

**TOWN OF NORTHFIELD, VERMONT  
SELECT BOARD REGULAR MEETING  
Minutes of March 25, 2025**

- I. ROLL CALL.** Chair Charles Morse, Board members K. David Maxwell, Lydia Petty, Merry Shernock, and John Stevens. Also present were Manager Jeff Schulz, Acting Clerk Kenneth McCann, Royal DeLegge (Chair, Planning Commission), Brian Massey Jr., Susan Stillinger, and Elroy C. Hill.

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

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

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

**IV. LIQUOR CONTROL COMMISSION**

- a. Liquor License Renewal: O'Maddi's Deli and Café.** 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: O'Maddi's Deli and Café.** Motion by Board member Shernock, seconded by Board member Stevens, to approve the outside consumption permit. Board member Stevens asked how this permit would conform with the ban on public consumption on the Common. Manager Schulz said the area where the drinking would take place would be fenced off from the general public. The tables and chairs would be located on the sidewalk in front of the establishment. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

**V. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

- a. March 11, 2025 (Regular Meeting).** Motion by Board member Shernock, seconded by Board member Stevens, to approve the minutes. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

**VI. APPROVAL OF BILLS**

- a. Approval of Warrant #18-25 & #18-25A-C.** Motion by Board member Shernock, seconded by Board member Stevens, to approve Warrant #18-25 & #18-25A-C in the amount of \$293,653.63. Board member Stevens asked about the purchase of two (2) defibrillators by the Northfield Ambulance Service (NAS). Manager Schulz said this was a planned purchase and there are funds in the NAS Capital Equipment Plan (CEP) budget to cover the expense. Board member Stevens noted a payment regarding the Cross Brothers Dam removal project; he thought all the expenses of this project would be paid by FEMA. Manager Schulz said this was a pass-through payment for which the municipality will be reimbursed by FEMA at a later time. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
- b. Receipt of Biweekly Payroll through March 16, 2025.** Motion by Board member Shernock, seconded by Board member Stevens, to receive the biweekly payroll in the amount of \$122,444.69. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

**VII. SELECT BOARD**

- a. Appointments of Various Town Officials.** The terms of certain appointed municipal positions expire at the end of this month. There also are positions that have been vacant for several months. These positions were advertised and the current office holders contacted to see whether or not they would like to be reappointed.
- 1. Conservation Commission.** Motion by Board member Shernock, seconded by Board member Stevens, to reappoint Nigel Hicks-Tibbles and Ruth Ruttenberg to the Conservation Commission. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
  - 2. Development Review Board.** Motion by Board member Shernock, seconded by Board member Stevens, to reappoint Elroy C. Hill to the Development Review Board, appoint Brian Massey, Jr. to fill out the remaining two (2) years of a four (4) year term, and appoint Bryon J. Furman as an alternate member. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
  - 3. Dog River Park Committee.** Motion by Board member Shernock, seconded by Board member Stevens, to reappoint Fred Nadon to the Dog River Park Committee. There were no applicants for one (1) vacant position. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
  - 4. Energy Committee.** Motion by Board member Shernock, seconded by Board member Stevens, to reappoint Joseph Wantuch and Gail Hall to the Energy Committee. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

5. **Planning Commission (PC).** Motion by Board member Shernock, seconded by Board member Stevens, to reappoint Royal DeLegge and Elroy C. Hill to the Planning Commission and to appoint Brian Massey Jr. to fill out the remaining two (2) years of a four (4) year term. There were no applicants for an additional vacant position. PC Chair DeLegge thanked the Select Board members for making these appointments. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
6. **Town Forest Stewardship Committee.** Motion by Board member Shernock, seconded by Board member Stevens, to reappoint Russ Barrett and Ray Crowder to the Town Forest Stewardship Committee. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
7. **First Constable.** Motion by Board member Shernock, seconded by Board member Stevens, to reappoint Richard Wobby as First Constable. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
8. **Grand Juror.** There were no applicants for this position.
9. **Tree Warden.** Motion by Board member Shernock, seconded by Board member Stevens, to reappoint Russ Barrett as Tree Warden. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
10. **CVFiber Delegate.** Motion by Board member Shernock, seconded by Board member Stevens, to reappoint Tom Davis as CVFiber Delegate. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
11. **Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission (CVRPC) Representative.** Motion by Board member Shernock, seconded by Board member Stevens, to reappoint Royal DeLegge as the CVRPC Representative and Jeff Schulz as the alternate representative. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
12. **CVRPC Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) Representative.** Motion by Motion by Board member Shernock, seconded by Board member Stevens, to reappoint Tom Davis as the CVRPC TAC Representative and Jeff Schulz as the alternate representative. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

