

TOWN OF NORTHFIELD, VERMONT
SELECT BOARD REGULAR MEETING
Minutes of January 27, 2026

- I. ROLL CALL.** Chair Charles Morse, Board members K. David Maxwell, Lydia Petty, Merry Shernock, and John Stevens. Also present were Acting Clerk Kenneth McCann, Kaitlyn Keating (Accessibility, Walkability, and Pedestrian Safety Task Force), Lorna Doney, James Tautfest, Curtis Dudley, Jeffrey Elrick, Gerard LaVarnway, Susan Stillinger, Carrie McCool, Don Doyon, Gary Circosta, Kristin Pollard, 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):

- a. **Kaitlyn Keating, Accessibility, Walkability, and Pedestrian Safety Task Force: "Cabin Fever Block Party."** (7:01 p.m.) Ms. Keating said that this winter celebration, which was funded by an AARP grant, will be held on Wednesday, March 4, 2026. She said this event is especially designed for those who usually don't go out in the wintertime and therefore will be universally accessible. Norwich University will be hosting this event at Plumley Armory and Sabine Field and the festivities will end with a lantern parade. More information regarding the day's activities will be coming out soon as the details are finalized. The poster now on display includes a QR code in order to register for the lantern making classes that will be held at the Northfield Middle & High School (NMHS) the weekend of February 7-8, 2026. These classes are free but you do need to register in advance. Some lanterns already are on display at the TDS Telecom window on Depot Square. NU will be providing the food for the event. Ms. Keating then thanked Economic Development Director Tom Davis for helping the Task Force obtain the AARP grant and also recognized event sponsors Kennedy's Flowers, Norwich University, TDS Telecom, etc. The Select Board members were very supportive of this event and thanked the Task Force members for obtaining the grant funds and for organizing the festivities.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- a. **January 8, 2026 (Special Meeting).** (7:10 p.m.) Motion by Board member Shernock, seconded by Board member Stevens, to approve the minutes. Board member Shernock found a number of typos that will be corrected. **Motion to approve the amended minutes passed 5-0-0.**
- b. **January 13, 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.**
- c. **January 13, 2026 (Regular Meeting).** (7:13 p.m.) Motion by Board member Shernock, seconded by Board member Stevens, to approve the minutes. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
- d. **January 15, 2026 (Special Meeting).** (7:15 p.m.) Motion by Board member Shernock, seconded by Board member Stevens, to approve the minutes. Board member Shernock found a couple of typos that will be corrected **Motion to approve the amended minutes passed 5-0-0.**

- e. **January 20, 2026 (Special Meeting). (7:16 p.m.)** Motion by Board member Shernock, seconded by Board member Stevens, to approve the minutes. Board members Petty and Shernock had some corrections. **Motion to approve the amended minutes passed 5-0-0.**

V. APPROVAL OF BILLS

- a. **Approval of Warrant #14-26 & #14-26A-B. (7:17 p.m.)** Motion by Board member Shernock, seconded by Board member Stevens, to approve Warrant #14-26 & #14-26A-B in the amount of \$163,817.05. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
- b. **Receipt of Biweekly Payroll through January 18, 2026. (7:18 p.m.)** Motion by Board member Shernock, seconded by Board member Stevens, to receive the biweekly payroll in the amount of \$118,546.97. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

VI. SELECT BOARD

- a. **Approval of 2026 Northfield Town Meeting Warning. (7:21 p.m.)** Chair Morse noted that due to voter action taken last year, this year's Town Meeting will be Australian Ballot only. Motion by Board member Maxwell, seconded by Board member Shernock, to approve the 2026 Northfield Town Meeting Warning. Board member Maxwell asked if the article wording for the Mayo Healthcare partial property tax exemption had changed since the last time it was on the warning. He was told that the wording was the same. In addition, the amount requested for the GMT commuter bus service has stayed at \$21,000 from the beginning. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
- b. **Appointment of Grants Authorized Representative. (7:24 p.m.)** Chair Morse said Manager Steven Mackenzie would like to be formally appointed to replace the former manager as the Grants Authorized Representative. Motion by Board member Shernock, seconded by Board member Stevens, to appoint Interim Town Manager Steven Mackenzie as Authorized Representative for all Grant projects for which the resignation of the former Town Manager has created a vacancy. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

VII. TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT. (7:25 p.m.) Manager Mackenzie could not be present tonight but he did provide a written report detailing his actions since the last Select Board regular meeting.

