

**TOWN OF NORTHFIELD, VERMONT**  
**SELECT BOARD REGULAR MEETING**  
**Minutes of June 24, 2025**

- 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, Tim Swartz (Accessibility, Walkability, and Pedestrian Safety [AWPS] Task Force), Janan Hamm (AWPS Task Force), Dan Anderson (AWPS Task Force), Delane McIlvene (AWPS Task Force), Bill Clements (AWPS Task Force), Royal DeLegge (Chair, Planning Commission), Carolyn Stevens (Northfield Community Development Network [NCDN]), Kaitlyn Keating (NCDN), Gerard LaVarnway, Sally Davidson (Northfield Gardeners), Bethany Drum (Northfield Gardeners), Susan Stillinger (Northfield Conservation Commission), Jeremy Whalen (Northfield Conservation Commission), Pam Ricker, Lois Melander, Jonathan Spencer, and Elroy C. Hill.

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

**II. MUNICIPAL CONDEMNATION SITE VISIT AND HEARING**

- a. Municipal Condemnation Site Visit: 73 North Main Street, 6:00 p.m.** The meeting was properly warned for 6:00 p.m. on June 24, 2025 for a site visit as part of a municipal condemnation proceeding related to the Main Street Bridge replacement project, Transportation Project Northfield BF 0241(58). The subject property is 73 North Main Street. The property owner was given thirty (30) days' notice via certified mail. The property owner is represented by counsel and counsel requested a continuance to July 8, 2025. Motion by Board member Shernock, seconded by Board member Petty, to recess the site visit until 6:00 p.m. on Tuesday, July 8, 2025. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
- b. Municipal Condemnation Hearing: Community Room, 7:00 p.m.** Chair Morse said this public hearing is part of a municipal condemnation proceeding related to the Main Street Bridge replacement project, Transportation Project Northfield BF 0241(58). The subject property is 73 North Main Street. The hearing was properly warned for 7:00 pm on June 24, 2025. The property owner was given thirty (30) days' notice of the hearing via certified mail. The property owner is represented by counsel and counsel requested the condemnation hearing be continued until July 8, 2025. Motion by Board member Shernock, seconded by Board member Petty, to recess the municipal condemnation hearing until 7:00 p.m. on Tuesday, July 8, 2025. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

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

**IV. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (SCHEDULED):**

- a. Carolyn Stevens: Community Research Night. (7:05 p.m.)** Ms. Stevens said on Friday, June 27, 2025 in the Community Room starting at 6:00 p.m. there will be a presentation by four Norwich University (NU) student researchers (Andrii Shadrin, Ashley Parker, Agnes Antwi, and Kundan P. Kushwaha) who will discuss their individual summer study projects.
- b. Charles Morse: Community Room Mural (7:06 p.m.).** Chair Morse wanted to thank all the student artists (i.e., Akira Bresett, Logan Tate, Amelia Waters, Greyson Wheeler, Brantley Bain, Olivia Howard, Willow Wilder, Avah Lawliss, Mary Yacavoni, Landry Tabor, Sonja McIntyre, and Norah Bissonnette) who helped paint the mural at the back of the room under the direction of local arts instructor Leslie Striebe. The other adults who assisted with the project were Dot Higgin, Ed Striebe and Dawn Bailey.
- c. Tim Swartz, Accessibility, Walkability, and Pedestrian Safety Task Force: Post-Construction Cheney Field Parking Options. (7:07 p.m.)** Mr. Swartz said although it is his name listed on the agenda, this presentation is a joint effort of all the Task Force members present tonight. They would like to start a conversation regarding the possibility of establishing public parking spaces adjacent to Cheney Field. Temporary parking spaces have been installed as part of the water tank replacement project and there have been suggestions that some or all of these spaces be made permanent. Mr. Swartz said this is a popular outdoor recreation site but it is difficult to access for persons with mobility issues. He suggested the parking spaces could be made available to the public from dawn to dusk with security cameras installed if there are fears about vandalism, illegal open fires, trash disposal, etc.

