

**VILLAGE OF NORTHFIELD
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
Minutes of July 9, 2013**

- I. ROLL CALL.** Chair Dennis Donahue, Village Trustees Kevin T. Beal, K. David Maxwell, and James R. Wilson. Also present were Acting Village Manager Stephen Fitzhugh, Acting Clerk Ken McCann, Peter G. DeMasi (Highway Superintendent), Eva Ciampaglia, Paul Ciampaglia, and Kathleen Lott (*Northfield News*).

Chair Donahue 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. PUBLIC COMMENT (Scheduled and Unscheduled).** None.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- a. **June 19, 2013 (Special Meeting).** Motion by Trustee Maxwell, seconded by Trustee Donahue, to approve the minutes. **Motion passed 3-0-2, with Trustees Beal and Wilson abstaining.** (*Note: Although Manager Fitzhugh is an elected Village Trustee, he will be acting only as Acting Manager during this meeting with the sole exception of voting to approve these minutes. Without his participation, no action could be taken on these minutes as there would not be a quorum of the Village Trustees who attended that meeting.*)
- b. **June 24, 2013 (Joint Board Meeting).** Motion by Trustee Beal, seconded by Trustee Wilson, to approve the minutes. At last night's Select Board meeting, Selectman Brad Denny requested that the minutes clarify that the \$110,258.45 collected during the recent tax sale was recovered delinquent taxes and not the total sale price of the twelve (12) structures that sold. The Village Trustees had no objection to this amendment to the minutes. **Motion to approve amended minutes passed 3-0-1, with Trustee Maxwell abstaining.**
- c. **June 28, 2013 (Special Meeting).** Motion by Trustee Beal, seconded by Trustee Wilson, to approve the minutes. **Motion passed 3-0-1, with Trustee Maxwell abstaining.**
- d. **July 2, 2013 (Special Meeting).** Motion by Trustee Maxwell, seconded by Trustee Beal, to approve the minutes. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**

V. APPROVAL OF BILLS

- a. **Warrant #02-14.** Motion by Trustee Wilson, seconded by Trustee Beal, to approve Warrant #02-14 in the amount of \$347,253.24. Trustee Maxwell asked about the rental of a "transmission jack." Highway Superintendent Peter G. DeMasi stated that this was special equipment that was required to fix the International truck. Trustee Maxwell asked about a payment to Green Mountain Power (GMP) to replace poles. Manager Fitzhugh stated that this was most likely a bill for the guy poles changed near Plumley Armory. He will look into this so that he can confirm this. Chair Donahue asked how much money has been spent this year maintaining the Village sweeper. Mr. DeMasi thought \$2500 is a good estimate. This is compared to \$8000 spent last year as well as the cost of a new sweeper, which would be upwards of \$200,000. The Highway Department is making every effort to keep this vehicle on the streets. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**

VI. OLD BUSINESS

- a. **Village Common Rehabilitation Project.** Manager Fitzhugh was in contact with Project Engineer Evan Detrick (DuBois & King) this morning. He also has informed Wendy Pelletier (Vermont Agency of Transportation) and Attorney Bill Smith that even though he now is the Acting Village Manager, Utility Superintendent Patrick DeMasi has been appointed the Project Manager. Regarding the concerns raised regarding traffic flow during the project's construction phase, the consensus among them is there should not be a major change in the Village Common's traffic pattern (e.g., two-way traffic on the south side) during this two (2) week period.

Mr. Detrick is now working on developing bid documents that would need to be approved by the state before he could start advertising in early September. Given this delay in the previous timetable, it now seems more likely that the construction phase will be split into two (2) parts with the new sidewalks installed this fall and road reconstruction waiting until next spring. Trustee Beal believes that the popular sentiment among the Depot Square merchants and property owners is to complete the entirety of this project before this coming winter. Trustee Maxwell asked if there has been any consideration of renovating the Village Fountain so that it can recirculate its water. Manager Fitzhugh said his preliminary investigation indicates that the expense of purchasing and installing a recirculating pump would be far more expensive than the cost of non-circulated water.

