

**TOWN OF NORTHFIELD, VERMONT
SELECT BOARD REGULAR MEETING
Minutes of February 24, 2026**

- I. ROLL CALL.** Chair Charles Morse, Board members K. David Maxwell, Lydia Petty, Merry Shernock, and John Stevens. Also present were Interim Town Manager Steven Mackenzie, Acting Clerk Kenneth McCann, Beth Pombar (Mosaic Vermont), Nancy Peck (Central Vermont Community Harvest), Jenny Montagne (Central Vermont Home Health and Hospice), Casey Engels (Capstone Community Action), Monica White (Green Mountain Transit), Michele Braun (Friends of the Winooski River), Dan Anderson (Accessibility, Walkability, and Pedestrian Safety [AWPS] Task Force, Mary Nadon Scott (AWPS Task Force), Susan Barnard (AWPS Task Force), Kaitlyn Keating (AWPS Task Force), Tim Swartz (AWPS Task Force), Carolyn Stevens (AWPS Task Force), DeLane McInvene (AWPS Task Force), Aaron Rhodes, Connor Keating (Head Coach, Norwich University [NU] Women's Wrestling), Alyssa Lamper (Assistant Coach, NU Women's Wrestling), Ay'Seante Ross (NU Women's Wrestling), Gia Cope (NU Women's Wrestling), Addisyn Herdic (NU Women's Wrestling), Gianna Silva (NU Women's Wrestling), Aiyana White (NU Women's Wrestling), Nalani Portela-Bailey (NU Women's Wrestling), Isabelle Brandt (NU Women's Wrestling), Ana Lemler (NU Women's Wrestling), Kristen Pollard. Brian Massey Jr., Tim Davis, Thersa Elmer, Curtis Dudley, Amie Dudley, Mikala Bolmer, Rhonda Doyon, Elise Miller, Harriet Hirst, KS Ward, Rebecca Quarters, Mary Smith, and Cassie Morse.

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

II. PUBLIC HEARING

- a. Northfield Town Meeting Australian Ballot Articles. (7:00 p.m.)** State law requires the Select Board to hold a public hearing prior to Town Meeting so members of the public can discuss or ask questions regarding the articles to be voted upon by Australian Ballot. As Northfield voters decided at last year's Town Meeting to eliminate the Open Session, all articles will be voted on by Australian Ballot this year. Chair Morse then went through the list of articles.

Article 2. Shall the voters authorize total fund expenditures of \$7,011,800 of which \$4,637,270 shall be raised by property taxes and \$2,374,530 by non-tax revenues? There was no discussion.

Article 3. Shall the voters of Northfield authorize the Town to exempt from local property taxation to the extent of 50% of the appraised value, the land and premises of Mayo Healthcare, Inc., located at 71 Richardson Avenue, for a period of three (3) years beginning July 1, 2026? Theresa Elmer asked how much in tax revenue did this partial property exemption cost the municipality. None of the Select Board members could provide an exact figure. Board member Maxwell suggested that Ms. Elmer could contact Mayo Healthcare directly about this. It was noted that Mayo Healthcare is a registered non-profit organization.

Article 4. Shall the voters authorize the expenditure of an amount not to exceed twenty-one thousand dollars (\$21,000) for FY27 towards the Northfield Commuter year-round commuter with service between Northfield and Montpelier? Monica White is the Green Mountain Transit (GMT) Director of Central Vermont Services and she thanked the Select Board members for the opportunity to provide information about the services GMT provides Northfield. She noted that the big change this coming year is that starting on July 1, 2026, Central Vermont public transit will come under the umbrella of Tri-Valley Transit. There will be no reduction in service and the major noticeable change will be new logos on the buses. Ms. White said in the past year, the weekday Northfield commuter bus served 3,445 riders and the weekly Northfield Community Shuttle had 212 riders. GMT also provided on-call service for older/disabled Northfield residents so they could access medical appointments, etc. GMT also will be providing charter service at the Senior Center on Wednesday, March 4, 2026 so that seniors citizens can attend the Cabin Fever Block Party taking place at Norwich University that day. Board member Stevens asked how much it costs to use the commuter bus service. Ms. White said there was no charge.