Mr. Swartz added that improved access also would be beneficial in case emergency vehicles needed to reach the site. Mary Nadon Scott noted that there are some (illegal) fire pits on Cheney Field so improved emergency response would be good in case fires got out of control. Bill Clements said the current water tank construction presented a window of opportunity for the installation of new parking areas. He has spoken to Northfield Police Chief Pierre Gomez about possible security issues and whether public access to the area should be seasonal. Mr. Clements said the main point of the parking proposal is to make Cheney Field more accessible to Northfield residents regardless of their mobility levels. Janan Hamm is part of a local hiking group and she noted that sometimes there is a need to park on nearby neighborhood streets because of the lack of dedicated parking areas for Town Forest access points. A parking area at or near Cheney Field would be a big improvement and not only older persons would benefit but also families with younger children, strollers, etc. Board member Maxwell said Chair Morse had suggested this possibility last February but there had been some resistance at that time. Kaitlyn Keating thought the opposition was from people who feared that the parking spaces would be located on nearby Byam Hill on not on Cheney Field itself. Gerard LaVarnway lives on Hill Street and he confirmed that Byam Hill is a quite narrow road and public parking there would create traffic problems for those who live in the neighborhood. He also would be anxious about increased vehicular traffic in the area and also has real concerns about illegal fires. Board member Petty said fires are not permitted in the Town Forest without the expressed permission of the Town Forest Stewardship Committee (TFSC) and such permission has not been granted to date. In fact, the TFSC members have been looking into installing additional signage regarding what types of actions are and are not permitted in the Town Forest. Board member Petty said whether open fires should be allowed in the Town Forest at all is a question that needs to be resolved. She also noted that public parking to access Cheney Field is now permitted on Byam Hill even though there have been objections regarding whether this should be encouraged or discouraged. Dan Anderson said Cheney Field is Town property and the vista there is special and unique. Currently, public access to the site is not equitable and he hopes that there will be a full conversation about whether adding parking spaces there would ultimately benefit the community or whether the site should be left undisturbed. Board member Stevens believed the Northfield Conservation Commission (NCC) members are on record opposing the establishment of a parking area on Cheney Field. He also noted that the current access road is quite steep and would have to be upgraded if additional traffic is anticipated. Mr. Swartz said he hasn't considered the engineering side of the matter but instead would like all possible options explored. Board member Shernock felt the Task Force members should have a discussion with the NCC members about their concerns. Perhaps some compromise could be reached on the matter. It was noted that the NCC would hold one of its regular meetings tomorrow night (06/25/25). Chair Morse said it was important to have a full discussion on this matter but warned that there is a time factor involved. The water tank installation project is expected to be completed by this autumn so any decision regarding whether the temporary parking spaces should be retained needs to be made before September 2025. Chair Morse also felt the residents living in the vicinity of Cheney Field should be included in the decision-making process. In the end, some difficult decisions might need to be made that may not please everyone. Sally Davidson felt that the cost of the future maintenance of any new parking area should be a factor in the final decision. Board member Petty noted the VOREC Grant Implementation Committee had looked into spending some of the grant funds to increase public parking spaces near the NU Shaw Outdoor Center. Unfortunately, the current NU stormwater permit would not allow for this. She added that there are many factors that need to be explored when establishing dedicated parking spaces for greater access to outdoor recreation sites. Mr. LaVarnway asked about the status of the unauthorized construction road that was built on Cheney Field. Chair Morse said since the road was not authorized beforehand by the municipality, it will be removed and the site restored to its original condition on completion of the project.

- d. **Sherrie Tucker, RE Tucker, Inc.: Availability of Tucker Sand Pit for Municipal Purchase. (7:30 p.m.)** Ms. Tucker had requested by email to be added to tonight's agenda but was not present. In her letter to the Select Board members, she suggested the municipality should consider the possibility of purchasing the RE Tucker sand pit located off Vermont Route 12A. This could provide a steady source of road material for several years. Chair Morse would like Manager Schulz to research this matter and provide a recommendation to the Select Board members for a future discussion.

**V. LIQUOR CONTROL COMMISSION**

- a. **Liquor License Renewal: Northfield Country Club. (7:32 p.m.)** Motion by Board member Shernock, seconded by Board member Stevens, to approve the liquor license renewal. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
- b. **Outside Consumption Permit: Northfield Country Club. (7:33 p.m.)** Motion by Board member Stevens, seconded by Board member Shernock, to approve the outside consumption permit. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

**VI. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

- a. **June 10, 2025 (Regular Meeting). (7:35 p.m.)** Motion by Board member Shernock, seconded by Board member Stevens, to approve the minutes. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
- b. **June 16, 2025 (Special Meeting). (7:36 p.m.)** Motion by Board member Stevens, seconded by Board member Shernock, to approve the minutes. It was noted that a reference Chair Morse made to a previous closure of East Street for construction purposes was regarding the current water main replacement project and not the sidewalk project of a few years ago. This will be fixed. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

