

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

- I. ROLL CALL.** Chair Charles Morse, Board members K. David Maxwell (absent), Lydia Petty, Merry Shernock, and John Stevens. Also present were Interim Town Manager Steven Mackenzie, Acting Clerk Kenneth McCann, Mitch Osiecki (Zoning Administrator), David Mears (Chair, Conservation Commission), Bill Dell'Isola (Town Forest Stewardship Committee), Bill Clememts (Accessibility, Walkability, and Pedestrian Safety [AWPS] Task Force), Daniel Anderson (AWPS Task Force), Mary Nadon Scott (AWPS Task Force), Kaitlyn Keating (AWPS Task Force), DeLane McIlvene (AWPS Task Force), Tim Swartz (AWPS Task Force), Susan Stillinger (Conservation Commission), Jeremy Whalen (Chair, Town Forest Stewardship Committee), Brian Massey Jr., Mike Tomczyk, Dave Huber, Aaron Rhodes, Nancy Peck, Susan Barnard, Dave Hanna, Laura Hill-Eubanks, Carolyn Stevens, Pam Ricker, Gerard LaVarnway, Don Doyon, Gary Circosta, Janan Hamm, and Lorna Doney.

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

- II. SET/ADJUST AGENDA. (7:01 p.m.)** Chair Morse said a reimbursement request for a plumber bill due to a faulty water line will be moved ahead in the agenda as this payment (if authorized) is included on the warrant. In addition, Board member Petty has asked that approval of the advertisement for soliciting members for the Town Manager Search Advisory Committee be added to the agenda.

**III. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (SCHEDULED):**

- a. Mike Tomczyk: Falls Trailer Park Zoning Concerns. (7:03 p.m.)** Mr. Tomczyk resides at 312 Vermont Route 12 North, which is right next to the Falls Trailer Park. This past summer, he noticed that stakes for potentially two (2) new mobile home slabs were being put down next to his property. He then contacted Zoning Administrator Mitch Osiecki to make sure setback and other zoning regulations were being followed. At the same time, he also applied to Mr. Osiecki for permit to put up a fence that would separate the properties. After the fence was put up, the new slabs were put in as well as new septic systems. Last month, Mr. Tomczyk saw that an electric power board was being installed so he again contacted Mr. Osiecki and well as the Falls Trailer Park owner, Randy Rouleau. Mr. Tomczyk believes one of the new slabs was put down too close to the property line and that it had been installed without a permit. He asked Mr. Rouleau about this and his response was that he "did not do permits." Mr. Osiecki confirmed the lack of permits for the work and stated that zoning regulation violation fines would be imposed. Mr. Tomczyk understands that that is the normal process but it doesn't resolve that the new trailer home(s) will be too close to his property. He also is concerned about the impact on the resale value should he decide to sell his property. Board member Stevens asked what is the required setback for fences. Mr. Osiecki said there is no set distance but it is advised that new fences be at least two feet (2') from the property line so that the side facing the neighboring property can be maintained. Mr. Tomczyk said his fence is at least three feet (3') from the property line. Board member Shernock asked if the closest slab is less than the ten foot (10') setback minimum. Mr. Tomczyk said it is eight feet (8') from the property line. As for the new septic systems, Mr. Osiecki said municipalities usually don't regulate them as this is the jurisdiction of the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC). Therefore, if they have been installed improperly, this may become a state matter. Mr. Tomczyk said this whole process is new to him as he never has had a neighbor dispute before. He is hoping that the situation can be rectified so that Mr. Rouleau will be made to follow the rules in future. Chair Morse said Mr. Osiecki has contacted Mr. Rouleau at least twice by letter in order to have him file the proper permits for his trailer park expansion plans. He added that as this matter involves legal matters, it will be discussed later in the meeting in executive session with Mr. Osiecki included. Mr. Tomczyk then thanked the Select Board members for looking into this matter.

