

**TOWN OF NORTHFIELD, VERMONT
SELECT BOARD REGULAR MEETING
Minutes of January 13, 2026**

I. ROLL CALL. Chair Charles Morse, Board members K. David Maxwell, Lydia Petty, Merry Shernock, and John Stevens. Also present were Manager Steven Mackenzie, Acting Clerk Kenneth McCann, Laurie Baroffio (Finance Director), Eric W. Nordenson (Chief, Montpelier Police Department), Kristin Pollard, Brian Massey Jr., Tim Davis, Stephen Coley, Lorna Doney, Lynn Doney, Bizhan Yahyazadah, David Hanna, Bonnie Hanna, Heather Snyder, Pam Ricker, Jeffrey Elrick, Gerard LaVarnway, Ken Christman, Cristie Arguin, Matthew Romei, Susan Stillinger, Mary Nadon Scott, Melinda Davis, Steven Tiersch, Steven Harnois, and Elroy C. Hill.

Chair Morse called the meeting to order at 7:09 p.m.

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

III. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (SCHEDULED):

a. **Pierre Gomez: Record Correction. (7:10 p.m.)** Mr. Gomez was not present.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

a. **December 9, 2025 (Regular Meeting). (7:11 p.m.)** Motion by Board member Shernock, seconded by Board member Stevens, to approve the minutes. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

b. **December 17, 2025 (Special Meeting). (7:11 p.m.)** Motion by Board member Shernock, seconded by Board member Stevens, to approve the minutes. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

c. **December 23, 2025 (Special Meeting). (7:12 p.m.)** Motion by Board member Shernock, seconded by Board member Stevens, to approve the minutes. Board member Shernock found one typo that will be corrected. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

d. **December 29, 2025 (Special Meeting). (7:12 p.m.)** Motion by Board member Shernock, seconded by Board member Stevens, to approve the minutes. **Motion passed 4-0-1, with Board member Maxwell abstaining.**

e. **January 6, 2026 (Special Meeting). (7:12 p.m.)** Motion by Board member Shernock, seconded by Board member Stevens, to approve the minutes. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

V. APPROVAL OF BILLS

a. **Approval of Warrant #13-26 & #13-26A. (7:13 p.m.).** Motion by Board member Stevens, seconded by Board member Shernock, to approve Warrant #13-26 & #13-26A in the amount of \$3,008,447.49. Board member Maxwell noted that the bulk of the warrant amount (\$2,262,537) was a bond anticipation note payback related to last year's water projects. Finance Director Baroffio said these funds were recently received from the State of Vermont and are paid to the bank to reduce the amount due on the bond anticipation note. Board member Shernock noted an \$854 payment for design plans for the Cross Brothers Dam Removal project. These funds will later be reimbursed by FEMA. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

b. **Receipt of Biweekly Payroll through December 21, 2025. (7:19 p.m.).** Motion by Board member Stevens, seconded by Board member Shernock, to receive the biweekly payroll in the amount of \$124,794.81. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

c. **Receipt of Special Payroll through December 29, 2025. (7:19 p.m.)** Motion by Board member Stevens, seconded by Board member Shernock, to receive the special payroll in the amount of \$73,494.96. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

d. **Receipt of Biweekly Payroll through January 4, 2026. (7:20 p.m.)** Motion by Board member Shernock, seconded by Board member Stevens, to receive the biweekly payroll in the amount of \$112,463.68. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

