

**VILLAGE OF NORTHFIELD  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
Minutes of November 26, 2013**

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

Chair Donahue called the meeting to order at 7:05 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).** There was none.

**IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

- a. October 15, 2013 (Regular Meeting).** Approval of these minutes was tabled as there was not a quorum of Village Trustees here tonight who were present at this meeting.
- b. October 28, 2013 (Joint Board Meeting).** Motion by Trustee Maxwell, seconded by Trustee Wilson, to approve the minutes. **Motion passed 3-0-0.**
- c. November 20, 2013 (Special Meeting).** Approval of these minutes was tabled as there was not a quorum of Village Trustees tonight who were present at this meeting.

**V. APPROVAL OF BILLS**

- a. Validation of Warrant #10-14.** Motion by Trustee Maxwell, seconded by Trustee Wilson, to validate the approval by signature of Warrant #10-14 in the amount of \$313,642.68. **Motion passed 3-0-0.**
- b. Warrant #11-14.** Motion by Trustee Maxwell, seconded by Trustee Wilson, to approve Warrant #11-14 in the amount of \$181,608.93. Chair Donahue noted that the bulk of this payment (\$149,900) was to pay off a loan for the Village Common Rehabilitation Project. **Motion passed 3-0-0.**

**VI. OLD BUSINESS**

- a. Proposed Sale of Former Police Station (52 East Street).** Chair Donahue stated that he was not present at the special meeting last week (11/20/13) when this matter again was discussed. Trustee Maxwell said that Manager Fitzhugh had asked the Board members present how they would prefer to handle the property sale process. Now that numerous potential buyers have come forward, the Board needs to decide whether the property should be sold through an auction, through advertisement for sealed bids, by employing a real estate agent, etc. Trustee Wilson felt that the Board should take its time to determine the best option. Manager Fitzhugh warned that the first interested party stated that he would like to close on the property by mid-January 2014 so we may lose him (and perhaps others) as a bidder if the Board does not act soon. Trustee Wilson noted that it was indicated at that meeting that using sealed bids would provide the Village with the most control over the process. Trustee Maxwell would like any bid specifications to clarify that the Village would reserve the right to reject any and all bids. Chair Donahue added that the specifications also should include provisions regarding possible testing for toxic waste on the property, potential relocation of utility poles, etc. Trustee Wilson also would like a minimum bid amount specified. Manager Fitzhugh said that if it is the Board's consensus that the property should be sold through sealed bids, he will begin preparing the bid specifications as soon as possible. He added that many area residents assumed that the Northfield Savings Bank would be buying the property eventually but this is no longer the case. Manager Fitzhugh would like the property sold and put back on the tax roll. He also would like to see a new business (or the expansion of an existing business) in the downtown area.

- b. Village Common Rehabilitation Project.** Manager Fitzhugh stated that Project Manager Patrick DeMasi has spoken to the contracted construction inspector (Dufresne Group), who in turn has already contacted Don Weston Excavating, which will be performing the work. The project now is in suspension until the first pre-construction meeting is held next spring. Trustee Maxwell asked what was the earliest date when construction could begin. Manager Fitzhugh thought that April 15, 2014 probably was the target date for breaking ground; some preparation work in the area could be done beforehand.
- c. LED Streetlight Replacement Project.** Manager Fitzhugh reported that he still is working out the best way to handle the project's "stranded investments," i.e., existing lighting fixtures. This now is the last piece in the puzzle. Trustee Maxwell asked how the project would be financed. Manager Fitzhugh felt that there were sufficient CIP funds in the current year's budget. In addition, there will be rebates coming from Efficiency Vermont when the project is completed.
- d. Town/Village Merger Transition.** Chair Donahue noted that the subcommittee will be meeting again next Wednesday (12/04/13) at 4:00 p.m. in the Municipal Building. There will be a discussion with Town Clerk Kim Pedley on how to develop the voter checklists for the election of the new utility commissioners. There still are a number of grey areas that need to be worked out. Manager Fitzhugh stated that he has contacted utility attorney Eli Emerson (Primmer Piper Eggleston & Cramer PC) about some remaining Northfield Electric Department (NED) issues such as how the merged municipality will operate the department. Also, when NED obtains the lien authority that the Water and Sewer departments already have, there will be a need to inform customers that personal information now considered confidential might have to be released during the lien process. Trustee Wilson suggested that the electric commissioners might be able to hold executive sessions when these matters are under discussion. Manager Fitzhugh will discuss this possibility with Mr. Emerson. He then added that Town Manager Rob Lewis has been very helpful in including him in the discussions held as the proposed combined budget is being drafted. Finally, at last night's Select Board meeting, the Town Selectmen stated their preference to review the proposed budget line-by-line. The Village Trustees will be invited to attend the upcoming budget meetings; it was noted, however, that there would be a quorum of the two boards (Town Selectmen and Village Trustees) present even if some or all of the Village Trustees decide not to attend the meetings. No meeting schedule has been set though Manager Lewis has said that twice-weekly meetings should commence in early December.

