

**TOWN OF NORTHFIELD, VERMONT
TOWN SELECT BOARD
SPECIAL MEETING
Minutes of December 3, 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, Finance Director Laurie Baroffio, Jean Kerner (Northfield Community Development Network), Kaitlyn Keating (Northfield Community Development Network), Heather Devine, Kelli Cheney, Dan Sivori, Charles Morse, and Elroy Hill.

Chair Maxwell called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

- II. PLEDGE OF ALLIEGENCE.** The Board members and the public were asked to rise and recite the Pledge of Allegiance.

- III. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (Scheduled):** None.

IV. BUDGET WORK SESSION

- a. Town General and Other Sources Revenue.** Manager Schulz wanted to do a quick run through on the non-tax revenues in the budget. These can be discussed later at greater length when the specific department's full budget is presented. Manager Schulz said certain fees and other charges have been revisited in recent years but for this year the non-tax revenue amount is anticipated to slightly decrease (0.2%). He added most Vermont communities also have seen their non-tax revenues remain stagnant in recent years. Adjustments have been made in recent years to the amounts Northfield Ambulance Service (NAS) charges for various services as well as increases in the cost of pool passes and swimming lessons in order to bring in additional revenue.

Manager Schulz said the anticipated revenue amounts for liquor licenses, dog licenses, etc. has been kept about the same as last year based on past actuals. One significant change is a reduction in the amount expected from Northfield Police Department (NPD) special detail reimbursements due to decreased state funding for these programs. Anticipated NAS revenue was left at \$510,000 for FY 2020/2021 even though there has been a steady increase in NAS revenue in recent years. Since the per capita charge to Berlin and Roxbury for NAS coverage was increased last year, the current draft budget does not include any new increase. As per its five-year agreement with the municipality, the annual gift Norwich University provides for emergency service coverage and other municipal services will increase from \$196,320 to \$204,970. Chair Maxwell noted part of this amount (\$20,000) will go into a Northfield Fire Department (NFD) Capital Equipment Plan (CEP) account dedicated to the eventual replacement of the NFD ladder truck.

Manager Schulz noted anticipated revenue from municipal pool usage and various NPD fines aren't expected to change much (if at all) in the next fiscal year. In addition, despite increased costs for highway maintenance, the amount of State Highway Aid received by Northfield has remained stagnant in recent years. No increases are expected in Current Use or PILOT receipts.

b. Administration.

- 1. Manager's Office.** Manager Schulz said this budget would rise about three percent (3%) with most of this due to scheduled salary/benefit increases. Some of this will be offset by some health insurance savings as the municipal employees' coverage will switch from Blue Cross Blue Shield to MVP Health Care. This department's anticipated expenditures for contract services, administrative costs, and materials are expected to remain constant in the next fiscal year.

2. **Accounting Department.** Financial Director Laurie Baroffio said her department's total budget will decrease slightly (0.6%) mainly due to a reduction in personnel costs. A recently retired employee was on a two-person health insurance plan but her replacement is on a single-person plan. Other expenses for this department are about the same as last year.

Manager Schulz said the discussion of the Town Clerk/Treasurer budget will wait until Town Clerk Kim Pedley personally can appear at a future budget meeting.

- c. **Support Services.** Manager Schulz said most of the payments in this department are for contract services to outside agencies or individuals. He said the amount budgeted for legal services will remain at \$15,000 based on actuals from recent years. The amount budgeted for Green Up Day will remain at \$900. Although the state does provide reimbursement for some local expenses, the municipality does need to rent a trash dumpster before the event and pay some disposal charges. There will be an increase from \$9,450 to \$10,230 for "Maintenance Contracts" as the cost of computer systems and software maintenance is expected to rise in the next fiscal year. The annual per capita payments to the Central Vermont Economic Development Corporation (CVEDC) and the Vermont League of Cities & Towns (VLCT) will remain about the same in the next fiscal year. Manager Schulz said CVEDC provides the Northfield community with assistance in matters related to local economic development. VLCT is a particularly valuable resource that provides legal assistance, training programs, access to less expensive insurance coverage, safety inspections, etc.

