

**TOWN OF NORTHFIELD, VERMONT
SELECT BOARD SPECIAL MEETING
Minutes of October 14, 2019**

- I. ROLL CALL.** Select Board Chair K. David Maxwell, Board members Lynn Doney, Julie H. Goodrich, Kenneth W. Goslant (absent), and Nathaniel Miller. Also present were Town Manager Jeff Schulz, Steve Davis, Linda Barrows, Bonnie Hanna, and Dave Hanna.
- II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE.** The Board members and the public were asked to rise and recite the Pledge of Allegiance.
- III. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (Scheduled):** None.
- IV. DISCUSSION**

- a. Union Brook Road.** Chair Maxwell said at last week's regular Select Board meeting (10/08/19) there was a discussion about what should be done to repair the worst sections of Union Brook Road so they are drivable during the upcoming winter months and prior to next year's major road reconstruction. The options discussed then were either grinding down the road to gravel at some of the worst spots or applying an overlay or shim coat on some bad spots. Manager Schulz said estimates put the cost of grinding at about \$23,000 and installing an overlay at about \$30,000. Chair Maxwell said the Select Board members agreed at that time to postpone a decision until the Town Highway Subcommittee had the opportunity to meet and explore various options, which happened last Thursday morning (10/10/19).

Board member Miller serves on the Highway Subcommittee and he said fellow subcommittee member Kenneth Goslant originally had been in favor of grinding down the road but then he had the opportunity to speak with some representatives from the Vermont Agency of Transportation (VTTrans). It was their view that the best and most cost-effective solution would be filling in the largest potholes now and holding off on any other major roadwork until next year's road reconstruction. Highway Foreman Trent Tucker attended the meeting and he felt shim paving would be a more thorough approach. The pavement put down would be ground up and repurposed during road reconstruction. Mr. Tucker opposed grinding down road sections to dirt due to the problems that would cause next Mud Season. Board member Miller said there really wasn't any consensus from the subcommittee regarding the best solution. He himself leans towards installing the shim overlay despite the higher cost.

Chair Maxwell noted a petition now is being circulated to overturn the bond authorization vote (09/17/19) for the Union Brook road reconstruction project. Manager Schulz said the required amount of signatures (±350) had to be submitted to the Town Clerk's Office no later than this Thursday (10/17/2019). Chair Maxwell said the Select Board members cannot move forward on the road reconstruction project until this has been resolved. However, they can act at this time to provide temporary fixes to the worst sections of the road. This special meeting was held because it was felt best to make a decision while the Water Street/Union Street stormwater project pavers were in town.

Manager Schulz said Mr. Tucker's main concern about pothole filing is that the road is much deteriorated and there is a good chance the material used could "pop out" over the winter. However, Manager Schulz himself felt \$30,000 for an overlay is a lot to pay for a temporary solution and there are no guarantees the shim coat itself would last through the winter months. Since there is no perfect solution, Manager Schulz recommends going with the least expensive one and filling in the worst potholes. He estimated it would cost between \$4,000 and \$5,000 to do this. If some do open up later, cold patch could be applied by the Highway crew. Chair Maxwell would like Union Brook Road residents (and others who use the road regularly) informed of any decision and the reasoning behind it.

Board member Goodrich asked about the possibility of grinding down some of the pavement a few inches to smooth out the road. This is what David Hanna suggested at the last meeting. Manager Schulz said he spoke to Mr. Tucker about this and it was his opinion that the targeted sections of road are in such bad condition that this might break down the road section entirely. Mr. Hanna feels this approach could work on the stretch of road by his house as there are several layers of old pavement. Steve Davis suggested putting down a lot of sand but no salt on the hill at the end of Union Brook Road over the winter so the snow will pack down and create a smooth road surface. Board member Miller said in some Northwestern states, it is common practice to keep salt off the roads so snow packs can develop. If done here, we would have to hope drivers invest in good snow tires. Mr. Hanna has dealt with bad road conditions for several years and now that a long-term solution is on the horizon, he wouldn't want \$30,000 spent on an interim measure. Mr. Davis also favors saving money and patching up the worst road sections.

Board member Goodrich noted there are a lot of potholes around town that need to be addressed eventually. Linda Barrows agreed, saying that Stony Brook Road is in especially bad shape. Chair Maxwell said the Select Board members should look at the many problem paved roads and possible solutions during the upcoming budget meetings. This would be similar to the actions taken last year to address severe problems on the graveled backroads by increasing the budget for road material, etc. Chair Maxwell also noted a more aggressive tree trimming policy had positive effects during the last Mud Season. It is his recommendation to patch the worst parts of Union Brook Road but have a plan in place should any problems develop over the winter months. He cannot justify spending \$30,000 on new pavement that will be torn up next year. Ms. Barrows agrees with this.

Bonnie Hanna said one problem every spring is the number of log trucks operating in the area and tearing up the backroad. Perhaps more restrictions could be put on them. Manager Schulz said Mr. Tucker posts weight limits on the backroads in early March and truck drivers are asked to operate only in the early morning hours while the roads are frozen. He added that the large Casella trash collection trucks also do a lot of road damage. Manager Schulz said you can put limits on heavy vehicle use of the backroads but you cannot completely ban them. After further discussion, the consensus of the Select Board members was to accept Chair Maxwell's recommendation. Board member Doney would like to be sure whoever fills the potholes does a good job the first time. This includes machine packing the material and not just stomping it down by foot.

V. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (Unscheduled). There was none.

VI. ADJOURNMENT. Motion by Board member Goodrich, seconded by Board member Doney, to adjourn. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**

The Board adjourned at 7:33 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 October 22, 2019.