

**TOWN OF NORTHFIELD, VERMONT
SELECT BOARD REGULAR MEETING
Minutes of March 10, 2020**

- I. ROLL CALL.** Select Board members Julie H. Goodrich, K. David Maxwell, Nathaniel Miller, Charlie Morse, and John B. Stevens. Also present were Town Manager Jeff Schulz, Acting Clerk Kenneth McCann, Laurie Baroffio (Finance Director), Kaitlyn Keating (Northfield Community Development Network), Jean Kerner (Northfield Community Development Network), Carolyn Stevens (Northfield Community Development Network), Fred Nadon, Mary Dollenmaier, Aaron Rhodes, and Elroy Hill.

The meeting was called 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. ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING OF THE SELECT BOARD

- a. Election of Chair.** Motion by Board member Goodrich, seconded by Board member Morse, to appoint K. David Maxwell as Select Board Chair. **Motion passed 4-0-1, with Board member Maxwell abstaining.**
- b. Election of Vice-Chair.** Motion by Board member Miller, seconded by Board member Morse, to appoint Julie H. Goodrich as Select Board Vice-Chair. **Motion passed 4-0-1, with Board member Goodrich abstaining.**
- c. Select Board Subcommittee Assignments.** After consulting with his fellow Board members, Chair Maxwell recommended the committee assignments be filled as follows: **Budget and Financial Review** (Board members Goodrich and Morse); **Town Buildings & Energy** (Board members Goodrich and Stevens); **Economic Development** (Board members Maxwell and Morse); **Norwich University** (Board members Maxwell and Stevens); **Highway Planning & Project Oversight** (Board members Miller and Stevens); **Public Safety Oversight & Planning** (Board members Goodrich and Miller); and **Labor Agreement & Bargaining** (Board members Goodrich and Maxwell). In addition, Board member Stevens will serve as the Select Board's representative on the Water & Wastewater Utility Commission and Board member Morse will serve as the Select Board's representative on the Electric Utility Commission. Board member Miller and Manager Schulz will serve as Northfield's representatives to the Mountain Alliance. Stephen Fitzhugh will serve as Northfield's representative to Vermont Public Power Supply Authority (VPPSA) and Manager Schulz as the alternate representative.
- d. Regular Meeting Schedule (Dates, Time, and Location).** Motion by Board member Morse, seconded by Board member Stevens, to have the Select Board continue to meet on the second and fourth Tuesday of each month at 7:00 p.m. in the Community Room located in the Brown Public Library. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
- e. Designation of Official Newspapers.** Motion by Board member Morse, seconded by Board member Stevens, to designate *The Northfield News* and the *Times Argus* as the municipality's official newspapers for legal notices, advertisements, etc. The Front Porch Forum also will be used to post announcements, meeting agendas, etc. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

- IV. SET/ADJUST AGENDA.** There were no changes to the posted agenda.

V. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (SCHEDULED):

- a. Kaitlyn Keating, Northfield Community Development Network (NCDN).** Ms. Keating wanted to thank the current Select Board members as well as former Select Board members Lynn Doney and Kenneth Goslant for providing NCDN members with the opportunity to speak and share their opinions, concerns, etc. at regular and budget meetings over the past year. She also wanted to thank Northfield voters for approving the Town Meeting article that authorized the Select Board members to hire a part-time Economic Development Director. Ms. Keating said the NCDN members would be willing to provide any assistance needed to ensure the Select Board members recruit and hire the best person for this position.

VI. DEPARTMENT HEAD REPORT

- a. Laurie Baroffio, Finance Director: Eight-Month Financial Statements.** Ms. Baroffio said the financial statements for the eight (8) month period from July 1, 2019 to February 29, 2020 were included in the Select Board members' packets for their review. Tonight she distributed a two-page summary highlighting the department budgets that are projected to have significant surpluses or deficits by the end of this fiscal year (06/30/20). Ms. Baroffio said the current projection is for the Town General budget to have a \$25,200 favorable fund balance. This is mainly due to savings in personnel and health care expenses. For example, the Listers budget is predicted to have a \$20,000 surplus due to the absence of an employee for several months. The budget for the Northfield Police Department (NPD) is projected to have an \$18,000 deficit mainly due to overages in the part-time officer and overtime line items. However, Ms. Baroffio said this overspending was partially offset by savings in health care expenses. The Highway Department budget currently projects to have a \$6,500 deficit that is largely due to the materials line items being overspent by \$18,000. She noted this projection is tentative due to current uncertainties regarding how bad Mud Season will be this year, etc. Combining the projected Town General and Highway budgets shows an \$18,700 positive balance for the 2019/2020 fiscal year. As was decided during the most recent budget meetings, projected surplus funds will not be used to supplement any specific budget. As a result, the projected Undesignated Fund Balance on June 30, 2020 will be \$161,336. Ms. Baroffio said she and Manager Schulz will work with the various department heads in the months remaining in this fiscal year in order to keep budgets down to their current projections. Chair Maxwell asked if the current inventory of road materials (i.e. winter sand, road salt, etc.) was sufficient to last through the remaining weeks of winter and Mud Season. Manager Schulz said he confirmed with Highway Foreman Trent Tucker that there should be no problem. Chair Maxwell then thanked Ms. Baroffio and the Accounting Department staff for their excellent work. Board member Morse would also like to commend the various department heads for their efforts as well.