Article 5. Shall the voters authorize the expenditure of \$14,800 for the Central Vermont Home Health and Hospice? Jenny Montagne is the CVHHH Marketing and Communications Manager and she thanked the Select Board members for inviting her to this meeting and Northfield voters for their past support. CVHHH is seeking \$14,800, which is the same amount that they have requested in past years. Ms. Montagne said CVHHH made 3,545 total visits/contacts to Northfield residents during the 2025 calendar year. The funds CVHHH would receive from Northfield would be used to fill the gap between how much it costs for them to operate and what Medicare covers. Board member Shernock said she is very pleased with the services CVHHH provides to Northfield residents, i.e. home health care, hospice care, etc. Chair Morse agreed that CVHHH is a welcome presence in our community.

Article 6. Shall the voters authorize the expenditure of \$3,000 for the Central Vermont Council on Aging? Carolyn Stevens has a friend who needed help with Medicare supplemental insurance and CVCOA was very helpful in helping resolve the situation. She added that CVCOA also provides tax preparation assistance at the Northfield Senior Center each spring.

Article 7. Shall the voters authorize the expenditure of \$3,000 for the Northfield Community Flag Project? There was no discussion.

Article 8. Shall the voters authorize the expenditure of \$2,800 for the Good Samaritan Haven? There was no discussion.

Article 9. Shall the voters authorize the expenditure of \$2,500 for Washington County Mental Health Services, Inc.? There was no discussion.

Article 10. Shall the voters authorize the expenditure of \$1,200 for Central Vermont Adult Education? There was no discussion.

Article 11. Shall the voters authorize the expenditure of \$1,200 for Mosaic Vermont (formerly the Sexual Assault Crisis Team of Washington County)? Beth Pombar is Chair for Mosaic Vermont, formerly known as the Sexual Assault Crisis Team of Washington County. She said Mosaic Vermont assists those who have been impacted by sexual violence and also provides educational sessions at local schools, retirement homes, etc. Mosaic Vermont assists victims of sexual assault by providing medical exams, temporary housing, etc. Board member Shernock asked if Mosaic Vermont accepted volunteers. Ms. Pombar said they hold a number of workshops and other group events throughout the year and volunteer assistance is always welcome.

Article 12. Shall the voters authorize the expenditure of \$1,200 for the Vermont Association for the Blind & Visually Impaired? There was no discussion.

Article 13. Shall the voters authorize the expenditure of \$1,000 for Capstone Community Action, Inc.? Casey Engels is a Development Associate for Capstone Community Action, which was established in 1965 with federal funding as part of President Lyndon Johnson's "War on Poverty" initiative. As part of their mission to improve the lives of those living in poverty, Capstone Community Action provides residents of Lamoille, Orange, Washington, Windsor, Addison, and Rutland Counties with improved access to basic living needs such as food, shelter, winter heating, home weatherization, etc. In the past year, Capstone Community Action served 10,117 people in 6,115 households. This includes 404 Northfield residents living in 227 households.

Article 14. Shall the voters authorize the expenditure of \$1,000 for Circle? There was no discussion.

Article 15. Shall the voters authorize the expenditure of \$1,000 for Good Beginnings of Central Vermont? There was no discussion.

Article 16. Shall the voters authorize the expenditure of \$1,000 for the Vermont Center for Independent Living? There was no discussion.

Article 17. Shall the voters authorize the expenditure of \$800 for the Family Center of Washington County? There was no discussion.

Article 18. Shall the voters authorize the expenditure of \$600 for Elevate Youth Services (formerly the Washington County Youth Service Bureau/Boys & Girls Club)? There was no discussion.

Article 19. Shall the voters authorize the expenditure of \$400 for Community Harvest of Central Vermont? Nancy Peck is a local volunteer for CHCV and she reported that this past year CVCV gleaned over 96,000 lbs. of produce from local farms. This produce, which was perfectly safe but could not be sold in retail stores, then was provided to food banks, senior centers, schools, etc. Locally, the Northfield Senior Center received 4,753 pounds of produce that was made available to all. CHCV has a small paid staff but mostly relies on volunteers for the produce gleaning and distribution.

