

**TOWN OF NORTHFIELD
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
Minutes of October 26, 2009**

- I. **ROLL CALL.** Chair Kenneth Johnson, Selectmen Melvin Adams, Kenneth Goslant, Charles Morse, and Gregory Sanders (absent). Also present were Town Manager Nanci Allard, Acting Clerk Kenneth McCann, Fred White, Patsy White, Donald Wallace, Phil Harnois (Northfield Senior Center), Arlene Harnois, and Kathleen Lott (*Northfield News*).

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

II. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

- a. **October 12, 2009 (Regular Meeting).** Motion by Selectman Adams, seconded by Selectman Goslant, to approve the minutes. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**

III. **APPROVAL OF BILLS**

- a. **Warrant #09-10.** Motion by Selectman Morse, seconded by Selectman Goslant, to approve Warrant #09-10 in the amount of \$106,299.36. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**
- b. **Warrant #09-10A.** Motion by Selectman Morse, seconded by Selectman Adams, to approve Warrant #09-10A in the amount of \$96,529.70. Selectman Adams noted that this warrant covered bond payments for the new Police Station, the Municipal Pool, and the Brown Public Library. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**

IV. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

- a. **Fred White: Central Vermont Solid Waste Management District update.** Mr. White is Northfield's appointed representative to the Central Vermont Solid Waste Management District (CVSWMD). He reported that due to budgetary concerns, CVSWMD is considering divesting itself from the various recycling depots that it currently manages in the area. One problem is that there has been a decrease in the amount of bagged trash (for which customers are charged a set price per bag) brought to the recycling centers. Part of this is due to more efficient recycling but other factors include the poor economy. As CVSWMD has gone through its surplus funds, it now proposes an increase in the charges for bagged trash as well as instituting a new charge for recycled materials, i.e. broken-down cardboard boxes, tin cans, newspapers, etc. It also is looking into a \$2 per person increase in the per capita charge for its member communities. Mr. White said that CVSWMD has prepared two (2) draft budgets for the next fiscal year; one is based upon the current level of operations and the other is based on the CVSWMD no longer running the recycling depots. The first would require the per capita increase but the second would not. CVSWMD already has sent out preliminary bid proposals to see if any private contractors would be willing to take over management of the recycling centers. Mr. White added that, of the various facilities in Central Vermont, the Northfield Recycling Center is the only one that has routinely turned a profit. The amount last year was about \$5000. These budgets will be voted upon at CVSWMD's monthly meeting in December (12/02/09) so he would like the Board's views tonight on how to proceed.

Chair Johnson then opened the floor to questions or comments. Phil Harnois, who serves as President of the Northfield Senior Center's Board of Directors, noted that the imposition of fees for recycling would have a very adverse affect upon the Senior Center, which currently recycles large amounts of cardboard boxes and food cans. Not only would this hardship include the monetary cost but also the time spent bagging the recycled material for weighing, measuring, etc. He noted that if there were no way to avoid this, the Senior Center would have to look at not recycling these materials but instead putting them in the regular trash that is hauled away.

Donald Wallace noted that this topic is "near and dear to him" as he was very involved with starting up the Northfield Recycling Center. He believes that this facility provides an essential service to the community, as can be seen by the heavy traffic. The facility began with mostly volunteer assistance but the CVSWMD decided to get rid of the volunteers and hire professionals. He believes that Northfield should take over its operation and use the revenue from trash disposal to maintain free recycling. He also wondered what Northfield was getting back in return for the per capita payment and felt that CVSWMD's stated goal of "zero waste" could not be reached if it kept killing the very programs that might achieve this.

Selectman Morse asked what services Northfield would lose from the CVSWMD if it took over management of the recycling center. Mr. White stated that it would lose the paid employees along with the truck and driver that take the trash and recycling to the landfill, etc. Selectman Morse felt that since this decision had to be made in just over a month, a cost analysis was required as soon as possible to see if this option was cost-effective and otherwise feasible. He added that the increased fees will hit some people especially hard in this bad economy and he felt that the CVSWMD should have been better prepared for this situation. He noted that when Northfield is assessed the per capita charge, the Norwich University students living on campus are included in the head count even though their trash disposal is handled privately by the university.

Selectman Adams stated that although he understood the reasons why the fees are going up, he also favored considering the possibility of Northfield running the depot itself provided that the aforementioned cost analysis can be done properly before the decision needs to be made. Mr. Wallace stated that Northfield might be able to get some financial assistance from the neighboring communities, i.e. Roxbury, Williamstown, West Berlin, etc., that also make use of this facility. Chair Johnson stated that he could not support the proposed CVSWMD budgets if it meant that Northfield would continue to subsidize other communities in the area.

After further discussion, there was a consensus that Selectman Adams will work with Messieurs White and Wallace to explore the various options reviewed tonight and would report back to the Board at its second meeting in November (11/23/09). They also will attempt to provide a full explanation of the proposed CVSWMD budgets (and associated implications). Mr. White thanked the Board for the input that he received tonight. Chair Johnson in turn commended Mr. White for the expertise that he brought to tonight's discussion.

