

**TOWN OF NORTHFIELD, VERMONT
SELECT BOARD REGULAR MEETING
Minutes of April 14, 2026**

- I. ROLL CALL.** Chair K. David Maxwell, Board members Tim Davis (absent), Lydia Petty, Merry Shernock, and John Stevens. Also present were Interim Town Manager Steven Mackenzie, Acting Clerk Kenneth McCann, Thomas Davis (Economic Development Director), Jeffrey Lewis (Aldrich + Elliott, PC), Mallory Duncan (Aldrich + Elliott, PC), Karen Boyce (The Veterans Place), Kristen Pollard, Mary Smith, KS Ward, Rhonda Doyon, Susan Stillinger, Matt Romei, Harriet Hirst, Gerard LaVarnway, Carolyn Stevens, and Elroy C. Hill.

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

- II. SET/ADJUST AGENDA. (7:01 p.m.)** Chair Maxwell would like to add the action item "Appointment of Town Manager" to the agenda. In addition, Kenneth Strong was to address the Select Board members tonight but is not present.

III. SELECT BOARD

- a. Appointment of Town Manager. (7:02 p.m.)** Motion by Board member Shernock, seconded by Board member Stevens, to appoint Mary Smith as Town Manager and to authorize Chair Maxwell to execute the employment contract. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**

IV. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (SCHEDULED):

- a. Jeffrey Lewis & Mallory Duncan, Aldrich + Elliott, PC: Northfield Wastewater Treatment Facility (WWTF) – Twenty (20) Year Evaluation Report Briefing. (7:02 p.m.)** Manager Mackenzie said that this report had been completed in November 2024 but he asked that the engineers responsible address the Select Board members tonight to provide an in-person presentation and highlight what actions need to be taken in coming years to make sure the Northfield WWTF continues to operate efficiently and in compliance with state and federal regulations. Mr. Lewis said the twenty-year evaluation report was developed so that Northfield officials can plan and budget for whatever facility upgrades that will become necessary in coming years. Ms. Duncan said the WWTF operations were reviewed in order to ensure that all requirements for a state discharge permit were met. They also evaluated the sewer lines that were connected to the facility and they met with the WWTF operators to discuss any concerns that they might have. Ms. Duncan said it was determined that most sewer manholes in the community are in fairly good condition but there are a few that will require replacement and these have been identified. She added that the sewer lines also are in fairly good shape with one notable exception. There is one sewer line in the vicinity of Sherman Avenue that is sticking out of the Dog River riverbank that should be replaced as soon as possible. However, this one bad pipe is the exception rather than the rule. Ms. Duncan stated that the pump stations, including the one on Jarvis Lane, are in good condition. As for the WWTF itself, after their own inspection and by talking with the WWTF operators, they developed a list of required upgrades that should be phased in over the next few years. This list along with a work schedule and cost estimates were included in the report. One serious problem is that the operators now have to carry heavy bags of grit up two sets of stairs and this needs to be changed for their health and safety. Ms. Duncan said that the facility's wet well and pump room are in good shape but some of the equipment will need to be replaced in coming years. This is the same situation for the secondary treatment stage operations. Ms. Duncan said the post-equalization tank's pump will need to be replaced in the near future. In addition, the sludge storage tanks are aging and also should be relocated further away from the buildings where the operators work. Ms. Duncan noted that the WWTF garage is unheated and this should be changed when there is a major upgrade of the facility. Board member Shernock has heard that sludge biodigesters could be used to produce both heat and energy. Mr. Lewis said the cost to install the necessary machinery probably would be cost-prohibitive for a town the size of Northfield. He said there were a number of much less expensive options available for energy use savings. Mr. Lewis said that they are recommending that the municipality should budget about \$125,000 each year for capital improvements. However, should any major upgrades be required in coming years, it probably would be necessary to bond to cover the expense. Manager Mackenzie said it would be good to get specific recommendations for what needs to be done in the next couple of years so that the funds can be budgeted properly.