VIII. BOARD MEMBERS' COMMENTS, CONCERNS, QUESTIONS

- a. **Memorial Park Skating Rink. (7:25 p.m.)** Board member Maxwell wanted to thank Chair Morse, Utility Superintendent James Russo, Jeremy Drown, and all those others involved for their efforts in setting up a skating rink at Memorial Park. Chair Morse said it looks like the rink will be the scene for a lot of fun this winter. Board member Maxwell said it is a great asset for the community
- b. **Electric Vehicle (EV) Charger. (7:27 p.m.)** Board member Stevens would like the EV charger on Depot Square cleared of snow so that it can be accessed.
- c. **Snow Plowing. (7:28 p.m.)** Board member Stevens thanked the Highway crew for keeping the roads clear of snow during very cold weather. However, he felt the front entrance to the Brown Public Library should have been plowed out sooner than it was.

- d. **Municipal Pool Painting Job. (7:28 p.m.)** Board member Shernock asked if it has been determined whether the paint job at the Municipal Pool, which Pool Director Shannon Palone said was substandard work that needs to be redone, is still under warranty. Chair Morse believes that some of the work, such as the base coat, is still under warranty. Manager Mackenzie will be contacting the contractor about redoing the work.
- e. **Union Brook Road Parking Problems. (7:30 p.m.)** Board member Shernock asked if the parking problem discussed at the previous meeting had been resolved. Chair Morse said that the car that was blocking the road has been removed but other vehicles remain in the municipality's right-of-way for highway maintenance, snow removal, etc. Board member Shernock said this matter must remain a Select Board priority until it is resolved. She thought perhaps the interim police chief could provide the Select Board members with an update on how he has been addressing this concern.
- f. **Highway Department Salt Shortage. (7:34 p.m.)** Chair Morse said the Highway Department has purchased additional road sand but there is a statewide salt shortage. He hopes that next winter the State of Vermont will purchase and store a sufficient amount of salt that can be provided to local highway departments when needed. Perhaps the Vermont League of Cities & Towns will lobby the state legislature to ensure this. Board member Maxwell thought it might be good for Northfield to construct a larger salt shed so that more salt can be purchased this summer and stored before next winter comes.

IX. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (UNSCHEDULED)

- a. **James Tautfest: Union Brook Parking Situation. (7:40 p.m.)** Mr. Tautfest is a forty-year Northfield resident and he feels that state law does provide authority for the removal of cars blocking traffic on municipal highways. He suggested that a "No Parking" sign be put on Union Brook Road and if there were violations, the offending vehicles should be towed away. Mr. Tautfest said there now is a dangerous situation and the municipality does have a responsibility to take action. Chair Morse said our interim police chief is looking into the situation and is hopeful that the situation can be resolved soon. He added that a revision in the local traffic ordinance probably would be required so that any new "No Parking" signs would be enforceable. Mr. Tautfest reviewed the local traffic ordinance and agreed that it should be revised in order to strengthen enforcement of parking violations through higher penalties, etc.

X. ADJOURNMENT. (7:47 p.m.) Motion by Board member Shernock, seconded by Board member Stevens, to adjourn. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

The Board adjourned at 7:48 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kenneth L. McCann

Kenneth L. McCann, Acting Clerk

A video recording of this meeting is available at: <https://youtu.be/7byeBAuXck>

These minutes are subject to approval at the next Select Board regular meeting.