

**VILLAGE OF NORTHFIELD
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
Minutes of September 10, 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, Randy Peace (Northfield Barber Shop), 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)

- a. Randy Peace, Northfield Barber Shop: Depot Square Parking.** Mr. Peace has concerns about the amount of parking on the Village Common available to customers during business hours. He would like the two (2) hour daytime parking limit expanded beyond the storefront spaces on the Common's north and west sides. Mr. Peace also is concerned that the situation will worsen now that O'Maddi's Deli & Café has relocated to the north side of the Village Common. He did praise the Northfield Police Department for enforcing the current time-limited parking spots as well as those business owners, employees, apartment renters, etc. who have been parking on the Depot Square's southeast corner and/or the parking spaces on Holland Place. Mr. Peace and the other Depot Square business owners would like to work with the Village Trustees to resolve this problem. Chair Donahue stated that he will inform Select Board Chair John Quinn III of this concern and this matter will be on the agenda of the next Joint Board Meeting (see below). Mr. Peace noted that there still are two (2) vacant stores on the Common's north side so parking problems might increase when they become occupied. He doesn't want Northfield to develop downtown parking problems similar to Montpelier.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- a. August 13, 2013 (Regular Meeting).** Motion by Trustee Wilson, seconded by Trustee Beal, to approve the minutes. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**

V. APPROVAL OF BILLS

- a. Validation of Warrant #05-14.** Motion by Trustee Beal, seconded by Trustee Wilson, to validate the approval by signature of Warrant #05-14 in the amount of \$22,112.18. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**
- b. Warrant #06-14.** Motion by Trustee Beal, seconded by Trustee Maxwell, to approve Warrant #06-14 in the amount of \$406,233.26. Trustee Maxwell asked about the waterline work being done on Washington Avenue. Manager Fitzhugh stated that this was a scheduled project and there are Water Department CIP funds to cover the expense. As of today, the work is half completed. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**

VI. OLD BUSINESS

- a. Village Common Rehabilitation Project.** Manager Fitzhugh stated that the bid documents were approved by the Vermont Agency of Transportation (AOT) and were advertised widely. Bids for the construction are due next Tuesday (09/17/13) and the work inspection bids are due the following Friday (09/20/13). The bids submitted by the deadline will be reviewed by the Project Engineer (Evan Detrick, DuBois & King) and AOT. Whether construction begins this fall or next spring depends on when the chosen contractor would like to begin work. Manager Fitzhugh will prepare an article for public circulation that will explain the process once the decision has been made. Manager Fitzhugh added that TDS Telecom has provided a \$52,000 quote to bury the utility lines on the west side of the Village Common. The bulk of this cost is the cable itself. This work will be done only if there are sufficient leftover funds in the project budget once the construction bid has been awarded.

- b. Streetlight Replacement Project.** Manager Fitzhugh spoke again with Josh Kelman, who is an Energy Consultant for Vermont Energy Investment Corporation (VEIC). Mr. Kelman stated that Efficiency Vermont would reimburse Northfield Village up to one hundred dollars (\$100) per old lighting fixture to cover “stranded investments.” Utility Officer Manager Doug Reed is still confirming the total projects costs before we can seek financing.
- c. Town/Village Merger Transition.** Chair Donahue noted that the next committee meeting is tomorrow afternoon. Manager Fitzhugh added that he contacted Berlin Select Board members regarding their relationship with the Berlin Water Commission. Trustee Beal noted that although it is good to have such examples to work from, there are situations unique to Northfield that may require us to create our own precedents.
- d. School Street Extension Wall Repair.** Manager Fitzhugh stated that the Northfield Bible Fellowship and neighborhood residents sent a “thank you” card to the Village Trustees for the completion of the wall repair. The payment for the construction is on the current warrant. Trustee Maxwell noted that the card included a suggestion that a weight limit should be instituted for the road. Manager Fitzhugh has not yet discussed this with Highway Superintendent Peter G. DeMasi. The heaviest vehicles on the road probably are our own plow trucks. Trustee Maxwell felt that the Board should look into replenishing the Village Highway’s wall repair CIP account as there are a number of failing walls in the Village. Manager Fitzhugh noted that when Lamoille Construction was here to repair the School Street Extension Wall, they looked at the wall at the north end of Central Street by the railroad tracks. Their estimate was about \$25,000, which did not include labor costs, flagging, etc. Manager Fitzhugh will contact Evan Detrick to see if this repair would have to be “engineered.” Trustee Beal added that the ownership of this wall also would have to be determined. He thought it probably railroad property. Trustee Maxwell asked if there were any other such walls in imminent danger. Manager Fitzhugh did not believe so. However, the wall on Elm Street is being looked at now and the one on Pearl Street also will have to be addressed soon.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

