

**TOWN OF NORTHFIELD, VERMONT
SELECT BOARD SPECIAL MEETING
Thursday, January 15, 2026**

- I. ROLL CALL.** Chair Charles Morse, Board members K. David Maxwell, Lydia Petty, Merry Shernock and John Stevens. Also present were Manager Steven Mackenzie, Laurie Baroffio (Finance Director), Shannon Palone (Pool Director), Kevin L. Kite (Carroll, Boe & Kite, P.C.), Simon Pearish, Curtis Dudley, Carolyn Stevens, Gerard LaVarnway, Tim Swartz, Matthew Romei, DeLane McIlvene, Don Doyon, Kristin Pollard, Mary Nadon Scott, and Elroy Hill.

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

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

- III. EXECUTIVE SESSION.** Motion by Board member Petty, seconded by Board member Maxwell, to go into executive session, in accordance with 1 VSA 313 (a)(1)], in order to discuss a legal matter with Manager Steve Mackenzie and Town Attorney Kevin L. Kite present. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

The Board went into executive session at 6:01 p.m.

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

The Board came out of executive session at 6:20 p.m. No action was taken.

IV. DISCUSSION

a. Proposed FY 2026/2027 Town Budget

1. Operations and Maintenance (O&M) Budgets.

- i. Cemetery.** This O&M budget increased by 1.6% with the major change being a \$2,000 increase in the Cemetery Care Contract account.
- ii. Town Garage.** The major change in this O&M budget is that the Building Maintenance/Supplies line item has increased from \$5,000 to \$7,000. The new amount better matches recent actuals. There also are plans to install new seals on the garage doors.
- iii. Library/Historical Society Building.** Most of the line items in this O&M budget are level funded with only slight increases for Janitorial Services and Elevator Maintenance. In addition, the Building Maintenance/Supplies budget will increase from \$5,000 to \$7,000.
- iv. Municipal Building.** This O&M budget is mostly level funded with a \$1,000 increase in the Heating Oil line item.
- v. Human Services.** The annual payment to the Senior Center will stay at \$25,000 and the Brown Public Library payment will increase from \$112,000 to \$113,000.
- vi. Grounds, Parks, & Facilities.** The O&M budget for the maintenance worker will decrease as the new position holder makes a lower salary than their predecessor. The salary for this position is evenly split between this department and the Highway Department. Board member Maxwell asked if this position should be totally funded by Grounds, Parks, & Facilities so that the employee can focus solely on park maintenance work throughout the year. Board member Stevens noted the Brown Public Library (BPL) recently hired a person to shovel snow around the property.

Board member Maxwell would like the possibility of creating a full-time maintenance position discussed further at some point and perhaps considered at near year's budget meetings. He believes currently there is a lot of deferred maintenance of municipal assets and that is not good practice. The Facility Maintenance/Supplies O&M budget will increase from \$5,000 to \$6,000 to better match recent actuals.

- vii. **Conservation.** This O&M budget is level funded in the next fiscal year.
- viii. **Municipal Pool.** The Personnel Services O&M budget will increase by 7.8% in order to increase pay for the pool director and lifeguards. The personnel budget for Special Events/Theme Nights will stay at \$1,000 in the next fiscal year. Chair Morse asked if any of these funds were spent last summer. Pool Director Shannon Palone said she didn't have a sufficient number of lifeguards last summer to hold any special events. The O&M budget for Special Events/Theme Nights non-personnel expenses will remain at \$1,200. Ms. Palone believes the \$5,500 now budgeted for chemicals should be increased due to the higher cost of chlorine, etc. She noted that higher temperatures result in increased chlorine usage. Board member Maxwell suggested raising this budget to \$6,000. There was no objection. The Facility Maintenance/Supplies O&M budget will remain at \$3,000.
- ix. **Support Services.** Chair Morse said the Legal Services budget for the next fiscal year has been increased from \$25,000 to \$40,000. Litigation expenses are expected to be significant in the next year. Ms. Baroffio said the Washington County tax has increased to \$30,450 so the budget will be adjusted accordingly.

Simon Pearish said he has created a job description for a full-time recreation position that would handle park maintenance as well as park use reservations, interact between various outdoor recreation groups, etc. Board member Maxwell would like a future conversation about this possibility. He feels that by not having this person in place, the municipality is losing in the long run both time and money.