VII. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- a. February 24, 2020 (Special Meeting).** Motion by Board member Goodrich, seconded by Board member Miller, to approve the minutes. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
- b. February 25, 2020 (Regular Meeting).** Motion by Board member Goodrich, seconded by Board member Miller, to approve the minutes. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

VIII. APPROVAL OF BILLS

- a. Approval of Warrant #17-20.** Motion by Board member Goodrich, seconded by Board member Morse, to approve Warrant #17-20 in the amount of \$550,197.57. Board member Morse asked if a water cooler was being rented for the Municipal Building. Manager Schulz said a cooler was rented for a few months due to a problem with the building's water pipes. Now that this problem has been resolved, the rent agreement has been terminated and a drinking fountain installed. Board member Morse asked about an invoice for "cold planing." Manager Schulz said when Water Street was repaved after the stormwater project there, two coats of pavement were installed. The top coat is called "cold planing." Board member Morse asked if VPPSA charges an "administrative fee" each month. Manager Schulz confirmed this was the case. Board member Morse asked about a charge for "printer overage." Manager Schulz said the rental/service contract for the copiers/printers allows for a certain amount of printing without additional expense. This limit was exceeded during the last pay period. Board member Goodrich saw payments for renovations in the Northfield Ambulance Service (NAS) part of the Town Garage. She asked if all the work had been completed. Manager Schulz said we should receive one more invoice for interior painting. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

- b. **Approval of Warrant #17-20A.** Motion by Board member Goodrich, seconded by Board member Morse, to approve Warrant #17-20A in the amount of \$25,754.97. Manager Schulz said this was a payment on an old RSMS loan. The remaining balance will be refinanced over the next four (4) years at a lower interest rate (see below). **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
- c. **Approval of Biweekly Payroll through February 23, 2020.** Motion by Board member Goodrich, seconded by Board member Morse, to approve the biweekly payroll in the amount of \$97,423.76. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

IX. LIQUOR CONTROL COMMISSION

a. Liquor License Renewals

- 1. **Cornerstone Burger (1st Class).** Motion by Board member Morse, seconded by Board member Stevens, to approve the liquor license renewal. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
- 2. **Cornerstone Burger (3rd Class).** Motion by Board member Morse, seconded by Board member Stevens, to approve the liquor license renewal. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
- 3. **Dollar General.** Motion by Board member Morse, seconded by Board member Stevens, to approve the liquor license renewal. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
- 4. **Norwich University.** Motion by Board member Morse, seconded by Board member Stevens, to approve the liquor license renewal. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

b. Outside Consumption Permit

- 1. **Cornerstone Burger.** Motion by Board member Morse, seconded by Board member Goodrich, to approve the outside consumption permit. Board member Stevens asked how large an area will be set aside for outside consumption. Chair Maxwell said it would be the two (2) parking spaces in front of the restaurant. After further discussion, the Select Board members felt it best the permit should be granted with the condition that sidewalk foot traffic would not be impeded. **The amended motion passed 5-0-0.**

X. SELECT BOARD

- a. **Northfield Town Plan.** Manager Schulz said at the last meeting (02/25/20), there had been a discussion of suggested changes to the draft Northfield Town Plan 2019-2027. One question had been whether the approval process had been warned properly. Manager Schulz and Planning Commission (PC) Chair Laura Hill-Eubanks went through this and found that everything had been done in accordance with state law. Manager Schulz also worked with Ms. Hill-Eubanks on possible revisions of the draft plan that had been brought up at the two (2) public hearings and other meetings. If the Select Board members are comfortable with accepting some or all of these suggestions, the document can be returned to the PC members so the changes can be incorporated into a finalized document. Once the PC members have completed their work, the document would be returned to the Select Board members for one final public hearing and their approval. The final step would be to send the approved plan to the State of Vermont for its approval.
Board member Morse is very impressed with the proposed Town Plan but still has a number of concerns. For example, he would like to see how its provisions relate to Northfield's current zoning regulations. Board member Morse felt it might take a couple meetings to resolve these issues. Chair Maxwell felt it was right to take some time and make sure there are no problems with the document to be approved. Since Manager Schulz will not be present at the next meeting (03/24/20), this discussion will resume at the first meeting in April (04/14/20).

