

**TOWN OF NORTHFIELD, VERMONT
SELECT BOARD REGULAR MEETING
Minutes of November 25, 2025**

- I. ROLL CALL.** Chair Charles Morse, Board members K. David Maxwell, Lydia Petty, Merry Shernock, and John Stevens (absent). Also present were Manager Jeff Schulz, Acting Clerk Kenneth McCann, Bill Frasier (Vermont League of Cities & Towns), Brian Massey Jr., Logan Potkowski, Jeffrey Elrick, Gerard LaVarnway, Jack Yandell, NAGE/IAEP, Tom Davis, Susan Stillinger, Don Doyon, Elisabeth Atems, Pierre Gomez, Sherilyn Matthans, Gary Circosta, Kristin Pollard, Karen Trombly, Pam Ricker, Mary Richter, KS Ward, Mary Nadon Scott, Matthew Romei, and Elroy C. Hill.

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

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

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

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- a. **November 10, 2025 (Regular Meeting). (7:02 p.m.)** Motion by Board member Shernock, seconded by Board member Maxwell, to approve the minutes. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**
- b. **November 19, 2025 (Special Meeting). (7:03 p.m.)** Motion by Board member Shernock, seconded by Board member Petty, to approve the minutes. Board member Shernock noted that Bill Clements' last name was misspelled three (3) times in the minutes. This will be corrected **Motion to approved the revised minutes passed 4-0-0.**

V. APPROVAL OF BILLS

- a. **Approval of Warrant #10-26. (7:05 p.m.)** Motion by Board member Shernock, seconded by Board member Petty, to approve Warrant #10-26 in the amount of \$1,277,606.66. Board member Shernock is appreciative that the municipality can still make credit card purchases of gasoline at the South Village Mobil. Manager Schulz said he is still looking for a gasoline supplier who will fill the tank located at the Town Garage. Board member Shernock asked why the Highway Department purchased a new truck. Manager Schulz said the two (2) new Western Star trucks to be purchased in the next fiscal year will not be delivered until next autumn. This used truck (2017 International) was purchased for \$69,000 and will be used in the interim. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**
- b. **Receipt of Biweekly Payroll through November 9, 2025. (7:09 p.m.)** Motion by Board member Shernock, seconded by Board member Petty, to receive the biweekly payroll in the amount of \$119,423.27. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**

VI. SELECT BOARD

- a. **Vermont League of Cities & Towns (VLCT) Succession Plan Proposal. (7:10 p.m.)** Chair Morse said that the Select Board has received proposals from VLCT to assist the municipality with the job searches for an interim Town Manager, interim Police Chief, and for a permanent Town Manager. Board member Maxwell said VLCT has helped with the Town Manager hiring process in the past. He assumes that as in the past a hiring committee will be formed. Bill Fraser is the former Montpelier City Manager and now is employed by VLCT as a consultant. He said that once the proposals have been approved, he will meet with the Select board members to determine how they would like the job searches conducted. Once the interim positions have been filled, the much longer process for hiring a permanent Town Manager will begin. Board member Petty asked how long it would take to hire a permanent Town Manager. Mr. Frasier said about four (4) to five (5) months depending on the process preferred by the Select Board members. The initial advertising period would be for about forty-five (45) days and then the initial applications would be reviewed and a short list of candidates determined. Board member Petty thought an interim Town Manager should be in place before commencing the other job searches. Mr. Frasier said that it was his opinion that the permanent Town Manager should be hired before the search for a permanent Police Chief as the new manager would be a big part of the hiring process.

It also is possible that the Select Board members could strongly approve of the performance of the interim hires and decide to make them permanent hires. Chair Morse asked who would conduct the background investigations of the applications. Mr. Frasier said VLCT would take care of this. The extensiveness of these investigations would be for the Select Board members to decide as more thorough investigations would cost more. Board member Maxwell would favor a comprehensive background check that would include reviewing past social media postings, etc. Mr. Frasier said that should a local candidate be already familiar to the Select Board members, they might not want to spend a lot of investigative resources on that person. He noted that the cost of these investigations includes an hourly rate plus expenses. Motion by Board member Petty, seconded by Board member Maxwell, to execute three (3) contracts with VLCT in order to assist with the job searches for an interim Town Manager, interim Police Chief, and permanent Town Manager. **Motion passed 4-0-0.** Mr. Frasier thanked the Select Board members for their confidence in VLCT. They will begin the outreach process for possible interim candidates once they have received the signed agreements.

