

**TOWN OF NORTHFIELD, VERMONT  
SELECT BOARD REGULAR MEETING  
Minutes of April 28, 2026**

- I. ROLL CALL.** Chair K. David Maxwell, Board members Tim Davis, Lydia Petty, Merry Shernock, and John Stevens. Also present were Town Manager Mary Smith, Interim Town Manager Steven Mackenzie, Acting Clerk Kenneth McCann, Dan Anderson (Accessibility, Walkability, & Pedestrian Safety [AWPS] Task Force), Casey Kipp (Northfield Farmers Market), Susan Barnard, Nancy Peck, Mary Nadon Scott (AWPS Task Force), DeLane McIlvene (AWPS Task Force), Kaitlyn Keating (AWPS Task Force), Tim Swartz (AWPS Task Force), Steve Schenk (Northfield Farmers Market), Janan Hamm (AWPS Task Force), Bill Clements (AWPS Task Force), Don Schneider (Cabin Fever Party), MK Monley (Cabin Fever Party), Kristin Pollard, Pam Ricker, Carolyn Stevens, Matt Romei, Gerard LaVarnway, Susan Stillinger, Alison Turner, and Elroy Hill.

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

- II. SET/ADJUST AGENDA (7:00 p.m.)** There were no changes to the posted agenda.

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

- a. Dan Anderson, Co-chair, Accessibility, Walkability, & Pedestrian Safety Task Force: Cabin Fever Party Report. (7:01 p.m.)** Mr. Anderson provided a slideshow with pictures of this all-accessible public event, which was held on Wednesday, March 4, 2026. He said the AWPS Task Force spent a considerable amount of time and effort planning this event that was preceded by a number of workshops where lanterns were fashioned for the concluding Lantern Parade. Mr. Anderson said the festivities were funded through an AARP Placemaking grant and met the grant provider's goal of creating a public gathering where anyone could participate regardless of age or mobility level. The timing of the event was based on the notion that late winter in Vermont usually is a time when people don't venture out so this all-inclusive event provided a very good reason to bring people together. Mr. Anderson said one initial concern was being able to find a location that was all-accessible but Norwich University (NU) did make their Plumley Armory available. As the event date fell in the middle of NU Spring Break, there were no other activities planned for the facility that day. Although many volunteers helped with the planning for and the holding of this Cabin Fever Party, Mr. Anderson singled out Liz Kennedy for special commendation since she provided both significant time and resources as party organizer. Also very helpful was MK Monley from Waterbury VT, who provided much valuable guidance based on her years of experience in organizing the Waterbury River of Lights celebration. This event started small but has steadily expanded in scope and participation level over the past sixteen (16) years. Ms. Monley was very impressed with how the Northfield volunteers embraced this new event and made sure that all members of the community could participate. The day's activities included chair yoga, a knitting corner, contra dancing, a nature walk, a flower centerpiece arrangement class, and an especially popular bird watch along Central Street led by Carlos Pinkham. In retrospect, Mr. Anderson said AWPS Task Force members learned a great deal about the logistics of holding an all-inclusive gathering and he felt that would help considerably should they decide to make this an annual event. However, that would depend on available funding and being able to locate (or perhaps create) additional all-accessible spaces in Northfield. Manager Mackenzie asked how many people attended the festivities. Bill Clements said they had planned to provide meals for over one hundred (100) people and it seemed there were more people than that. Mr. Anderson said this was an all-day event and he believes several hundred people attended the various activities and came and went over several hours.