- a. Bid Award for Trailer to convey the Water/Sewer Department Compact Tractor.** Manager Fitzhugh noted that since there were leftover CIP funds when the new compact tractor was purchased, Utility Superintendent Patrick DeMasi asked for and received Board authorization to seek bid proposals for a trailer to transport it around Northfield. Mr. DeMasi received three (3) proposals, the lowest of which was from Perfection Trailer for \$4810. Manager Fitzhugh added that the trailer also would be used to transport material around the Village. Motion by Trustee Beal, seconded by Trustee Wilson, to authorize the purchase. Trustee Beal felt that this would result in cost savings in manpower and material. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**
- b. Proposed Discontinuance of “Village Highway” off Central Street.** Chair Donahue said that this “road” goes between two (2) residences on upper Central Street and leads to the Methodist Church parking lot on South Main Street. One of the residents has maintained and has been using this path as a driveway for forty (40) years. He would like the road “thrown up” and title be given back to the property owner. Manager Fitzhugh has looked into this matter and there is an AOT procedure for discontinuing a roadway. It starts with notification to the abutting property owners, public hearings, etc. He has learned that the property belongs to the Methodist Church and if the Village Highway’s right-of-way is discontinued, the land would revert back to the Church. Chair Donahue noted that the adjacent property owner would like to retain the land as a driveway. Trustee Maxwell suggested that a good first step would be for Manager Fitzhugh to contact the Methodist Church. We also need to determine what is the Village’s role in this process. Trustee Beal does not want the Village to get too involved in what may develop into a civil dispute between adjacent property owners. Trustee Wilson suggested that any further discussion should be postponed until Manager Fitzhugh has reached out to the property owners.

- c. **Joint Merger Transition Committee.** The committee's next meeting will be held on Wednesday, September 11, 2013 at 4:00 p.m. The main topic will be the role of the new utility commissions in the merged community.
- d. **Joint Board Meeting.** The Town Selectmen and Village Trustees will next meet jointly on Tuesday, September 24, 2013 at 7:00 p.m.

VIII. MANAGER'S REPORT. Manager Fitzhugh sent his report by email to the Board members. He now has a few additional comments.

- a. **FEMA Flood-Damage Funding.** Manager Fitzhugh is investigating whether FEMA funds are available to restore the road to the Wastewater Treatment Facility (WWTF) that was damaged by the early July 2013 flooding.
- b. **Snow Removal.** Since the Village Highway will be unable this winter to dump snow into the river or on the vacant space by the aforementioned Central Street wall, there may develop a need to truck it out of town, which would be an additional cost. There are some alternative sites in the Village, such as behind the Fire Station, that could be used if the snowfall is not too excessive.
- c. **Village Highway Paving.** Manager Fitzhugh stated after Vine Street is ground and paved, there will be sufficient funds leftover to pave the Village's portion of Crescent Avenue. Trustee Maxwell asked that given the drainage problems in the area, the Village might be paving over a problem. Manager Fitzhugh will check with Highway Superintendent DeMasi on this. In the interim, it was the consensus of the Board to authorize the Crescent Avenue paving, provided that the drainage issues do not become a major concern.
- d. **Labor Day Weekend Festivities.** Manager Fitzhugh noted that this year the Village Common was closed to through traffic at 4:00 p.m. on Friday afternoon so that it could be set up for the weekend. As this created a hardship for the businesses still open at that time, it might be a good idea to authorize a later Depot Square road closing time next year.

IX. BOARD MEMBERS' COMMENTS, CONCERNS, QUESTIONS

- a. **Byam Road No Parking Ordinance.** Trustee Beal felt that the first public hearing for this matter should be held just prior to the first meeting in October (10/15/13).

X. PUBLIC COMMENT (Unscheduled). There was none.

XI. EXECUTIVE SESSION. Motion by Trustee Wilson, seconded by Trustee Beal, to go into executive session, in accordance with 1 VSA 313 (a)(1), in order to discuss a legal matter with Manager Fitzhugh present. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**

The Board went into executive session at 7:58 p.m.

Motion by Trustee Wilson, seconded by Trustee Beal, to come out of executive session. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**

The Board came out of executive session at 8:30 p.m. No action was taken.

XII. ADJOURNMENT. Motion by Trustee Beal, seconded by Trustee Wilson, to adjourn. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**

The Board adjourned at 8:31 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kenneth L. McCann

Kenneth L. McCann, Acting Clerk

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