- x. **Planning/Zoning.** This O&M budget is largely level funded with a small salary increase for the Zoning Administrator that will increase the Personnel Services budget by 6.6%.
 - xi. **Economic Development.** This budget also is fairly level funded with a 4.7% increase in the Personnel Services budget.
2. **Municipal Pool Capital Improvement Plan (CIP).** Chair Morse noted there is a \$748 deficit in the Paint/Repair Pool account. Ms. Palone said the paint job done last year was very poor and the pool needs to be repainted before it reopens this summer. She said the paint peeled at various locations and sand wasn't mixed into the paint used around the pool. This resulted in very slippery walkways and she had to purchase several floor mats to address the problem. Ms. Palone said the former manager was supposed to have contacted the paint contractor to have the work done again after the pool closed for the season but this wasn't done. Board member Maxwell would like Manager Mackenzie to look into this situation. Chair Morse said we should check to see if the work is still under warranty. He also felt Select Board members should have been better informed of the substandard work. Chair Morse noted there is an \$11,938 balance in the Building/Facility Improvement CIP account with \$10,000 to be added in the next fiscal year. However, there also is an \$8,360 deficit in the Pool Bathhouse account. Ms. Palone said the pool bathrooms do need to be upgraded before the pool reopens this summer. In addition, sometimes the showers don't work properly due to clogs in the pipes. Also, some doorways and hallways are too narrow for wheelchair occupants to navigate.

Chair Morse would like to postpone further discussion of this CIP budget until Manager Mackenzie has been able to check the status of the paint contractor, etc. There also needs to be some clarification regarding the funding of the proposed bathhouse renovation project. For now, \$2,400 in the Building/Facility Improvement account will be used to pay for the bathhouse renovation designs.

- 3. Municipal Pool Capital Equipment Plan (CEP).** Chair Morse said the Pool Filter CEP account has a \$91,153 balance with \$7,500 to be added in the next fiscal year. The estimated replacement cost is between \$80,000 and \$100,000 so this account is in good shape. The Pool Vacuum CEP account has a \$2,814 balance with \$500 to be added in the next fiscal year. The replacement cost is estimated at \$5,500 and this is scheduled in FY 2030-2031. The Diving Boards CEP account has a \$1,072 balance with \$500 to be added in the next fiscal year.
- 4. Miscellaneous.** Ms. Baroffio turned to the Town General Revenue budget and noted last year the Select Board members eliminated the charge for swimming lessons for Northfield residents. If that policy is kept in place this coming summer, she would like the amount budgeted for anticipated swim lesson revenue lowered from \$1,500 to \$100. She noted that only \$94 was collected for pool lessons last summer. There was no objection. Ms. Palone said there were a couple problems with the program last year. First, it was difficult to confirm Northfield residency at times. Also, there was a limit on how many people could take the lessons and some who delayed signing up were left out. Ms. Palone thought it might be possible to increase capacity this summer should an additional swim instructor be hired.

Ms. Baroffio will create a list of currently unresolved budget matters so that they can be fully discussed at upcoming budget meetings. The next one will be held next Tuesday night (01/20/26) and additional can be held if needed. She said the list would include the Northfield Ambulance Service (NAS) O&M budget, general building maintenance issues, adjusting downward the expected life spans of highway equipment, the financing of Northfield Fire Department (NFD) heavy equipment, financing the Main Street Bridge Replacement Project local match amount, etc. Ms. Baroffio said there also needs to be some discussion of how prior year surplus should be used in the proposed FY 2026-2027 budget.

V. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (UNSCHEDULED).

- a. Elroy Hill: Trash Can Disposal.** Mr. Hill suggested that perhaps the municipality should contract with All Clean Waste Services to empty the public trash cans at least twice a week. Currently, the municipality's maintenance worker does this and sometimes there are delays in getting the work done for a week or two. Board member Maxwell would like Manager Mackenzie to look into this possibility.

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

The Board adjourned at 8:02 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kenneth L. McCann

Kenneth L. McCann, Acting Clerk

A video recording of this meeting is available at: <https://youtu.be/fP3c1nnIMvA>

These minutes were revised and approved at the Select Board regular meeting of January 27, 2026.