

**TOWN OF NORTHFIELD
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
Minutes of November 24, 2015**

- I. **ROLL CALL.** Chair John Quinn III (absent), Vice-Chair K. David Maxwell, Selectmen Lynn Doney (absent), Matthew Gadbois, and Kenneth W. Goslant. Also present were Town Manager Jeffrey Schulz, Acting Clerk Kenneth McCann, and Kathleen Lott (*Northfield News*).

Acting Chair Maxwell 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. **SET/ADJUST AGENDA.** There were no changes to the posted agenda.

- IV. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (SCHEDULED):** None.

V. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

- a. **November 3, 2015 (Special Meeting).** Motion by Selectman Gadbois, seconded by Selectman Goslant, to approve the minutes. **Motion passed 3-0-0.**
- b. **November 10, 2015 (Site Visit).** Motion by Selectman Gadbois, seconded by Selectman Goslant, to approve the minutes. **Motion passed 3-0-0.**
- c. **November 10, 2015 (Regular Meeting).** Motion by Selectman Gadbois, seconded by Selectman Goslant, to approve the minutes. **Motion passed 3-0-0.**
- d. **November 13, 2015 (Special Meeting).** Motion by Selectman Gadbois, seconded by Selectman Goslant, to approve the minutes. **Motion passed 3-0-0.**

VI. **APPROVAL OF BILLS**

- a. **Warrant #11-16.** Motion by Selectman Gadbois, seconded by Selectman Goslant, to approve Warrant #11-16 in the amount of \$91,801.91. Selectman Gadbois asked about a \$593.60 payment for Northfield Police Department (NPD) "travel expenses." Manager Schulz stated that the State of Vermont awarded funds so that the NPD Chief and an officer could attend a police conference in Chicago. The State will reimburse one hundred percent (100%) of all costs. Manager Schulz was asked to provide a copy of the letter that confirms this. He will send a copy to the Select Board members. Selectman Goslant asked if two (2) NPD officers actually attended the conference. Manager Schulz stated that Police Chief James Dziobek had planned to attend but later decided against it so only one NPD officer attended. He was gone from Northfield for five (5) days, took three (3) vacation days, and claimed two (2) workdays. Selectman Gadbois then asked about an \$8500 payment to the Brown Public Library for "human services." Manager Schulz said that this was the monthly payment to the library to cover employee expenses. Acting Chair Maxwell noted some payments for Central Street mains; was this part of the recent water project? Manager Schulz confirmed that it was and these should be the final payments. He added that when all the bills are paid, the project should come in significantly under budget. Selectman Goslant asked if the King Street water project also came in under budget. Manager Schulz said that it did. **Motion passed 3-0-0.**
- b. **Approval of Bi-Weekly Payroll through November 8, 2015.** Motion by Selectman Gadbois, seconded by Selectman Goslant, to approve the bi-weekly payroll in the amount of \$80,916.45. Selectman Gadbois noted that NPD overtime expenses had dropped considerably since the previous pay period (from about \$1200 to \$350). He asked how this will affect the NPD current year budget. Manager Schulz stated that although we are less than five (5) months into the current fiscal year, the NPD budgets for part-time and overtime expenses both are over-budget. Manager Schulz has spoken to Chief Dziobek regarding an explanation for this as well as his plan to deal with this during the rest of the fiscal year. **Motion passed 3-0-0.**

VII. SELECT BOARD

- a. **Elm Street Wall Replacement Bids.** Manager Schulz noted that RFPs for engineering this project were solicited some time ago. The bid proposals received ranged from \$8500 to \$22,300. Even though Manager Schulz subsequently learned that the available state grant funds were less than had been believed, he still is leaning towards a more comprehensive (and more expensive) look at this problem. Manager Schulz's next step will be to contact the state to see if additional grant money is available and/or if the expiration date could be extended for the grant funds already on hand. Selectman Gadbois noted that a study on the deteriorating wall was done several years ago; couldn't some or all of this old study be reused? Manager Schulz stated that the engineering firm that conducted this study has disbanded and much of the information in the study is either outdated or incomplete. Acting Chair Maxwell asked if the Select Board would get this new information before any additional action is taken. Manager Schulz confirmed that it would.
- b. **Municipal Phone System.** Manager Schulz stated that at an earlier meeting (10/27/15) he brought forward the proposal from TDS Telecom to install a new phone system for the municipality. Two (2) other proposals had been received but were considerably more expensive. After TDS Telecom representatives looked more fully into the current system and discovered that additional lines would need to be added, etc., they altered the initial proposal and raised the contract cost. In light of this, Manager Schulz now is recommending that the municipality purchase the equipment upfront and alter the revised proposal by eliminating four (4) phone lines (one in the Municipal Building and three in the Police Station). The cost will be a one-time \$5000 payment to purchase the equipment and a monthly service charge of \$1150 for the next five (5) years. The monthly charge is higher than the municipality currently pays but less than in the revised proposal. Acting Chair Maxwell asked if the TDS Telecom proposal is still less than that of its competitors. Manager Schulz confirmed that it was. Selectman Goslant asked what would be the warranty period for the phones, etc. that would be purchased. Manager Schulz will check on this. Selectman Goslant asked about the advantages of purchasing rather than leasing the equipment. Manager Schulz said that there were CIP funds available for the phone system upgrade so it was thought best to lower the future monthly charges by making the equipment purchase. Motion by Selectman Gadbois, seconded by Selectman Maxwell, to authorize Manager Schulz to make the agreement with TDS Telecom for a new municipal phone system including the purchase of twenty-one (21) telephones and other equipment using CIP funds. Selectman Goslant still has some concerns about what will happen when phones, etc. start breaking down. **Motion passed 3-0-0.**
- c. **FY 2016/2017 Town Budget.** Manager Schulz has been working with the municipal staff to develop a proposed budget for the next fiscal year. The various department heads have provided him with their recommended budgets and these have been revised downward after some negotiations. The latest draft budget has a 4.8% increase and most of this is due to wage and benefit increases incorporated in the current union contracts. Manager Schulz would like to begin holding budget meetings next week. He proposed that the first one be held on Wednesday, December 2, 2015 at 6:00 p.m. There was no objection. The meeting will be held here in the Community Room if it is available. (*Note: it was learned after the Select Board meeting that the Community Room would not be available that night so the first budget meeting was rescheduled for Thursday, December 3, 2015.*) Selectman Gadbois asked if the Utility Commissioners have developed the water, sewer, and electric budgets yet. Manager Schulz said that they would prefer to meet with the Select Board first.
- d. **Public Hearing – Solid Waste Management Plan.** Manager Schulz stated that as part of Northfield joining the Mountain Alliance, a new solid waste management plan had to be developed that is acceptable to the State. Before its approval, two (2) public hearings will need to be held with one probably held in Randolph and the other here.