**VII. APPROVAL OF BILLS**

- a. **Approval of Warrant #24-25 & #24-25C-F. (7:40 p.m.)** Motion by Board member Stevens, seconded by Board member Shernock, to approve Warrant #24-25 & #24-25C-F in the amount of \$735,729.99. Board member Petty would like additional information from Manager Schulz about the recent repairs at the Memorial Park bathrooms. Board member Stevens asked about a \$11,796 Cabot loan payment. Board member Petty said this is a regular passthrough payment for which Cabot Hosiery reimburses the municipality. Board member Shernock saw a \$119 image transfer fee for the covered bridge security cameras. She had requested a cost analysis for these surveillance cameras to determine whether their expense was justified. Board member Shernock also remembers that there had been some discussion of installing "headache bars" on the covered bridges to prevent oversized trucks from accessing them. Chair Morse noted the Vermont Agency of Transportation (VTrans) has scheduled the Cox Brook Road covered bridges for extensive repairs in 2029 so the bars probably shouldn't be installed until after that repair work has been completed. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
- b. **Approval of Warrant #01-26A. (7:47 p.m.)** Motion by Board member Maxwell, seconded by Board member Stevens, to approve Warrant #01-26A in the amount of \$44,675.88. This warrant included the first payment of this year's Washington County taxes as well as the annual payment of an old water bond note. This was twenty (20) year bond and the last payment is due on July 1, 2032. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
- c. **Receipt of Biweekly Payroll through June 8, 2025. (7:47 p.m.)** Motion by Board member Shernock, seconded by Board member Stevens, to receive the biweekly payroll in the amount of \$113,520.63. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

**VIII. SELECT BOARD**

- a. **Municipal Condemnation of 73 North Main Street Property. (7:48 p.m.)** As was noted earlier in the meeting, at the request of the property owner's attorney, this matter has been recessed until Tuesday, July 8, 2025.
- b. **Approval of Public Participation Procedures (revised). (7:48 p.m.)** Motion by Board member Maxwell, seconded by Board member Stevens, to approve the revised Public Participation Procedures. The only changes from the current document, which was approved in 2005, was to include a reference to the appropriate governing state statutes (1 V.S.A. §312 and 13 V.S.A. §1026) and to remove references to the former Board of Village Trustees. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

- c. **Tree Issue (1257 Vermont Route 12 South). (7:52 p.m.)** Chair Morse said the resident at this location has been in contact with the municipality over the past three (3) years regarding this large tree that bridges the road from the front yard and encroaches on the utility lines on the other side of the state highway. The property owner said numerous power outages have resulted from tree limbs falling on the utility lines and he would like the municipality to take down the whole tree. Chair Morse said since this is a state highway, VTrans District 6 will need to be part of the process. Board member Maxwell asked if the power lines involved belong to the Northfield Electric Department (NED). Chair Morse confirmed this. Board member Petty noted Manager Schulz responded by email to the property owner to confirm that Utility Superintendent James Russo will schedule the trimming of the tree limbs close to the NED power lines. Chair Morse said the property owner would like the whole tree removed with the cost split three (3) ways between the municipality, the property owner, and VTrans.

**IX. BOARD MEMBERS' COMMENTS, CONCERNS, QUESTIONS**

- a. **Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Presentation (7:56 p.m.).** Board member Petty noted that Geoffrey Farrell (Geoffrey Ferrell Associates), who presented the "Northfield Vision Plan" to the Select Board members at their May 13, 2025 regular meeting, will be providing the next update at next Tuesday night's Planning Commission meeting (07/01/25). The meeting will be held in the Community Room starting at 6:30 p.m. and there will be remote meeting access. Board member Petty encouraged her fellow Select Board members to attend along with anyone else interested in smart growth in Northfield, which could result in new businesses, more affordable housing units, "traffic calming" measures, etc. Mr. Ferrell will be addressing additional groups, including the Select Board members, as the process continues.
- b. **Central Vermont Select Board Meet-up (7:57 p.m.).** Board member Petty noted the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission (CVRPC) and the Vermont League of Cities & Towns (VLCT) will be hosting a meeting of Central Vermont Select Board members on Thursday, July 17, 2025 from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. at the Montpelier Senior Center. The Select Board members are invited to "meet each other, network, and share successes and challenges in their municipalities."
- c. **Vermont Council on Rural Development (VCRD) Community Leadership Summit. (7:58 p.m.)** Board member Petty reported that VCRD will hold their sixth Community Leadership Summit on Monday, August 11, 2025 from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at Vermont State University Randolph. According to the VCRD website, "This event is a chance to explore how we can work together to get things done, even when times are tough and resources are limited. Through workshops, panels, group discussions, and networking, participants will gain useful ideas, make connections, and hear inspiring success stories and tips."
- d. **Turkey Hill Resurfacing update. (7:58 p.m.)** Board member Stevens asked if the road resurfacing work on Turkey Hill has been completed. Board member Maxwell believes it is not yet finished.
- e. **Stony Brook Road Warning Signs. (7:59 p.m.)** Two (2) road signs have been placed on Stony Brook Road that direct truck drivers to travel on Smith Hill Road instead in order to prevent damage to the Stony Brook Road Covered Bridge. Board member Stevens believes at least one additional sign should be installed to ensure compliance.
- f. **Municipal Pool (8:02 p.m.)** Board member Shernock has heard good things about the pool, which opened for the summer season last Saturday (06/21/25). The pool has been very popular during the recent heat wave and parents have been signing up their children for the free swimming lessons.
- g. **310 Water Street FEMA Buyout Property. (8:03 p.m.)** Board member Shernock asked why the former laundromat is still standing on the buyout site. It was reported the RFP for razing the building had a Monday, June 16, 2025 deadline. Manager Schulz is reviewing the submissions at this time and will be awarding the contract soon.

