

**TOWN OF NORTHFIELD, VERMONT
SELECT BOARD REGULAR MEETING
Minutes of March 10, 2026**

- I. ROLL CALL.** Select Board members Tim Davis, K. David Maxwell, Lydia Petty, Merry Shernock, and John Stevens. Also present were Interim Town Manager Steven Mackenzie, Acting Clerk Kenneth McCann, Charles Morse, Kristin Pollard, Theresa Elmer, Brian Massey Jr., Nancy Peck, Mary Smith, Aaron Rhodes, Carolyn Stevens, Pam Ricker, Daniel Anderson, Jensie Pliego, Tim Swartz, Matt Romei, Arlene Davis, Janan Hamm, Jeremy Whalen, Kate Ostergard, Mary Nadon Scott, Morgan Amell, Nancy LaVarnway, Gerard LaVarnway, Rhonda Doyon, Walt Goodwin, and Elroy C. Hill.

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m.

II. ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING OF THE SELECT BOARD

- a. Election of Chair. (7:01 p.m.)** Motion by Board member Petty, seconded by Board member Shernock, to appoint K. David Maxwell as Select Board Chair. **Motion passed 4-0-1, with Board member Maxwell abstaining.**
- b. Election of Vice-Chair. (7:02 p.m.)** Motion by Board member Petty, seconded by Board member Maxwell, to appoint Merry Shernock as Select Board Vice-Chair. **Motion passed 4-0-1, with Board member Shernock abstaining.**
- c. Select Board Subcommittee Assignments. (7:03 p.m.)** The Select Board members set the subcommittee assignments as follows: **Budget and Financial Review** (Board members Maxwell and Petty); **Economic Development** (Board members Petty and Stevens); **Highway Planning & Project Oversight** (Board members Davis and Stevens); **Labor Agreement & Bargaining** (Board members Petty and Shernock); **Norwich University** (Board members Maxwell and Stevens); **Policy Review** (Board members Shernock and Stevens). **Public Safety Oversight & Planning** (Board members Petty and Shernock); and **Town Buildings & Energy** (Board members Shernock and Stevens). Board member Stevens was appointed to serve on the Water/Wastewater Utility Commission and Board member Davis on the Electric Utility Commission. In addition, Board member Petty and Manager Mackenzie will serve as Northfield's representatives to the Mountain Alliance. Stephen Fitzhugh will serve as Northfield's representative to Vermont Public Power Supply Authority (VPPSA) and Manager Mackenzie as the alternate representative.
- Board member Petty would like at some point to have a full Select Board discussion regarding these subcommittees as some seem to have overlapping responsibilities while others never seem to meet at all.
- d. Regular Meeting Schedule (Dates, Time, and Location). (7:11 p.m.)** The Select Board members will continue to hold their regular meetings on the second and fourth Tuesdays of the month at 7:00 p.m. in the Community Room.
- e. Designation of Official Newspapers, Websites, etc. (7:12 p.m.)** The Northfield News and the Times Argus will remain the official newspapers for municipal notices, etc. The Front Porch Forum will remain the official website.

- III. SET/ADJUST AGENDA. (7:13 p.m.)** Ron and Sherrie Tucker were to address the Select Board tonight regarding their offer to sell their sand pit to the municipality but decided to postpone their appearance to another time.

- IV. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (SCHEDULED): (7:13 p.m.)** None.

V. LIQUOR CONTROL COMMISSION

- a. **Liquor License Renewal: Dollar General (DG Retail, LLC). (7:14 p.m.)** Motion by Board member Shernock, seconded by Board member Stevens, to approve the liquor license renewal. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

VI. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- a. **February 24, 2026 (Regular Meeting). (7:14 p.m.)** Motion by Board member Stevens, seconded by Board member Shernock, to approve the minutes. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