## **VII. NEW BUSINESS**

- a. Approval of VPPSA Power Sales Agreement (Massachusetts Solar Project).** Prior to tonight's regular meeting, the Village Trustees held a Special Village Meeting in order to obtain voter authorization for this power sales agreement. There were no objections from the voters in attendance. Motion by Trustee Wilson, seconded by Trustee Maxwell, to approve the VPPSA Power Sales Agreement and authorize Manager Fitzhugh to take any appropriate action to formalize the agreement. **Motion passed 3-0-0.**
- b. Northfield Electric Department (NED) Terms and Conditions.** Motion by Trustee Wilson, seconded by Trustee Maxwell, to approve the revised terms and conditions (TARIFF No. TC-1) as recommended by management. Manager Fitzhugh stated that the document was reviewed by himself, Utility Superintendent Patrick DeMasi, Utility Office Manager Doug Reed, and Dave Mullett (VPPSA). The main emphasis was on revising the NED Terms and Conditions to simplify and clarify them for the benefit of NED customers. One significant change is to reduce the cost to customers should Green Mountain Power (GMP) make repeated trips to Northfield to perform a service disconnect, reconnection, etc. NED now will charge a flat rate for this service rather than invoice the customer based on GMP's own cost schedules. Other changes include eliminating the customer charge for cancelling an account; charging a flat \$190 fee to establish a temporary service; clarifying that when a power problem is on the customer side of the meter, the customer is responsible for repair costs; and eliminating several GMP references; etc. Trustee Wilson agreed that the revised document is much more streamlined. **Motion passed 3-0-0.**

- c. **Northfield Snowmobilers Request for Wellfield Trail.** Chair Donahue noted that Northfield Snowmobilers Inc. (NSI) have sent their annual request to have a trail go through the wellfield. In his memo, Utility Superintendent DeMasi has recommended approval of this request provided that NSI adhere to the conditions he has specified. Motion by Trustee Maxwell, seconded by Trustee Wilson, to approve the request with these usual stipulations. **Motion passed 3-0-0.**
- d. **Drinking Water Revolving Loan Fund.** Manager Fitzhugh informed the Board that the Village is on a short list for a low interest loan from the State of Vermont. The loan amount would be \$2,240,000 and would be used to install new water mains on Central Street, Washington Street, Jarvis Lane, and King Street. The deadline for the Village to express interest and submit a "Construction Project Timeline" is Monday, December 2, 2013. Manager Fitzhugh has spoken to engineer Brandon Streicher (Phelps Engineering) and he should be able to create a boilerplate document in time. He added that a Special Village Meeting (Australian ballot) would have to be held so that Village voters could authorize this loan. Trustee Maxwell was under the impression that when the water lines on Central Street were to be replaced, it was to be part of a larger project that also would address the sidewalks. He would not like to tear up the street more than once. Trustee Maxwell asked what would happen if the Village decided to pass at this time. Manager Fitzhugh stated that the priority list is reexamined each year. Trustee Maxwell stated that with Town/Village merger approaching, he did not feel that it was appropriate for the Village to make this large of a financial commitment on its own. Trustee Wilson agreed with this. Manager Fitzhugh also thinks that the timing is bad. He will contact the State and tell them "thanks, but no thanks."
- e. **Winter Road Maintenance Policy.** Chair Donahue stated that the Town Selectmen approved this document at the last Joint Board Meeting (11/12/13) but there was not a quorum of Village Trustees present to take action. Motion by Trustee Maxwell, seconded by Trustee Wilson, to approve and sign the new policy. **Motion passed 3-0-0.**
- f. **Joint Board Meeting: Monday, December 9, 2013.** The next Joint Board Meeting will begin that night at 6:00 p.m. in the Community Room.

#### VIII. MANAGER'S REPORT

- a. **Building Insulation Bids, etc.** Manager Fitzhugh reported that Utility Superintendent DeMasi had solicited and received bids to install insulation on one of the storage bays by the Wastewater Treatment Facility (WWTF) that faces the railroad tracks. This bay is kept heated and the old insulation had deteriorated. CIP funds were set aside for this purpose and the low bid received will result in the project being done under budget. In addition, Utility Superintendent DeMasi sought bids for the purchase of additional pipe lining materials that will be used to prevent outside elements from entering our sewer lines.

**IX. BOARD MEMBERS' COMMENTS, CONCERNS, QUESTIONS.** There was nothing additional from the Board members.

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

**XI. ADJOURNMENT.** Motion by Trustee Wilson, seconded by Trustee Maxwell, to adjourn. **Motion passed 3-0-0.**

The Board adjourned at 8:02 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

*Kenneth L. McCann*

Kenneth L. McCann, Acting Clerk

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