Article 20. Shall the voters authorize the expenditure of \$400 for the Friends of the Winooski River? Michele Braun is the Friends of the Winooski River (FOW) Executive Director as well as the former Zoning Administrator for Northfield. She said FOW does a lot of good work in Northfield with various projects that directly affect the Dog River through dam removal, improved riverside access, etc. Ms. Braun said the funds they receive from local communities are used not only to support their operating expenses but also for leverage when applying for state and federal grant funds. Board member Shernock has been chairing a local working group dedicated to creating universally-accessible pedestrian paths located along the banks of the Dog River. She said FOW has been an important resource for their efforts. Board member Shernock added that Dollar General donated some of its property last year in order to facilitate the establishment of a walking path that would start on the riverbank behind their store. The nearby Cross Brothers Dam is scheduled for removal later this year and after that occurs, the construction phase of this riverwalk project will be able to proceed. Board member Shernock added that FOW has received state grant funds that will be used to promote riverside projects in Barre, Winooski, and Northfield.

Article 21. Shall the voters authorize the expenditure of \$300 for Green Up Vermont? There was no discussion.

Article 22. Shall the voters authorize the expenditure of \$250 for OUR House of Central Vermont? There was no discussion.

Article 23. Shall the Town of Northfield collect property taxes in four (4) installments, which shall be due on August 21, 2026 and November 13, 2026 and February 12, 2027 and May 14, 2027? There was no discussion.

As there were no more questions or comments, the public hearing closed at 7:39 p.m.

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

IV. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (SCHEDULED):

- a. **Mary Nadon Scott: Rare Disease Day (Saturday, February 28, 2026). (7:40 p.m.)** Mary Nadon Scott has served as a Friedreich's Ataxia Research Alliance (FARA) ambassador since 2015 and she also is an advocate for all those suffering from rare diseases. Ms. Scott said there are more than 10,000 known rare diseases and that one out of every ten Americans is living with one. Worldwide, the total number is over 300 million. Ms. Scott said Rare Disease Day is a global imitative to raise awareness and provide support for those suffering from a rare disease. The zebra is the official mascot for Rare Disease Day because of the medical saying, "When you hear hoofbeats, think horses, not zebras". It encourages doctors to consider rare diseases (zebras) when diagnosing, rather than just common ones (horses). Ms. Scott said we now know that one in ten Americans is actually a zebra, not a horse. She then encouraged the Select Board members and members of the community to wear stripes on Rare Disease Day, which always takes place on the last day in February. Ms. Scott then provided the Select Board members with the text of the proclamation Governor Phil Scott will issue tomorrow to recognize Rare Disease Day 2026 in Vermont. Chair Morse, Board member Shernock, and Board member Stevens then read portions of the proclamation in turn, which reads as follows:

WHEREAS, there are nearly 10,000 diseases and conditions considered rare (each affecting fewer than 200,000 Americans) in the United States, according to the National Institutes of Health (NIH); and WHEREAS, while each of these diseases may affect small numbers of people, rare diseases as a group affect almost 30 million Americans; and WHEREAS, many rare diseases are serious and debilitating conditions that have a significant impact on the lives of those affected; and WHEREAS, while more than 450 drugs and biologics have been approved for the treatment of rare diseases according to the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), millions of Americans still have rare diseases for which there is no approved treatment; and WHEREAS, individuals and families affected by rare diseases often experience problems such as diagnosis delay, difficulty finding a medical expert, and lack of access to treatments or ancillary services; and WHEREAS, while the public is familiar with some rare diseases, many patients and families affected by less widely known rare diseases bear a large share of the burden of funding research and raising public awareness to support the search for treatments; and WHEREAS, residents of Vermont are among those affected by rare diseases because nearly ten percent of Americans have rare diseases; and WHEREAS, the National Organization for Rare Disorders (NORD) is organizing a nationwide observance of Rare Disease Day on February 28, 2026. NOW, THEREFORE, I, Philip B. Scott, Governor, hereby proclaim the 28th day of February, 2026 as RARE DISEASE DAY in Vermont.

In addition, as Ms. Scott is great supporter of Norwich University Women's Wrestling, many team members and their coaches attended tonight to show their support for her and her efforts to better publicize Rare Disease Day. Chair Morse and the other Select Board members also expressed their gratitude to Ms. Scott for all she does for Northfield.

