

**TOWN OF NORTHFIELD, VERMONT  
SELECT BOARD REGULAR MEETING  
Minutes of February 28, 2023**

- I. ROLL CALL.** Select Board Chair K. David Maxwell, Board members Julie H. Goodrich, Charles Morse, Lydia Petty, and John Stevens. Also present were Manager Jeff Schulz, Acting Clerk Kenneth McCann, Mitch Osiecki (Zoning Administrator), Thomas Davis (Economic Development Director), Juli Beth Hinds (Birchline Planning), Gary Laroche (Vermont Agency of Transportation), Alan Legacy (Vermont Agency of Transportation), Andy Shively (Vermont Agency of Transportation), Heidi Passalacqua (Mayo Healthcare), Danielle Nickerson (Mayo Healthcare), Jamie Smith (Green Mountain Transit), Kim Farnum (Central Vermont Home Health and Hospice), Luke Rackers (Central Vermont Council on Aging), Heather Slayton (Washington County Mental Health Services), Yvonne Lory (Capstone Community Action), Caitlin Roseen (Central Vermont Community Harvest), Steve Davis, Stephen Fitzhugh, Carolyn Stevens, Lynn Doney, Merry Shernock, Alex Flinn, Cassie Morse, Topper Morris, Patricia Palumbo, Colin Bright, and Elroy Hill.

Chair Maxwell called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

- II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE.** Those persons present were asked to rise and recite the Pledge of Allegiance. The remote contingent also participated as much as possible.

**III. PUBLIC HEARING.**

- a. Northfield Town Meeting Australian Ballot Articles.** State law requires the Select Board to hold a public hearing prior to Town Meeting so members of the public can discuss or ask questions regarding the articles to be voted upon by Australian Ballot. Most involve funding requests from regional non-profit organizations and all were invited by mail to attend this public hearing. Chair Maxwell then went through the list of Australian Ballot articles for any comments or questions.

**Article 4. Shall the voters of Northfield approve a ten (10) year property tax exemption status beginning July 1, 2023 for the property owned by The Veterans Place, Inc. and used exclusively for the purposes of that organization? The Veteran's Place is a not-for-profit housing for transitioning veterans.** There was no discussion.

**Article 5. Shall the voters of Northfield authorize the Town to exempt from local property taxation, to the extent of 50% of the appraised value, the land and premises of Mayo Healthcare, Inc., located at 71 Richardson Street, for a period of three (3) years beginning July 1, 2023?** Heidi Passalacqua, RN is the Residential Care Manager for Mayo Healthcare and Danielle Nickerson is the Mayo Healthcare Administrator. Ms. Passalacqua said Mayo Healthcare usually employs between 95 and 115 workers, most of whom live in Northfield or neighboring communities. She added that Mayo Healthcare is divided into two (2) separate sections. The first is a Level 3 residential care facility where residents are "aging in place" and receive regular but not constant medical attention. Ms. Passalacqua said once the residents have moved in, they are not removed from their quarters due to their inability to pay. The other section is a Level 1 facility that provides continual care and rehabilitation for residents who require 24/7 nursing care. She noted one requirement is that all residents must be fully vaccinated for COVID-19. Ms. Passalacqua said eleven (11) current residents lived in Northfield beforehand and they have others who have chosen to return to Northfield after living several years elsewhere. She added Mayo Healthcare is an important part of the community as they work with local schools on various programs while also providing the opportunity for Norwich University (NU) nursing students to intern. A couple weeks ago, a Valentine's Day Ball was held where NU cadets in dress uniforms conversed and slow danced with Mayo Healthcare residents. In addition, with the pandemic fading away, Mayo Healthcare is starting to welcome back volunteers (sometimes accompanied by their emotional support animals) who would like to visit with the residents. Chair Maxwell thanked Ms. Passalacqua and Ms. Nickerson for attending tonight and providing this valuable update on Mayo Healthcare.

