

## **Joint Meeting of the Northfield Electric and Water & Wastewater Commissions Minutes of August 3, 2026**

**Roll Call.** Utility Commissioners Tim Davis (absent), Dennis Donahue, Steve Fitzhugh, Michael Kelley, and John Stevens. Also present were Director of Public Works James Russo, Michael Miller, and Gerard LaVarnway.

The meeting started at 6:30 p.m.

**Approval of Minutes from Previous Meeting.** Motion by Mr. Donahue, seconded by Mr. Kelley, to approve the minutes of June 1, 2026. **Motion passed 3-0-1, with Mr. Stevens abstaining.**

### **Meeting of the Electric Commission**

#### **Northfield Electric Department (NED) Project Status**

**Grid Resiliency Grant.** Mr. Fitzhugh said this grant is still in the works and will take some effort to get over the finish line. He didn't expect the grant funds to become available until next year at the earliest.

**The Veterans Place Tier 3 Project.** Mr. Fitzhugh said this project is all but completed. The Veterans Place leadership will need to submit all the required paperwork to get their reimbursement funds.

**King Street Battery Storage Project.** Mr. Russo said all the required sitework has been completed and it looks like the concrete slabs will be poured soon. Green Mountain Power (GMP) still needs to install the utility poles and Mr. Russo doesn't know the timeline for this. He confirmed that the old veterinarian building and other structures have been removed from the worksite.

**King Street Substation Reclosers.** Mr. Fitzhugh said the reclosers have been retested and all are in good shape.

**Utility Pole Realignment Project.** Mr. Fitzhugh said Mr. Russo and Manager Smith were able to resolve the railroad issues involved with this project but we are still waiting for Act 248 permit approval.

**Main Street Bridge Replacement Project.** Mr. Fitzhugh said all the pre-construction utility work has been completed. Mr. Russo said GMP still needed to take down old utility lines and that should be done soon.

**Integrated Resource Plan (IRP).** Mr. Fitzhugh said the MOU has been executed and we have an agreement with the Public Service Board.

**Smart Meters.** Mr. Fitzhugh said we are looking for a contractor to complete the smart meter installation process. Mr. Russo said about five hundred (500) have been installed so far and there should be about nineteen hundred (1,900) in place when the project is completed.

**Norwich University (NU) Cyber Fusion Center.** Mr. Fitzhugh said NU's Act 248 permit has been approved and solar panels have been installed on the new building. Mr. Russo said the new building meter also has been installed.

**Turkey Hill Net Metering Customer.** Mr. Fitzhugh said a discussion with GMP was able to work out all the customer's concerns.

## Meeting of the Water & Wastewater Commission

### Northfield Water & Sewer Department Project Status

**Cheney Field Water Tank Replacement Project.** Mr. Russo said the tank installation project has been completed and he and Manager Smith will be meeting with the project contractor this week to resolve any remaining concerns. This includes the removal of additional ledge from the site than was originally planned. Mr. Russo added that the Accessibility, Walkability, and Pedestrian Safety Task Force would like a one-day special Cheney Field accessibility event that will require bringing in portalets, temporary handicapped parking spaces, etc. Mr. Russo felt scheduling the event in autumn would be best due to the exceptional foliage views available there.

**Main Street Waterline Installation Project.** Mr. Russo said all the new water main has been installed and we are working with the project contractor to make sure all items on the punch list have been addressed including lawn restoration, etc. Due to other projects, they probably will not be back until the end of this month.

**Cross Brothers Dam Removal.** Mr. Russo said the dam itself has been fully removed and the riverbed sewer line was relined with rock. He said the project contractor has been doing a good job and should complete all their work by the end of this month.

**New Water Main Installation (Pearl Street and School Street).** Mr. Russo said this project has been delayed due to current understaffing in the Water & Sewer Department (see below). Mr. Stevens said that probably meant School Street will not be repaved this year. Mr. Russo suggested that Prospect Street, Byam Hill, and Hill Street be repaved instead. Mr. Stevens said the Highway Subcommittee will need to discuss this as there are a number of streets that also would benefit from repaving.

### Other Business.

**Wastewater Treatment Facility (WWTF) Update.** Mr. Russo said that due to a couple of brief power outages, some pump equipment will need to be replaced. The generator did not come online during the outage due to a blown fuse. Mr. Russo added that the WWTF is showing its age after twenty-two (22) years of service. Mr. Donahue said the Utility Commissioners will need to keep this in mind when the next Sewer Department budget is drafted. Mr. Russo noted that there is an exposed sewer line near Sherman Avenue that also will need to be addressed soon.

**Water & Sewer Department Vacancies.** Mr. Russo said two (2) of the four (4) Water & Sewer Department positions are now vacant and the positions are being advertised. We are now waiting for qualified persons to apply. He does wish the best to the two (2) former employees who left in order to start their own businesses.

**Scheduled NU Campus Power Outage.** Mr. Russo said a power outage is planned for this Thursday morning (08/06/26), which will allow for work at the NU substation.

**Adjournment.** Motion by Mr. Fitzhugh, seconded by Mr. Donahue, to adjourn. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**

The Board adjourned at 6:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

*Kenneth L. McCann*

Kenneth L. McCann, Acting Clerk