Ms. Monley said it was decided at one point after the Rivers of Light celebration expanded to include street closures, etc. that it would be best for insurance coverage and proper permitting that this should become a municipal event. She felt the Northfield municipality could do the same here by providing some financial support to cover expenses and facilitate other logistical matters. Mr. Anderson noted that such community events do bring non-residents into town where they are very likely to patronize local businesses, restaurants, etc. He felt that any public funds provided would be a good investment in the community. Mr. Anderson added that late winter/early spring in Vermont can be a difficult time for most people, especially those with mobility issues, so any all-accessible celebration that can get them out in public is a worthwhile effort. Kaitlyn Keating said her mother is now using a walker due to temporary mobility issues and she was very happy to be able to participate in the day's activities. Board member Shernock said she participated in the pre-party workshops as well as the main event and found it a very enjoyable experience. She suggested that such all-inclusive activities could become a component in future of the annual Labor Day Weekend Festivities. Ms. Keating noted there now are a number of features installed around Depot Square over the holiday weekend, such as the large presence of power cords on the ground, that make it difficult for those with mobility issues to fully access all activities, etc. The lack of all-inclusive bathrooms also would need to be addressed. Board member Shernock suggested a meeting with the committee that oversees the Labor Day Weekend Festivities might be very productive in making this event more universally accessible in future. Mr. Anderson noted that there are a number of available downtown spaces but very few currently are fully accessible. Chair Maxwell then thanked all those responsible for making the Cabin Fever Party such a success.

- b. Casey Kipp, Northfield Farmers Market: Summer 2026 Outside Market. (7:35 p.m.)** Ms. Kipp said she would be taking over from Cassie Morse as Market Manager and she wanted to provide the Select Board members with an update on market activities and their plans for the 2026 summer season. She noted the Northfield Farmers Market is now an all-year institution with both online and indoor markets during the winter months and the outside market on the Common during the warm weather months. This year, the first outside market will be held on Tuesday, May 19, 2026 and the final one held on Tuesday, October 13, 2026. Ms. Kipp said the market performs a very valuable service to the community in providing a venue for local farmers and craftspeople to sell their products while also making affordable, fresh foodstuffs available to residents. The market vendors accept payments through all food assistance programs like the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), etc. Ms. Kipp thanked the Select Board members for their past support and hopes to see all of them this summer as market patrons. Chair Maxwell was grateful for all that the Northfield Farmers Market does for this community and said should they have any questions or concerns going forward, they should reach out to our new town manager, Mary Smith.

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

- a. Liquor License Renewals (7:40 p.m.)**
- 1. Cumberland Farms.** Motion by Board member Shernock, seconded by Board member Davis, to approve the liquor license renewal. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
  - 2. Falls General Store.** Motion by Board member Shernock, seconded by Board member Davis, to approve the liquor license renewal. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

## V. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- a. **April 14, 2026 (Regular Meeting). (7:42 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 to approve the amended minutes passed 5-0-0.**

## VI. APPROVAL OF BILLS

- a. **Approval of Warrant #20-26 & #20-26A-F. (7:43 p.m.)** Motion by Board member Shernock, seconded by Board member Stevens, to approve Warrant #20-26 & #20-26A-F in the amount of \$430,885.66. Board member Petty noted the numerous pages devoted to MVP-HRA payments at the end of the warrant, many of which one fill one-half or less of the page. She asked if these pages could be combined to prevent paper waste. Chair Maxwell recalls Finance Director Laurie Baroffio said that this is how the municipality's financial software prints out these pages. Perhaps we can find a workaround to reduce the number of printed pages. Board member Stevens asked about "test" materials used on the backroads. Board member Davis said some granite-based road material was purchased and used on the backroads to see if it performs better during Mud Season. Whether the test was successful and whether such material will be purchased in future can be discussed during the next budget meetings. Board member Stevens then asked about a \$4,350 payment for a "Salt-Carrier Assembly/Core Charge" for the 2018 Dodge Ram truck. Manager Mackenzie wasn't sure what this was so he will into this and report back. Board member Stevens also had concerns about numerous items purchased for the 2017 Western Star; he thought this truck was being eliminated. Manager Mackenzie said this truck will be taken out of service later this year when its replacement arrives. It still needs to be serviced in the interim and the recent purchases were relatively minor expenses. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
- b. **Receipt of Biweekly Payroll through April 12, 2026. (7:49 p.m.)** Motion by Board member Stevens, seconded by Board member Shernock, to receive the biweekly payroll in the amount of \$98,254.35. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