**Article 6. Shall the voters authorize the expenditure of an amount not to exceed twenty-one thousand dollars (\$21,000) for FY24 towards the Northfield Commuter year-round commuter with service between Northfield and Montpelier?** Jamie Smith is the Director of Marketing & Planning for Green Mountain Transit (GMT). She said the commuter bus service provides two (2) round trips between Northfield and Montpelier each weekday morning and another two (2) in the afternoon. There had been a midday route that had to be suspended due to driver understaffing. There are hopes it will return soon. Ms. Smith said as with other public transportation providers, GMT saw a sharp decline in ridership (70%) during the COVID-19 pandemic but in the past year ridership has nearly returned to pre-pandemic levels. She added that rider fares were suspended at the onset of the pandemic and this will continue for the foreseeable future. Another local GMT free bus service is the Wednesday shuttle that provides service between downtown Northfield and the Berlin Mall. Board member Morse said GMT's programs do have a lot of local support. Chair Maxwell then thanked Ms. Smith for the update on GMT services.

**Article 7. Shall the voters authorize the expenditure of \$14,800 for the Central Vermont Home Health and Hospice?** Kim Farnum is the Director of Community Relations and Development for the Central Vermont Home Health and Hospice (CVHHH). She reported CVHHH is a full-service, not-for-profit Visiting Nurse Association that provides intermittent, short-term medical care, education, and support at home to Central Vermonters. Of the 4,832 total CVHHH visits/contacts during calendar year 2022, over two hundred (200) involved Northfield residents. She said town funding has become increasingly more vital to CVHHH as Medicare has cut reimbursement amounts for home healthcare services. Ms. Farnum noted Northfield voters have been very supportive of their operations in the past and she hopes that will continue this year. Board member Stevens asked if their annual report was available on their website (<https://www.cvhhh.org>). Ms. Farnum said it was. Chair Maxwell then thanked her for participating in tonight's public hearing.

**Article 8. Shall the voters authorize the expenditure of \$3,000 for the Central Vermont Council on Aging?** Luke Rackers is the Director of Development and Communications at Central Vermont Council on Aging (CVCOA), who are "the leading experts and advocates in healthy aging for Central Vermonters." He said this is a level-funded request that will help support their various regional programs. He noted that during the last year, 140 Northfield residents benefited from CVCOA programs including meal assistance, case management services, and informational training. Mr. Rackers said CVCOA does partner with other volunteer programs including those serving the Northfield Senior Center and other regional senior housing locations. One recent program provided free veterinary services for the pets of older residents. He said a full description of their services is available on their website: <https://www.cvcoa.org> Board member Stevens asked if their annual report for the last fiscal year was available on this website. Mr. Rackers said it would be soon. Chair Maxwell then thanked Mr. Rackers for his report.

**Article 9. Shall the voters authorize the expenditure of \$2,800 for the Good Samaritan Haven?** There was no discussion.

**Article 10. Shall the voters authorize the expenditure of \$2,500 for the Washington County Diversion Program?** There was no discussion.

**Article 11. Shall the voters authorize the expenditure of \$2,500 for Washington County Mental Health Services, Inc.?** Heather Slayton is the Communications Coordinator for the Washington County Mental Health Services (WCMHS). She said WCMHS has provided services to both children and adults with mental health issues since 1967. They also assist adults with substance abuse problems and also provide 24/7 emergency services to those in need. WCMHS provides employment support to Central Vermont residents and (upon request) will conduct training sessions regarding mental health issues at local schools and businesses. Town funding is crucial to their operations as it helps cover the printing cost of their informational handouts as well as the expense of operating their phone banks. Ms. Slayton noted in the last fiscal year, of the 3,500 individuals who benefited from WCMHS, over two hundred (200) were Northfield residents. She added that their annual report for FY 2022/2023 will be posted on their website (<https://www.wcmhs.org>) after the outside auditors have completed their work. Chair Maxwell thanked Ms. Slayton for her report on WCMHS services.

**Article 12. Shall the voters authorize the expenditure of \$1,250 for the People’s Health and Wellness Clinic?** There was no discussion.

**Article 13. Shall the voters authorize the expenditure of \$1,200 for Central Vermont Adult Basic Education?** There was no discussion.

