

**TOWN OF NORTHFIELD, VERMONT
SELECT BOARD REGULAR MEETING
Minutes of August 11, 2026**

- I. ROLL CALL.** Chair K. David Maxwell, Board members Tim Davis, Lydia Petty, Merry Shernock (absent), and John Stevens. Also present were Town Manager Mary Smith, Acting Clerk Kenneth McCann, Kristin Pollard, Susan Stillinger, and Elroy C. Hill.

Chair Maxwell called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

- II. SET/ADJUST AGENDA.** There were no changes to the posted agenda.

- III. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (SCHEDULED):** None.

- IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES (6:01 p.m.)**

- a. July 28, 2026 (Regular Meeting).** Motion by Board member Stevens, seconded by Board member Petty, to approve the minutes. **Motion passed 3-0-1, with Board member Davis abstaining.**

- V. APPROVAL OF BILLS (6:03 p.m.)**

- a. Approval of Warrant #03-27 & #03-27A.** Motion by Board member Petty, seconded by Board member Davis, to approve Warrant #03-27 & #03-27A in the amount of \$491,076.24. Board member Stevens noted a \$1,325 bill for traffic light repairs due to a "contractor hit." He asked if the contractor responsible will pay for the damage. Manager Smith is unfamiliar with this matter but will check it out and report back. Board member Stevens said a good number of vehicle parts and other equipment was purchased in July 2026. Manager Smith said that usually is the case when the new fiscal year begins and departmental budgets are replenished. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**
- b. Receipt of Biweekly Payroll through August 2, 2026.** Motion by Board member Stevens, seconded by Board member Petty, to receive the biweekly payroll in the amount of \$129,708.04. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**

- VI. SELECT BOARD**

- a. Northfield Bridge #11 (AKA Lower Cox Brook Covered Bridge) VTrans Inspection Report & Recommendations. (6:12 p.m.)** Manager Smith said this report was received on July 24, 2026 and it recommended that this bridge be reposted at a lower maximum weight until the bridge deck is repaired. She noted that a new bridge deck was installed by the Highway Department last week so VTrans will be informed that there will be no need to take any further action at this time. Motion by Board member Petty, seconded by Board member Stevens, to affirm receipt of the bridge inspection report and to confirm that the recommended repairs have been performed. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**
- b. Northfield Bridge #81 (AKA Pleasant Street Bridge) VTrans Inspection Report & Recommendations. (6:19 p.m.)** Manager Smith said the Pleasant Street Bridge is in poor condition and VTrans is recommending that either the weight limit be lowered to 8,000 pounds or the bridge be closed to traffic until needed repairs can be made. Manager Smith said this bridge may need to be closed this winter but the lower maximum weight limit should be posted until that decision is made. The Select Board members also will need to decide whether they want to spend the funds needed to bring this bridge up to proper standards. Motion by Board member Petty, seconded by Board member Stevens, to affirm receipt of the bridge inspection report and confirm that the bridge will be reposted at the recommended lower weight limit.

Board member Davis said repairing this particular bridge would be both difficult and expensive. Chair Maxwell would like cost estimates for bridge repairs so that this can be fully discussed during the next budget meetings. Board member Petty noted this bridge can be detoured around without too much difficulty so a brief closure would not impose too much of a burden on the community. Manager Smith said there are other bridges that cannot be bypassed as easily that also require significant repairs. Board member Stevens confirmed that there are two (2) bridges on Chamberlin Road that need work. Board member Petty felt having an up-to-date bridge inventory would be very helpful for future highway budget planning. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**

- c. **Appointment of Brown Public Library (BPL) Trustee. (6:22 p.m.)** Board member Stevens reported that Kelly Murch has resigned from the BPL Board of Trustees. Fortunately, Northfield Falls resident and retired pharmacist Jill Donahue has volunteered to serve on the board. Motion by Board member Petty, seconded by Board member Davis, to appoint Jill Donahue to the vacant position on the BPL Board of Trustees. As this is an elected position, Ms. Donahue will serve out this term until the next Town Meeting Day (03/02/27). She then has the option of continuing to hold the office through election. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**
- d. **Approval of Grand List Errors & Omissions. (6:25 p.m.)** Chair Maxwell said Lister's Chair Thomas Alsheimer is asking that the value of a mobile home damaged by fire be lowered from \$14,000 to \$1,500. Motion by Board member Stevens, seconded by Board member Petty, to approve this Grant List Errors & Omissions correction request. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**

