

**TOWN OF NORTHFIELD
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
Minutes of April 8, 2013**

- I. ROLL CALL.** Select Board Chair John Quinn III, Selectmen Chris Bradley, Brad Denny (absent), Matthew Gadbois, and Kenneth W. Goslant. Also present were Town Manager Rob Lewis, Acting Clerk Ken McCann, Laurie Baroffio (Finance Director), James Dziobek (Acting Police Chief), Justin Pickel, and Kathleen Lott (*Northfield News*).

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

- II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE.** The Board members and the public were asked to rise and recite the Pledge of Allegiance.

- III. SET/ADJUST AGENDA.** Manager Lewis had no adjustments to the posted agenda.

- IV. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:** None.

V. DEPARTMENT HEAD REPORT

- a. Acting Police Chief James Dziobek.** Chief Dziobek provided the Board members with a written report in their meeting packets, which he now summarized. He began by stating that he has been in law enforcement for over thirty (30) years, the last five (5) with the Northfield Police Department (NPD). He has been Acting Chief for about a month and the transition has been seamless. Chief Dziobek recently held a day-long "summit" with the other four (4) full-time officers to discuss this transition period; department expectations; short- and long-term strategic plans; and the new part-time "detective" position. With former Chief Chris Outten's departure, former Sergeant Dziobek's elevation to Acting Chief, and former full-time officer Chuck Satterfield's reclassification as part-time detective, the department now has two (2) vacant full-time positions. Chief Dziobek will hold off on filling these positions until he has discussed this matter with Manager Lewis and determined the appropriate level of staffing. He added that he would be interested in serving as the permanent Police Chief as he had held this position three (3) previous times in other communities. Chair Quinn thanked Chief Dziobek for his detailed written report and for his interactions on the Front Porch Forum. Chief Dziobek said that he is trying to keep the Select Board and general public informed of any recent developments.

Chief Dziobek then touched upon local crime statistics for the year to date. For example, since January 1, 2013, there have been 502 complaints, resulting in twenty-eight (28) arrests. Also, there currently are twenty-two (22) "active" complaints. The part-time detective has been working on five (5) burglary cases with two (2) search warrants executed as a result of these investigations. Town Manager Lewis was invited to take part in one of these searches. In addition to educating him on the procedure, Town Manager Lewis' presence was much appreciated by the officers as it showed how committed Town officials are to the NPD. The detective has worked on other cases, including a sex crime that required some assistance from Vermont State Police in order to be sure that there were no procedural errors; no investigation delays; etc. before the arrest was made. Chief Dziobek stated that because the detective relieves the other officers of time-consuming investigative work, they are able to spend more time out on patrol. Selectman Bradley echoed Chair Quinn's earlier statement regarding the thoroughness of Chief Dziobek's report. He then asked if twenty-two (22) active cases were a normal amount for a quarter year and whether any active cases were leftover from the previous calendar year. Chief Dziobek was not sure but will check. He added that there always are some cases that will never close.

Selectman Goslant asked why the detective position was limited to thirty-two (32) hours if it is so valuable. Manager Lewis stated that the position was defined that way so that the Town would not have to pay any employee benefits. Chief Dziobek stated that if the detective is working on a case, he may work more than thirty-two (32) hours that week but then work fewer hours the following week so that the two (2) week pay period would not exceed sixty-four (64) hours total. Finance Director Laurie Baroffio added that since this is a part-time non-union position, there are no extra overtime expenses unless there are more than eighty (80) hours worked during the two (2) week pay period.

Selectman Gadbois asked if Chief Dziobek was enjoying his new role. He replied that he certainly enjoys working in Northfield and interacting with the community. Although Chief Dziobek will be eligible for retirement this coming October, he would like to continue working for a few more years. Manager Lewis added that the Northfield Falls Neighborhood Watch contacted him today to say how impressed they are with the increased police presence in the area, which probably can be attributed to the new part-time detective position as well as Chief Dziobek's own efforts.