**Article 14. Shall the voters authorize the expenditure of \$1,200 for Mosaic Vermont (formerly the Sexual Assault Crisis Team of Washington County)?** There was no discussion.

**Article 15. Shall the voters authorize the expenditure of \$1,200 for the Vermont Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired?** There was no discussion.

**Article 16. Shall the voters authorize the expenditure of \$1,000 for the Arts Bus?** There was no discussion.

**Article 17. Shall the voters authorize the expenditure of \$1,000 for Capstone Community Action, Inc.?** Yvonne Lory is the Communications Manager for Capstone Community Action, which was established in 1965 with federal funding as part of President Lyndon Johnson’s “War on Poverty” initiative. Their mission is to help “individuals and families in Central Vermont to achieve stability and rise out of poverty.” Capstone Community Action is one of five (5) community action agencies in Vermont and there are nearly one thousand (1,000) others located throughout the country. The bulk of their funding comes from federal block grants but town funding provides additional resources needed to support their various programs, which include providing access to healthy meals and affordable shelter as well as winter heating assistance. In the last year, Capstone Community Action assisted 10,950 individuals in 6,014 different households in its service area, which includes Lamoille, Orange, and Washington Counties and nine (9) communities in Windsor, Addison, and Rutland Counties. This included 369 Northfield residents in 217 households. For more information about their various programs, please visit their website: <https://capstonevt.org>. The annual report on their last completed fiscal year will be online soon. There also is a webpage for those who would like to donate funds to Capstone Community Action’s heating fuel assistance and other programs. Chair Maxwell thanked Ms. Lory for the information on the services Capstone Community Action provides its member communities.

**Article 18. Shall the voters authorize the expenditure of \$1,000 for Circle?** There was no discussion.

**Article 19. Shall the voters authorize the expenditure of \$1,000 for Good Beginnings of Central Vermont?** There was no discussion.

**Article 20. Shall the voters authorize the expenditure of \$1,000 for the Vermont Center for Independent Living?** There was no discussion.

**Article 21. Shall the voters authorize the expenditure of \$800 for the Family Center of Washington County?** There was no discussion.

**Article 22. Shall the voters authorize the expenditure of \$600 for the Washington County Youth Service Bureau/Boys & Girls Club?** There was no discussion.

**Article 23. Shall the voters authorize the expenditure of \$500 for the Everybody Wins! Vermont?** There was no discussion.

**Article 24. Shall the voters authorize the expenditure of \$400 for Community Harvest of Central Vermont?** Caitlin Roseen is the Gleaning & Community Engagement Manager for Community Harvest of Central Vermont (CHCV). She started out as a CHCV volunteer before becoming a staff member. She said CHCV’s mission is to bring communities together by gleaning at local farms to obtain their healthy foodstuffs that for one reason or another cannot be sold retail. CHCV has hundreds of volunteers who work on over fifty-five (55) local produce growers. Since its founding in 2014, CHCV has recovered and donated over 661,890 pounds of fresh, nutritious food. The recipients include food shelves, senior meal programs, community meal programs, and farm-to-school partnerships. In Northfield, this includes the CERV food shelf, the Senior Center, and the Northfield schools. Ms. Roseen said CHCV has partnerships with four (4) Northfield growers and over 7,700 pounds of produce were distributed to Northfield residents last year. Chair Maxwell thanked Ms. Roseen for the information about CHCV and the impact of its programs on Northfield. Carolyn Stevens said this was an excellent organization that provides true benefits to the Northfield community.

**Article 25. Shall the voters authorize the expenditure of \$400 for the Friends of the Winooski River?** Stephen Fitzhugh said this organization has overseen important local work involving the Dog River in recent years in its attempt to protect the Lake Champlain watershed. This includes the removal of antiquated dams in order to restore proper river flow and fish migration while improving water quality.

**Article 26. Shall the voters authorize the expenditure of \$300 for Green Up Vermont?** There was no discussion.

**Article 27. Shall the voters authorize the expenditure of \$250 for OUR House of Central Vermont?** There was no discussion.