Board member Maxwell thanked the applicants in the room who were either appointed or reappointed tonight for volunteering to serve the Northfield community.

- b. **Request to Close Off Public Parking Spaces for Outside Seating.** Manager Schulz said a Depot Square business (i.e. Depot Square Pizzeria) has requested that two (2) parking spaces be closed so that they can place tables and chairs there for outside consumption. This would be similar to what occurs on East Street for Good Measure Pub & Brewery patrons each summer. Due to the scarcity of public parking on Depot Square, Manager Schulz felt the Select Board members should discuss this matter fully before any decision was made. If the request is denied, there might be questions about why one request was granted and the other denied. Motion by Board member Maxwell, seconded by Board member Stevens, to approve the request from Depot Square Pizzeria. Board member Maxwell noted Select Board permission for closing off East Street parking spaces was provided several years ago first for the Knotty Shamrock and then later for Good Measure Pub & Brewery. He feels there should be a clear policy for providing permission to close off public parking spaces to benefit a specific business. Board member Maxwell noted that the parking situations and traffic flows are very different on Depot Square and East Street. He felt the sidewalk in front of Depot Square Pizzeria is quite wide so perhaps that could be the site for outside consumption that would not necessitate eliminating parking spaces. Board member Maxwell feels that the request should be tabled until Manager Schulz has had the opportunity to fully research the matter and prepare a draft policy for Select Board discussion.

Board member Petty supports allowing local dining/drinking establishments to have outside consumption during the warmer months. She believes this does attract both residents and non-residents to the downtown area where they might patronize other businesses, etc. However, Board member Petty also believes there should be a formal policy governing this that would include ADA compliance and other conditions before approval. She has looked at other Vermont communities that allow for streetside dining and drinking as well as the creation of "parklets" for similar reasons. These communities have rules that usually include strict safety provisions that separate and thus protect patrons from vehicular traffic, ensure universal access, etc. Board member Petty noted the municipality has purchased and installed tables and chairs on the Common interior in order to encourage people to eat meals and drink non-alcoholic beverages there.

Board member Stevens agrees that a policy needs to be put in place before the approval of any additional requests to close off public parking spaces. He would like Manager Schulz to draft a such a policy for Select Board review as soon as possible. Board member Shernock also agreed with the need for a formal policy. Chair Morse felt any new policy should take into consideration the State of Vermont’s own policies regarding outside consumption. Without objection, the motion was tabled until the next Select Board regular meeting (04/08/25).

