

**TOWN OF NORTHFIELD
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
Minutes of November 25, 2014**

- I. **ROLL CALL.** Select Board Chair John Quinn III, Selectmen Kevin T. Beal, Brad Denny, Dennis Donahue, Lynn Doney, Matthew Gadbois (absent), Kenneth W. Goslant, K. David Maxwell, and James R. Wilson. Also present were Town Manager Jeffrey Schulz, Acting Clerk Kenneth McCann, Sally Davidson, Joshua Jennings, 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.** Since the resident (Joshua Jennings) who made the request regarding Robinson Road is present tonight, Manager Schulz asked that this item be moved forward under "Public Participation."

IV. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (SCHEDULED):**

- a. **Sally Davidson: Absentee Ballots.** Ms. Davidson believes that Northfield residents who vote using absentee/early ballots should have the same level of privacy as those who vote at the polling station on Election Day. Currently, the ballot is placed in an envelope that has the voter's name and signature on it. She would like the ballot put into a separate blank envelope that would then be put into the outer signed envelope. This way, when the absentee/early ballots are counted on Election Day, the poll workers will not be able to see how someone voted provided that the inner blank envelopes are separated from the signed envelopes before they are opened. Ms. Davidson has spoken to the Town Clerk's Office about this before and was told the extra cost of additional envelopes was the main reason this could not be done. Manager Schulz stated he would discuss this possibility with Town Clerk Kim Pedley. Selectman Beal wondered if this question might better be directed to the Vermont Secretary of State's Office since this would impact local, state, and federal elections. Ms. Davidson said she had testified on this matter in Montpelier and was told that whether or not to make this change would be the decision of local election officials. Selectman Wilson asked how many absentee/early ballots were cast in the most recent election (11/04/14). No one knew the exact number but it was estimated at about two hundred (200). Provided that making this change was not cost prohibitive, Selectman Wilson also would like the extra layer of voting privacy. Manager Schulz will make inquiries and afterwards contact Ms. Davidson.

- b. **Joshua Jennings: Robinson Road.** Mr. Jennings and his neighbors on Robinson Road contacted the Select Board a couple months ago with their request to block the road's eastern outlet. Robinson Road currently is a loop road off of Vermont Route 64 about a quarter mile from Interstate 89 Exit 5. The section of the road closest to the freeway is often the locale for such questionable behavior as excessive speed, trash dumping, public urination, etc. Manager Schulz has spoken to Road Foreman Ray Hudson on this matter and their recommendation is to install a guardrail at the eastern outlet as close to Vermont Route 64 as the State will allow. It has been suggested that the whole road could be privatized since there are only two (2) houses located on it. However, there is a cemetery there that requires public access so the entire road cannot be "thrown up." The consensus of the Select Board was to install the guardrail barrier (or perhaps two of them and some road material) and privatize the section of the road from its eastern outlet to the cemetery. Taking this action will require that a public hearing be held and that adjoining property owners be notified. Motion by Selectman Donahue, seconded by Selectman Maxwell, to privatize Robinson Road from its eastern intersection with Vermont Route 64 to the cemetery entrance. Selectman Maxwell asked if the privatized section of road would revert to the adjoining property owner (Mr. Jennings). Manager Schulz confirmed that this was the case. Selectman Denny suggested that there should be some negotiation with the affected Robinson Road property owners to see if they would share some of the expense of this action. **Motion passed 8-0-0.**

V. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

- a. **November 10, 2014 (Regular Meeting).** Motion by Selectman Goslant, seconded by Selectman Denny, to approve the minutes. **Motion passed 7-0-1, with Selectman Donahue abstaining.**

VI. APPROVAL OF BILLS

- a. **Warrant #11-15.** Motion by Selectman Denny, seconded by Selectman Donahue, to approve Warrant #11-15 in the amount of \$524,757.42. **Motion passed 8-0-0.**
- b. **Bi-Weekly Payroll through November 9, 2014.** Motion by Selectman Denny, seconded by Selectman Donahue, to approve the Bi-Weekly Payroll in the amount of \$81,632.21. **Motion passed 8-0-0.**

VII. SELECT BOARD

- a. **Bond Anticipation Note (Depot Square Roadway).** Motion by Selectman Maxwell, seconded by Selectman Donahue, to approve and sign the Bond Anticipation Note for the Depot Square Roadway project in the amount of \$330,000 at 1.19% interest; to approve and sign the Bond Anticipation Borrowing Resolution; and to approve and sign the No-Arbitrage and Use of Proceeds Certificate. Selectman Goslant asked for how long the Town will be paying this off. Manager Schulz believes this is a ten (10) year note. **Motion passed 8-0-0.**
- b. **Hazardous Waste Contamination and Cleanup Liability Exemption Form.** Manager Schulz stated that the Town is in the process of foreclosing and putting out to bid the property on 11 Wall Street. As part of this, the attorneys have asked the Select Board to approve this waiver form in order to limit the Town's liability should any hazardous waste contamination eventually be found on site. Motion by Selectman Donahue, seconded by Selectman Wilson, to approve and authorize Manager Schulz to sign the waiver form. Selectman Denny asked if this limited liability would pass on to any buyer for the property. Manager Schulz understands that this waiver would only cover the Town. Selectman Goslant felt that this might discourage buyers and/or lower the sale price. Manager Schulz stated that the Phase I Environmental Site Assessment for this property is a public document so any potential buyer should be aware of the possibility of site contamination. Selectman Goslant asked if the current property owner has access to the site. Manager Schulz believes that there is a court order in place to prevent this. **Motion passed 8-0-0.**
- c. **Appointment of Authorized Representative (Water Projects).** Manager Schulz stated that the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources would like formal confirmation from the Select Board that he is the authorized representative for the upcoming water main replacement projects on Central Street, Washington Street, and King Street. Motion by Selectman Denny, seconded by Selectman Maxwell, to appoint Manager Schulz as the authorized representative for these projects and to sign the confirmation form. **Motion passed 8-0-0.**
- d. **Town Buildings & Energy Committee Report.** Selectman Denny serves on the Committee and will provide a brief overview tonight. (His written report will be in the next Select Board packets.) Selectman Denny stated that the Brown Public Library (BPL) building roof has a number of issues. An engineer inspected it and reported that there are structural problems but no threat of immediate collapse. However, the roof should be repaired as soon as possible to prevent this possibility. In addition, it was discovered that the main problem with the BPL heating system was that a switch on the control panel was stuck in place. This has been resolved so future heating bills should be reduced. The Town Highway Department crew did some repair work on the BPL front steps and in the process found some voids below the granite steps. This was filled in using some road material but this probably is only a temporary solution. The crew also provided a temporary fix to the roof over the basement entrance.