Chair Maxwell asked if any of the persons attending the meeting in person or online had any comments at this time. Town Moderator Cassie Morse wanted to remind residents that the open session of this year's Town Meeting will be held next Monday night (03/06/23) starting at 6:30 p.m. in the Northfield Middle/High School's Mary Granai Corrigan Auditorium. For the first time, free child care will be provided in the school's gymnasium by Natural Wonders Childcare. Advanced signup is required so please contact Kathleen Burroughs at (802) 272-6750 or at [naturalwonders802@gmail.com](mailto:naturalwonders802@gmail.com) by Friday, March 3, 2023. No walk-ins will be taken and no children under age two (2). Chair Maxwell thanked Ms. Morse for this information and hopes this will enable more younger parents to attend the meeting. There being no other questions or comments, the public hearing closed at 7:50 p.m.

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

**V. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (SCHEDULED)**

**a. Juli Beth Hinds, Birchline Planning: Revision of Northfield Zoning Regulations.**

Ms. Hinds and her firm were hired in April 2022 with the use of planning grant funds in order to assist the Northfield Planning Commission in updating Northfield's zoning regulations to remain in compliance with state law, reflect changed local priorities, etc. She has provided the Select Board members with a memorandum that provides an update on the process to date as well as a draft version of the reorganized zoning bylaws as of December 29, 2022. Ms. Hinds said that there are no problems with the project budget and since substantial progress has been made, she believes the municipality will meet the grant deadline with a full draft of the revised bylaws prepared by May 31, 2023. Ms. Hinds noted there were a number of difficulties with the local zoning bylaws now in effect including repeated references to superseded state laws, inaccurate and/or outdated definitions of various zoning terms, etc. A fair amount of general cleanup was needed as well as extensive reorganization to avoid redundant language, etc. The current draft covers Articles 1.0 to 5.0, which covers about two-thirds of the document. Ms. Hinds said the project to date has been a general reorganization of the existing zoning provisions but no actual changes to the local rules. If she is authorized to do so, Ms. Hinds will complete the document reorganization and work with the new Planning Commission members (see below) on completing the draft version. She advised that the draft document should be reviewed by legal counsel in order to confirm its complete adherence to current state law. Ms. Hinds then would be able to meet with Northfield officials as well as the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission (CVRPC) in order to finalize the document for public review and comment. She also has been working regularly with Manager Schulz, Zoning Administrator Mitch Osiecki, and Economic Development Director Tom Davis in order to expedite the process. Ms. Hinds then asked if the Select Board members had any questions regarding the work done so far.

Board member Morse was out-of-town this past weekend so he wasn't able to review the draft document in detail. Most likely he will have questions about the revised zoning bylaws at a later date. Board member Petty asked if Ms. Hinds would be able to work properly with the reconstituted Planning Commission. Manager Schulz said the plan is to appoint four (4) new members tonight who will be able to hold an organizational meeting next week in order to keep this project on track. Board member Petty appreciates all the work Ms. Hinds has done on the draft document. Board member Morse agrees that the draft document already shows considerable improvement on what we have had in the past.

Board member Stevens noted the draft document had some boxed comments in the margins. He asked where those comments came from. Ms. Hinds said some came from her and others from the former Planning Commission members. She believes the concerns reflected in these comments have been resolved. Chair Maxwell then thanked Ms. Hinds for her work to date and he looks forward to seeing the completed document.