- b. Karen Boyce, The Veterans Place: Fundraising Request. (7:50 p.m.)** Ms. Boyce is the former managing director for The Veterans Place and now helps with their fundraising efforts. She noted the Veterans Administration (VA) does pay a per diem for the veterans that they shelter but this only covers the salaries of its paid employees. They do need to fundraise to cover other expenses, which include personal hygiene items, meals, clothing, transportation, etc. The Veterans Place also tries to provide household items for former residents moving into their own accommodations. Ms. Boyce said the operating budget for The Veterans Place is over \$600,000 and the VA only covers about sixty percent (60%) of this expense. She said that to help fill the gap, The Veterans Place would like to hold two (2) separate fundraisers this spring. The first is the "Walking Bob 5k" that will be held on Saturday, April 11, 2026 and is named in honor of one of its permanent residents who walks everywhere. The walk will start on the Common and will traverse side street sidewalks until it reaches The Veterans Place on Vine Street. She has spoken to the interim police chief about the event and he is very supportive. In addition, NU students will provide crowd control along the route and Good Measure will provide for supplies at the water stops that will be set up. The Select Board members were supportive of this event provided that there is coordination with Northfield emergency services. Ms. Boyce said the next event will be a bottle drive on Saturday, May 2, 2026 that will be held in the parking lot of Kenyon's hardware store. They held a similar bottle drive last year and raised over \$3,000. That day also is NU Graduation Day and the Veterans Place would like Select Board permission to hold a coin drop that morning (8:30 a.m. to 10:00 a.m.) at the north and south ends of town. Chair Morse said in the past the Select Board has only permitted coin drops on Labor Day morning that would directly benefit the group that organizes that holiday weekend's activities. Other requests have not been allowed due to safety concerns, etc. Board member Petty is concerned that the NU graduation traffic, which can get quite heavy at times, might face further delays due to the coin drop. It was noted some graduation attendees underestimate the time needed to drive from southern New England and they sometimes arrive in Northfield with little time to spare before the ceremonies begin. Ms. Boyce thought this might be a good time to hold a coin drop because traffic is already slowed down. The Veterans Place would work with the Northfield Police Department (NPD) to ensure traffic safety. After some discussion, the Select Board members asked Ms. Boyce to contact NU administrators to get their views on this. If they are supportive, she can return to the Select Board members and again request their permission.

V. LIQUOR CONTROL COMMISSION

- a. **Liquor License Renewal: Tops Market. (8:06 p.m.)** Motion by Board member Shernock, seconded by Board member Stevens, to approve the liquor license approval. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

VI. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- a. **February 10, 2026 (Regular Meeting). (8:07 p.m.)** Motion by Board member Shernock, seconded by Board member Stevens, to approve the minutes. Board member Petty found one error that will be corrected. **Motion to approve the amended minutes passed 4-0-1, with Board member Maxwell abstaining.**

VII. APPROVAL OF BILLS

- a. **Approval of Warrant #16-26 & #16-26A-F. (8:08 p.m.)** Motion by Board member Stevens, seconded by Board member Shernock, to approve Warrant #16-26 & #16-26A-F in the amount of \$344,250.47. Board member Shernock asked why some NPD firearms were traded in at a local gun shop and new ones purchased. Board member Maxwell said that firearms training does wear them out eventually and they need to be replaced. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
- b. **Receipt of Biweekly Payroll through February 15, 2026. (8:11 p.m.)** Motion by Board member Shernock, seconded by Board member Stevens, to receive the biweekly payroll in the amount of \$100,651.23. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

VIII. SELECT BOARD

- a. **Recommend Appointment of Health Officer & Deputy Health Officer. (8:13 p.m.)** Motion by Board member Maxwell, seconded by Board member Stevens, to recommend the reappointment of Mitch Osiecki as Health Officer and the appointment of Steven Mackenzie as Deputy Health Officer. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
- b. **Approval of Grand List Certificate of No Appeal or Suit Pending. (8:15 p.m.)** Motion by Board member Stevens, seconded by Board member Maxwell, to approve and sign the Grand List Certificate of No Appeal or Suit Pending. This paperwork needs to be provided to the State of Vermont to confirm that the 2025 Northfield Grand List has been finalized. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

- IX. TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT. (8:15 p.m.)** Manager Mackenzie had provided the Select Board members with a written summary of his actions/activities since the last regular meeting (02/10/26). In that time, he has responded to various resident requests in a timely manner. This includes a cleaning of the traffic light by Snapping Turtle Tree Service as some drivers said the light was unreadable at certain times of day. Although the situation has been improved, Manager Mackenzie said the lights are quite old and will need to be replaced this year. Board member Maxwell said this has been an issue for some time. Manager Mackenzie said residents really seem to appreciate being able to speak directly to the town manager about their concerns and getting a timely response. The Town Manager's Report also included a report from Interim Police Chief Kevin Moulton, which included his efforts to improve Police Station security. Both reports are available for viewing on the municipal website (<https://www.northfield-vt.gov/select-board-minutes>) through the relevant meeting's "Documents" link.

