

**TOWN OF NORTHFIELD, VERMONT
SELECT BOARD REGULAR MEETING
Minutes of March 24, 2026**

- I. ROLL CALL.** Chair K. David Maxwell, Board members Tim Davis, Lydia Petty, Merry Shernock, and John Stevens. Also present were Interim Town Manager Steven Mackenzie, Acting Clerk Kenneth McCann, Thomas Davis (Economic Development Director), Scott Kerner (Good Measure Brewing), Kenneth Goslant (The Stic), Lorna Doney, Mary Smith, Bill Clements (Accessibility, Walkability, and Pedestrian Safety [AWPS] Task Force), Kristin Pollard, James Tautfest, Kaitlyn Keating, DeLane McInvenc (AWPS Task Force), Tim Swartz (AWPS Task Force), Susan Barnard, Dan Anderson (AWPS Task Force), Carolyn Stevens, Brian Massey, Matt Romei, Clare LaFrance, and Rhonda Doyon.

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

- II. SET/ADJUST AGENDA. (7:01 p.m.)** There were no changes to the posted agenda.

III. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (SCHEDULED):

- a. Scott Kerner, Good Measure Brewing: East Street Closure for Anniversary Celebration. (7:02 p.m.)** Mr. Kerner is requesting that East Street be closed to through traffic from 11:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. on Saturday, June 20, 2026 so that Good Measure can hold its annual anniversary celebration. He said the event was held last year without any problems and he again is working with Northfield emergency services in order to ensure that this will be "a safe and fun day for our community and our patrons." Board member Petty believes there was a minor problem with detour signage last year. Mr. Kerner said new signage has been purchased that will work much better. Board member Stevens asked if there would be live music. Mr. Kerner confirmed that there would be a band. There were no objections from the Select Board members. Manager Mackenzie has the authority to provide permission for the temporary closure.
- b. Thomas Davis, Economic Development Director: Amtrak Service update. (7:05 p.m.)** Mr. Davis said he started the process of trying to reestablish train service to Northfield in the fall of 2022. He believes the community's location and the presence of Norwich University (NU) makes Northfield a viable Amtrak service stop. A survey was conducted that indicated local support for reestablishing train service. In October 2022, Governor Phil Scott was sent a letter from the municipality asking that Northfield be considered for a future Amtrak stop. Since adding an additional train stop might result in rail travel delays (however slight), the transportation boards of Massachusetts and Connecticut had the right to object to adding any new Vermonter train stops. Mr. Davis was informed late last year that neither states' transportation boards raised any objections. He added that preliminary plans indicated that a 700-foot platform would be required for the train stop but he subsequently learned that a 300-foot platform would be acceptable. Two possible locations are being considering including the former train station location at 70 Depot Square. If that location proves unworkable, Mr. Davis thought a site south of Wall Street might be acceptable. He noted that the Vermont Agency of Transportation (VTrans) has indicated its support for this proposal and Mr. Davis would like to conduct a feasibility study that would determine the optimal train stop location, how a covered waiting shelter should be configured, the location of dedicated parking spaces, etc. Northfield Village Development also supports the municipality's efforts in this. Mr. Davis now would like confirmation that the Select Board members do support his efforts so that he can locate grant and other outside funding for the feasibility study. Once completed, the study would go to the Select Board members first for their review before being forwarded to VTrans and other involved parties. This process probably would take a minimum of two (2) years but Mr. Davis noted Vermont Senator Peter Welch is a big supporter of adding additional train stops in this state and that raises the possibility of federal funding becoming available. There also is VTrans funding available for public transportation projects like this one. Board member Petty asked if the feasibility study would include the recurrent issue of public parking on and around Depot Square. Mr. Davis confirmed that it would.

Board member Petty then asked about the estimated cost of the feasibility study. Mr. Davis felt it probably would cost in the range of \$20,000. The Select Board members then expressed their general support for Mr. Davis's efforts. Manager Mackenzie said the project does seem to be moving forward, which is a very positive sign. Bill Clements is a member of the Accessibility, Walkability, and Pedestrian Safety Task Force and he hoped that the presence of the new train platform and shelter would not preclude the possibility of a new pedestrian trail in the area. Mr. Davis said that should not be a problem. Chair Maxwell then thanked Mr. Davis for his presentation and all the work he has put into this project.