- b. Streetlight Replacement Project.** Manager Fitzhugh has worked up (and forwarded to Utility Office Manager Doug Reed) a spreadsheet that shows which streetlights have already been converted to LED, how the Northfield Electric Department (NED) tariff might be affected by a full conversion to energy-efficient lighting, etc. It remains to be determined which existing streetlights have some value and how NED would get a rebate from Efficiency Vermont for this conversion. In addition, the Village will need to work with the Public Service Board (PSB) to establish whether the Village needs PSB approval for the various financing options discussed at the last Joint Board Meeting (06/24/13).
- c. Town/Village Merger Transition.** Merger Transition Committee members Donahue and Beal met earlier today with Selectmen Brad Denny and John Quinn to develop a set of questions that need to be answered before the effective date of merger (07/01/14). This included the respective roles and responsibilities of the Municipal Manager and the Utility Commissioners. Trustee Beal added that the committee will be looking at how other merged communities handled these issues. Draft proposals will be presented to the full boards when they are ready. Manager Fitzhugh has been working on a template for the new electric commission based upon those developed in Stowe and Hardwick. He added that Northfield does have a number of unique factors, including the fact that the NED will not have management completely separate from the Select Board. Manager Fitzhugh stated that the weekly Wednesday afternoon meetings involving the Town Manager, Village Manager, and Finance Director on all issues related to merger will resume next week.
- d. School Street Extension Wall Repair.** Highway Superintendent Peter G. DeMasi has informed Manager Fitzhugh that since DuBois Construction will be consumed with major repair jobs related to the recent flooding, they have withdrawn their \$15,000 bid quote to fix the wall. The Village now will seek new bid proposals to do the work. The timeline is to have the bid awarded by the end of this month and the repair work completed by the end of August. Chair Donahue would like to reassure the public that the road will be fixed as soon as possible. Trustee Maxwell noted that a letter signed by the area's residents asked in part for a plan to be in place; he believes that the Village has done this. Paul Ciampaglia stated that the letter mainly was in response to a suggestion from a Select Board member at the last meeting that the road might no longer be maintained by the municipality (i.e., "thrown up"). This led to concerns over accessibility to the homes in the area. He is pleased to hear that the Village is going forward on at least a temporary solution. Mr. Ciampaglia added that most of the problems with the road happened after it was paved and heavy trucks were used to maintain it. Perhaps among the possible long-term solutions would be to remove the pavement. Trustee Beal is in favor of eventually throwing up the road and converting it into a long driveway. He believes that the road is too narrow for two-way traffic or any other improvements. The short-term solution is to restore the road to its condition before the wall collapsed this past spring. The Board then will consider several long-term possibilities. Trustee Beal was very grateful for the feedback that the Village Trustees have received from the residents.

- e. **Approval of Northfield Electric Department (NED) Abatements.** Chair Donahue stated that approval of these abatements was tabled at the last meeting due to questions regarding abatements related to damage caused by tree-trimmers and an accident caused by an uninsured motorist. Manager Fitzhugh has confirmed with Mr. Reed that these debts are uncollectable. Trustee Maxwell stated that Mr. Reed is a good judge of these matters. Motion by Trustee Beal, seconded by Trustee Maxwell, to approve the NED abatements totaling \$23,531.91 and to authorize Chair Donahue to sign the abatement forms. The Board members still had some concerns regarding the high expense (\$4,754.08) of the uninsured driver abatement. Manager Fitzhugh will contact the Vermont League of Cities and Towns (VLCT) to see if the Village has any additional options for reimbursement. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**

VII. NEW BUSINESS

- a. **Approval of 2013/2014 Village Tax Rates.** Manager Fitzhugh noted that because the new Accounting Department position will be half-time rather than full-time as initially envisioned, there will be savings in the Town General (\$11,380) and combined Highway (\$4,910) budgets that were approved on Town Meeting Day (03/05/13). This will result in a \$0.006 decrease in the Village tax rates that were originally proposed. Motion by Trustee Wilson, seconded by Trustee Beal, to approve the revised FY 2013/2014 Village tax rates of \$2.6357 (Homestead) and \$2.7544 (Non-Residential). **Motion passed 4-0-0.**
- b. **Approval of Highway Paving Bid Award.** Mr. DeMasi recommends that the Village award the highway paving bid to the low bidder, Pike Industries, at \$82.45 per ton. He added that the paving planned for the Village this coming year consists of Vine Street and the Village portion of Crescent Avenue. He had looked at repaving lower Washington Street this year but would prefer to postpone this because the Water Department is considering installing a new waterline there. Motion by Trustee Beal, seconded by Trustee Maxwell, to award the highway paving bid to Pike Industries. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**
- c. **Approval of Sand & Gravel Bid Award.** Mr. DeMasi recommends that the Village award the winter sand (delivered) bid to Gross Trucking & Excavating (\$11.00 per yard). RE Tucker, Inc. had submitted a \$10.00 per yard bid proposal for winter sand but this price did not include delivery (as the specifications required). The cost for the Village to pick up the winter sand itself would far exceed the \$1/per yard price difference. Motion by Trustee Beal, seconded by Trustee Wilson, to award the winter sand bid to Gross Trucking & Excavating. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**