## VII. SELECT BOARD

- a. **Review Northfield Municipal Projects Schedule. (7:50 p.m.)** Manager Mackenzie said he prepared a summary of ongoing municipal projects that are in various stages of completion. In the construction phase were the Cheney Field Water Tank and Main Street Water Main Installation projects that were started last year and should both be completed by July 1, 2026. Manager Mackenzie said three (3) projects recently went out to bid: the Cross Brothers Dam Removal, the Bean Business Park Stormwater Project, and the Barrows Road Culvert Replacement/Upgrade Project. These projects are expected to be completed by Fall 2026. Two (2) projects now in the design phase are the Vermont Routes 12 & 12A Paving Project and the Wall & Water Street Sidewalk Project. The completion dates for these projects are uncertain but probably will not be until 2027 at the earliest. Long-term projects now under consideration include the proposed Amtrak train stop and extension of the municipal sewer lines southwards on Vermont Routes 12 & 12A. These projects are dependent on state and/or federal funding that may or may not become available in the near future. Two (2) last local projects will be conducted by the Vermont Agency of Transportation (VTrans): the current work on the retaining wall located on Vermont Route 12 South by Sunny Brook and the Main Street Bridge Replacement Project, which after some delays is now scheduled for next year. Board member Petty thought the exposed sewer line near Sherman Avenue should be added to the list as the engineers present at the last meeting (04/14/26) thought that should be addressed this year. Manager Mackenzie said the municipality in future will be more proactive in alerting Northfield residents with weekly updates regarding current projects and where to expect traffic delays and other possible disruptions in the coming week. Chair Maxwell would like to hold a Board Retreat later this spring so there can be a full discussion of all current and future municipal infrastructure projects.

- b. **Green Up Day 2026. (8:03 p.m.)** Chair Maxwell noted that this year's Green Up Day will be held on Saturday, May 2, 2026. Volunteers are asked to meet behind the Northfield Fire Station (128 Wall Street) at 8:30 a.m. so that the green bags can be distributed and work areas assigned. Volunteers are asked to bring gloves, warm clothing, work boots, rain gear (if needed) and (if possible) their own pick-up trucks. For more information, please contact the Rotary Club of Northfield, Vermont at [northfieldvtrotary@gmail.com](mailto:northfieldvtrotary@gmail.com) It was noted that for those wishing to get an early start on roadside trash collection, the green bags also are available for pick up at the Brown Public Library and the Municipal Building.

**VIII. TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT. (8:04 p.m.)** Manager Mackenzie had provided the Select Board members and department heads with a written report of his actions and activities since the last regular meeting. He now highlighted a few of those including an onsite Cheney Farm accessibility meeting with Utilities Superintendent James Russo and Bill Dell'Isola from the Town Forest Stewardship Committee. In addition, a highway subcommittee meeting was held (04/17/26) where there was a full discussion of road/bridge maintenance projects planned for this summer. After the meeting there were site visits to a few locations that had been under discussion including the Slaughterhouse Road Covered Bridge where stormwater mitigation work will start soon. Another negotiation session with the collective bargaining unit now representing Northfield Ambulance Service (NAS) part-time employees was held (04/21/26) and Manager Smith was able to attend in order to get a full update on the process. In addition, Manager Mackenzie has spoken to the contractors for last year's pool painting and Vine Street sidewalk projects in order to get them to return to fix some remaining problems while their work remains under warranty. The contractors will be in Northfield in coming weeks. Repair work was done on the Vine Street/North Main Street traffic signal and the faulty pedestrian crossing signal was fixed at that time. Safety bollards have been installed around the new generators and the Municipal Building back entrance will be upgraded with its own safety bollard. Manager Mackenzie's last day on the job will be this Friday (05/01/26) and in his remaining time he will help incoming town manager Mary Smith transition into her new position. He added that he has been very pleased with the time he has spent in Northfield as interim manager and found this to be a very friendly and welcoming community. Manager Mackenzie also found the municipal staff to be very helpful as he made every effort to help address and resolve some longstanding issues. He noted that during his time here he made a special emphasis on being responsive to resident concerns and addressing their issues as soon as possible. Manager Mackenzie is sure that Manager Smith will follow this practice in future. Chair Maxwell and the other Select Board members then expressed their own appreciation to Manager Mackenzie for stepping into the breach as interim manager and for making a real difference during his brief time here.