Board member Stevens had a couple of suggested changes that he will forward to Manager Schulz. For example, the list of long-term goals originally included hiring an Economic Development Director but that reference was removed. Now that Northfield voters have authorized this position, Board member Stevens felt it best to reinstate that language. Board member Goodrich asked if any of the recommendations in Mathew Wheaton's email to the Select Board members had been incorporated into the list of suggested changes. Manager Schulz plans to include some of his suggestions, such as exempting the Slate/Elm/Prospect area from any high density designation. Given the amount of feedback the PC members received over the past two (2) years while working on this document, Board member Miller didn't think it proper to strike language or create exemptions at this stage based on one person's input. He felt further outreach to residents in the affected areas would be better. Board member Morse asked if he should submit his list of suggested changes in writing. Manager Schulz felt that would be more efficient than going through the document page-by-page. If there are no objections, Board member Morse might attend a future PC meeting in order to obtain their perspective on certain issues.

- b. Brown Public Library (BPL) Board of Trustees Appointment.** Board member Stevens, who also serves as a BPL Trustee, said one position became vacant after Town Meeting Day as no one took out a petition to get on the ballot and nobody had sufficient write-in votes. He said Northfield resident Dale Kunkel has agreed to serve in the position in an interim basis until Town Meeting 2021. Board member Stevens added that Mr. Kunkel is an active BPL patron who often brings his young daughter in for Storytime. Motion by Board member Stevens, seconded by Board member Morse, to appoint Dale Kunkel to the Brown Public Library Board of Trustees. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
- c. Bond Anticipation Note (RSMS Program FY 2013/2014).** Motion by Board member Goodrich, seconded by Board member Morse, to approve and sign the Bond Anticipation Note in the amount of \$20,155 at 1.99% interest; to approve and sign the Bond Anticipation Borrowing Resolution; and to approve and sign the No-Arbitrage and Use of Proceeds Certificate. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
- d. Vermont Agency of Transportation (VTrans) Town Highway and Structure Grants.** Manager Schulz said the application process for VTrans Class 2 roadways and structures grants has begun. Since Cox Brook Road was paved last year, Manager Schulz doesn't see any need to apply for a Class 2 roadway grant. There also are no current plans to pave other local "connector" roads that fall into this classification, such as Lovers Lane and Berlin Pond Road. As was discussed during the budget meetings, Manager Schulz plans to apply for a structures grant related to the extensive repairs needed on Stony Brook Bridge. He received a \$280,000 quote for bridge rehabilitation/replacement a couple years ago and expects the current cost to exceed \$300,000. Even if successful, the VTrans grant would cover only a fraction of this cost. This bridge is on the VTrans priority list but not near the top. Given the coming expense of the Union Brook Road rehabilitation this year, Board member Miller suggested not applying for a paving grant this year but he does support applying for a structures grant. Manager Schulz said he has made a structures grant application each year since he has been here but all have been unsuccessful. He felt it should be Northfield's turn in the near future. Other possible projects include the Pleasant Street Bridge and the retaining wall on Elm Street. After further discussion, it was Select Board consensus that Manager Schulz apply for a VTrans structures grant this year given the number of residents and businesses that make use of Stony Brook Bridge on a daily basis.
- e. Certificate of Compliance: Town Road and Bridge Standards.** Manager Schulz said the State of Vermont requires confirmation each year that municipalities have adopted road and bridge standards that meet or exceed its minimum requirements. He said the Select Board members approved updated standards in July 2019 that meet this criteria. Motion by Board member Morse, seconded by Board member Goodrich, to adopt and authorize Manager Schulz to sign the Town Roads and Bridge Standards Certificate of Compliance. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