- b. Gary Laroche, et al., Vermont Agency of Transportation (VTrans): Main Street Bridge Replacement Project.** Mr. Laroche is the VTrans Consultant Project Manager and he is joined tonight by Alan Legacy (VTrans Utilities Coordinator) and Andy Shively (VTrans Hazardous Materials Unit Manager). Mr. Laroche said the project's preliminary plans have been completed and the next step will be to meeting individually with the abutting property owners. This will be followed by obtaining needed environmental permits; researching rights-of-way concerns; developing the project's final plans with cost estimates and specifications; and then advertising the project RFP. The current timeline for the bridge replacement is the summer of 2025. He then referenced the project location, which is the center of the Northfield community on Vermont Route 12. Neighboring businesses include the Dollar General, Champlain Farms, Kenyon's Hardware Store, and the DS Café (former location of the China Star restaurant). Mr. Laroche noted the current bridge was constructed in 1926 and underwent substantial reconstruction in 1958 when sidewalks were added to both sides of the structure. The bridge now is in poor condition with deteriorating sidewalks; cracking and pothole formation on the bridge deck; and severe problems with the bridge's support beams and abutments. In addition, due to the existing bridge pier system, river debris including fallen trees has been accumulating on the western side of the bridge. As for environmental concerns, Mr. Laroche said the bridge might be a habitat for Northern long-eared bats and this will need to be evaluated before any construction begins. He added that the bridge itself is not considered historic but is in proximity to several historic structures. Mr. Laroche then provided an overview of the bridge replacement. He noted that the current bridge has 4,800 vehicles pass over it daily and about eight percent (8%) of those are heavy trucks. The new bridge would have all new components and six foot (6') wide sidewalks on both sides. The project would include the removal of the current bridge piers from the riverbed and relocation of utility lines in the area. The new bridge also would have dedicated bicycle lanes on both sides. At their regular meeting of March 8, 2022, the Select Board members approved the "Woodstock" bridge design with concrete railing with windows and also stipulated that the new lighting fixtures would match those now located on Depot Square. Mr. Laroche said the new bridge would be a 140' single span with a steel I-girder superstructure. The bridge foundation will be socketed directly into the river bedrock. Although the entire structure of the current bridge will be removed, some of the existing abutments will be retained in order to minimize the impact of the project excavation. Some deep foundation work would be done before the bridge removal in order to limit the amount of time the bridge will be out of commission. The single span construction will reduce the amount of river debris accumulating below the bridge. As part of the project, new signage will be installed to indicate the new bike lanes, the pedestrian crossing, etc. Since the new bridge will be about thirty feet (30') longer than the current one, there will be the loss of one (1) parking space near the southern end of the bridge.

Mr. Legacy then spoke about the proposed utility relocation of existing aerial and underground utility lines in the project area. This includes municipal water and sewer lines as well as power lines owned by the Northfield Electric Department (NED). There also are aerial communication lines that belong to private companies such as TDS Telecom, Trans-Video, and First Light Fiber. Most but not all of these aerial lines will be relocated underground in duct banks, which are PVC conduits encased in concrete. One waterline located in the riverbed will be relocated but the other water and sewer lines will be left in place. Mr. Legacy said the next step is to hire a contractor to determine the exact locations of the underground utility lines. Chair Maxwell asked if the duct banks would have extra sections that could be reserved for additional capacity at a later time. Mr. Legacy said that was a possibility but the exact configuration still needs to be determined. Chair Maxwell really would like added capacity made available. Mr. Legacy said VTrans is now developing a cost estimate for the utility relocation before agreements are made with the companies that will have their lines relocated. The utility line rerouting also will involve developing soil management requirements but this could be done by the same contractor performing the general environmental survey.

Mr. Laroche then turned to the subject of bridge lighting. He said the current bridge has four (4) lighting fixtures but the new one will have six (6) in order to provide sufficient lighting along the longer structure. As indicated earlier, the new lighting fixtures will match those now located on Depot Square and will be mounted directly to the bridge. Since there is a private residence located at the southeast corner of the bridge, that particular lighting fixture will be shielded to limit its direct impact. The new lighting fixtures will be seventeen feet and two inches (17'2") in height and will include banner arms on their sides. Due to their height, bucket trucks will be needed when lights have to be replaced or other maintenance done. Mr. Laroche said VTrans would like some local feedback regarding the light fixture design before it proceeds to developing the final specifications.