VII. TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

- a. **Main Street Waterline Project and Cheney Field Reservoir Project (7:25 p.m.)** Manager Schulz said the Main Street new waterline installation project has been completed for this construction season. Some additional road patching will be done north of the Main Street Bridge next spring. The reservoir project just requires that the new water tank be painted and the worksite restored to its original condition. This will happen next spring.
- b. **Norwich University (NU) Proposed Land Transfer (7:28 p.m.)** Manager Schulz said NU officials are eager to move forward with the proposed transfer of municipal-owned Center Park in return for NU property adjacent to the wellfield. An easement search did find a Northfield Electric Department (NED) easement on the current NU property. If the Select Board members want to pursue this land transfer, Manager Schulz recommended that a full title search should be started. He added that there used to be a firing range decades ago on the NU property and a contractor did find some old ammunition on the site. This could limit how the property is used in future.
- c. **Tucker Sand Pit Proposed Purchase. (7:30 p.m.)** Manager Schulz said Ron and Sherrie Tucker have proposed that the municipality purchase their sand pit located off Vermont Route 12A. A site visit by the Highway Committee was held last week and it was found that the site has a considerable amount of road material. Chair Morse said it was a "beautiful" sand source but felt that the larger material was "bony" and would need to be further crushed before it could be used on the roads. The Tuckers have drafted a purchase agreement in the amount of \$600,000 and Chair Morse believes the Tuckers would like an agreement reached during the current calendar year. As this would not be a budgeted purchase, the Select Board members would need to determine how to finance it. There remains some concerns about the road access through railroad property and Board member Maxwell warned that they have been difficult to deal with in past similar situations. He would like a firm agreement between the municipality and the railroad before any purchase agreement is executed. Chair Morse also would like Manager Schulz to reach out to the Vermont Agency of Transportation (VTrans) regarding the access road's bridge and what would be needed to bring it up to their standards. In addition, there is an adjacent property owner with a "floating" right-of-way that needs to be clarified. Board member Maxwell asked if such a land purchase would require a public vote. Manager Schulz said it would not but some form of public notification should be done beforehand. Chair Morse said it would be necessary to hold a vote if funds had to be borrowed to make the purchase. He also felt it would be necessary to determine the taxable value of the property.

- d. Local Police Coverage (7:37 p.m.)** Manager Schulz said he has put in place a procedure for two (2) part-time police officers with Level III certification to come in and work with Sergeant Brian Gosselin regarding the resolution of ongoing investigations. These part-time officers will be on call when needed. Chair Morse asked if this would allow Sergeant Gosselin to attend Vermont Academy training next February so he can obtain his own Level III certification. Manager Schulz is not sure but will look into this. Board member Shernock felt as this was three (3) months away, perhaps Sergeant Gosselin should sign up for the training but be prepared to withdraw if his attendance become unfeasible. Board member Shernock noted there are a number of certified law enforcement officers living in Northfield but working in other communities. Perhaps they should be contacted to see if they would like to work for the Northfield Police Department (NPD).
- e. FEMA Buyout Property (7:45 p.m.)** Manager Schulz reported that the demolition has begun of the structure located on the FEMA buyout property at 310 Water Street. The demolition contract calls for all building elements to be removed from the site, which afterwards will be graded and seeded.
- f. Smart Meters (7:46 p.m.)** Manager Schulz said the plan remains to have the smart meters installed and operational by next spring. Northfield utility customers will be informed through informational handouts stuffed in upcoming bill mailings.