XI. BOARD MEMBERS' COMMENTS, CONCERNS, QUESTIONS

- a. Current Project Tracking.** Board member Morse thought it would be helpful if Manager Schulz provided periodic "ticklers" that would indicate the status of current and future projects. He felt that would be especially helpful to new Select Board members. Chair Maxwell agreed this would be useful and tasked Manager Schulz to create this document in the near future.
- b. Select Board Meeting Streaming.** Board member Morse noted that although Trans-Video has been broadcasting Select Board meetings live it hasn't been streaming and posting them on their Facebook page for several weeks. Manager Schulz said there was an equipment failure that should be resolved soon. Board member Morse said being able to view the meetings on the internet is a great service to those residents who cannot attend the meetings themselves or do not subscribe to Trans-Video.
- c. Union Brook Road Reconstruction.** Board member Stevens noted Manager Schulz's written report has an update on this project. He thought it would be good to post this information on the municipal website or on Front Porch Forum so Northfield residents can know what progress has been made to date, when construction might begin, etc. Manager Schulz will draft something for wide dissemination. Board member Miller said he and Manager Schulz met recently with engineer Ron Lyon (DuBois & King) regarding this project. Detailed site reviews should take place in the next week or so and site borings should be completed before the end of the month. In addition, plans are being made to address the "big dip" on Union Brook Road. However, this may turn out to be the final part of this project. Manager Schulz said there may be extra funds for this should the bids for the main project come in lower than expected. Board member Miller said Mr. Lyon also is preparing detailed maps of the road indicating each culvert, side street, driveway, etc. He would like public feedback from those who regularly drive the road to best determine where bad spots and other peculiarities are located.

The maps will be available for review in Manager Schulz's office. Manager Schulz said the schedule is for Mr. Lyon to have his recommendations and a draft RFP ready for Select Board review at their April 14, 2020 regular meeting. We are hoping to get the RFPs advertised before the end of April so the project's construction phase can start as soon as possible.
- d. Select Board Meeting Agenda.** Board member Goodrich felt it would be more efficient if the "Town Manager's Report" preceded "Board Members' Comments..." on the agenda. This change will be made.
- e. NAS Billing Services.** Board member Goodrich asked if the new ambulance billing service (Medical Business Services of Essex, VT) has started processing billing. Manager Schulz said the service contract has been signed and billing information now is being transferred from the former billing services provider (Lyndon Rescue). All should be up and running before the end of the month.
- f. Select Board Appreciation.** Chair Maxwell first wanted to welcome the new Select Board members, Charlie Morse and John Stevens, and added he looks forward to working with them. He also wanted to thank Town Clerk Kim Pedley, Assistant Town Clerk Janel Doney, Finance Director Laurie Baroffio, Bobbi Underhill, and the Justices of the Peace for all their good work on Town Meeting Day.

XII. TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

- a. Northfield Fire Department (NFD) Tanker Truck Purchase.** Manager Schulz said NFD Chief Peter J. DeMasi is now working on the specifications and RFP for the purchase of a new tanker truck. He will work with Manager Schulz on this and the Select Board members will review the paperwork before it is sent out.

- b. **FY 2020/2021 Water, Sewer, & Electric Budgets.** Manager Schulz said the Utility Commissions will start working on these budgets at their meeting next week (03/17/20). The plan is to present them to the Select Board in May 2020 so that the new water and sewer rates can be approved before the new fiscal year begins on July 1, 2020. There also is a proposal to present the utility budgets at a public information meeting.

XIII. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (UNSCHEDULED)

- a. **Aaron Rhodes: Union Brook Road.** Mr. Rhodes said there are quite a number of extreme bumps on the road. He knows the road will be reconstructed later this year but asked if warning signs could be installed in the interim. Manager Schulz has spoken to Mr. Tucker about this. Although there were some concerns about the expense of renting flashing signs from VTrans, this will be explored further. Board member Stevens suggested it might be possible to provide some temporary steps to smooth out of the road.

XIV. EXECUTIVE SESSION Motion by Board member Goodrich, seconded by Board member Stevens, to go into executive session, in accordance with 1 VSA 313 (a)(1), in order to discuss a legal issue and a personnel matter with Manager Schulz present. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

The Board went into executive session at 8:35 p.m.

Motion by Board member Morse, seconded by Board member Goodrich, to come out of executive session. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

The Board came out of executive session at 9:20 p.m. No action was taken.

XV. ADJOURNMENT. Motion by Board member Goodrich, seconded by Board member Stevens, to adjourn. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

The Board adjourned at 9:20 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 revised and approved at the regular Select Board meeting of March 24, 2020.