IV. LIQUOR CONTROL COMMISSION

a. Liquor License Renewals

- 1. Good Measure Brewing. (7:18 p.m.)** Motion by Board member Stevens, seconded by Board member Shernock, to approve the liquor license renewal. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
- 2. The Stic. (7:18 p.m.)** Motion by Board member Stevens, seconded by Board member Shernock, to approve the liquor license renewal. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

b. Outside Consumption Permits

- 1. Good Measure Brewing. (7:20 p.m.)** Motion by Board member Stevens, seconded by Board member Shernock, to approve the outside consumption permit. Board member Petty noted Good Measure will be using some public parking spaces to create outdoors seating. There was a Select Board discussion last year about the possibility of drafting a parklet policy with safety rules, etc. This issue was not resolved then but perhaps should be resurrected this year so that all dining establishments will be treated the same in future when similar requests are made. Lorna Doney noted Good Measure is in close proximity to the only laundromat in town and she is concerned that not enough parking spaces will be available for its patrons. Board member Petty believes Good Measure has been working with the laundromat owner in order to limit the impact of the reduced number of spaces. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
- 2. The Stic. (7:25 p.m.)** Motion by Board member Stevens, seconded by Board member Shernock, to approve the outside consumption permit. It was noted the outdoor seating will be on private property and no public parking spaces would be affected. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

V. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- a. March 10, 2026 (Regular Meeting). (7:28 p.m.)** Motion by Board member Stevens, seconded by Board member Shernock, to approve the minutes. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
- b. March 11, 2026 (Special Meeting). (7:28 p.m.)** Motion by Board member Stevens, seconded by Board member Shernock, to approve the minutes. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
- c. March 18, 2026 (Special Meeting). (7:29 p.m.)** Motion by Board member Shernock, seconded by Board member Stevens, to approve the minutes. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

VI. APPROVAL OF BILLS

- a. Approval of Warrant #18-26 & #18-26A-G. (7:30 p.m.)** Motion by Board member Shernock, seconded by Board member Stevens, to approve Warrant #18-26 & #18-26A-G in the amount of \$145,720.99. Board member Maxwell asked if all the expenditures associated with the "Ice Block Party" were covered by grant funds. Manager Mackenzie believes that is the case but he will get confirmation. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

- b. **Receipt of Biweekly Payroll through March 15, 2026. (7:30 p.m.)** Motion by Board member Shernock, seconded by Board member Stevens, to receive the biweekly payroll in the amount of \$109,719.57. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

VII. SELECT BOARD

- a. **Appointments of Various Town Officials. (7:31 p.m.)**
 - 1. **Conservation Commission.** Motion by Board member Shernock, seconded by Board member Stevens, to reappoint Russ Barrett and Mariela Swiech to the Conservation Commission. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
 - 2. **Development Review Board.** Motion by Board member Shernock, seconded by Board member Stevens, to reappoint Kevin Pecor to the Development Review Board. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
 - 3. **Dog River Park Committee.** Motion by Board member Shernock, seconded by Board member Stevens, to reappoint Kim Adams to the Dog River Park Committee. One committee position remains vacant at this time. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
 - 4. **Energy Committee.** Motion by Board member Shernock, seconded by Board member Stevens, to reappoint Sheila Bannister and Chandler Murch to the Energy Committee. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
 - 5. **Town Forest Stewardship Committee.** Motion by Board member Shernock, seconded by Board member Stevens, to reappoint Virginia Kunkel and Andrew Padilla and appoint Dylan Alsbach to the Town Forest Stewardship Committee. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
 - 6. **First Constable.** Motion by Board member Shernock, seconded by Board member Stevens, to reappoint Richard Wobby as First Constable. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
 - 7. **Grand Juror.** There were no applicants for this vacant position.
 - 8. **Tree Warden.** Motion by Board member Shernock, seconded by Board member Stevens, to reappoint Russ Barrett as Tree Warden. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
 - 9. **NEKCV Broadband (formerly CVFiber) Delegate.** Motion by Board member Shernock, seconded by Board member Stevens, to reappoint Thomas Davis as the NEKCV Broadband Delegate. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
 - 10. **Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission (CVRPC) Representative.** Motion by Board member Shernock, seconded by Board member Stevens, to reappoint Royal DeLegge as the CVRPC Representative and appoint Steven Mackenzie as the alternate representative. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
 - 11. **CVRPC Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) Representative.** Motion by Board member Shernock, seconded by Board member Stevens, to reappoint Thomas Davis as the CVRPC TAC Representative and appoint Steven Mackenzie as the alternate representative. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
- b. **Appointment of Water & Wastewater Commissioner. (7:33 p.m.)** Motion by Board member Petty, seconded by Board member Shernock, to appoint Stephen Fitzhugh as a Water & Wastewater Commissioner. As this is an elected position, Mr. Fitzhugh will serve until the next Town Meeting Day. He then can choose to seek election for the remaining two years of this three-year term. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
- c. **Appointment of Deputy Health Officer. (7:33 p.m.)** Motion by Board member Shernock, seconded by Board member Stevens, to appoint Crystal L. Peterson as Deputy Health Officer. Board member Shernock noted Ms. Peterson is the Director of Nursing at Mayo Healthcare and it will be good to have someone with a medical background again serving in this position. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