- b. David Mears, Chair, Northfield Conservation Commission: Cheney Field Accessibility. (7:15 p.m.)** Mr. Mears is joined tonight by Bill Dell'Isola from the Town Forest Stewardship Committee. They have facilitated several meetings at which members of the Northfield Conservation Commission (NCC), Town Forest Stewardship Committee (TFSC), and the Accessibility, Walkability, and Pedestrian Safety (AWPS) Task Force discussed the possibility of improving access at Cheney Field while at the same time preserving the natural state of the site. Mr. Mears said initially the NCC and TFSC members seemed skeptical about this access improvement if it meant putting permanent parking spaces on Cheney Field. However, their interactions with AWPS Task Force members resulted in discussion of various options in order to achieve this improved accessibility without causing any lasting impairment to the site. He then noted Mr. Dell'Isola helped develop a working group that met to discuss various compromise solutions. Mr. Dell'Isola said the working group first reviewed the Town Forest Stewardship Plan (2019), which does contain suggestions for improving public access to the Town Forest. As the working group focused on improved Cheney Field access while preserving the site, they have provided suggestions for a pilot program that would allow public parking along the Cheney Field access road for special events rather than establishing a permanent parking lot. The roadside parking would be limited to those who have been issued a state-issued disabled parking placard. Mr. Dell'Isola said there would need to be improvements to the now very sharp turn from Byam Hill Road to Cheney Farm Road. He added that for general improved access to the Town Forest trail system, it might be possible to create a small parking area at the end of Slate Avenue near the start of the Lybrand Trail that connects to Cheney Field. Other potential sites for new parking areas for improved Town Forest access include the top of Kingston Road and along Turkey Hill Road. Mr. Dell'Isola said more able-bodied hikers also could be directed to park in the downtown area and/or at Norwich University's Shaw Outdoor Center. There will be a need to work with Norwich University (NU) on some of these options as a good part of the municipal trail system travels adjacent or briefly crosses NU property. Mr. Dell'Isola said that in addition to working with NU, there are some regional outdoor recreation groups with whom we could work with on such matters.

Board member Petty thanked all those who worked together to develop these proposals. It is good these individuals were able to help develop a balanced approach that will improve Cheney Field access while also providing forest protection. Board member Petty said the VOREC Grant Implementation Committee also looked at options for creating new parking areas for greater access but some of the solutions were either too expensive or would require difficult-to-obtain state permits. Manager Mackenzie has been reviewing the proposals and suggested Mr. Mears and Mr. Dell'Isola should meet with Highway Foreman Karl Bailey and Utility Superintendent James Russo about how the pilot proposals could be implemented this year. Mr. Russo would need to be assured that there would be no adverse impact on the new Cheney Farm Reservoir and Mr. Bailey would need to provide input on road access to the site. Manager Mackenzie feels such a meeting would be very productive. Mr. Mears also felt such a meeting would be very useful in determining which of their proposals are feasible given current and future site conditions. He added that some of their proposed changes could be done this year while others might take several years to accomplish.

Board member Shernock is pleased with the way this process has turned out. It now seems that some consensus has been reached on how to achieve a compromise solution. She also hopes that Mr. Mears and Mr. Dell'Isola will remain personally involved as the pilot programs are developed. Mr. Mears said that any role they would play would be in partnership with the municipality. He looks forward to the upcoming conversations with municipal staff on these matters. Manager Mackenzie will try to facilitate such a meeting in the near future. Chair Morse believes that with all the intelligent minds now involved in this project, the goal of creating greater access to Cheney Field while preserving its special nature can be achieved. The municipality will provide all assistance to pursuing the pilot programs after the water project on Cheney Field has been completed and the heavy equipment now on the site has been removed.

Laura Hill-Eubanks read the report that Mr. Mears and Mr. Dell’Isola provided to the Select Board members and was very impressed. She felt this was a good first step in finding a proper balance between improved Town Forest access and forest protection. She asked when the work on Cheney Field would be completed. Chair Morse said it probably would be late spring and the work contract calls for full restoration of the land that had been disturbed. However, it is possible that the new access road that the work contractor installed could be improved and maintained for future usage.

