Management Software (RSMS) Program.** The final report should be available soon.
3. **CVRPC Traffic Report.** The report on the Hockman Hill/Union Brook intersection and other trouble locations also should be available soon.

VI. SELECTBOARD

a. Vermont Community Development Program (VCDP) Grant Application. Eileen Peltier, who is Executive Director of the Central Vermont Community Land Trust (CVCLT), stated that the Town of Northfield has been very helpful in sponsoring this as well as past VCDP grant applications. The current grant application is for more than previous ones as more funds are available for energy efficiency, etc. The amount is \$1,005,500 over a two year period and grant monies are available to residents of Washington, Orange, and Lamoille counties. Motion by Selectman Adams, seconded by Selectman Sanders, to approve and sign the VCDP Grant Application. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**

b. Town Charter Committee Request for Funds (Legal Services). Terry Gray, Chair of the Town Charter Committee, stated that the committee has been meeting regularly and working to write a draft town charter. The committee would like the Board's authorization to spend no more than \$1000 on legal services so that the draft could be reviewed by an attorney before it is submitted to the Board. Ms. Gray felt that attorney Paul Gillis would best provide this service, as he is an expert on Vermont municipal charters. However, she was willing to work through the Town's attorney or the Vermont League of Cities & Towns if that was the Board's preference. Selectman Adams felt that this request was premature, as the committee has not yet explained the compelling reason for a town charter, whether there is interest in the community for a charter, etc. He also thought that the Board should be able to review the draft charter before it is sent out for legal review. Sally Davidson, also on the committee, would like the draft to be reviewed by an attorney before it went out to the public. Selectman Adams asked if there still was the intention to have the proposed Town Charter voted upon at the next Town Meeting (March 2010). Ms. Gray said that was still the goal but the timeline may not be feasible. Chair Johnson stated that he would not mind waiting another year in order to get the best possible document. He believed that the lack of a town charter meant Northfield was excluded from certain opportunities, i.e. grant funds. Selectman Sanders felt that the request for legal services was reasonable as it was important to have a viable, legal document. Selectman Goslant added that since the Board had authorized establishing this committee, it should provide some support for it, including legal expenses. Motion by Selectman Sanders, seconded by Selectman Goslant, to authorize the Town Manager to expend up to \$1000 for legal review of the Town Charter. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**

c. Joint Board Meeting: August 11, 2009. Motion by Selectman Sanders, seconded by Selectman Adams, to cancel the regular Selectboard meeting of Monday, August 10, 2009 and hold a Joint Board Meeting with the Village Trustees on Tuesday, August 11, 2009. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**

d. Status Reports: Various Projects

1. **Highway Subcommittee.** Selectman Goslant has heard that there has been a lot of brush cutting on the backroads recently and thinks that this is a good thing. He would like to see the RSMS report as soon as possible. Sally Davidson would like more attention paid to Lovers Lane.

2. **Inter-Company Charges.** Selectman Goslant has been meeting regularly with Manager Allard, Accounting Manager Laurie Baroffio, and Village Trustee Doug Lawson on the complex subject of properly assigning expenses between Northfield Town and Northfield Village. He said that both Boards will have to be willing to work together to get this accomplished at the end of the process. Chair Johnson was appreciative of the work being done on this. Manager Allard added that this will allow proper budgeting on where the actual costs are.

VII. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: Non-agenda items

1. **Sally Davidson: Athletic Fields.** Ms. Davidson thinks that Northfield is not putting enough money into the maintenance of the recreation fields. She believes that the municipal pool, which takes up most of the recreation budget, should be more self-supporting.

VIII. EXECUTIVE SESSION. Motion by Selectman Adams, seconded by Selectman Sanders, to go into executive session with the Manager present in order to discuss a legal matter. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**

The Board went into executive session at 8:05 p.m.

Motion by Selectman Sanders, seconded by Selectman Adams, to come out of executive session. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**

The Board came out of executive session at 8:29 p.m. No action was taken.

IX. ADJOURNMENT. Motion by Selectman Adams, seconded by Selectman Sanders, to adjourn. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**

The Board adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kenneth L. McCann

Kenneth L. McCann, Acting Clerk

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