VI. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- a. March 25, 2013 (Joint Board Meeting).** Motion by Selectman Bradley, seconded by Selectman Gadbois, to approve the minutes. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**

VII. APPROVAL OF BILLS

- a. **Warrant #20-13.** Motion by Selectman Bradley, seconded by Selectman Goslant, to approve Warrant #20-13 in the amount of \$54,447.85. Selectman Gadbois asked about a payment classified as an Ambulance overpayment. Ms. Baroffio stated that this was a repayment to an insurance company because of a corrected invoice. Selectman Gadbois then inquired about a \$290 payment to SymQuest. Manager Lewis stated that this was a monthly expenditure for "safety net" computer services. Ms. Baroffio added that should SymQuest be called in to fix a problem, the monthly payment would cover some service work. Also, there is a guaranteed response time, which is very important given the amount of business that the municipality performs on a daily basis. Ms. Baroffio will be looking in the near future to determine if there are any less expensive alternatives. Selectman Goslant asked why some municipal departments are charged more than others for internet service. Ms. Baroffio stated that the breakdown is determined by the Inter-Company Charges Policy. For example, the Municipal Building is charged one lump sum and the departments then are charged for estimated usage. Selectman Goslant asked if there was any consideration of installing Wi-Fi in the building. Ms. Baroffio has been reluctant to do so because of confidentiality concerns, such as the security of ambulance billing, etc. Selectman Goslant asked if the Inter-Company Charges Policy would become obsolete post-merger. Ms. Baroffio stated that many inter-company charges would be eliminated but others would have to be retained. For example, the enterprise fund accounts (water, sewer, and electric) would need to be tracked separately as these expenses are rate-based, not tax-based. The same would be true for Ambulance Service expenses so that the proper rate schedule can be determined. She added that there would be some time savings once merger comes into effect. Selectman Goslant then asked about a payment to the Waterbury Veterinary Hospital. Chief Dziobek stated that there was a recent police investigation of a dog running at large that included possible animal abuse. The persons taking in the dog use this facility for their own pets so this is where the dog was taken. Manager Lewis added that if the owner wanted to reclaim his dog, he/she would have to reimburse the Town for this expense. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**
- b. **Approval of Bi-Weekly Payroll through March 31, 2013.** Motion by Selectman Bradley, seconded by Selectman Goslant, to approve the bi-weekly payroll in the amount of \$54,339.51. Selectmen Gadbois and Bradley asked about technical and overtime expenses charged to Grounds/Parks/Facilities. Ms. Baroffio stated that these were incurred by the maintenance worker while he was performing some winter highway work. Due to the Inter-Company Charges Policy, part of his salary is always charged to Grounds/Parks/Facilities. Chair Quinn then asked about a Police Department overtime expense. Chief Dziobek stated that this was partly due to carrying out the aforementioned search warrants. He added that he always provides Manager Lewis with overtime breakdowns. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**

VIII. LIQUOR CONTROL COMMISSION

- a. **Liquor License Renewal Applications**
1. **Convenience Plus.** Motion by Selectman Bradley, seconded by Selectman Goslant, to approve the liquor license renewal. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**
 2. **Grand Union (Tops Markets).** Motion by Selectman Bradley, seconded by Selectman Goslant, to approve the liquor license renewal. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**
- b. **Tobacco License Renewal Applications**
1. **Convenience Plus.** Motion by Selectman Bradley, seconded by Selectman Goslant, to approve the tobacco license renewal. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**
 2. **Grand Union (Tops Markets).** Motion by Selectman Bradley, seconded by Selectman Goslant, to approve the tobacco license renewal. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**

IX. SELECT BOARD

- a. **New Animal Control Officer.** Manager Lewis stated that after over thirty (30) years of providing animal control services to Northfield, Jack and Thelma Baroffio have closed the Baramack Kennel where stray dogs were taken before transport to the Central Vermont Animal Society (CVHS). Manager Lewis worked with Police Chief Dziobek on various options for future animal control and they now have a recommendation for the Select Board. Chief Dziobek first expressed his appreciation for the Baroffios' past service. He then explained that the Town has a contract with CVHS to transport stray dogs there for \$2000 per year. Previously, local strays were held for five (5) days at the Baramack Kennel, which then would transport them to CVHS. Chief Dziobek stated that the Northfield Police Department (NPD) does not have a mechanism to hold or transport stray dogs. He looked into this matter and learned that Barre Town resident Justin Pickel provides animal control services for several local communities (i.e., Barre Town, Berlin, Williamstown, and Orange) and is highly recommended by the CVHS. Mr. Pickel would transfer stray dogs from Northfield to CVHS for a flat fifty dollar (\$50) fee. Manager Lewis noted that there is an exception when the dog has bitten someone and needs to be quarantined for ten (10) days at the cost of eighteen dollars (\$18) per day. Chief Dziobek stated that NPD officers would collect the stray dogs and contact the owner if there are tags. Mr. Pickel would be contacted if the dogs do not have proper identification or if they cannot be captured easily.