Regarding the closure period while the old bridge is removed and the new one installed, Mr. Laroche said the current timeline for this is approximately twelve (12) weeks. During this period, local vehicle and pedestrian traffic will bypass the construction area with a detour along Wall Street and Water Street. Heavy truck traffic would be excluded from this detour route and expected to access locations north and south of the bridge by using Vermont Routes 12 and 64 as well as Interstate 89. In order to lessen congestion in the Town Common area, there would be temporary two-way traffic at the southern end of Depot Square along Wall Street. This will require the temporary closure of seven (7) parking spaces. The pedestrian detour would require temporary safety fixes be installed to meet ADA-compliance rules. The railroad crossings at Wall Street and Water Street, which already have crossing gates installed, also would need to have flaggers on scene when trains pass by due to the increased detoured traffic. VTrans would coordinate this with New England Central Railroad (NECR).

Mr. Laroche then discussed the Finance and Maintenance Agreement that would be needed regarding the possible environmental contamination sites near the construction area. This would focus on the areas now occupied by the Champlain Farms (gas station), the DS Café, and Dollar General. He said the municipality would be held responsible for the cost of mitigating any environmental contamination. The current estimate of contaminated soil is 2,624 cubic yards and the cost of reuse is \$196,800 and the disposal cost is \$578,250. VTrans will investigate the various ways the contaminated soil could be reused locally, including as landfill on municipal property, in order to keep project costs down. If petroleum-related soil contamination is found, the municipality would be eligible for grant funds to cover the cost of its removal. Mr. Shively said it now is suspected that all the petroleum-contaminated soil will be located near Champlain Farms. This site was investigated last year and the Dollar General site was investigated for contaminated soil when the building was built in 2013. The Fernandez Living Trust property on which DS Café is situated has not had a subsurface investigation since 1996 and that is a bit of a concern. Risk management consideration needs to be done to determine whether due diligence requires soil testing of this private property. If the owners refuse to allow this, then the municipality will be considered to have done due diligence for the purpose of this project. Mr. Shively said even if some soil contamination is discovered during a subsurface investigation or during the utility relocation phase, it is possible it could be managed properly on site.

As for total bridge replacement project costs, Mr. Laroche said the current estimate is \$8,917,000. Northfield would be responsible for five percent (5%) of these costs, which would be \$445,850. This amount does not include reuse/disposal costs of contaminated soils, for which expense the municipality would be fully responsible. As for the current project timeline, Mr. Laroche said the property owner contact phase would occur over the next couple months and the final project plans completed by December 2023. This timeline would allow for bridge removal/replacement over the summer of 2025. Mr. Laroche then asked if the Select Board members had any questions.

Board member Morse noted in the project plans that one of the possible local sites for contaminated soil disposal is the Northfield Wastewater Treatment Facility on Dog River Drive. He did not think that would be a good idea as this facility is located in a flood zone. Mr. Shively agreed that fact probably would exclude this site from consideration. There will need to be a future discussion about possible other locations. Board member Morse noted the municipality does own a former gravel pit that might be a possible fit. Mr. Shively said gravel pits are a good option as it is possible the relocated contaminated soil could be reused as fill at a future time.

Board member Morse asked how much excavation would be needed on the Fernandez property to determine whether there is soil contamination. Mr. Shively said a five foot (5') deep trench across the property should be sufficient. Board member Morse noted this location hosted a gas station in the past so it is almost certain that petroleum-based contamination is present. He therefore doesn't see any purpose for this testing. He then asked why the ADA-compliant pedestrian safety features would be removed at the end of the project rather than be made permanent. Mr. Laroche said these were mainly plastic dividers separating pedestrians from vehicular traffic and not intended for permanent installation. Board member Morse then asked about heavy trucks that needed to make daily deliveries in the detour route area. Mr. Laroche said temporary waivers, such as overweight permits, could be granted by the municipality on a case-by-case basis. VTrans also can provide a public outreach coordinator to work with local businesses on this. Board member Morse feels there will need to be a fuller discussion of this at some time but he does believe workable solutions would be found. He then asked whether the cost of the relocation of private utility lines will be included in the overall project budget. Mr. Shively said VTrans will pay for the installation of the duct banks but the private companies will have to pay for the cost of installing their own utility lines themselves. Manager Schulz said some outreach has been made to these companies and there is an understanding that these relocation costs will be minimal. Overall, Board member Morse was impressed with tonight's presentation and commended all those involved in putting it together.