The amount budgeted for Northfield's membership in the Mountain Alliance will be reduced from \$8,500 to \$7,000 based on recent actuals. Manager Schulz noted Northfield must belong to a solid waste management district in order to operate a transfer station/recycling center in the community. It joined with Randolph, Brookfield, and Braintree to form the Mountain Alliance in 2015 as a cost-saving action. Northfield previously belonged to the Mad River Resource Management Alliance (MRRMA) but its membership costs spiked after the closure of the Moretown Landfill. The budgeted amount mainly will be spent on holding a state-mandated household hazardous waste collection event in Northfield next year.

The amount now budgeted for Green Mountain Transit (GMT) is \$3,350, which is the cost of operating the special needs bus and the weekly shuttle bus service. An additional \$21,000 was put into this line item last year when Northfield voters authorized this amount on Town Meeting Day in order to restore funding for the Northfield-Montpelier Commuter Bus Service. Normally this amount is listed with the other requests from non-profit organizations with funding articles on the Town Meeting Warning. Manager Schulz said the Select Board members will need to decide over the next few weeks whether to put the GMT \$21,000 funding request directly on the 2020 Town Meeting Warning or if a petition will be required. GMT representatives will be addressing the Select Board members on this and other matters at a future meeting (regular or budget) within the next couple weeks.

- d. **Zoning/Planning.** Manager Schulz said a new Zoning Administrator (Mitch Osiecki) was hired during the current fiscal year. As Mr. Osiecki will be working fewer hours than his predecessor, the amount budgeted for his salary has been reduced from \$23,170 to \$21,420. Under "Contract Services," the amount budgeted for the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission (CVRPC) will increase slightly from \$7,450 to \$7,540. Manager Schulz said CVRPC has provided many important services to Northfield in recent years including assisting with stormwater management projects, highway infrastructure planning, etc. CVRPC has been particularly helpful in helping the municipality obtain grant funds for various major projects.

Manager Schulz noted Northfield has significant stormwater issues due to its terrain and the fact the Dog River runs through the center of town. Four (4) completed stormwater management projects have greatly alleviated these problems and another is planned in the near future for the South Main Street area. The main goal of this project would be the elimination of Northfield's last remaining CSO (Combined Sewer Overflow), which is located on East Street.

- e. **Brown Public Library/Historical Society Building.** Manager Schulz said this budget deals only with the operation of the building that houses the Brown Public Library (BPL) and the Northfield Historical Society. It does not cover library employee compensation, book purchases, etc. That budget will be addressed at another meeting with member(s) of the BPL Board of Trustees present. There are only minor changes in this budget. The cost of maintaining the library's elevator has been cut roughly in half since the number of safety inspections held each year has been reduced from four (4) to two (2). Also, based on past actuals, the amount budgeted for heating fuel has been increased from \$13,000 to \$15,000. The amounts budgeted for janitorial services and electricity will remain about the same.
- f. **Municipal Building.** The proposed budget will have slight increases for trash disposal and janitorial services. The heating oil budget will increase from \$6,500 to \$8,000 based on recent actual expenses. The amounts budgeted for other materials and supplies will remain about the same.

Manager Schulz said the next budget meeting will be held on Thursday, December 5, 2019, at 6:00 p.m. in the Community Room. On the agenda will be the proposed budgets of the Northfield Police Department and at least one other department.

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

VI. EXECUTIVE SESSION Motion by Board member Goodrich, seconded by Board member Doney, 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 4-0-0.**

The Board went into executive session at 7:30 p.m.

Motion by Board member Goodrich, seconded by Board member Doney, to come out of executive session. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**

The Board came out of executive session at 8:10 p.m. No action was taken.

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

The Board 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 regular Select Board meeting of December 10, 2019.