VIII. BOARD MEMBERS' COMMENTS, CONCERNS, QUESTIONS.

- a. **Revised Municipal Website.** Selectman Gadbois asked about the status of the proposed new municipal website. Manager Schulz said that the new website has been developed and will be available for review before it goes online. He has been working with a Northfield resident who has considerable website creation experience. Acting Chair Maxwell asked if the new website would be more user-friendly. Manager Schulz confirmed that it would. Acting Chair Maxwell asked if there would be additional costs. Manager Schulz said there would not.

- b. **Dog River Floodplain Restoration.** Selectman Goslant noted that in the packets was a “Ballpark Opinion of Probable Construction Costs” for this project. Manager Schulz stated that the Town received grant funds to pay for a study to look into options for mitigating the threat of flooding along the Dog River with a focus on the Water Street area. The main goal of this project is to protect 10-12 homes located in the Dog River floodplain. The project cost is \$462,000, which is much more than originally anticipated. Additional meetings will be held with the consultants and the Select Board will be provided with updates.
- c. **VTrans On-Road Bicycle Plan Public Meeting.** Acting Chair Maxwell stated that the Vermont Agency of Transportation will be holding a public meeting on Tuesday, December 1, 2015 from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. on its plan to “improve Vermont state roads to work better and be safer for all bicyclists...” The meeting will be broadcast throughout the state using Vermont Interactive Technologies (VIT). The VIT locations closest to Northfield are in Montpelier (Vermont Department of Labor) and Randolph Center (Vermont Technical College). There also will be a live stream of the meeting (<http://www.vitlink.org/streamingmedia/vtcvitopen.php>).
- d. **NAVI Tree and Wreath Sale.** Acting Chair Maxwell stated that Northfield Ambulance Volunteers, Inc. (NAVI) will be holding their annual sale of Christmas trees and wreaths at the Ambulance Bay (31 Dog River Drive) beginning on Saturday, November 28, 2015 and lasting through Christmas Eve (or until the supplies are gone). The trees and wreaths will come in various sizes and are priced accordingly.

IX. TOWN MANAGER’S REPORT

- a. **Updated Information.** Manager Schulz recently met with a Recreation Committee member and various matters were discussed. Among them was the proposed removal of the large spruce tree on the Common. A local person is willing to donate a smaller replacement tree. Selectman Goslant added that the current tree is diseased and overgrown. He did want to assure the public that nothing will be done to the tree, which has been decorated annually with holiday lights, until after the Christmas season. Selectman Goslant suggested that something could be done with the nearby water fountain at the same time. Manager Schulz said that the Recreation Committee member also asked if some funds could be put into the budget for the purchase of new holiday decorations. Selectman Goslant believes that TDS Telecom owns most of the current ones.

X. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (UNSCHEDULED). There was none.

XI. EXECUTIVE SESSION. Motion by Selectman Gadbois, 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 Schulz present. **Motion passed 3-0-0.**

The Board went into executive session at 7:55 p.m.

Motion by Selectman Gadbois, seconded by Selectman Goslant, to come out of executive session. **Motion passed 3-0-0.**

The Board came out of executive session at 8:55 p.m. No action was taken

XII. ADJOURNMENT. Motion by Selectman Goslant, seconded by Selectman Gadbois, to adjourn. **Motion passed 3-0-0.**

The meeting adjourned at 8:56 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 regular Select Board meeting of December 8, 2015.