Selectman Goslant asked how many stray dogs were picked up each year. Manager Lewis thought that it was about forty (40). Chair Quinn asked about the length of the proposed agreement with Mr. Pickel. Manager Lewis would like to start with a three (3) year contract. Mr. Pickel stated that he would be on call twenty-four (24) hours per day and is authorized to issue tickets for stray dogs, unlicensed dogs, etc. He uses a facility in Williamstown to hold suspected rabid dogs. He also has code access to holding areas at the CVHS so animals can be secured there at all hours. He noted that if it is tagged and the owner is home, the animal would be returned before transport to CVHS. If there are repeated pickups of the same animal, increasing fines will be imposed. Manager Lewis stated that hiring Mr. Pickel would free up NPD officers for other work. Selectman Goslant said that since Mr. Pickel seems to be quite knowledgeable and professional, hiring him seems to be a good choice. Chair Quinn agreed but he would like to start with a one (1) year contract to see how this agreement works out. Selectman Gadbois asked if other candidates had been contacted. Manager Lewis stated three (3) other individuals had been considered but they either had background check problems or did not carry their own liability insurance. Mr. Pickel does carry his own insurance and would be acting as a private contractor. Motion by Selectman Bradley, seconded by Selectman Goslant, to hire Justin Pickel as the Northfield Animal Control Officer to be paid fifty dollars (\$50) per animal pick up/transport and to authorize Manager Lewis to sign a one (1) year contract with Mr. Pickel. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**

- b. Annual Financial Audit Bid Results.** Finance Director Baroffio stated that the Town and Village have had Fothergill, Segale, and Valley (FSV) conduct their financial audits for the past seven (7) years. She discussed this with Manager Lewis and Village Manager Jay Marcotte and it was decided to put the FY 2012/2013 audit out to bid on a one (1) year contract. Thirteen (13) RFPs were sent out and five (5) proposals were received by the deadline. She is recommending that FSV be hired for this audit but that they are excluded when the Town and Village seek proposals for future years. It is considered good financial policy to change auditors on a periodic basis. Ms. Baroffio noted that although there was a lower bidder than FSV, this proposal contained mathematical errors. That accounting firm also had limited staffing and did not provide a timeline (as requested) for audit completion. FSV was the next lowest bidder. The next lowest did not have experience with municipal utilities and also did not provide a completion deadline. Ms. Baroffio added that the Town has already budgeted for the cost of the audit. Motion by Selectman Bradley, seconded by Selectman Goslant, to hire Fothergill, Segale, and Valley to conduct the 2012/2013 annual financial audit. Selectman Goslant asked how expensive this audit would be compared to last year. Ms. Baroffio stated that there would be a \$500 increase in the base fee. Selectman Goslant stated that if FSV is not hired for future audits, there might be fewer viable options. Ms. Baroffio stated that since the next RFP would be for three (3) years, there might be some auditing firms that did not bid this time that might be interested. There are some initial startup costs that are better accommodated over a multi-year contract. Also, as the next RFP is developed, some other changes may be made to encourage additional responses. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**
- c. Permission Request to Hold Walk/Run Benefit Race.** Chair Quinn stated that Nicole DiDomenico, who is Norwich University's Director of Civic Engagement, has asked for the Town's permission to hold a benefit race on Town and Village streets on Sunday, April 28, 2013. The race would raise funds for a former Norwich University (NU) student who suffered a traumatic brain injury over a year ago. There would be a five (5) kilometer race for adults and a mile children's race. The longer race would begin at NU's Plumley Armory and travel down Central Street, Wall Street, and Water Street before turning around at the base of Dole Hill Road. Chair Quinn has no objections except for the matter of traffic control during the race. It was noted that Ms. DiDomenico indicated in her request that she has already contacted Chief Dziobek regarding these concerns. Motion by Selectman Bradley, seconded by Selectman Goslant, to approve Ms. DiDomenico's request with the stipulation that the race organizers must work with Northfield Emergency Services regarding traffic control, public safety, etc. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**
- d. Appointment of Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission (CVRPC) Representative.** Manager Lewis noted that Laura Hill-Eubanks, who currently serves on the Northfield Conservation Commission, had submitted a letter of interest for this vacancy. Based upon her résumé, she seems a very qualified applicant. Motion by Selectman Bradley, seconded by Selectman Gadbois, to appoint Laura Hill-Eubanks as Northfield's CVRPC Representative. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**
- e. Joint Board Meeting.** Since the Town Selectmen and Village Trustees both support holding monthly joint board meetings as municipal merger approaches, the Boards will hold their next Joint Board Meeting on Tuesday, April 23, 2013.
- f. Status Reports: Various Projects**

 - 1. Highway Committee.** Selectman Gadbois, who is a new member of this committee, would like its next meeting held within the next couple weeks.
 - 2. Economic Development Committee.** Selectman Bradley noted that since its former chair (Selectman Denny) has left the committee, a reorganizational meeting will need to be held soon.