V. MANAGER'S REPORT

- a. **Joint Board Meeting.** Manager Allard would like to schedule a Joint Board Meeting of the Town Selectmen and Village Trustees in order to discuss matters that affect both Boards, such as the proposed revisions to the Northfield Personnel Policy. The meeting was tentatively scheduled for Monday, November 9, 2009 (pending approval by the Village Trustees).
- b. **Status Reports: Various Projects**
 1. **Accounting Department.** Manager Allard noted that one of the employees had resigned; the department now is very busy due to the reduction in personnel.
 2. **Ancient Roads.** Manager Allard displayed a map of Northfield that indicated the 241 ancient roads that had been discovered by James LaMonda. Selectman Adams was surprised by this high number. He would like a presentation from Mr. LaMonda where he would provide his own recommendations on which (if any) of these ancient roads should be preserved. Selectman Morse felt that the map displayed was too vague and lacked specific points of reference. He would like future maps to have overlays with current highways indicated. He also believed that the Highway Committee should review this matter in some detail (including some site visits) before it came back to the full Board (as well as the Village Trustees, since some trails are located in Northfield Village).

VI. SELECTBOARD

- a. **Plowing & Sanding Bid Proposals.** Chair Johnson noted that the plowing and sanding of various groups of roads had been put out to bid to potential sub-contractors and the proposals had been returned and opened. Selectman Goslant was surprised that there had been only two (2) proposals had been received. He also wanted to know if accepting all or part of the low bid proposal would save the community any money. Selectman Adams also would like hard numbers on cost savings as well as whether this would allow the Town Highway crew to provide faster service on other, more heavily travelled roads. He would like this information broken down by the roads grouped together in the bid proposal so a clear comparison can be made. Manager Allard stated that this information will be generated and that this item will be on the next meeting's agenda (11/09/09).
- b. **Bull Run Road and Messier Hill Road Intersection.** At the request of Police Chief Jeffrey Shaw, Highway Superintendent William Lyon reviewed this intersection; his recommendation is that a yield sign be placed on Messier Hill Road at this intersection. This would require an amendment to the Town Traffic Ordinance for enforcement purposes. Motion by Selectman Morse, seconded by Selectman Goslant, to approve Emergency Ordinance 2009-2, which would site a yield sign on Messier Hill Road at its intersection with Bull Run. The ordinance will go into effect immediately and signage installed as soon as possible. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**

- c. **Greater Northfield Coalition Council (GNCC) Town Meeting Warning Request.** The GNCC has asked to be placed on the 2010 Town Meeting Warning with a \$3000 funding request. Motion by Selectman Goslant, seconded by Selectman Adams, to put the \$3000 GNCC funding request on the 2010 Town Meeting Warning. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**
- d. **Northfield Snowmobilers Trail Request (South View Drive & Fairgrounds Road).** Northfield Snowmobilers, Inc. (NSI) has made its annual request to open sections of South View Drive and Fairgrounds Road for snowmobile use. NSI also has asked to have this permission granted in perpetuity until notified otherwise. The Board would like to continue to receive annual requests. Motion by Selectman Morse, seconded by Selectman Goslant, to grant NSI's request to operate on South View Drive and Fairgrounds Road for the 2009-2010 winter riding season. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**
- e. **Vermont Community Development Program (VCDP) Municipal Policies & Codes.** Manager Allard explained that as part of its grant application process on behalf of the Central Vermont Community Land Trust (CVCLT), the Town must approve and sign this form which affirms that the Town does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, etc. as well as some additional policies that already are in place. Motion by Selectman Morse, seconded by Selectmen Adams, to approve and sign the VCDP Municipal Policies & Codes form. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**
- f. **Status Reports: Various Projects**
 - 1. **Police Vehicle Purchase.** Selectman Goslant noted from the Manager's Report that the Police Department was ordering a Dodge Charger rather than the more expensive vehicle (Chevy Tahoe) that had been originally proposed. He thought it a good thing that some financial restraint was being shown in these difficult times.
 - 2. **Town Charter Committee.** Selectman Morse reported that the committee recently has been meeting every other week but will probably take a break over the holiday season.
 - 3. **Fiske Drive Property Quit Claim.** Selectman Morse stated that a landowner wanted to donate to the Town about 4.65 acres near Fiske Drive through a quit claim deed. Motion by Selectman Morse, seconded by Selectman Goslant, to authorize Manager Allard to begin the quit claim deed process in order to acquire this property. Kathleen Lott asked if the Town would be accepting any financial responsibility by accepting this property. Selectman Morse said that this issue would be part of the quit claim process, which includes a title search, liability issues, etc. Chair Johnson added that Manager Allard would explore all these possibilities when seeking legal advice. The Town was under no obligation to pursue this if serious concerns were discovered. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**

VII. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:** Non-agenda items

VIII. **ADJOURNMENT.** Motion by Selectman Morse, seconded by Selectman Goslant, to adjourn. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**

The Board adjourned at 8:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kenneth L. McCann

Kenneth L. McCann, Acting Clerk

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