Board member Petty asked if there has been any coordination between this project and the proposed removal of the nearby Cross Brothers Dam. Manager Schulz said the Vermont Natural Resources Council (VNRC) has a number of pending grant applications to cover the expense of the dam removal. VNRC officials are very aware of the timeline of the Main Street Bridge Replacement Project. Board member Petty thought it would be good if the funding becomes soon available so these projects could be aligned. Board member Petty would like to see if permanent sidewalk improvements could be done along the proposed pedestrian detour route before the bridge replacement begins. There also may be the need to adjust the traffic signs along the detour route to accommodate the increased vehicular and pedestrian traffic. Mr. Laroche said VTrans could provide an impact study regarding the increased traffic volume to determine what other steps need to be made to improve public safety. Board member Petty is concerned drivers might want to speed up on the new bridge and thus endanger the bicyclists and pedestrians on the sides. Mr. Laroche said there are various forms of traffic calming to be considered if this does become a problem. Chair Maxwell then thanked Messieurs Laroche, Legacy, and Shively for tonight's presentation. Mr. Laroche said they all can be contacted anytime should the Select Board members have any additional questions.

#### **VI. LIQUOR CONTROL COMMISSION**

- a. **Liquor License Renewals: Champlain Farms, Cumberland Farms.** Motion by Board member Morse, seconded by Board member Stevens, to approve the liquor license renewals. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

#### **VII. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

- a. **February 14, 2023 (Regular Meeting).** Motion by Board member Morse, seconded by Board member Stevens, to approve the minutes. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

#### **VIII. APPROVAL OF BILLS**

- a. **Approval of Warrant #16-23.** Motion by Board member Morse, seconded by Board member Stevens, to approve Warrant #16-23 in the amount of \$177,435.21. Board member Goodrich saw a towing charge for the Northfield Ambulance Service (NAS). Manager Schulz confirmed a NAS unit broke down and had to be towed to the repair shop. Board member Stevens noted the salting truck has required a number of repairs recently. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
- b. **Approval of Biweekly Payroll through February 19, 2023.** Motion by Board member Morse, seconded by Board member Stevens, to approve the biweekly payroll in the amount of \$104,358.63. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

**IX. SELECT BOARD**

- a. **Road Reclassification and Discontinuance Policy.** Due to the lateness of the hour, Chair Maxwell asked that this item be tabled until the next regular meeting (03/14/23). There was no objection.
- b. **CVFiber Agreement.** This item also was postponed until the next meeting.
- c. **Planning Commission Appointments.** Motion by Board member Morse, seconded by Board member Stevens, to appoint Steve Davis, Royal DeLegge, Stephen Fitzhugh, and Julie M. Lappin to the Planning Commission. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
- d. **Housing Task Force Appointments.** This item was postponed until the next meeting.
- e. **Northfield Police Department Union Contract.** Manager Schulz said since this is a contract negotiation, it will be discussed later in the meeting in executive session.

**X. TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT**

- a. **Northfield Town Reports.** Manager Schulz reported hardcopies of the Town Report were delivered to Northfield last week and can be picked up at the following locations: Municipal Building (inside and outside), Brown Public Library, Northfield Senior Center, Falls General Store, Gadbois Laundromat, Kenyon's Hardware Store, Northfield Pharmacy, South Village Mobil, Tops Market, and Trans-Video. The report also can be downloaded from the municipal website at <https://www.northfield-vt.gov/town-reports>
- b. **Municipal Building Improvements.** Manager Schulz met with the contractor last week about the structural repairs needed for the building. The work will start this April.
- c. **Utility Superintendent Appointment.** In light of the retirement of former Utility Superintendent Patrick DeMasi last month, Manager Schulz has appointed longtime municipal employee James Russo as his replacement.
- d. **Year-to-Date Budget Update.** Manager Schulz said at the next meeting Finance Director Laurie Baroffio will provide the Select Board members with a FY 2022-2023 budget status report as we now are eight (8) months into the current fiscal year.
- e. **Tickler File Update.** Manager Schulz believes he now has the tickler file in the format that the Select Board members prefer and he will provide periodic updates.