The Committee has reviewed the Paine House where the Northfield Historical Society (NHS) is situated and did not find any serious problems. However, it might be a good idea to install additional insulation. The Committee believes that the cost of improvements to the entire building could be addressed in a single grant application to the Vermont Division for Historic Preservation (Department of Housing & Community Development).

In addition, the Municipal Building's leaky sidewall has been repaired. This was completed at a reduced cost because the Highway crew again provided some manpower. The fire alarm system at the Town Garage has been upgraded to meet state specifications. Selectman Denny said that he and the other Committee members would like to thank Mr. Hudson and his crew for their assistance on these various projects.

Chair Quinn asked if the structural repairs to the BPL roof would still be needed if the slate roof was replaced with a metal standing seam roof. Selectman Denny believed that would be the case since there are problems with weakened beams. He also would favor installing a standing seam roof but would need to check first to see if this would hurt any chance for a historic preservation grant.

Selectman Goslant asked if the labor provided by members of the Town Highway Department was charged to the appropriate department. Manager Schulz stated that it was not; this was just absorbed into the existing Town Highway budget. These are municipal facilities and one of the Highway Department's functions is to assist with their maintenance. Chair Quinn added that this had been done this way in the past and in any case Northfield voters no longer approve a separate Town Highway budget. Selectman Wilson felt that future tracking of such expenses could be discussed during the upcoming budget process. Selectman Denny stated that the Committee's major concern was getting this work completed as quickly as possible to resolve any public safety issues.

VIII. BOARD MEMBERS' COMMENTS, CONCERNS, QUESTIONS

- a. **Combined EMS Facility.** Selectman Doney asked if there was any update on the proposal to have the Northfield Fire Department (NFD) and Northfield Ambulance Service (NAS) share a facility on Wall Street. Manager Schulz stated that the cost estimates provided by the project architect were rather high. He would like the Public Safety Committee to meet and perhaps reevaluate the situation in order to determine a more cost-effective solution. Selectman Goslant serves on this committee and believes that funding issues should be discussed during the budget meetings. He had been under the impression that grant monies would be available for this type of project but this did not prove to be the case.
- b. **Fairground Road Bridge Replacement Project.** Selectman Goslant said residents of the nearby Tucker Trailer park are concerned that the school bus will not cross the temporary bridge now in place and that their children will be forced to traverse a construction zone. He felt that the temporary bridge is wide enough to accommodate a school bus. Chair Quinn said that this was an old issue as the bus company contracted by the Northfield School District had similar concerns about the old bridge even though it met all state specifications for a vehicle of that weight and size. Selectman Goslant is concerned that regardless of who is responsible for this situation, it looks like a disaster waiting to happen. Selectman Beal suggested that Manager Schulz could discuss this matter with the Northfield School Superintendent to see if some accommodation could be made. Manager Schulz will look into this. Kathleen Lott asked if the temporary bridge was rated to accommodate a school bus. Manager Schulz said that it was and this fact has been directly communicated to the bus company.
- c. **FY 2015/2016 Town Budget Process.** Chair Quinn noted that the Town will hold budget meetings on Tuesday and Thursday nights for the next three (3) weeks starting on Tuesday, December 2, 2014. The meetings will be held in the Community Room starting at 6:00 p.m. and Trans-Video will be televising them. If needed, budget meetings will resume after the holidays.
- d. **NAVI Annual Tree and Wreath Sale.** Northfield Ambulance Volunteers, Inc. will be selling holiday trees and wreaths in various sizes and prices at the Ambulance Bay starting on Saturday, November 29, 2014 and finishing on Christmas Eve. Free delivery is available.

IX. TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT. Manager Schulz had nothing to add to the written report emailed to the Select Board members.

X. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (UNSCHEDULED)

- a. **Kathleen Lott, Tax Stabilization Agreement.** Ms. Lott asked if the Northfield voters had provided authorization for the tax stabilization agreement approved by the Select Board. Chair Quinn stated that such agreements that involve commercial and/or industrial properties require a two-thirds public vote and the special article only received sixty-two percent (62%) support. He suggested that this article could be put on next year's Town Meeting Warning and perhaps the Select Board could do a better job of explaining why the Economic Development Committee felt this was an important resource to encourage local economic development.

XI. ADJOURNMENT. Motion by Selectman Beal, seconded by Selectman Donahue, to adjourn. **Motion passed 8-0-0.**

The meeting adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kenneth L. McCann

Kenneth L. McCann, Acting Clerk

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

These minutes were approved at the Select Board meeting of December 9, 2014.