

**TOWN OF NORTHFIELD
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
Minutes of October 12, 2009**

- I. **ROLL CALL** Chair Kenneth Johnson, Selectmen Melvin Adams, Kenneth Goslant, Charles Morse, and Gregory Sanders. Also present were Town Manager Nanci Allard, Acting Clerk Kenneth McCann, and Kathleen Lott (*Northfield News*).

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

II. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

- a. **September 28, 2009 (Regular Meeting).** Motion by Selectman Morse, seconded by Selectman Goslant, to approve the minutes. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

III. **APPROVAL OF BILLS**

- a. **Warrant #08-10.** Motion by Selectman Morse, seconded by Selectman Adams, to approve Warrant #-8-10 in the amount of \$47,212.24. Selectman Sanders asked about the purchase of building materials (lumber). Manager Allard thought that it was either for the Town Garage or Brown Public Library (or perhaps both). She will look into this. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

IV. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:** None.

V. **MANAGER'S REPORT**

a. **Status Reports: Various Projects**

1. **Highway Subcommittee.** Manager Allard would like the subcommittee members to meet as soon as possible in order to discuss the Road Surface Management System (RSMS) program and its impact on the budget process for the next fiscal year. The Selectboard members will try to arrange a meeting this week with the Village Trustees on the subcommittee.
2. **Ancient Roads.** Manager Allard reported that she recently met with attorney James LaMonda, who has been working on this project. She said that he has finished his research and it will be up to the Selectmen to determine which ancient roads would be kept and those that would be abandoned. Manager Allard added that there are strict stipulations on when to notify landowners, hold public hearings, etc. Selectman Adams felt that the Selectmen should be able to review the material before making any decisions. Manager Allard noted the bulkiness of the Mr. LaMonda's documentation. Chair Johnson suggested that a brief summary would be useful in the beginning; if the Selectmen require more information, it could be provided later. Selectman Morse agreed that a summary of the work should be created for initial discussion purposes.
3. **Town Budget Process.** Manager Allard stated that she and Accounting Manager Laurie Baroffio will start meeting soon with the various department heads in regards to their requests for the next fiscal year. She also would like some general guidance from the Board before detailed budgets are prepared. Chair Johnson stated that he certainly will be providing some input. Selectman Morse noted that the lack of storage space in the Town Clerk's Office needs to be addressed sooner rather than later. There also were some concerns expressed over providing winter shelter for various emergency vehicles, i.e. police and ambulance trailers. Various long- and short-term solutions were discussed.

VI. **SELECTBOARD**

- a. **Ordinance 2009-1 (Regulating All Terrain Vehicles).** Chair Johnson noted that after the last meeting, Selectman Morse was tasked to produce a narrowly-written ordinance that would permit the individual with special needs to drive his ATV from his house on Hallstrom Road for approximately one-half mile to an access point to a logging trail leading to his family's camp. Selectman Morse noted that he had used a sample ordinance from the Vermont League of Cities & Towns (VLCT) as a template. There have been some changes, i.e. increasing the penalty amounts, requiring liability insurance, etc. Motion by Selectman Adams, seconded by Selectman Sanders, to approve and sign Ordinance 2009-01.

Selectman Sanders asked what would prevent any other ATV operator from making use of this ordinance. Selectman Morse said that although the individual for whom this ordinance was created is not named, the affected stretch of road is specified. In addition, there is a requirement that the ATV operator must have an authorizing letter from the Selectmen. Chair Johnson noted that if another individual with comparable special needs made a similar request, the ordinance could be amended to assist that person. He emphasized, however, that this ordinance is intended to help individuals with special needs and is not for recreational use or just convenience. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

- b. Request to Close Part of Town Highway (Robinson Road).** Chair Johnson noted that the Selectboard had received a letter from residents on Robinson Road asking that part of the road (the eastern segment) be closed to traffic because of safety and other concerns. Motion by Selectman Morse, seconded by Selectman Goslant, to hold a site visit on Robinson Road. Selectman Morse stated that the site visit was merely the first step in the process to determine whether or not the request should be granted. **Motion passed 5-0-0.** Manager Allard will schedule a site visit in the near future and be sure that all requirements are met, i.e. proper warning, notification of adjoining landowners, etc. Selectman Adams suggested that since it soon will be getting dark by late afternoon, it might be a good idea to schedule this site visit in the early morning hours (i.e. 8:00 a.m. or 9:00 a.m.).

c. Status Reports: Various Projects

- 1. Charter Committee update.** Selectman Morse reported that the Charter Committee has been meeting every two weeks and is making significant progress. However, he said that the final document probably won't be completed until mid-February 2010, which would be too late for consideration at Town Meeting Day (03/02/10). Chair Johnson said that there was no need to rush the process; he would rather have a good document than an imperfect one done in haste. Selectman Goslant noted that the minutes of the last meeting indicated that the committee recommended hiring a professional assessor; if that happened, would we still need a Board of Listers? Selectman Morse stated that since eliminating the Board of Listers would require a charter change, this matter is being explored during the charter writing process. Whether or not this would produce more efficiency or significant cost savings is something that would need to be reviewed.
- 2. Public Works Director.** Selectman Sanders asked about the status of the transition from the current Public Works Director (upon his anticipated retirement) to other personnel. Manager Allard stated that she had been working on this matter for a couple of years. The final decision has not been made yet whether to hire a new public works director from outside or instead promote the current department heads working under him. However, these department heads have been taking management training courses just in case. Chair Johnson stated that, either way, this would be quite a significant change for the community.

VII. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: Non-agenda items. None.

VIII. EXECUTIVE SESSION. Motion by Selectman Morse, seconded by Selectman Sanders, to go into executive session with Manager Allard present in order to discuss a legal matter. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

The Board went into executive session at 8:10 p.m.

Motion by Selectman Sanders, seconded by Selectman Goslant, to come out of executive session. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

The Board came out of executive session at 8:25 p.m. No action was taken.

IX. ADJOURNMENT. Motion by Selectman Sanders, seconded by Selectman Morse, to adjourn. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

The Board adjourned at 8:26 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kenneth L. McCann

Kenneth L. McCann, Acting Clerk

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