**XI. BOARD MEMBERS' COMMENTS, CONCERNS, QUESTIONS**

- a. **Select Board Member Goodrich.** Board member Morse noted this will be Board member Goodrich's last regular meeting after six (6) years on the Select Board. She will be truly missed. Chair Maxwell concurred and said she has been very valuable to him by serving as Vice-Chair the past few years. Board member Goodrich said it has been a real privilege to be a Select Board member and will miss her colleagues.
- b. **Affordable Heat Act (S.5).** Board member Morse is very concerned about this particular piece of legislation now working its way through the Vermont State Senate. The bill focuses on reducing greenhouse gas emissions in the thermal sector and is meant to help the state meet its 2025, 2030, and 2050 legally-binding carbon emission deadlines. Some say should the bill pass, it could increase the cost of heating fuel by seventy cents (70¢) per gallon in the near future. Board member Morse is concerned about the impact this would have on the municipal fuel budget in the next fiscal year. He is hoping the Vermont League of Cities & Towns (VLCT) is lobbying against this bill on behalf of its member municipalities.
- c. **Northfield Falls Pedestrian Safety.** Board member Stevens asked about the status of the proposed new pedestrian sign at the crosswalk by the Falls General Store. Manager Schulz said we are still waiting for the CVRPC report to be finished. This organization has had some employee turnover recently and this has been causing some project delays. Since this new signage would be located on a state highway, we would need to have this safety study in hand in order to justify the purchase to VTrans.



## **XII. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (UNSCHEDULED)**

- a. Lynn Doney: Retention of Third NAS Unit.** Mr. Doney is a NAS EMT and he would like to know if the used NAS unit purchased from the Mad River Valley Ambulance last year would remain in service even after the remounted NAS unit returns from its out-of-state servicing in a few months. Board member Morse believes the Select Board consensus during the budget meetings was the vehicle would be retained as a backup but would not be provided with new equipment or any other costly upgrades. We do not want to sink any additional money into this vehicle. Mr. Doney asked if American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds could be used to make this unit fully equipped and up-to-date. Board member Morse said this possibility was never raised during the budget discussions. Chair Maxwell believes the general idea was to keep this unit as a backup should either of the two (2) main NAS units break down. It also might be used for standby events or non-emergency transfers so the other NAS units would remain available for actual emergency calls. There was no plan to create a new Capital Equipment Plan (CEP) budget for its future upkeep. Chair Maxwell suggested Mr. Doney should speak with NAS Chief Meggan McCusker to see if she herself would like to develop a new proposal regarding the third NAS unit. Board member Petty believes there also was a reluctance to decide upon a long-term strategy regarding a third NAS unit without input from the incoming NAS Chief. At the time, there was no way to know what would be the views of the person who would ultimately be hired to replace former NAS Chief Lawton Rutter. Chair Maxwell does feel the best course of action would be for Mr. Doney to discuss this matter with Chief McCusker. This issue can be brought up when the FY 2024/2025 NAS CEP budget is first discussed at the end of this calendar year.

## **XIII. EXECUTIVE SESSION** Motion by Board member Morse, seconded by Board member Stevens, to go into executive session, in accordance with 1 VSA 313 (a)(1)], in order to discuss legal issues, personnel matters, and a contract negotiation with Manager Schulz present. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

The Board went into executive session at 10:32 p.m.

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

The Board came out of executive session at 11:00 p.m.

Motion by Board member Morse, seconded by Board member Goodrich, to approve and sign the agreement between the Town of Northfield and the New England Police Benevolent Association Local 406. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

## **XIV. ADJOURNMENT.** Motion by Board member Morse, seconded by Board member Goodrich, to adjourn. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

The Board adjourned at 11:05 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 Select Board regular meeting of March 14, 2023.