#### **IV. LIQUOR CONTROL COMMISSION**

- a. **Liquor License Renewal: Champlain Farms (Wesco, Inc.). (7:45 p.m.)** Motion by Board member Shernock, seconded by Board member Stevens, to approve the liquor license renewal. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**
- b. **Outside Consumption Permit: Folino’s Pizza (Fig Hospitality LLC). (7:46 p.m.)** Motion by Board member Shernock, seconded by Board member Stevens, to approve the outside consumption permit. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**

#### **V. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

- a. **January 21, 2026 (Special Meeting). (7:47 p.m.)** Motion by Board member Stevens, seconded by Board member Shernock, to approve the minutes. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**
- b. **January 22, 2026 (Special Meeting). (7:48 p.m.)** Motion by Board member Shernock, seconded by Board member Stevens, to approve the minutes. Board member Shernock found one typo that will be corrected. **Motion passed 3-0-1, with Board member Petty abstaining.**
- c. **January 27, 2026 (Regular Meeting). (7:49 p.m.)** Motion by Board member Shernock, seconded by Board member Stevens, to approve the minutes. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**

#### **VI. SELECT BOARD**

- a. **Authorization to Reimburse Mark Finch for Water Line Repair Bill. (7:50 p.m.)** Motion by Board member Shernock, seconded by Board member Stevens, to reimburse Mark Finch for a \$437.35 plumber’s bill due to a faulty water line for which the municipality was responsible. Chair Morse noted that this matter was discussed at the Utility Commissions Joint Meeting on January 12, 2026 and the commission members voted to recommend that Mr. Finch be reimbursed. The minutes of that meeting state there were precedents for this action and Board member Petty asked if this was correct. Chair Morse confirmed it was. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**

#### **VII. APPROVAL OF BILLS**

- a. **Approval of Warrant #15-26 & #15-26A-C. (7:51 p.m.)** Motion by Board member Shernock, seconded by Board member Stevens, to approve Warrant #15-26 & #15-26A-C in the amount of \$739,494.17. Chair Morse noted that of the total warrant amount, \$415,206 represented power purchases for the Northfield Electric Department (NED). **Motion passed 4-0-0.**
- b. **Receipt of Biweekly Payroll through February 1, 2026. (7:53 p.m.)** Motion by Board member Shernock, seconded by Board member Stevens, to receive the biweekly payroll in the amount of \$99,353.78. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**

#### **VIII. SELECT BOARD (cont.)**

- a. **Vermont Agency of Transportation (VTrans) Grant Reimbursement Request (Lovers Lane). (7:54 p.m.)** Motion by Board member Stevens, seconded by Board member Petty, to approve and sign the reimbursement form. Manager Mackenzie said approving this form will certify that the grant funds were spent on Lovers Lane and that the project was completed. Board member Petty asked how the grant funds were spent. Manager Mackenzie said the project including purchasing and installing new guardrails, ledge removal, grinding down the road surface, etc. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**