- c. **Tax Stabilization Policy and Application Form.** The policy and application form have been reviewed and revised by the Select Board members at previous meetings. It now is being presented for formal approval. Motion by Board member Shernock, seconded by Board member Stevens, to approve the Tax Stabilization Policy and Application Form as presented by management. On the first page of the policy (and on subsequent pages), there is the requirement that the proposed project “has received all applicable zoning and Act 250 permits.” Board member Stevens would like this wording changed to the following: “Construction is considered started when the Town of Northfield Development Review Board has approved the plan and a Building Permit has been issued. Construction is not an evaluation of existing buildings or land prior to construction, nor does it include minor renovation or repairs for which a Building Permit is not required. Construction does not include work on ‘brownfields’ for future construction.” There was no objection to making this change wherever the original language appears in the policy. There also was a request to finalize the policy by adding page numbers, etc. Without objection, the motion was tabled until the next meeting.
- d. **Annual Financial Plan for Town Highways.** The Vermont Agency of Transportation (VTTrans) requires each municipality to provide its annual financial plan for its Town Highways to document the amount budgeted for highway maintenance in the next fiscal year. Motion by Board member Shernock, seconded by Board member Stevens, to approve the Annual Financial Plan for Town Highways. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
- e. **Town Common Rehabilitation Project.** Chair Morse said the DuBois & King consultants who worked on this project (Emily Lewis and Cait Campbell) formally submitted their design concept proposal to the Select Board members at their October 22, 2024 regular meeting. As the total cost of completing all twenty-six (26) elements of this proposal is estimated at \$2,073,362, there has been some subsequent discussion about prioritizing certain elements of the project and thus perhaps completing the project in phases. Chair Morse would like the Town Buildings & Energy Subcommittee members (Board members Shernock and Stevens) to hold an open meeting in the near future to develop a priority list that the full Select Board can evaluate and discuss at one of their regular meetings. As this would be a warned public meeting, the former members of the Northfield Common Rehabilitation Steering Committee would be encouraged to attend and provide their own views on this. Board member Petty thought that it might be useful to hire engineers to review the design concept and provide their own recommendations regarding project prioritization. Chair Morse thought the first step in the process would be the aforementioned subcommittee meeting.

### VIII. TOWN MANAGER’S REPORT

- a. **Main Street Waterline and Cheney Farm Water Tank Replacement Project.** Manager Schulz said the minutes of the pre-construction meetings for both of these projects were provided in the Select Board packets. As indicated in these minutes, work on each of these separate projects will start no later than early May 2025. The waterline replacement work will start at the Main Street Bridge and work southwards in the direction of Norwich University (NU) for about two (2) months. After this section has been completed, the work will resume north of the Main Street Bridge to the Nantanna Mill area. The final segment will go along Prospect Street towards Cheney Farm. Manager Schulz said no road closures are planned during the construction phase and any disturbed pavement will be repaired. Manager Schulz will provide weekly social media postings during the construction phases of these projects. Board member Petty hopes this will include Facebook postings as those reach a lot of Northfield residents. Chair Morse said the minutes have a work schedule for the Cheney Farm Water Tank project but there is not one for the waterline replacement project. He also would like to see a timeline for this project. Chair Morse hopes the construction work on Cheney Farm will result in a few new parking spaces that afterwards could be used by outdoors enthusiasts wanting to hike the Town Forest trails starting at that location.

- b. Finance Director Resignation.** Manager Schulz noted Finance Director Laurie Baroffio has decided to retire after thirty-four (34) years of service to the community. Manager Schulz will start advertising the vacant position in the next week. He added Ms. Baroffio is willing to assist the municipality as a part-time consultant after her retirement date (06/15/25). Board member Maxwell asked if a hiring committee will be formed. Manager Schulz said the decision on whom to hire is solely his own but he is willing to include Select Board members or residents with financial expertise in the process. Board member Maxwell thought the transition to a new Finance Director might be a good opportunity to update the municipality's financial software and practices.
- c. Vine Street Sidewalk Project.** Manager Schulz said the sidewalk contractor plans to start work by the end of April 2025. As part of the project, some utility poles will need to be relocated further away from the street.
- d. Open Meeting Law Training.** Manager Schulz said the Vermont League of Cities & Towns (VLCT) will be hosting Open Meeting Law online training on Wednesday, April 16, 2025 from 10:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. He has encouraged all municipal board members to take this free training course if possible. Manager Schulz also will set up a group viewing site in the Municipal Building Conference Room for those interested.
- e. Diversity, Equality, & Inclusion (DEI) Training.** Manager Schulz said the Director of the State's Office of Racial Equality, Education, & Outreach will be attending the Select Board's regular meeting on April 22, 2025 to discuss DEI training planning options. An in-person DEI training session then will be scheduled for municipal employees, board members, committee members, etc. There is no cost for these events.
- f. NU Cyber Fusion Building.** NU will be proceeding with this new building construction project this week. The Hasset House and the Communications Building are scheduled to be razed tomorrow (03/26/25). Manager Schulz was contacted late last week about providing permission for temporarily closing Park Avenue, which is a public road, during this construction. He did grant permission with a number of conditions, such as installing proper traffic safety signage, repaving any damaged parts of the street, etc.
- g. Turkey Hill Maple Farm.** Manager Schulz noted the lease for Turkey Hill Maple Farm to tap trees on Turkey Hill municipal property will expire on June 30, 2025. As this property belongs to the Water Department, the discussion on possibly extending the lease will start at the next Utility Commissions meeting (04/07/25).
- h. Pool House Rehabilitation Project.** The hired architects for updating this facility and making it ADA-compliant have developed two (2) options for this project. One is a full renovation of the building and the preliminary cost estimate for this is just over \$1,000,000. The other option has only minor building interior renovations and would cost about \$150,000. Manager Schulz would like the Town Buildings & Energy Subcommittee to meet soon to review these options and further refine the plans.
- i. Municipal Website Upgrade.** Manager Schulz has received some comments that the municipal website could be made more user-friendly and easier to navigate. Some upgrades will be made in the near future to accomplish this. Board member Shernock would like the website's search engine updated.
- j. Wall Street Pedestrian Safety Project.** Manager Schulz has decided to award the engineering phase of this project to DuBois & King. They submitted the only bid before the RFP deadline and after some consideration, Manager Schulz decided to hire them rather than rebid the project.