Mr. Lewis said there is nothing at the WWTF that needs to be addressed immediately but there are several items that would need to be resolved in coming years. He added that the state revolving loan fund would be the proper source for funding for any major upgrades and Mr. Lewis said Aldrich + Elliott would be willing to assist with the process. There are other state and federal grant fund opportunities that become available periodically in order to protect the regional watershed, etc. Mr. Lewis said the exposed pipe near Sherman Avenue probably should be addressed in coming months either on its own or as part of a larger project. Board member Shernock said she agreed with the conclusion in the report that the WWTF operators are doing an outstanding job. Ms. Duncan confirmed that they do a very good job of keeping the facility in good condition and operating properly. Board member Stevens said there are plans to replace some of the riverbed sewer lines near the Main Street Bridge as part of the bridge replacement project. He asked if these plans were included in the report. Mr. Lewis said these underwater pipes were not evaluated as part of their study. Board member Petty thanked Mr. Lewis and Ms. Duncan for helping to explain some of the more complex matters included in the written report. She said having a list of prioritized upgrades will be very useful for future budget planning. Chair Maxwell also thanked Mr. Lewis and Ms. Duncan for their very informative presentation.

- b. Karen Boyce, The Veterans Place: Coin Drop Request. (7:35 p.m.)** Ms. Boyce had previously (02/24/26) asked for Select Board permission to hold a coin drop on the morning of Saturday, May 2, 2026. As this is the same day as Norwich University's commencement celebration, they then had asked for Ms. Boyce to interact with NU officials to determine whether or not they would have any objections due to traffic delays, etc. Manager Mackenzie said he has spoken to NU Vice President of Facilities Operations & Conference Services Bizhan Yahyazadeh and was informed he had no objections. Ms. Boyce said she herself spoke with Bill Passalacqua and the NU Commencement Committee and the members were all supportive of her plans. She added that since the commencement ceremonies start at 10:00 a.m., the coin drop would start at 8:00 a.m. and finish at 10:00 a.m. Chair Maxwell thought that an ending time of 9:30 a.m. would be preferable to avoid any last minute confusion. Ms. Boyce had no objection. She said she would advertise the coin drop widely and will use those advertisements to explain how the collected funds would be spent and to encourage those who don't have money on hand to make future donations. A bottle drive also will be held in Kenyon's parking lot that day. Motion by Board member Shernock, seconded by Board member Stevens, to authorize The Veterans Place to hold a coin drop on Saturday, May 2, 2026 from 8:00 a.m. to 9:30 a.m. Board member Petty believes the Select Board members have been very selective in past years in providing permission for coin drops but she would not object to this one since NU officials do support it. Board member Shernock has concerns about how the coin drop will affect the out-of-state traffic for NU commencement but felt a full evaluation of the impact can be determined afterwards. Ms. Boyce believes that traffic is already slowed down by the commencement visitor traffic. She added that this is the first coin drop The Veterans Place has conducted and it will be a good learning experience. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**

V. LIQUOR CONTROL COMMISSION (7:42 p.m.)

a. Liquor License Renewals

- 1. Convenience Plus (NU Beverage LCC).** Motion by Board member Stevens, seconded by Board member Shernock, to approve the liquor license renewal. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**
- 2. The Woods Lodge.** Motion by Board member Stevens, seconded by Board member Shernock, to approve the liquor license renewal. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**

b. Outside Consumption Permit

- 1. The Woods Lodge.** Motion by Board member Stevens, seconded by Board member Shernock, to approve the outside consumption permit. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**

VI. APPROVAL OF MINUTES (7:44 p.m.)

- a. March 23, 2026 (Special Meeting).** Motion by Board member Stevens, seconded by Board member Shernock, to approve the minutes. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**
- b. March 24, 2026 (Regular Meeting).** Motion by Board member Stevens, seconded by Board member Shernock, to approve the minutes. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**