- b. Authorization to Request Quotes to Replace 2007 Fire Pumper Truck. (7:58 p.m.)** Motion by Board member Shernock, seconded by Board member Stevens, to authorize Manager Mackenzie and Northfield Fire Department (NFD) Chief Peter J. DeMasi, to obtain quotes for the replacement of the 2007 Fire Pumper Truck. This purchase is now scheduled for FY 2028-2029. Chair Morse believes that the Town Manager already has the authority to seek such quotes through the municipal purchasing policy. Manager Mackenzie said he sought this specific authorization in the interest of full transparency. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**
  - c. Public Hearing (Warned Town Meeting Articles). 7:58 p.m.)**. A public hearing will be held at the beginning (7:00 p.m.) of the Tuesday, February 24, 2026 Select Board regular meeting for the “purpose of providing views on the Warned Town Articles to be voted upon by Australian Ballot at the Annual Town Meeting on Tuesday, March 3, 2026.” Chair Morse noted that since the Town Meeting open session was eliminated last year by Northfield voters, this will be the only opportunity for residents to ask questions at a public meeting about the proposed municipal budget and the other warning articles.
  - d. Finalize Advertisement for Town Manager Search Advisory Committee Members. (8:03 p.m.)** Board member Petty said the advertisement seeking applicants to serve on this advisory committee has been drafted but there were some unresolved issues. This includes the committee size and she recommends five (5) public members. There was no objection. In addition, the deadline for receiving letters of interest was set at Thursday, March 5, 2026 and they should be directed to Manager Mackenzie ([manager@northfield.vt.us](mailto:manager@northfield.vt.us)). The committee members will be chosen at the Select Board regular meeting the following week (03/10/26). This advisory committee will help with interviewing the final three (3) or four (4) job candidates who will be brought to Northfield. The Select Board members will be making the final hiring decision but public input from residents, staff members, etc. will be an important factors. Motion by Board member Stevens, seconded by Board member Shernock, to approve the revised advertisement for soliciting members for the Town Manager Search Advisory Committee. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**
- IX. TOWN MANAGER’S REPORT. (8:15 p.m.)** Manager Mackenzie had provided the Select Board members with a written report highlighting his activities since the last meeting (01/27/26) as well as his plans for the next two (2) weeks. Among his recent achievements were finalizing the proposed FY 2026-2027 budget with the assistance of Finance Director Laurie Baroffio, attending three (3) negotiating meetings with union representatives for the Northfield Ambulance Service (NAS), working with Montpelier Police Chief Eric Nordenson on an MOU for local law enforcement coverage, conducting interviews for the Finance Director position, etc. Manager Mackenzie’s report also included an update from Interim Northfield Police Chief Kevin Moulton regarding his recent activities/actions. Manager Mackenzie said Chief Moulton has been doing an outstanding job and is working to resolve a number of long standing issues, such a Police Station security, etc.. Manager Mackenzie and Chief Moulton will be holding a “meet and greet” tomorrow afternoon at O’Maddi’s Café at 4:00 p.m. Board member Shernock noted Chief Moulton has been holding meetings with local school leadership and she thought that was a very positive development. Chair Morse would like Manager Mackenzie to perhaps work on a possible solution to the current road salt shortage so this doesn’t happen in future years. This could include greater access to the large stockpile of salt that VTTrans amasses each winter. Another possibility is the construction of a new salt shed with larger capacity than the current one.
- X. BOARD MEMBERS’ COMMENTS, CONCERNS, QUESTIONS**
- a. Union Brook Parking Problem. (8:25 p.m.)** Board member Stevens asked if the problem with one resident (Donald Smith) parking his vehicles within the municipal right-of-way has been resolved. Manager Mackenzie said this will be a long process that probably will require an amendment to the local traffic ordinance. He added that Chief Moulton has been in contact with Mr. Smith to see if this matter can be resolved in a more expedient manner. Chair Morse said this problem probably would have been addressed more aggressively in the past had the Northfield Police Department (NPD) not been so understaffed this past year. Dave Hanna, who had brought this concern to the Select Board members’ attention at a recent meeting, believes that any vehicle parked in the road that impedes normal traffic should be removed as permitted by state statute. It also was noted that the current winter parking ban prohibits any roadside parking between the hours of midnight and 6:00 a.m.

**XI. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (UNSCHEDULED)**

- a. Dan Anderson: AWPS Task Force update. (8:35 p.m.)** Mr. Anderson said the Task Force members are very pleased with the work done by the committee looking into the possibility of greater public access to Cheney Field. The Task Force members also look forward to working with the municipality on any pilot programs later this year.
- b. Dan Anderson: PTNO Raffle. (8:36 p.m.)** Mr. Anderson said the Northfield Parent Teacher Neighbor Organization (PTNO) will be holding a fundraising raffle soon and had hoped to include a family pass to the municipal pool as one of the prizes. Manager Mackenzie believes that he did receive this request by email and, as this has been standard practice in recent years, did approve the request. He will check to confirm whether or not his response email actually went through.

**XII. EXECUTIVE SESSION.**

Motion by Board member Petty, 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 4-0-0.**

Motion by Board member Petty, seconded by Board member Stevens, 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. The Select Board also will discuss a separate matter with Manager Mackenzie and Zoning Administrator Osiecki invited to attend. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**

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

Motion by Board member Morse, seconded by Board member Stevens, to come out of executive session. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**

The Board came out of executive session at 9:50 p.m. No action was taken.

**XIII. ADJOURNMENT.** Motion by Board member Morse, seconded by Board member Petty, to adjourn. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**

The Board adjourned at 9:52 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

*Kenneth L. McCann*

Kenneth L. McCann, Acting Clerk

A video recording of this meeting is available at: <https://youtu.be/Ha2s3M5rK10>

These minutes are subject to approval at the next Select Board regular meeting.