

**TOWN OF NORTHFIELD, VERMONT
SELECT BOARD REGULAR MEETING
Minutes of December 9, 2025**

- I. ROLL CALL.** Chair Charles Morse, Vice-Chair Merry Shernock, Board members K. David Maxwell, Lydia Petty (absent), and John Stevens. Also present were Acting Clerk Kenneth McCann, Brian Massey Jr., Kristen Pollard, Tim Davis, Sherilyn Matthans, Curtis Dudley, Karen Trombly, Sara Path, Chandra Blackmer, Matthew Romei, Shawn Bryan, Helen Bryan, Donald Doyon, Melinda Davis, Gary Circosta, Erik Bailey, Greg Tessier, Jeremy Whalen, Susan Stillinger, KS Ward, Katie Moorby, Russ Barrett, Jeffrey Elrick, Laurie Beth Putnam, Lorna Doney, Liz Ebbs, Cristie Arguin, Mary Richter, Gordon Bock, Pam Ricker, Charlie Watt, and Elroy C. Hill.

Since Chair Morse will be attending remotely tonight, Vice-Chair Shernock will serve as Acting Chair. Acting Chair Shernock called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

- II. SET/ADJUST AGENDA.** There was no changes to the posted agenda.

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

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- a. November 25, 2025 (Regular Meeting). (7:02 p.m.)** Motion by Board member Morse, seconded by Board member Maxwell, to approve the minutes. Acting Chair Shernock noted one typo that will be corrected. Acting Chair Shernock added that during this meeting, Pierre Gomez asked some questions regarding his work performance during his two (2) years as Northfield Police Chief. She said that upon the advice of counsel, the Select Board members in future will not discuss such personnel matters outside of executive session. **Motion to approve the revised minutes passed 3-0-1, with Board member Stevens abstaining.**

V. APPROVAL OF BILLS

- a. Approval of Warrant #11-26 & #11-26A-B. (7:04 p.m.)** Motion by Board member Morse, seconded by Board member Maxwell, to approve Warrant #11-26 & #11-26A-B in the amount of \$2,061,702.97. It was noted that of the total warrant amount, \$1,448,900 represented local property taxes collected by the Town of Northfield and forwarded to the Paine Mountain School District. In addition, \$304,337 was spent purchasing power for the Northfield Electric Department (NED) to be later sold later to its customers. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**
- b. Receipt of Biweekly Payroll through November 23, 2025. (7:06 p.m.)** Motion by Board member Stevens, seconded by Board member Maxwell, to receive the biweekly payroll in the amount of \$119,272.10. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**

VI. SELECT BOARD

- a. Proposed Norwich University (NU) Land Transfer. (7:10 p.m.)** As has been discussed at previous meetings, Center Park is a Town-owned property located on the NU campus. NU would like to take possession of the property in order to facilitate its redesign/redirection of nearby campus roads. In return, the municipality would receive NU property located adjacent to the wellfield. Chair Morse believes there are a few items related to this proposed land transfer needing to be resolved before this matter is turned over to the Select Board subcommittee that focuses on Northfield-Norwich University matters for direct negotiations. Further discussion of this matter will be postponed to a future meeting.

- b. Proposed Purchase of Tucker Sand Pit. (7:12 p.m.)** Ron and Sherrie Tucker have offered to sell their sand pit located off Vermont Route 12A to the municipality for \$600,000. Board member Maxwell said there were a number of questions about the proposed purchase that still need to be answered. For example, Chair Morse is now conducting a cost-benefit analysis for the purchase and there is uncertainty about the property tax implications. Acting Chair Shernock said discussion of this matter also will be postponed to another meeting. Tim Davis understands that the process for this proposed purchase is in its initial stages but he wanted to note a number of concerns he has. For example, there are unanswered questions about accessibility to the site as the access road crosses railroad property and there is a bridge of undetermined ownership on the access road. He also has concerns about the quality of the road material that would be produced from the pit and whether municipal employees would be able to obtain proper certification to operate a municipal pit in compliance with MSHA regulations. Mr. Davis noted that two (2) other towns recently looked into operating their own sand pits but found the operational costs, regulatory requirements, etc. to be too costly and burdensome to outweigh any possible cost savings. Board member Maxwell said these are some of the same issues that has caused the municipality some hesitation in pursuing this purchase. Chair Morse asked Mr. Davis to email the Select Board members the full list of his concerns so that they themselves can look into those matters he brought up tonight that they hadn't before considered.
- c. Authorize Select Board Chair to Review and Approve Future Payroll and Operating Expenses through December 23, 2025 [24 V.S.A. §961(b)]. (7:20 p.m.)** As the Select Board members will be cancelling their next scheduled regular meeting (12/23/25) due its proximity to the Christmas holiday, they now need to authorize Chair Morse to review and approve future payroll and operating expenses through that date in accordance with 24 V.S.A. §961(b). Motion by Board member Maxwell, seconded by Board member Stevens, to provide Chair Morse this authorization. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**

VII. TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT. (7:21 p.m.) It was noted that Manager Schulz had provided the Select Board members with a written overview of current municipal projects, such as the Main Street Waterline Project, the Cheney Field Water Tank, etc.