- c. **April 1, 2026 (Special Meeting).** Motion by Board member Stevens, seconded by Board member Shernock, to approve the minutes. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**
- d. **April 6, 2026 (Special Meeting).** Motion by Board member Stevens, seconded by Board member Shernock, to approve the minutes. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**

VII. APPROVAL OF BILLS

- a. **Approval of Warrant #19-26 & #19-26A-D. (7:48 p.m.)** Motion by Board member Shernock, seconded by Board member Stevens, to approve Warrant #19-26 & #19-26A-D in the amount of \$833,736.27. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**
- b. **Approval of Warrant #19-26E. (7:49 p.m.)** Motion by Board member Stevens, seconded by Board member Shernock, to approve Warrant #19-26E in the amount of \$107,373.21. Chair Maxwell noted that this is a payment on a bank loan. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**
- c. **Receipt of Biweekly Payroll through March 29, 2026. (7:49 p.m.)** Motion by Board member Shernock, seconded by Board member Stevens, to receive the biweekly payroll in the amount of \$98,499.06. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**

VIII. SELECT BOARD (cont.)

- a. **Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) Grant Application Authorization. (7:49 p.m.)** Economic Development Director Thomas Davis has a grant proposal to present to the Select Board members but first he wanted to provide his own welcome to Mary Smith as the new Town Manager. Mr. Davis would like Select Board authorization to submit a letter of interest for a BRIC grant, which is a federal program that was recently reinstated. The grant application would be in the range of \$500,000 to \$600,000 and the funds would be used for flood mitigation measures on Water Street near the Norwich University (NU) rugby field and Mayo Healthcare. In addition, the funds could be used for a FEMA buyout of the last remaining riverside private property on Water Street. Mr. Davis said the first step in the grant process is to submit a letter of interest, which must be sent by this Friday (04/17/26). The grant would require a twenty-five percent (25%) local match but Mr. Davis noted that American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds already have been reserved for this purpose. He added that there are other funding sources possible for the match amount but immediate access to the ARPA funds would make the grant application more attractive. Motion by Board member Shernock, seconded by Board member Stevens, to authorize Economic Development Director Thomas Davis to submit a letter of interest for a BRIC Grant application. Board member Petty asked if there is a budget breakdown for the grant funds. Mr. Davis said this would be developed later in the process. Board member Petty would be interested to learn if NU would be willing to contribute funds towards the local match as it would benefit directly from the project. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**
- b. **Capital Expense Note (2022 Cat Loader). (8:00 p.m.)** Motion by Board member Stevens, seconded by Board member Shernock, to approve the Capital Expense Note in the amount of \$89,600.00 at 4.50% interest; to approve the Capital Expense Borrowing Resolution; and to approve the No-Arbitrage and Use of Proceeds Certificate. Chair Maxwell said this is a refinancing an equipment purchase note. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**
- c. **Approval of Local Emergency Management Plan (LEMP). (8:01 p.m.)** Manager Mackenzie noted that this local plan needs to be updated annually. He recently held a joint meeting of the heads of the local emergency departments (Fire, Police, Ambulance, Utilities, and Highway) with Vermont Emergency Management (VEM) Regional Coordinator Sid Pollock to discuss what updates were needed to the document. These have all been included in the document provided to the Select Board members for approval. Manager Mackenzie is pleased that this update was a team effort this year. Motion by Board member Shernock, seconded by Board member Stevens, to approve the Local Emergency Management Plan as presented by management. Board member Petty believes this update has more information than previous versions and she is very pleased with the additions. She then asked if the current document can be approved now and needed updates made after Mary Smith takes over as Town Manager. She was told that would be done. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**
- d. **2026 Summer Infrastructure Projects. (8:04 p.m.)** Manager Mackenzie said he informed the Select Board members at the last meeting (03/24/26) that he planned to develop a list of planned infrastructure improvements for this coming summer. The list has been generated and has been provided to the Select Board members and posted on the municipal website so residents will be aware of what projects are planned this year.