VI. SELECT BOARD

- a. **Possible Amendment of Town Traffic Ordinance.** Chair Morse said there is a problem in this community with residents parking their vehicles in the street within the right-of-way provided to the municipality for road maintenance, snow removal, etc. These obstructions have created dangerous situations for the Highway crew as well as for those driving the roads. A Northfield resident (Dave Hanna) recently informed the Select Board of a particularly dangerous situation on Union Brook Road, where number of vehicles are parked on the side of the road at one location and this is causing a hazardous situation for those driving by. Chair Morse said state law says that this is illegal and our local traffic ordinance specifically bans overnight roadside parking during the winter months. He would like the Town Attorney to send a letter to the property owner stating that if the vehicles are not removed, the municipality has the authority to have them towed away and will do so. Chair Morse said another option is to revise the local traffic ordinance to specifically address this matter. Board member Maxwell asked what would be the point of this letter. Chair Morse said it would create a paper trail while informing the property owner that this dangerous situation must be remedied quickly or the vehicles will be removed. It also might be good to contact and hire the Washington County Sheriffs to handle the law enforcement end of this matter including all required documentation. The Northfield Police Department (NPD) currently does not have the staffing to deal with this. Manager Mackenzie is willing to send his own letter to the property owner first to see if the matter can be resolved without bringing in law enforcement. If that doesn't work, the scenario Chair Morse has suggested will be followed. Board member Petty believes the local traffic ordinance, which hasn't been revised for over ten (10) years, should be updated at some point but she would like it reviewed in a comprehensive matter for needed changes and not revised in a piecemeal manner due to one issue.
- b. **Vermont Agency of Transportation (VTrans) Certificate of Highway Mileage 2026. (7:34 p.m.)** VTrans requires each municipality to confirm whether it added or subtracted any town highway mileage during the previous calendar year. Failure to approve and submit the form can result in delays in receiving state funding for local road operations, etc. There were no changes in local highway mileage in the past year. Motion by Board member Stevens, seconded by Board member Maxwell, to approve and sign the VTrans Certificate of Highway Mileage. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
- c. **Proposed Norwich University (NU) Land Transfer. (7:34 p.m.)** Chair Morse said that NU has proposed a land swap with the municipality in which Center Park would be exchanged for NU property located adjacent to the wellfield. Chair Morse has reviewed this proposal and found no legal impediments to this land transfer should the Select Board members decide to pursue it. Board members Maxwell and Stevens serve on the Select Board subcommittee that deals with "Town and Gown" matters and they will start meeting with NU representatives to negotiate this possible land transfer.
- d. **Approve Intermunicipal Agreement for Interim Police Chief (possible executive session). (7:37 p.m.).** Chair Morse said that since this matter involves a contract negotiation, it will need to be discussed later in the meeting in executive session.
- e. **Tax Sale Litigation Update (possible executive session). (7:37 p.m.)** Chair Morse said that as this is a legal matter, this also will be discussed in executive session.

VII. TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT. (7:40 p.m.) Manager Mackenzie had provided the Select Board members with a written report over the weekend and now provided an overview of some of its highlights. He noted that he retired as Barre City Manager about three (3) years ago and had no intention of going back to work until Bill Frasier from the Vermont League of Cities & Towns (VLCT) informed him that Northfield was looking for an interim manager. After some consideration, Manager Mackenzie decided to apply for the position provided that he could serve as a part-time employee.

Now that he has been hired, Manager Mackenzie is looking forward to working with the Select Board members, municipal employees, and the general public to help resolve current concerns in this community. Manager Mackenzie said he has received a warm reception and is willing to meet with anyone during his regular working hours (9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.) and also when he is present for nighttime municipal meetings. He has started the practice of holding weekly meetings with the municipal department heads in order to keep open the lines of communication. Manager Mackenzie then recapped from his report his recent meetings with the Northfield Ambulance Service (NAS) union representative, the Town Attorney, etc. He also will restart the process for finding a replacement for Finance Director Baroffio, who officially resigned last year but has been willing to work as a part-time consultant to the municipality.

VIII. BOARD MEMBERS' COMMENTS, CONCERNS, QUESTIONS. (7:46 p.m.) The Select Board members did not have any specific questions or comments at this time but all were grateful to Manager Mackenzie for his willingness to come out of retirement to serve the Northfield community. They also were grateful that Ms. Baroffio is willing to put in so many hours to assist the Select Board members in drafting the FY 2026-2027 municipal budget that will be presented to Northfield voters for approval on Town Meeting Day (03/03/26).

IX. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (UNSCHEDULED)

a. **Lynn Doney: Improper Disclosure of Personnel File. (7:49 p.m.)** Mr. Doney said he had complained at a recent Select Board Special Meeting (12/23/25) that a critical letter from his personnel file had been mailed unsolicited to members of the public. He wanted to know if anything has been done about this. Chair Morse said it has been determined that the letter did not originate from the personnel file that the municipality maintains. Mr. Doney believes there are personnel files at the Police Station that are largely unsecured. Chair Morse said he went through twenty-four (24) banker boxes and the contents of each has been catalogued. These boxes will be stored more securely in future. Mr. Doney asked if the former police chief returned all his Police Station keys to the municipality. If not, it might be a good idea to change the locks there. Chair Morse said that would be a decision for the town manager and/or the interim police chief.

X. EXECUTIVE SESSION. (7:58 p.m.) Motion by Board member Maxwell, seconded by Board member Petty, to go into executive session, in accordance with 1 VSA 313 (a)(1)], in order to discuss a contract negotiation and legal matter with Manager Mackenzie and Montpelier Police Chief Eric W. Nordenson present. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

The Board went into executive session at 8:07 p.m.

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

The Board came out of executive session at 8:32 p.m.

Motion by Board member Maxwell, seconded by Board member Petty, to approve the intermunicipal agreement for interim police chief services as presented by the City of Montpelier and naming the Montpelier Deputy Police Chief to serve in Northfield. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

XI. ADJOURNMENT. Motion by Board member Petty, seconded by Board member Shernock, to adjourn. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

The Board adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kenneth L. McCann

Kenneth L. McCann, Acting Clerk

A video recording of this meeting is available at: <https://youtu.be/EJ7Kp5LSajk>

These minutes were approved at the Select Board regular meeting of January 27, 2026.