VIII. BOARD MEMBERS' COMMENTS, CONCERNS, QUESTIONS

- a. Vermont Routes 12 & 12A Sewer Extension. (7:22 p.m.)** Board member Stevens would like a full update on the long-term plans to extend the municipal sewer lines along Vermont Routes 12 & 12A. He doesn't believe he has received such an update during the past year.
- b. Christmas on the Common. (7:23 p.m.)** Board member Maxwell wanted to thank everyone who made last Friday night's public celebration such a success.
- c. Chromebooks for Select Board Members (7:24 p.m.)** Acting Chair Shernock said the local schools have received a new generation of Chromebooks for their students and have donated their old ones to the municipality. Acting Chair Shernock believes that the Select Board members could use them at future meetings in order to improve their ability to receive public comment from those attending the meeting remotely.
- d. CERV Food Shelf. (7:25 p.m.)** Acting Chair Shernock has been in contact with Aimee Farnum, who serves on the CERV Board of Directors and helps run their food shelf. Ms. Farnum said the food shelf has been in operation for over twenty-five (25) years and she believes it now serves about twice as many people as it did in its early days. Acting Chair Shernock noted the CERV Food Shelf is open at the Ambulance Bay Saturday mornings from 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. and Monday nights 5:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. The CERV Clothing Shelf is located in the Municipal Building basement and is open Saturday mornings from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. and Wednesday mornings from 9:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m.

Acting Chair Shernock added that CERV is always looking for volunteers to help run their shelves and also will accept food and clothing donations during their hours of operation.

- e. **Community Volunteers Awards. (7:27 p.m.)** Acting Chair Shernock would like to designate funds in the next fiscal year budget in order to reward local volunteers with commemorative plaques, etc.
- f. **FY 2026-2027 Budget Meetings. (7:28 p.m.)** Acting Chair Shernock would like some clarification about the upcoming budget sessions, which have not yet been scheduled. The former finance director (Laurie Baroffio) is now putting in part-time hours until her replacement has been hired so scheduling might become difficult.

IX. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (UNSCHEDULED)

- a. **Brian Massey, Jr.: Public Safety Survey Results. (7:29 p.m.)** Mr. Massey said the survey he conducted has been closed and there were sixty-four (64) responses. The survey results indicate that residents “have been increasingly concerned about the state of public safety in Northfield” as the Northfield Police Department (NPD) now has only one full-time officer and one part-time officer. This short staffing has led to public perceptions that there is “slower response, less police visibility, and reduced public confidence.” According to Mr. Massey, until an interim town manager can be hired, Northfield will be “without administrative leadership at the same moment we are struggling with critical public safety needs.” Mr. Massey understands the municipality has contracted with the Vermont League of Cities & Towns (VLCT) to assist in the process of hiring an interim town manager and an interim police chief. He feels that there should be more information provided by the Select Board, including hiring timelines, as the process continues so the general public is kept aware of the situation. Mr. Massey said the survey respondents also have made it clear that they would like the NPD restaffed as soon as possible so that the community doesn’t have to rely on outside agencies for police coverage. Residents also have concerns about the lack of affordable housing, inadequate street lighting, poor sidewalks, etc. that contribute to real safety issues in this community. Mr. Massey said the survey results provide strong evidence that Northfield residents would like improved town leadership regarding short- and long-term oversight of public safety concerns. There also are concerns that the current municipal leadership has not been fully communicative with the public about the current state of local law enforcement coverage and how the problem can and should be fixed. Mr. Massey has provided the Select Board members with a written summary of the survey results for their consideration.
- b. **Kristin Pollard: Inappropriate Language. (7:37 p.m.)** At the beginning of the Select Board meeting, there had been a problem with the library heat circulation fan causing so much noise that it was feared that those attending the meeting remotely would not be able to hear what the Select Board members were saying (and vice versa). At that time, Acting Chair Shernock made a joking reference to “taking a gun” to disable the fan. Ms. Pollard felt that such a statement was inappropriate. Acting Chair Shernock apologized for her choice of words.

X. ADJOURNMENT. Motion by Board member Maxwell, seconded by Board member Maxwell, to adjourn. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**

The Board adjourned at 7:38 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kenneth L. McCann

Kenneth L. McCann, Acting Clerk

A video recording of this meeting is available at: <https://youtu.be/GqxL83HQFcI>

These minutes were approved at the Select Board regular meeting of January 13, 2026.