VIII. BOARD MEMBERS' COMMENTS, CONCERNS, QUESTIONS

- a. Holiday Decorations Appreciation (7:47 p.m.)** Board member Maxwell wanted to thank those responsible for putting up the decorations around the Common including the Christmas Tree. Manager Schulz said the Northfield Utilities crew were assisted by Snapping Turtle employees this year.
- b. Winter Salt & Sand Pit Status. (7:48 p.m.)** Board member Maxwell asked if sufficient salt and sand have been stockpiled for the coming winter season. Manager Schulz said the pit will be fully stocked for winter and we also will have a full Highway crew for winter road maintenance.
- c. FEMA Buyout Property (cont.) 7:48 p.m.** Board member Petty asked if the sidewalk that adjoins the property will be repaired. Manager Schulz said he is compiling a list of all the work that needs to be done to the site next spring.
- d. Darn Tough Socks Sale (7:50 p.m.)** Board member Shernock noted that the Darn Tough Socks Sale was held last weekend (November 20/21, 2025) and it brought a lot of visitors to town. However, she felt the poor condition of the sidewalks on North Main Street really diminished the event. Board member Shernock suggested that the municipality should meet with the owner of the adjacent building (i.e. former video store) there to see if they would be willing to share costs to fix the sidewalk. Board member Maxwell believes there might be some housing units going into this building so perhaps Economic Development Director Tom Davis could contact them about this.
- e. Form-Based Code Planning Update (7:52 p.m.)** Board member Shernock noted that the group led by Geoffrey Ferrell Associates have produced an update to the "Northfield Vision Plan" document that was distributed earlier this year. She would like the new document made widely available as it provides a good framework for future development for the Northfield community.
- f. FY 2026-2027 Budget Process (7:55 p.m.)** Board member Maxwell asked where we now are with the budget process. Manager Schulz said there had been some delays as the Finance Director has been working in a part-time capacity this year. Manager Schulz expects that a draft budget should be ready for distribution within the next couple of weeks. Board member Maxwell would like the Budget & Financial Review Subcommittee (Board members Maxwell & Morse) to meet in the next week or so for a first review of the draft budget.

IX. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (UNSCHEDULED)

- a. **Brian Massey Jr.: Community Safety Survey. (7:56 p.m.)** Mr. Massey said he has drafted and has been distributing a Community Safety Survey in order to provide Northfield residents with an opportunity to express their views on the current state of local law enforcement. He said that early feedback has focused on the need for greater stability and long-term planning. The survey remains available online and Mr. Massey will share the final results with the Select Board members when it is closed.
- b. **Mary Nadon Scott: Cheney Field Site Restoration (7:58 p.m.)** There is an ongoing conversation regarding the final disposition of the Cheney Field worksite, i.e. whether parking spaces should be added for improved site access. Ms. Scott wanted to be sure that there will be a accessible contact person for the municipality before the decisions about this need to be made next spring. Manager Schulz said when he not available, Utility Superintendent Jim Russo is the contact person for this project. Board member Petty believes an interim Town Manager should be in place by next spring and that person would be the proper contact person on this matter.
- c. **Pierre Gomez: Clarifications regarding Certain Online Allegations. (8:06 p.m.)** Mr. Gomez has seen some allegations on local social media regarding his tenure as Northfield Police Chief and would like Manager Schulz to provide some clarifications on some matters. He asked whether any discrepancies were found on any of the time sheets he submitted during his NPD employment. Manager Schulz said he could not recall any. Mr. Gomez then asked if any resident had complained that Mr. Gomez had cheated the municipality of \$185,000. Manager Schulz said this never happened. Mr. Gomez then asked if he was a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) hire. As he has reported in the past, Manager Schulz said he cannot remember if this issue ever came up when Mr. Gomez was being considered for the position of Northfield Police Chief.

X. EXECUTIVE SESSION. Motion by Board member Shernock, seconded by Board member Maxwell, to go into executive session, in accordance with 1 VSA 313 (a)(1)], in order to discuss a personnel issue with Manager Schulz present. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**

The Board went into executive session at 8:10 p.m.

Manager Schulz left the executive session at 8:15 p.m.

Motion by Board member Maxwell, seconded by Board member Petty, to come out of executive session. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**

The Board came out of executive session at 8:25 p.m. No action was taken.

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

The Board adjourned at 8:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kenneth L. McCann

Kenneth L. McCann, Acting Clerk

A video recording of this meeting is available at: <https://youtu.be/TBhxrNzc57o>

These minutes were revised and approved at the Select Board regular meeting of December 9, 2025.