

**Joint Meeting of the Northfield Electric
and Water & Wastewater Commissions
Minutes of February 2, 2026**

Roll Call. Utility Commissioners Dennis Donahue, Steve Fitzhugh, Michael Kelley, John Stevens, and Charlie Morse. Also present were Town Manager Steve Mackenzie (6:50 p.m.), Utility Superintendent James Russo, and Gerard LaVarnway. The meeting started at 6:31 p.m.

Approval of Minutes from Previous Meeting.

Motion by Mr. Morse, seconded by Mr. Donahue, to approve the January 12, 2026 meeting minutes. Mr. Fitzhugh has a couple of corrections. The IRP has been filed with the Public Utility Commission (PUC) but the Certificate of Public Good for the utility pole relocation project has not. In addition, Mr. Fitzhugh had reported at the last meeting that a recloser had broken at the substation and this resulted in a prolonged power outage. It was subsequently discovered that the recloser had been put out of commission by a broken wire and would not have to be replaced.

Motion to approve the amended minutes passed 5-0-0.

Meeting of the Electric Commission.

Northfield Electric Department (NED) Upcoming Projects

Integrated Resource Plan (IRP). Mr. Fitzhugh has been meeting with representatives from Vermont Public Power Authority (VPPSA) and the PUC to resolve any questions about the IRP.

Utility Pole Realignment Project. Mr. Fitzhugh said the Certificate of Public Good for this project should be filed this week. This will be followed by a twenty-one (21) day public comment period.

Grid Resiliency Grant. Mr. Fitzhugh has been working with Utility Superintendent James Russo on obtaining accurate equipment rental pricing for this project. Mr. Fitzhugh is finishing up on the grant application forms and they should be submitted soon.

King Street Battery Storage Project. Mr. Fitzhugh recently met with representatives from Lightshift and they plan to start working on the site this coming March and April. The dilapidated buildings in the work zone will be razed and the site will need to be connected to NED power by May 1, 2026. Mr. Russo added that some borings will be done in the area this week so see if there is any ledge that might interfere with the construction process.

Smart Meters. Mr. Fitzhugh said some test meters have been installed and the informational flyers were included in the last utility bills. If the initial tests go well, full deployment should start in April 2026

Other Business. Mr. Russo said two (2) weeks ago a utility pole was hit by a possibly intoxicated driver on North Main Street. The pole will need to be replaced and a three-hour planned outage will need to be scheduled so the NED service lines can be connected to the new pole. The costs should be covered by the driver's insurance.

Meeting of the Water & Wastewater Commission

Northfield Water & Sewer Department Upcoming Projects

New Champlain Farms Waterline. Mr. Russo said that the owner of Champlain Farms (Wesco, Inc.) wants to expand the building towards the river so an existing water line will need to be replaced. All State Construction will be doing the work and they will provide a quote this week. As this is private property and part of the Main Street Bridge Replacement Project, the Vermont Agency of Transportation (VTrans) will reimburse Northfield for all project costs, which might include the removal of contaminated soil.

Wastewater Treatment Facility (WWTF) Update. Mr. Russo said the WWTF is operating well but he will need to speak to Manager Mackenzie soon regarding some plant equipment that will need to be replaced.

Manager Mackenzie arrived at this time.

Next Utility Commissions Joint Meeting. As this year's Town Meeting will not include a Monday evening open session, the Utility Commissions will meet on their regular meeting night on Monday, March 2, 2026. As Mr. Morse is not running for reelection as a Select Board member, this will be his last meeting as a Utility Commissioner. In addition, Mr. Donahue will continue to serve as a member of the Electric Commission but not on the Water & Wastewater Commission.

Adjournment. Motion by Mr. Morse, seconded by Mr. Fitzhugh, to adjourn.
Motion passed 5-0-0.

The Board adjourned at 6:54 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kenneth L. McCann

Kenneth L. McCann, Acting Clerk