Manager Mackenzie then briefly went over the list, which includes highway work on Bean Road, work on two small bridges located on Chamberlin Road, and street paving on Old Mill Hill Road, Pearl Street, and School Street. As for the Utilities departments, new water mains will be installed on Pearl Street and School Street. In addition, underground power lines will be installed between Water Street Extension and Terry Hill. As for the Main Street Waterline Installation and Cheney Field Water Tank Replacement projects, Manager Mackenzie said both projects should be completed by July 1, 2026.

IX. TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT. (8:10 p.m.) Manager Mackenzie had provided a full written report on his actions/activities since the last meeting, which included assisting Mr. Davis and Northfield Ambulance Service (NAS) Chief Meggan McCusker on their separate grant applications for (respectively) Vermont Route 12/12A sewer extension and for advanced defibrillators. In addition, Manager Mackenzie coordinated with Board member Tim Davis and Highway Foreman Karl Bailey on the application of new road materials on the backroads as a Mud Season experiment. He also worked with Town Forest Stewardship Committee member Bill Dell'Isola and Utilities Superintendent James Russo on possible strategies to improve Town Forest access at Cheney Field and other locations. Manager Mackenzie also contacted the pool painting contractor about fixing some problems with the work provided last year that is still under warranty. He also reported that the Cross Brothers Dam Removal Project is going forward for this year and that RFPs for the dam removal process should be advertised soon.

X. BOARD MEMBERS' COMMENTS, CONCERNS, QUESTIONS.

- a. North Main Street Paving. (8:20 p.m.)** Board member Stevens said Mr. Russo reported at last night's Utility Commissions meeting that North Main Street north of the bridge to Belknap Avenue will be repaved this year. He believes the former town manager said that would not be happening. Board member Petty said there has been some confusion over whether the road would be totally repaved or that only repairs would be made where the installation of new water mains tore up the street. Manager Mackenzie believes that the Vermont Agency of Transportation (VTrans) is planning to fully reconstruct and repave Vermont Route 12 in 2028 so any roadwork done before then will probably be temporary repairs.
- b. Pearl Street and School Street Infrastructure Work. (8:21 p.m.)** Board member Stevens hopes that the paving work on these streets will be done after the new water mains have been installed. Manager Mackenzie believes that is the plan.
- c. Vermont Covered Bridge Society. (8:22 p.m.)** Board member Shernock noted that this society has announced plans to provide USA 250th Anniversary Celebration flags to be mounted on all Vermont covered bridges. This includes the five (5) Northfield town-owned covered bridges on Cox Brook Road, Slaughterhouse Road, and Stony Brook Road. Board member Shernock hopes that any needed bridge repairs will be made before then. Manager Mackenzie said the Highway Subcommittee will be meeting this Friday morning (04/17/26) and covered bridge maintenance will be a discussion item.
- d. New Town Manager Welcome. (8:25 p.m.)** Chair Maxwell provided his own welcome to new town manager Mary Smith, who is attending tonight's meeting. Ms. Smith said she is very excited to get started.

XI. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (UNSCHEDULED)

- a. Matt Romei: Norwich University Regimental Band Performance. (8:27 p.m.)** Mr. Romei noted that the NU Regimental Band, which is the nation's oldest collegiate band, will be holding a concert in Mack Hall on Friday, April 17, 2026 at 7:30 p.m. This concert will celebrate this year's 250th Anniversary of American Independence.
- b. Kristen Pollard: Faulty Pedestrian Crossing Light. (8:29 p.m.)** Ms. Pollard said one of the pedestrian crossing lights at the North Main Street/Vine Street intersection is not working. Manager Mackenzie said he has spoken to Mr. Bailey about this and the repair company has been contacted.

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

The Board adjourned at 8:32 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kenneth L. McCann

Kenneth L. McCann, Acting Clerk

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

These minutes were revised and approved at the Select Board regular meeting of April 28, 2026.