VII. TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT (6:26 p.m.) Manager Smith said the Zoning Office has received a good number of permit requests over the past couple of weeks including a request to convert the Habitat for Humanity duplex now under construction to a triplex. In addition, a few E-911 addresses need to be updated including some on the Norwich University campus. Manager Smith added that the Highway Department recently has been performing roadside mowing, ditching, grading, etc. on the backroads. As indicated earlier, one covered bridge was redecked last week and another will be worked on next week (08/18/26-08/21/26). The Highway Department next will perform grant-funded work on Smith Hill and Dole Hill. Manager Smith reported that the Northfield Police Department (NPD) completed its first week of regular street patrols. NPD Sergeant Brian Gosselin now is attending a Vermont Police Academy seventeen (17) week course in order to achieve Level III certification. NPD officers Kevin Moulton and Alesha Donovan recently met with staff members and residents of The Veterans Place in order to address any of their concerns and to "identify opportunities for collaboration." The Town Clerk's Office is conducting the Vermont Primary Election today and the first installment of 2026 property taxes is due by Friday, August 21, 2026. Manager Smith said Economic Development Director Thomas Davis attended an Opportunity Zone Roundtable recently and also is looking into grant opportunities to fund new ventilators for the Northfield Ambulance Service (NAS). Manager Smith added that she and Mr. Davis are working on further strengthening the municipality's relationship with Norwich University (NU) by keeping in regular contact with Brigadier General Mark A. Denton, the new Commandant of Cadets, as well as other NU officials. The Utility Department employees have been kept busy with routine maintenance of the water and sewer systems, which including repairing a sewer line on Water Street. The NAS responded to seventeen (17) emergency calls during the past week and NAS Chief Meggan McCusker is looking forward to the return of the NU students who serve as part-time EMTs. However, the return of the NU student population also will result in a steady increase in NAS call volume over the next few months.

VIII. BOARD MEMBERS' COMMENTS, CONCERNS, QUESTIONS (6:32 p.m.)

- a. Vine Street Pedestrian Bridge.** Board member Petty noted this pedestrian bridge is currently closed for repairs. She asked if this closure has been posted on local social media. Manager Smith said the public posting has been delayed until it has been determined how long the closure will last. Once that is known, public notifications will be made. Board member Petty noted many local students use this bridge as a walking route to school.
- b. Finance Director Recruitment.** Board member Stevens said we are paying a professional recruitment company a good amount to find qualified applicants for this vacant position. He asked if there has been any progress. Manager Smith said qualified applicants have not yet been identified but the hired firm had warned that it might take a few weeks for positive results.
- c. Vermont Homeland Security Information Request.** Board member Stevens said there was a recent story in *Vermont Digger* about Vermont Homeland Security emailing Town Clerks throughout the state for lists of local events that would attract more than 2,500 people. The stated intent is to identify possible "high-risk events" but some people are concerned there might be other motivations. Board member Stevens asked if Northfield received this request. Manager Smith is not sure but will check with Town Clerk Kim Pedley.
- d. Smart Meter Installation Progress.** Board member Stevens asked about the status of the smart meter installations. Manager Smith said due to the current employee shortfall in the Utility departments, we are now looking to outsource the installation work.
- e. Water Main Installation Project.** Chair Maxwell asked if this project is now complete. Manager Smith said there still are a few items on the project completion punch list such as lawn restoration, crosswalk painting, etc. The contractor will be back to complete the work after the Labor Day holiday.

IX. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (UNSCHEDULED) (6:38 p.m.)

- a. Elroy C. Hill: Missing Street Sign.** Mr. Hill said the "South Street" sign at the intersection of Central Street and South Street has been missing for some time. Chair Maxwell said traffic sign theft has become a real problem in recent years. Manager Smith said she is working with the NPD to create an inventory of missing traffic signs so replacements can be ordered.
- b. Elroy C. Hill: One-Way Street Suggestion.** Mr. Hill felt the whole of South Street and the section of Washington Street between South Main Street and Central Street should be redesignated as one-way streets. These streets are quite narrow and can become difficult to navigate whenever cars are parked there. Chair Maxwell said this will be put on the list of items for future discussion. This change would require a revision of the local traffic ordinance.

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

The Board adjourned at 6:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kenneth L. McCann

Kenneth L. McCann, Acting Clerk

A video recording of this meeting is available at: <https://youtu.be/ESeu4GP2MG4>

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