

**TOWN OF NORTHFIELD, VERMONT  
HIGHWAY PLANNING &  
PROJECT OVERSIGHT SUBCOMMITTEE  
Minutes of April 17, 2026**

- I. ROLL CALL.** Select Board members Tim Davis and John Stevens. Also present were Interim Town Manager Steve Mackenzie, Karl Bailey (Highway Foreman), and William Clements (Accessibility, Walkability, & Pedestrian Safety [AWPS] Task Force).

The meeting was called to order at 9:00 a.m.

- II. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (Unscheduled):** None.

**III. DISCUSSION**

**a. Prioritization of Summer 2026 Highway & Bridge Maintenance Projects.**

Manager Mackenzie has put together a packet of materials for this meeting that includes the list of upcoming projects, lists of local highways and bridges, and Highway Department budgets for the next fiscal year. He also has a list of the bridge work that is scheduled to be done this summer. Board member Davis asked if such projects were put out to bid and Manager Mackenzie said that would be standard practice. Board member Davis said that was good as it seemed to him that bridge contractors now are hungry for work. Manager Mackenzie said the work to be done shouldn't be too complicated as most of our bridges are iron and plank less than thirty feet (30') long. Board member Davis would like to see some rod repairs done on Union Brook Road since the municipality spent over \$3,000,000 on a complete road construction just a few years ago. Board member Davis would like the current list of highway projects addressed in coming months with the subcommittee reconvening in a few months with the new town manager (Mary Smith) to see what was accomplished and still needs to be done. Highway Foreman Karl Bailey said a ditch on Wheeler Road is now being repaired and similar work is planned in the near future on West Hill Road, Forrest Road, and Colson Road. Board member Davis said a major problem on Union Brook Road is caused by faulty driveways and he felt when the property owner is responsible for this, they should be held accountable. He added that state law forbid the discharge of driveway material into the public highways. Board member Davis said the Slaughterhouse Road Covered Bridge is on the priority list due to stormwater problems and some structural concerns. There have been several resident complaints regarding the condition of this bridge so the problems should be addressed soon. He said the road at both bridge entrances needs to be lowered so that stormwater is diverted away from the bridge. This is a relatively short bridge so that shouldn't be too difficult of a project. Board member Davis said the planking on the other covered bridges also needed replacement.

Board member Davis would like to see more Highway Department employee personal development in the future by allowing them to take part in future training sessions from Vermont Local Roads and other organizations. Manager Mackenzie thought the Highway Department would run more efficiently in future if certain departmental responsibilities were clearly delineated in future. He felt the former town manager took on a number of responsibilities but did not follow up on a number of them. One upcoming project that needs to be overseen is the design of an expanded salt shed that would allow for more effective advanced purchasing and winter storage. Board member Davis said stormwater mitigation grant funds have become available but a letter of interest must be submitted. Manager Mackenzie said he would see to this.

Manager Mackenzie said it would be very helpful to him to view some of the aforementioned trouble areas, such as Slaughterhouse Road Covered Bridge, after this meeting concludes. The other meeting attendees are welcome to join him and Mr. Bailey on this.

Board member Davis said the contracted street sweeping has become a real problem in recent years. Mr. Bailey said it has become difficult to rent the needed equipment as other municipalities want to do their own spring cleaning at the same general time. He added that several of these rental companies have gone out of business in the past couple of years. Board member Davis said it might be necessary to contract with out-of-state businesses if Vermont companies are not available. He added that all municipal bridges do need to be washed and cleared out on an annual basis.

Board member Davis asked if any culverts needed to be replaced on the road planned or repaving this summer, i.e. Pearl Street, School Street, etc. Mr. Bailey didn't think that would be necessary. He added that the Utility Department is planning to install new water lines on Pearl Street and School Street prior to their repaving. There is a retaining wall at the intersection of Pearl Street and School Street that Mr. Bailey says has been problematic for at least thirty (30) years. This wall should be repaired at some point. Manager Mackenzie would like to view these streets as well this afternoon.

#### **IV. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (Unscheduled).**

- a. William Clements.** Mr. Clements is a member of the Accessibility, Walkability, & Pedestrian Safety [AWPS] Task Force and there are a few concerns he would like to bring up at this meeting. For example, he noted that the AWPS Task Force members pushed hard for new Vine Street sidewalks last year in order to promote safer routes for children to walk to school. Unfortunately, there are some areas where the sidewalk is having problems already. Board member Davis said he himself has seen some spalling at several locations at the end of driveways. He said there are various factors during the sidewalk installation process that could result in these problems. Since the work is still under warranty, Board member Davis suggested that Manager Mackenzie could contact the engineering contractor for this project (The Dufresne Group) about addressing the problems. In addition, Mr. Clements lives on School Street and he said when this road was repaved the past couple of times, it resulted in stormwater problems at the end of his driveway. Mr. Bailey said the work to be done this year would not be a full reconstruction but rather just a new layer of asphalt so there should be no new drainage problems. Mr. Clements then said that the task force members would like to see pedestrian crosswalks painted this springtime rather than last summer as has become recent practice. Mr. Bailey said it has become difficult to hire street paving contractors in recent years as several have gone out of business. He found a new contractor (Kurt Bellavance) last year and plans to use him again this year. Board member Davis said perhaps would could look into heat stripping in future as that is what the Vermont Agency of Transportation (VTTrans) does as it lasts longer.

#### **V. ADJOURNMENT.** Without objection, the meeting adjourned at 10:07 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

*Kenneth L. McCann*

Kenneth L. McCann, Acting Clerk