3. **Highway Report.** Highway Superintendent Peter G. DeMasi submitted a written report for the Board packets even though he is not present tonight. There were some concerns expressed regarding the upcoming bids for a new truck, the closing of the Gross Gravel Pit, etc. Selectman Gadbois asked how often such reports were provided. Manager Lewis stated that the Highway Superintendent provides monthly reports while the other department heads provided them on at least a quarterly basis. Selectman Gadbois thought that monthly reports from all department heads might be a good idea. Chair Quinn suggested that the Board members should contact Manager Lewis if there is a concern regarding a specific department that would necessitate a written report.

X. MANAGER'S REPORT

- a. **Status Reports: Various Projects.** Since Manager Lewis submitted a written report, he asked if the Board would like any additional information on items discussed therein.
 1. **Cemetery Superintendent.** Selectman Goslant asked if any interest had been expressed for the upcoming vacancy. Manager Lewis stated that three (3) individuals have contacted him even though the RFP has not been completed. In addition, after meeting with local funeral director Michael Donahue, he is considering the possibility of splitting the current responsibilities between cemetery maintenance and sexton duties. The current Cemetery Superintendent, Dominic Falzarano, has stated that he is willing to work on a per diem basis beyond his April 15, 2013 retirement date until the vacancy is filled.
 2. **Fairground Bridge.** Manager Lewis stated that it now seems doubtful that FEMA would approve the current scope change that would relocate the bridge's east end to form an intersection with Lovers Lane. The consensus reached at recent meeting on this matter was that more work needed to be done on the scope change to show that it would result in sufficient bridge elevation to gain FEMA approval. Manager Lewis stated that it is unlikely that a replacement bridge will be installed this year. He added that building a new bridge at the old location would not solve the old problems that led to Tropical Storm Irene's destruction of the previous bridge. Chair Quinn is concerned about using the temporary bridge for another year. He doubts that FEMA will provide any money for a relocated bridge. Since options are limited, there may be no alternative to replacing the old bridge as it was. Selectman Goslant felt that bridge relocation was a good concept but not feasible. He felt that the Town should try to obtain the funds to replace the old bridge. Even though this new bridge would have the same weight limit as the temporary bridge (16,000 lbs.), Chair Quinn felt that the school bus company may feel more confident travelling over a newly built bridge. Manager Lewis said that he would obtain more information on what the State allows regarding building a new bridge at the old location. He will have a report available for the next meeting.
 3. **CVRPC Road Survey, etc.** Manager Lewis stated that he met with Dan Currier and Steve Gladczuk from CVRPC about creating an overlay of the Town Highway system that would indicate planned repairs. In addition, Highway Superintendent Peter G. DeMasi will be completing his road assessment in the next couple of weeks. Chair Quinn would like a report on this for the first meeting in May (05/13/13).
 4. **Combined Ambulance/Fire Facility.** Selectman Goslant would not like to see any further delay in what he sees as a common sense solution. Selectman Bradley stated that there are a number of questions remaining on how this co-location might be accomplished; i.e. expansion of the current Fire Station, creation of a stand-alone structure for the Ambulance Service, etc. NU engineering students will be submitting their suggestions soon. There also needs to be some discussion of how to pay for this.

XI. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: Non-agenda items. There was none.

XII. EXECUTIVE SESSION. Motion by Selectman Bradley, seconded by Selectman Goslant, to go into executive session, in accordance with 1 VSA 313 (a)(1), in order to discuss a personnel matter with Manager Lewis present. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**

The Board went into executive session at 9:46 p.m.

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

The Board came out of executive session at 11:13 p.m. No action was taken.

XIII. ADJOURNMENT. Motion by Selectman Bradley, seconded by Selectman Gadbois, to adjourn. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**

The Board adjourned at 11:14 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kenneth L. McCann

Kenneth L. McCann, Acting Clerk

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

An audio recording of this meeting is available in the Town Manager's Office.