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

- a. **Highway Planning & Project Oversight Subcommittee Meeting update. (8:16 p.m.)** Board member Davis said it was noted at the meeting that in addition to the major road work planned for this summer, there also were a number of smaller issues that need to be addressed. This includes problem driveways along Union Brook Road that cause washouts into the highway. Manager Mackenzie said he would meet with Highway Foreman Karl Bailey before the week's end to get a status report on such concerns. Board member Davis hopes the smaller projects can be resolved before the Highway crew become tied up with the major projects planned this summer for Bean Road, etc. Chair Maxwell said in cases of deferred maintenance issues, perhaps some of the smaller projects could be contracted out so that the Highway crew can focus on routine highway maintenance. Manager Mackenzie asked Board member Davis to email him a list of his road concerns so he can discuss them with Mr. Bailey. We also need to establish a complete list of prioritized highway projects. Board member Petty felt we should look to protect those areas where considerable funds have been invested in the recent past. Chair Maxwell felt the highway subcommittee should meet on a more regular basis and report their concerns to the Town Manager so needed roadwork is not put off.

- b. Cox Brook Road Covered Bridges. (8:25 p.m.)** Board member Stevens reported that VTrans sent an email to the Select Board members indicating that they wish to act upon their recommendations for various repairs to these covered bridges. They would like to schedule a ninety (90) minutes presentation at a future regular meeting.
- c. Rabbit Hollow Bridge. (8:26 p.m.)** Board member Stevens asked about the status of this bridge. A VTrans engineer (Laura Stone) addressed the Select Board members at their September 26, 2023 with a list of significant deficiencies but Board member Stevens believes nothing has been done since. Chair Maxwell said there is a longstanding dispute over whether the bridge is owned by the municipality or the New England Central Railroad (NECR). Board member Davis said that issue should be resolved as soon as possible. Board member Shernock noted many residents who use the bridge frequently attended this meeting and there seemed to be some resistance to some of the changes that VTrans recommended including replacing this historic bridge with a new structure. Chair Maxwell said this matter should be added to the list of ongoing infrastructure concerns.
- d. Elm Street Retaining Wall. (8:32 p.m.)** Board member Shernock asked if there were any current plans to upgrade this retaining wall. Board member Davis said the retaining wall was one of the site visits after the highway subcommittee meeting and there was a discussion of possibly removing the wall entirely. If that happened, it is likely that the utility lines in the area would need to be relocated. Before he leaves this week, Manager Mackenzie would like to know who was the consultant when this retaining wall was last evaluated and the various options that were presented at that time.

**X. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (UNSCHEDULED) (8:36 p.m.)**

- a. Elroy Hill: Appreciation for Steve Mackenzie.** Mr. Hill expressed his great gratitude to Manager Mackenzie for the four (4) months of service he provided as Northfield Interim Manager and for helping to “right the ship” in the process. He also thanked Mary Smith for her willingness to take charge as permanent town manager. Manager Smith then thanked Mr. Hill for the tulips he left at her office on her first day of work as a welcoming gift. They were very much appreciated.

**XI. EXECUTIVE SESSION.** Motion by Board member Shernock, seconded by Board member Stevens, to go into executive session, in accordance with 1 VSA 313 (a)(1)], in order to discuss a legal matter and a contract negotiation with Manager Mary Smith and Interim Manager Steve Mackenzie present. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

The Board went into executive session at 8:40 p.m.

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

The Board came out of executive session at 9:30 p.m. No action was taken.

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

The Board adjourned at 9:31 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

*Kenneth L. McCann*

Kenneth L. McCann, Acting Clerk

A video recording of this meeting is available at: <https://youtu.be/Nb4RwyJ9dM8>

These minutes were approved at the Select Board regular meeting of May 12, 2026.