

**Joint Meeting of the Northfield Electric
and Water & Wastewater Commissions
Minutes of October 13, 2025**

Roll Call. Utility Commissioners Dennis Donahue, Steve Fitzhugh (absent), Michael Kelley, John Stevens, and Charlie Morse. Also present were Town Manager Jeff Schulz and Gerard LaVarnway. The meeting started at 6:32 p.m.

Approval of Minutes from Previous Meeting.

Motion by Mr. Morse, seconded by Mr. Kelley, to approve the September 8, 2025 meeting minutes. **Motion passed 3-0-1, with Mr. Stevens abstaining.**

Meeting of the Water & Wastewater Commission

Northfield Water & Sewer Department Upcoming Projects

Main Street Waterline Installation Project. Manager Schulz said the project contractor has brought in additional manpower in order to get all (or almost all) of the work completed this autumn. The new waterline south of the Main Street Bridge has all been installed and the rest is being installed from north of the bridge to Nantanna. Manager Schulz has been meeting with the contractor to emphasize the need to limit traffic delays and to inform customers of scheduled water outages beforehand. On South Main Street, curb-to-curb paving is scheduled to begin the week of October 20, 2025. This additional work did require a \$250,000 change order and the state has agreed to pay half of this amount. Manager Schulz also found out that the Vermont Agency of Transportation (VTTrans) is planning to repave the rest of Vermont Route 12 in early 2029. He added that the project contractor has assigned some extra crew to install the new waterline that will connect to the new water tank by way of Byam Hill and Hill Street. The work may or may not be finished before winter weather begins to set in.

Cheney Field Water Tank Replacement Project. Manager Schulz said there was a late start and delays to this project but the contractor also brought in extra crew in order to catch up. The concrete flooring and siding for the new water tank have been poured with the next step being the installation of the concrete top. Mr. Donahue asked if the site would be fully rehabilitated this year. Manager Schulz was unsure as it is difficult to pin the contractor down to an exact date. A lot depends on the type of weather we get in early November. Mr. Donahue visited the construction site and was very impressed with the appearance of the new water tank.

Drought Situation Response. Manager Schulz has heard of only one family that had their spring run dry and they were provided with public water access. Precautions are being taken to prevent system contamination in case more families need access to the public water system. Mr. Morse noted that it also was possible to work with private water haulers to sell municipal water that can be accessed through the community garden outlet. Mr. Donahue thought it might become necessary to set limits on how much public water can be sold to residents. Manager Schulz would like a draft policy ready for discussion at the next meeting.

Wastewater Treatment Facility (WWTF) Update. Manager Schulz said the facility is running well and the cost of sludge management is being kept under control. He added that the hydrants weren't flushed this autumn in order to show that the municipality has been taking steps to save water during this regional drought.

Other Business. Manager Schulz noted that during the Main Street Waterline Installation Project, a utility line collapsed in the vicinity of the Margaret Holland Inn and this caused sewage to flow into the building. The property owner estimated the damage at \$5,900 and although it seemed at first that either the project contractor or the municipality's insurance company (VLCT) would agree to cover this expense, Manager Schulz found both reluctant to pay. After additional delays, Manager Schulz felt the best course of action was for the Water Department to reimburse the property owner at this time. Manager Schulz will continue to work with the contractor and insurance company to get them to change their minds and do the right thing. Manager Schulz would like the approval from the Utility Commissioners tonight for this course of action before seeking Select Board approval tomorrow night (10/14/25). Motion by Mr. Morse, seconded by Mr. Donahue, to authorize reimbursement to the Margaret Holland Inn in the amount of \$5,900 to cover damage that occurred as part of the Main Street Waterline Replacement Project. **Motion passed 4-0-0.** Manager Schulz noted that despite the numerous delays and changing stories, the property owner has been very gracious throughout the process.

Meeting of the Electric Commission

Northfield Electric Department (NED) Upcoming Projects

Smart Meters. Manager Schulz said the full launch for smart meters should take place in January 2026. NED customers will be informed ahead of time with informational flyers that will be included as bill stuffers, etc.

King Street Battery Storage Project. Manager Schulz has been in recent contact with the developer for this project and was informed that they would begin cleaning out the site later this week. The dilapidated structure scheduled for removal probably will be razed in November.

Underground Utility Relocation. Manager Schulz said the underground utility relocations due to the Main Street Waterline Installation Project and/or the Main Street Bridge Replacement Project have been largely completed.

Adjournment. Motion by Mr. Kelley, seconded by Mr. Morse, to adjourn. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**

The Board adjourned at 7:14 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kenneth L. McCann

Kenneth L. McCann, Acting Clerk