

**VILLAGE OF NORTHFIELD
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
Minutes of October 27, 2009**

- I. **ROLL CALL.** Chair Samantha Baraw, Vice-Chair Doug Lawson, Trustees Colin Bright, Libby Hambleton, and Thomas McCarney. Also present were Village Manager Nanci Allard, Acting Clerk Kenneth McCann, and Kathleen Lott (*Northfield News*).

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

- II. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (Scheduled):** None.

III. **ACTION ITEMS**

a. **Approval of Minutes**

1. **October 13, 2009 (Regular Meeting).** Motion by Trustee McCarney, seconded by Trustee Lawson, to approve the minutes. **Motion passed 4-0-1, with Chair Baraw abstaining.**

b. **Approval of Bills**

1. **Warrant #09-10.** Motion by Trustee Hambleton, seconded by Trustee Lawson, to approve Warrant #09-10 in the amount of \$212,679.97. Trustee McCarney stated that the payment of property taxes from the Water Department to the Town of Northfield should be paid under protest. He then asked when this contentious matter would be resolved. Manager Allard said that the Board of Listers will be holding a public meeting on Thursday, November 12, 2009 at 6:00 p.m. in the Municipal Building; "Assessment of Village Water Mains in Town" is on the agenda. Manager Allard will be present and she encouraged the Board members to attend (as well as other interested members of the public). **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

2. **Warrant #09-10A.** Motion by Trustee McCarney, seconded by Trustee Bright, to approve Warrant #09-10A in the amount of \$61,684.12. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

- c. **Tree Trimming Program Proposal.** Manager Allard stated that the Board had voted at its August 25, 2009 meeting to "authorize NED Technical Coordinator [Stephen] Fitzhugh to work with tree trimming companies in order to develop a proposal for system-wide tree trimming plan on a seven (7) year cycle." Mr. Fitzhugh recommends that the Board accept the bid proposal from Davey Tree Expert Company, copies of which were provided to the Board. Their estimated cost is \$4850 per mile. The plan is to spend the next two (2) years focusing on trouble areas and then begin the seven (7) year program. Trustee McCarney is disappointed that we have not been keeping up with the tree trimming and now have to play "catch up." He also is willing to go beyond the \$37,350 estimated for the first year of the program if this would make the Northfield Electric Department (NED) system more reliable. Manager Allard said that she will check the current budget to see how much can be done during this fiscal year. Next spring, when the Village budget process begins, the Board can consider how much it would like to allocate to tree trimming during the next fiscal year. Trustee McCarney asked if Davey Tree could come back to do some additional work before winter sets in; he is concerned about snow and ice storms doing damage in the trouble areas. Manager Allard will contact them and see what can be done this calendar year.

- d. **Request for Commitment of Funds to VLCT Amicus.** Manager Allard noted that the Vermont League of Cities & Towns (VLCT) is filing an amicus brief seeking to overturn the Vermont Environmental Court's decision "vacating the Montpelier wastewater treatment system permit renewal." VLCT believes that the State has imposed unreasonable standards for municipal wastewater systems and does not want this decision to stand as a precedent. VLCT is asking its member communities to contribute funds to cover part of the legal expenses; the suggested donation amount is \$300. Trustee McCarney believes that the Environmental Court's action is "disturbing" and does not oppose the \$300 donation. He also believes that Northfield should be pro-active to make sure that this doesn't happen here. Manager Allard stated that she has not seen anything in writing but has heard rumors that there may be problems when the Northfield WWTF applies for its discharge permit renewal next year. Trustee McCarney hopes that steps will be taken to ensure that there will be no surprises, especially after we have spent millions on the Northfield WWTF upgrade. Motion by Trustee Lawson, seconded by Trustee Bright, to authorize the \$300 contribution to VLCT Amicus. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

- e. **VT TRANSCO Equity Purchase (financing reconsideration).** Manager Allard provided the Board with information on how much VELCO stock and TRANSCO equity that has been purchased by the Northfield Electric Department (NED). She has reviewed financing options and if the Board does not want to purchase the equity through the Vermont Public Power Supply Authority (VPPSA), the purchase can be financed through local banks. She noted that these are fifteen (15) year bonds and the returns usually have been from twelve to fifteen percent (12%-15%). This return has lessened the need for electric rate increases. Trustee McCarney would like a spreadsheet showing how much has been spent, the full extent of NED's commitment, etc. Manager Allard will provide this information at the next meeting.
- f. **Northfield Snowmobilers Trail Request (Northfield Wellfield).** Northfield Snowmobilers Inc. (NSI) has made its annual request to run a snowmobile trail through the Wellfield. Superintendent of Public Works William Lyon has no objections provided that NSI adheres to the specific conditions laid out in his attached memo. 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 Trustee Lawson, seconded by Trustee Hambleton, to grant NSI's request for a snowmobile trail through the Wellfield for the 2009-2010 winter riding season provided that Superintendent Lyon's stipulations are observed. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

IV. REPORTS

a. Village Manager

- 1. **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 scheduled for Monday, November 9, 2009.
- 2. **Northfield Falls Hydroelectric Project.** Manager Allard met again with Richard Podolec today on his proposal.
- 3. **Stimulus Money.** Manager Allard was notified by David Mullett (VPPSA) that there is about \$2,000,000 available in stimulus money targeted for electric substation upgrades.

b. Miscellaneous

- 1. **Ancient Roads.** Trustee McCarney learned during last night's Selectboard Meeting that some of the Ancient Roads discovered by James LaMonda are located in Northfield Village. He asked that the Board receive copies of any documentation, including maps, pertaining to these. Manager Allard stated that the Village will be included in this process.
- 2. **Non-Village ERU Accounts.** Trustee McCarney asked how many ERU accounts are located outside the Village boundary lines. Manager Allard stated that she will forward this information once it is downloaded from the utility's computer system.
- 3. **Trustees Retreat.** Chair Baraw had proposed a tentative date of Saturday, November 7, 2009. Trustee Lawson is unavailable that day but will check to see if he can do it the following Saturday (11/14/09). Chair Baraw believes that the training room in the new Police Station would be the best location for the retreat. She will provide refreshments.

V. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (Unscheduled). None.

VI. ADJOURNMENT. Motion by Trustee Hambleton, seconded by Trustee Lawson, to adjourn. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

The Board adjourned at 7:51 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kenneth L. McCann

Kenneth L. McCann, Acting Clerk

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