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

- a. Annual Select Board Retreat.** Board member Maxwell reminded Chair Morse that it has become the practice in recent years for the Select Board members to hold a Board Retreat in the early spring in order to update the list of municipal short-, medium-, and long terms goals for the community.
- b. 310 Water Street FEMA Buyout Property.** Board member Petty asked if the sidewalk around this property will be improved following the building's razing. Manager Schulz said there were funds available to repave the surrounding section of sidewalk.

- c. **Bailey Road Controlled Structure Burn.** Board member Stevens noted that at the owner's request, on Saturday, April 5, 2025, the Northfield Fire Department (NFD) and other regional fire departments will conduct a controlled burn of the structure located at 486 Bailey Road. Board member Stevens asked if all potential toxics had been removed from the site. Manager Schulz confirmed that all the necessary permits have been obtained and the neighbors have been provided sufficient warning beforehand.
- d. **Town Meeting Voting Process.** Board member Shernock has been in contact with a Northfield resident who is disappointed that the Open Meeting component of the annual Town Meeting will be eliminated due to the public vote taken earlier this month (03/03/25) to have all budgetary and other matters voted on by Australian Ballot starting next year. She would like to address the Select Board members at a future meeting regarding possible options to maintain some sort of Town Meeting open forum.
- e. **Community Garden update.** Chair Morse said the planned configuration of the Community Garden, to be located at the intersection of Water Street and Summer Street, will have to be revised since it was discovered that some trees would need to be removed if the original plans were followed.

**X. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (UNSCHEDULED)**

- a. **Elroy C. Hill: Town Common Rehabilitation Project.** Mr. Hill felt with the large potential price tag estimated for this rehabilitation project, he would prefer that the municipality first focus on fixing the deteriorating sidewalks located in the downtown area. He believes that given their poor condition, these are real safety concerns.
- b. **Elroy C. Hill: Sidewalk Clearing Appreciation.** Mr. Hill also wanted to thank Manager Schulz for making sure salt was put down on the sidewalks after yesterday's brief snowstorm. This action made the sidewalks much safer in the afternoon.

**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 Manager Schulz, Police Chief Pierre Gomez, and the Town Attorney present. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

The Board went into executive session at 8:35 p.m.

Manager Schulz left the executive session at 9:20 p.m.

Chief Gomez joined the executive session at 9:38 p.m.

Chief Gomez left the executive session at 10:20 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 10:50 p.m. No action was taken.

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

The Board adjourned at 10:51 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

*Kenneth L. McCann*

Kenneth L. McCann, Acting Clerk

A video recording of this meeting is available at: <https://youtu.be/h8sC5rCCS2c>

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