- d. Authorize Brown Public Library (BPL) Repairs. (7:34 p.m.)** Manager Mackenzie said he was notified recently by Library Director Sherri Brickey that the handicap door opener for the downstairs entrance had stopped working. He contacted the original vendor to fix the problem and received a \$4,303.93 quote. He also obtained a \$25,400 quote to upgrade the building's HVAC (Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning) Control System, which is old and has been causing a number of problems. He believes there are funds in the BPL Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) budget to cover these expenses and would like Select Board authorization to proceed. Motion by Board member Petty, seconded by Board member Stevens, to authorize expending BPL CIP funds for the repairs indicated above. Board member Petty believes some American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds were designated for upgrades to the Community Room. Perhaps they could be used for these repairs. Manager Mackenzie is unsure whether such funds are available in the current year budget but will look into this. He knows that in the next fiscal year, CIP funds were allocated for various BPL building upgrades. Board member Petty asked if the HVAC upgrades would reduce the noise it generates when operating. Sometimes the noise is so bad during Community Room meetings that it drowns out discussion. Manager Mackenzie will see if that is a possibility. Board member Petty thought it was a waste to have an air conditioning system that has to be turned off when most needed due to excessive noise. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
- e. Approve Interim Manager Contract Extension.** Manager Mackenzie said he is willing to extend his current contract as interim manager for one month to May 1, 2026. If all goes well with the current manager search process, that would mean he could assist with the transition period after the permanent manager has been hired. Motion by Board member Shernock, seconded by Board member Stevens, to approve the interim manager contract extension. Board member Petty appreciates that Manager Mackenzie is willing to work longer than he originally planned so that there will no gap period between the town managers. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

VIII. TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT. (7:43 p.m.) Manager Mackenzie had provided the Select Board members with a written report on his activities/actions since the last regular meeting (03/10/2026). He reported that a "No Kings" rally will be held on the Common on Saturday, March 28, 2026 from 9:30 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. The organizers met with Manager Mackenzie and Northfield Police Department (NPD) Corporal Brian Gosselin to discuss the logistics. Such events do not require a formal permit but Manager Mackenzie did provide his permission for this use of the Common. In addition, Manager Mackenzie provided NU with permission to close Central Street southward of Washington Street on Saturday, April 18, 2026 from 12:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. This will allow them to hold a retirement celebration for William McCollough, the current Commandant of Cadets and Vice President of Student Affairs, while better ensuring the safety of those attending the event. There are many precedents for this action. In addition, Manager Mackenzie held a recent meeting with Vermont Emergency Management Regional Coordinator Sid Pollock that was also attended by the heads of our local emergency services, utility departments, and highway department in order to discuss needed updates to our Local Emergency Management Plan. Another meeting with the representatives from the union now representing Northfield Ambulance Service (NAS) employees was held on March 17, 2026. Much progress is being made on the initial NAS union contract and the next negotiation session will be held on April 7, 2026. Manager Mackenzie then said that engineers from Aldrich + Elliott will be present at the next Select Board regular meeting (04/14/26) in order to discuss their twenty-year evaluation report of the Northfield Wastewater Treatment Facility. He added that Utility Superintendent James Russo recently was informed by the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) that due to the completion of local stormwater projects, there are no longer any Combined Sewer Overflows (CSO) located in Northfield. As for future projects, Manager Mackenzie said he is working to create a job advertisement for a permanent police chief that he hopes will be published widely before the end of the week.