- h. 486 Bailey Road Structure Burn update (8:06 p.m.)** A Bailey Road property owner had offered the Northfield Fire Department (NFD) the opportunity to hold a controlled burn of an old structure for training purposes. One of the adjoining property owners filed an appeal with the Development Review Board (DRB) to stop the structure burn. Board member Shernock would like an update on the process. DRB member Elroy Hill reported that this matter was fully discussed at the last DRB meeting (05/22/25). After deliberation, the DRB members unanimously approved the structure burn request. It was noted at the time that this decision could be appealed to the Environmental Court.
  - i. Cross Brothers Dam Removal (8:08 p.m.)** Board member Shernock noted that the dam removal schematics provided in the meeting packets show that work access to the dam site will be from behind the Dollar General Store. This will greatly assist with the planned development of a riverwalk path in that area.
  - j. Bus Stop/Kiosk Relocation. (8:09 p.m.)** At a recent Select Board meeting, there was a suggestion that the kiosk could be relocated to North Main Street on the property Dollar General plans to donate to the municipality to facilitate the riverwalk path project. Board member Shernock asked if there was an update on this. Chair Morse said this location is only a proposal at this time. In any case, nothing new can be done in the area until after the dam removal process has been completed. In the meantime, Manager Schulz could get in contact with Green Mountain Transit (GMT) to see if they would have any objections to siting a bus stop/kiosk at this location.
  - k. Northfield Gardeners Flowerbed Removal (8:12 p.m.)** Chair Morse said the contractor for the water main installation project recently installed a new hydrant by the flagpole in front of the Northfield Savings Bank and in the process took out a flowerbed there that had been put in place by Northfield Gardeners. Chair Morse said Sally Davidson and the other gardeners were very disappointed by this and he apologized on behalf of the municipality. Board member Petty asked if there would be compensation for the damaged plants. Chair Morse is unsure. Ms. Davidson said some of the plants were saved and will be restored to their original location after all the construction work in the area has been completed.
  - l. Margaret Holland Inn Sewer Overflow. (8:15 p.m.)** Chair Morse said that after water main replacement work was done in the area, the sewer line feeding the Margaret Holland Inn collapsed. As this happened on a weekend, the water main replacement project crew were not on hand to fix this but the Northfield Utility Department did respond and resolved the matter before the end of the day.
- X. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (UNSCHEDULED)**
  - a. Sally Davidson, Northfield Gardeners: Flowerbed Removal. (8:17 p.m.)** Ms. Davidson asked if the hydrant installation at that location was part of the original project plans. Chair Morse is unsure if that was the case or if there was a change order of which he was unaware. Ms. Davidson said a single phone call beforehand would have avoided the subsequent plant damage and aggravation.
- XI. EXECUTIVE SESSION.** Motion by Board member Maxwell, seconded by Board member Stevens, to go into executive session, in accordance with 1 VSA 313 (a)(1)], in order to discuss a personnel issue and a legal matter with Town Attorney Michael J. Leddy present for some but not all of the discussion. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

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

Town Attorney Michael J. Leddy left the executive session at 8:52 p.m.

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

The Board came out of executive session at 9:22 p.m. No action was taken.

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

The Board adjourned at 9:26 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

*Kenneth L. McCann*

Kenneth L. McCann, Acting Clerk

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

These minutes were revised and approved at the Select Board regular meeting of July 8, 2025.