VII. APPROVAL OF BILLS

- a. **Approval of Warrant #17-26 & #17-26A-F. (7:15 p.m.)** Motion by Board member Shernock, seconded by Board member Stevens, to approve Warrant #17-26 & #17-26A-F in the amount of \$1,997,862.40. It was noted that of the total warrant amount, \$1,469,799.54 represented property taxes collected by the municipality and then forwarded to the Paine Mountain School District. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
- b. **Receipt of Biweekly Payroll through March 1, 2026. (7:18 p.m.)** Motion by Board member Stevens, seconded by Board member Shernock, to receive the biweekly payroll in the amount of \$99,343.46. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

VIII. SELECT BOARD

- a. **Appointment of Town Manager Search Advisory Committee Members. (7:19 p.m.)** Manager Mackenzie noted the municipality has received over seventy (70) applications for the position of Town Manager. As part of the selection process, the Select Board will create a committee comprised of local residents, business owners, etc. to help with interviews of the short-listed candidates. The original thought was to create a five (5) person committee but since there were fifteen (15) applicants, the Select Board members have decided to increase the committee size to seven (7). One position will be reserved for a Norwich University administrator and that person will be Vice President of Development and Alumni Relations Brian Doyle. After some discussion, it was decided to pick the other six (6) members by random drawing (out of a hat). The chosen applicants were Rebecca Dominguez, Theresa Elmer, Scott Kerner, William Kolb, Rafe Mattingley, and Kristin Pollard. They will all be contacted tomorrow by email regarding their selection and asked to confirm that they still want to serve on the committee and will be able to attend the managerial candidate interviews once they have been scheduled.

- IX. TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT. (7:32 p.m.)** Manager Mackenzie had provided the Select Board members with a written report of his activities/actions since the last Select Board regular meeting (02/24/26). This includes the implementation of the new Northfield Electric Department (NED) rates, meeting with a resident regarding a longstanding stormwater issue, executing an MOU for local law enforcement coverage, resolving a small claims court case, etc. He also worked with Interim Police Chief Kevin Moulton to get "panic buttons" installed in Municipal Building offices. Matters that Manager Mackenzie will be addressing in coming weeks include working with Finance Director Laurie Baroffio on drafting the utility department budgets, holding another negotiating session with the union now representing the Northfield Ambulance Service (NAS) part-time employees, etc. Manager Mackenzie also will be trying to resolve the ongoing parking problem on Union Brook Road. He is cautiously optimistic this matter can be settled within the next few weeks. Board member Shernock commended Manager Mackenzie for dealing directly with this problem.

X. BOARD MEMBERS' COMMENTS, CONCERNS, QUESTIONS

- a. **New Select Board Member. (7:38 p.m.)** Chair Maxwell welcomed newly-elected Tim Davis to the Select Board.
- b. **Mud Season Road Material. (7:39 p.m.)** Board member Davis noted Mud Season is on the way and said there have been complaints in the past regarding the road materials used on Northfield backroads. This includes complaints that the materials was so sharp that it caused flat tires. Board member Davis suggested that a different road material, one that is granite based, should be used in future to avoid such problems. He has found this material to be both clean and absorbent while providing a much better traveling surface than the plant mix, crushed stone, etc. used in recent years. Manager Mackenzie suggested a meeting should be set up with himself, Board member Davis, and Highway Foreman Karl Bailey to discuss this possibility.

XI. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (UNSCHEDULED). (7:42 p.m.) There was none.

XII. EXECUTIVE SESSION (7:43 p.m.)

Motion by Board member Petty, seconded by Board member Shernock, that the Select Board finds premature public knowledge of attorney-client communications concerning a lawsuit would place the Select Board at a substantial disadvantage, including by potentially waiving attorney-client privilege and disclosing confidential information. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

Motion by Board member Petty, 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 and a personnel issue with legal counsel, Manager Mackenzie, and Charles Morse present. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

The Board went into executive session at 7:49 p.m.

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

The Board came out of executive session at 9:25 p.m. No action was taken

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

The Board adjourned at 9:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kenneth L. McCann

Kenneth L. McCann, Acting Clerk

A video recording of this meeting is available at: <https://youtu.be/iQSxJ4aXwzU>

These minutes were approved at the Select Board regular meeting of March 24, 2026.