Mr. DeMasi also recommends that the bid for crushed gravel (i.e., "plant mix") be awarded to Pike Industries (\$8.49 per yard loaded and \$18.77 per yard delivered). Motion by Trustee Maxwell, seconded by Trustee Beal, to award the crushed gravel bid (loaded and delivered) to Pike Industries. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**
- d. **Joint Board Meeting.** The Village Trustees and Town Selectmen will hold their next joint meeting on Tuesday, July 23, 2013, at 7:00 p.m. Manager Fitzhugh plans to have a revised version of the Municipal Purchasing Policy available for discussion.

VIII. MANAGER'S REPORT.

- a. **Additional Village Wall Problems.** Manager Fitzhugh noted that in addition to the collapsed wall on School Street Extension, there are compromised walls located on Pearl Street and Central Street.
- b. **Compact Tractor Purchase.** Utility Superintendent Patrick DeMasi has asked that since the purchase of the compact tractor was about \$7000 under budget, would the Board authorize him to go out to bid for a trailer that would be paid for with the leftover funds? The trailer would be used to transport the tractor to where it would be needed. Manager Fitzhugh asked if the Board would authorize the development of RFPs for this proposed purchase.

Trustee Maxwell asked if there was a real need to purchase this trailer. Manager Fitzhugh was not sure. The emphasis was that the money is available and having the trailer on hand would be beneficial. Trustee Beal stated that even though he is reluctant to spend "saved money," this would seem to be a prudent purchase. Trustee Maxwell saw no harm in soliciting bid proposals.

- c. **Possible Funding for King Street Water Project.** Utility Superintendent Patrick DeMasi has informed Manager Fitzhugh that grant money might be available to devise plans to address serious water distribution concerns on King Street. A form needs to be filled out in order to stay on the state's list for possible consideration.
- d. **Possible Retainer for Former Village Manager.** Manager Fitzhugh was contacted by former Village Manager Jay Marcotte who asked if the Village would like him kept on retainer during the managerial transition period. Trustee Beal asked if there was any need for this. Manager Fitzhugh thought that it might be helpful with the Village Common Project on an as-needed basis. Trustee Beal would have no objections to authorizing this through the end of the calendar year once Mr. Marcotte's hourly rate has been determined. Trustee Maxwell also would like to see a proposal before any action is taken.
- e. **Vermont Public Power Supply Authority (VPPSA) Representative and Alternate.** Manager Fitzhugh stated that Mr. Marcotte was serving as VPPSA Representative this past year while he (Manager Fitzhugh) was serving as the alternate. Manager Fitzhugh should be appointed as the representative and a Village Trustee appointed as alternate as soon as possible. Trustee Beal suggested that this action be warned on the next meeting agenda. Manager Fitzhugh will be attending a VPPSA meeting this coming Thursday (07/11/13); he still will be able to vote as the alternate representative.

IX. BOARD MEMBERS' COMMENTS, CONCERNS, QUESTIONS

- a. **Northfield Flood Damage.** Chair Donahue asked Mr. DeMasi if Northfield had suffered any flood damage as a result of the recent rainstorms. Mr. DeMasi stated that there had been some damage to Dog River Road near the Wastewater Treatment Facility. He added that some Northfield backroads suffered more damage during the recent storms than they did during Tropical Storm Irene. The Highway crew was out today working on Berlin Pond Road. The road has been reopened but needs some additional work. This is a regional problem as Roxbury and Williamstown suffered a lot of damage and Washington County has been declared a federal disaster area. Mr. DeMasi added that the Highway crew has done an excellent job even though its numbers were reduced due to an employee out on disability, others taking vacation time, etc.

X. PUBLIC COMMENT (Unscheduled). There was nothing additional.

XI. ADJOURNMENT. Motion by Trustee Beal, seconded by Trustee Maxwell, to adjourn.
Motion passed 4-0-0.

The Board adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kenneth L. McCann

Kenneth L. McCann, Acting Clerk

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