IX. BOARD MEMBERS' COMMENTS, CONCERNS, QUESTIONS

- a. Mud Season Road Materials. (7:50 p.m.)** Board member Davis said he met with Manager Mackenzie and Highway Foreman Karl Bailey about the possibility of changing the road materials put down on the backroads during Mud Season. If no changes can be made this year due to budgetary concerns, he would like this discussed during the next budget sessions when the FY 2027-2028 Highway Department budget is drafted.
- b. Open Meeting Law. (7:52 p.m.)** Board member Shernock would like there to be some in-person training sessions held so that all committee chairs as well as other interested committee members are made aware of recent changes in the Open Meeting Law. She felt that in-person training sessions where questions can be asked and answered work much better than online training.
- c. Falls Trailer Park Zoning Violation update. (7:58 p.m.)** Board member Shernock asked if the recent concerns expressed by a Falls Trailer Park neighbor about improper setbacks, etc. had been resolved. Manager Mackenzie said the process is still ongoing and Zoning Administrator Mitch Osiecki has been in contact with the trailer park owner about possible zoning regulation violations. Manager Mackenzie plans to meet with Mr. Osiecki to discuss the current situation and explore what local options are available to resolve the matter.
- d. Northfield Falls Covered Bridges. (8:02 p.m.)** Board member Shernock said the four covered bridges in Northfield Falls are in need of urgent repair due to damages from oversized vehicles, storms, etc. She understands that this would cost a considerable amount of money but it does need to be done. Manager Mackenzie said he was recently contacted by someone who was willing to work on upgrading one of the covered bridges as a demonstration project. Manager Mackenzie will try to contact this person to see if this was a serious proposal. Chair Maxwell said VTrans did conduct an evaluation of the covered bridges that was quite thorough and was supposed to be followed by state funding for needed repairs. Unfortunately, the VTrans funds that were allocated for statewide historic bridges dried up and there is no certainty about when they will become available again in future. Board member Petty thought it would be good to get an update on the status of this promised funding. Board member Davis noted that the Slaughterhouse Road Covered Bridge still needs some additional work in order to prevent further water damage from stormwater coming off the road. The road also should be regraded to redirect stormwater away from the bridge.
- e. Municipal Building Conference Room Upgrade. (8:03 p.m.)** Chair Maxwell commended Manager Mackenzie for purchasing and installing a large television screen in the room that can be used for board meetings, training sessions, etc. This is a big improvement from having to use a small laptop screen.

X. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (UNSCHEDULED)

- a. Jim Tautfest: Union Brook Traffic Obstruction. (8:05 p.m.)** Mr. Tautfest said a resident on the road (Donald Smith) continues to park his vehicles in the traveled portion of the road, which creates a traffic hazard and also makes it impossible for the Highway Department to snowplow. Mr. Tautfest has reviewed the local traffic ordinance and believes the Highway Department already has the authority to put up "No Parking" signs where and when they are needed. The Town Manager also has this authority. Mr. Tautfest said many people are being inconvenienced daily by the current situation, which is potentially dangerous to drivers. He felt the municipality should delay no further and put up signs stating that parking is illegal at that location and violators will have their vehicles towed. Manager Mackenzie said this has been a perplexing issue that he inherited from the previous town manager. He has spoken to this individual on numerous occasions and been assured that he will comply. He has asked Board member Davis, who travels the road daily, to keep him informed of the situation. If voluntary compliance is not forthcoming, more stringent actions will be taken. Manager Mackenzie also will review the traffic ordinance to determine how much authority he has in this matter. Board member Shernock would like Mr. Smith given a hard deadline for removing his vehicles from the road. Manager Mackenzie said he has made it clear to Mr. Smith that his time is running out. Board member Davis said the situation has improved somewhat in recent weeks but there has been some backsliding on occasion.

Chair Maxwell thanked Manager Mackenzie for his efforts and hoped some resolution will come soon.

- b. Carolyn Stevens: Stony Brook Road Covered Bridge. (8:15 p.m.)** Ms. Stevens noted that in addition to the Northfield Falls covered bridges, there also is one on Stoney Brook Road (aka Moseley Covered Bridge) that also suffers periodic damage from trucks and other over-sized vehicles. She would like to be sure that this bridge will be included when any future plans for covered bridge upgrades are discussed.
- c. Kristin Pollard: Online Abuse. (8:17 p.m.)** Ms. Pollard said someone is logging onto Select Board meetings using logon names that are directly insulting to her. The person responsible also uses the Zoom chat feature to add additional insulting comments as well as posting her personal information. Ms. Pollard believes she knows who is responsible and has contacted Zoom's harassment bureau about this. Manager Mackenzie said he is aware of this problem and has contacted our attorney to see what the municipality can do to confront this. He personally believes that people logging into public meetings should be required to login with their real first and last names. Board member Petty doesn't believe that requirement can be enforced but it might be possible to disable the Zoom's chat feature if it is being abused. The municipality's public participation policy does specify that personal attacks are not allowed during public meetings. Mary Smith said that the City of Montpelier had to develop a policy code for remote meetings due to similar problems. Ms. Stevens suggested that Norwich University's Senator Patrick Leahy School of Cybersecurity and advanced Computing might be able to help with this problem. Manager Mackenzie said he would work to resolve this matter before the next regular meeting.

XI. EXECUTIVE SESSION. Motion by Board member Stevens, seconded by Board member Shernock, to go into executive session, in accordance with 1 VSA 313 (a)(1)], in order to discuss a legal matter with Manager Mackenzie present. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

The Board went into executive session at 8:25 p.m.

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

The Board came out of executive session at 8:42 p.m.

Motion by Board member Shernock, seconded by Board member Stevens, to accept the recommendation from Town Attorney Kevin Kite to settle the Boullion-Rogers property tax litigation as he indicated. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

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

The Board adjourned at 8:43 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kenneth L. McCann

Kenneth L. McCann, Acting Clerk

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

These minutes were approved at the Select Board regular meeting of April 14, 2026.