X. BOARD MEMBERS' COMMENTS, CONCERNS, QUESTIONS.

- a. **Appreciation for Select Board Chair Charles Morse. (8:23 p.m.)** Board member Maxwell wanted to express his appreciation to Chair Morse as this will be his last meeting as a Select Board member. Board member Maxwell felt Chair Morse should be commended for his past service to his country and to the Northfield community in various roles over the years. He hopes the friendship that developed between them during their time serving together on the Select Board will continue in future years. The other Select Board members also expressed their gratitude to Chair Morse for his service, even when they did not always agree with him.
- b. **Appreciation for Northfield Highway Crew. (8:25 p.m.)** Board member Maxwell thanked the Highway crew for their good work during the past few snowstorms despite being shorthanded on several occasions.

- c. **Appreciation for NPD Members for Spirit Week Participation. (8:25 p.m.)** Board member Petty noted Interim Police Chief Moulton and NPD Sergeant Brian Gosselin recently took part in Spirit Week activities at the local schools. This participation had a very positive impact on the students and Board member Petty was very appreciative of the extra effort that both officers made to interact with our local youth.
- d. **Road Salt Inventory. (8:28 p.m.)** Board member Shernock asked whether the Highway Department has been able to resolve its salt shortage problem. Manager Mackenzie said Highway Foreman Karl Bailey was able to replenish his supply by going to different vendors. As a result, we will be ready for the next snowstorm. However, Manager Mackenzie still feels we should improve our salt storage capacity for next winter as periodic road salt shortages have become a statewide problem.
- e. **Union Brook Road Parking Problem. (8:32 p.m.)** Board member Shernock asked if there is any update regarding the roadside parking problem on Union Brook Road. Manager Mackenzie said he has been working with local law enforcement and getting legal advice on how best to resolve the situation. A plan now is being developed that will be put in place soon.
- f. **Chair Morse Farewell. (8:33 p.m.)** Chair Morse wanted to thank his fellow Select Board members and the Northfield community for their support during his many years of service to Northfield. Manager Mackenzie said he has known Chair Morse for almost thirty (30) years, including his tenure as Northfield Town Manager. Manager Mackenzie said it has been a pleasure to work with Chair Morse these past few weeks and he thanked him for helping him during his transitional period as interim town manager.

XI. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (UNSCHEDULED). There was none.

XII. EXECUTIVE SESSION. (8:38 p.m.)

Motion by Board member Maxwell, seconded by Board member Shernock, that the Select Board finds, based on the advice of counsel, that premature general public knowledge of confidential attorney-client communications received from Northfield's counsel concerning a pending EEOC claim and union grievance involving an employee and made for the purpose of providing professional legal services to the Town of Northfield, would place the Select Board and Northfield at a substantial disadvantage. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

Motion by Board member Maxwell, seconded by Board member Petty, that the Select Board go into executive session pursuant to 1 V.S.A. §§ 313(a)(1)(E) and (F) to receive and consider professional legal advice in the form of confidential attorney client communications provided by counsel for the Town of Northfield concerning a pending employee EEOC claim and a union grievance with the Interim Town Manager invited to attend. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

The Board went into executive session at 8:45 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 10:06 p.m.

Motion by Board member Stevens, seconded by Board member Shernock, to pay the interest of the tax sale purchase to Zachary Stone. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

Motion by Board member Stevens, seconded by Board member Shernock, to return the redemption payment and interest owed to Deanna Boullian-Rogers. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

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

The Board adjourned at 10:07 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kenneth L. McCann

Kenneth L. McCann, Acting Clerk

A video recording of this meeting is available at: <https://youtu.be/XAcsyuZgn50>

These minutes were approved at the Select Board regular meeting of March 10, 2026.