

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

- I. ROLL CALL.** Chair K. David Maxwell, Board members Tim Davis (absent), Lydia Petty, Merry Shernock, and John Stevens. Also present were Town Manager Mary Smith, Acting Clerk Kenneth McCann, Brigadier General Mark A. Denton (Norwich University). Eric Nordenson (Chief, Northfield Police Department), Peter J. DeMasi (Chief, Northfield Fire Department), Mark Fournier, Kristin Pollard, Pam Ricker, Carolyn Stevens, and Elroy C. Hill.

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

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

III. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (SCHEDULED):

- a. Brigadier General Mark A. Denton, Norwich University Commandant of Cadets and Vice President for Student Affairs. (6:01 p.m.)** Chair Maxwell first wanted to welcome BG Denton to the Northfield community in his new role. BG Denton thanked the Select Board members for the opportunity to speak with them and then provided a brief background of his thirty-five (35) years of military service. He noted that he is now living with his wife and children in the Commandant's House on Central Street (next to the football stadium). He added that he has four (4) children with two (2) in college and the others will be attending Northfield High School this year. BG Denton said Norwich University (NU) has been very helpful with this transition. He is a NU graduate and returning here to work for NU after his retirement from the military is his "dream job." He also felt sharing with NU students his military expertise as well as what he learned as a NU Cadet himself is his "true calling." BG Denton would like NU to be a good neighbor to the municipality and asked that the Select Board members feel free to contact him should they ever have any questions or concerns. Chair Maxwell thanked BG Denton for being here tonight and wished him well in his new position.
- b. Northfield Police Chief Eric Nordenson: Police Department Update. (6:06 p.m.)** Chief Nordenson said it was good to meet BG Denton but reminded him that he is living next to a soccer field, not a football stadium. He then said that he has provided two (2) social media postings so far providing the community with reports on how he and the other new NPD officers are settling in. Chief Nordenson said their NPD uniforms arrived yesterday so he and the others are now wearing them while on the job. He and the other officers have been updating the Police Station as well as performing a departmental audit. The computer system there was quite old and will be replaced with up-to-date components and software. His Deputy Chief (Kevin Moulton) has been very helpful in this regard and he added that NPD Sergeant Brian Gosselin will be attending the Police Academy this summer in order to achieve full law enforcement officer certification. Chief Nordenson said the body cameras the former officers were using are fairly old and will be replaced by newer models. He also has signed a contract with a company that will be putting all their policies, etc. online. Chief Nordenson is reevaluating the NPD vehicle fleet and will be developing an effective capital equipment plan to budget for any needed future vehicle replacements. Lastly, the Police Station's key card system and security cameras also have been updated for improved building security. Chair Maxwell then asked about the other new NPD officers. Chief Nordenson said he has worked with Deputy Chief Kevin Moulton for over twenty (20) years and this has become a very successful working relationship. Also coming from Montpelier PD are Officers Diane Mathews and Alisha Donovan, who have respectively twelve (12) and five (5) years of law enforcement experience. Both have significant experience in child abuse cases and are wonderful human beings.

Board member Petty was grateful for the periodic departmental reports and noted there have been problems with the NPD phone system in the past with residents having trouble contacting NPD officers after hours. Chief Nordenson said the phone system has been updated so that if the NPD dispatcher is not available, the caller will be directly connected to a Vermont State Police dispatcher rather than a recorded message. Chief Nordenson said he has been warmly welcomed by the Northfield community and he will be proactive in making sure he and the other NPD officers will be highly visible around town during public gatherings, etc. Board member Stevens said he is very glad Chief Nordenson and the other officers are here and he also appreciates the departmental reports. Board member Shernock also is grateful to Chief Nordenson and the other Montpelier PD officers he brought with him. Chair Maxwell then thanked Chief Nordenson for coming tonight to meet the Select Board members and noted that they probably will be spending some time together when the next NPD budget is drafted later this year. Chief Nordenson said he is looking forward to helping develop long-term fiscal plans for his department.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES (6:15 p.m.)

- a. **July 14, 2026 (Regular Meeting).** Motion by Board member Stevens, seconded by Board member Shernock, to approve the minutes. **Motion passed 3-0-1, with Chair Maxwell abstaining.**

V. APPROVAL OF BILLS (6:18 p.m.)

- a. **Approval of Warrant #02-27 & #02-27A-C.** Motion by Board member Shernock, seconded by Board member Stevens, to approve Warrant #02-27 & #02-27A-C in the amount of \$818,435.93. Board member Petty saw an invoice for street sweeping and believed it was considerably higher than in the past. Manager Smith said this year we rented a street sweeper rather than just contacting out the work itself. Chair Maxwell said that meant instead of having the work done over a couple of days, the machine was on hand for a few weeks for a number of street sweeping sessions. Chair Maxwell noticed the purchase of gasoline from South Village Mobil. Manager Smith said that has been the practice in recent months as we were unable to find a supplier to deliver gasoline to the Town Garage tank. However, that changed recently and we should be receiving gasoline deliveries there soon. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**
- b. **Receipt of Biweekly Payroll through July 19, 2026.** Motion by Board member Shernock, seconded by Board member Stevens, to receive the biweekly payroll in the amount of \$152,611.28. Board member Stevens asked why this number is considerably higher than for the previous pay period. Manager Smith said we now have new NPD officers who need to be paid. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**

VI. SELECT BOARD

- a. **Bid Award for Barrows Road Culvert Replacement Project. (6:20 p.m.).** Manager Smith said the municipality went out to bid recently for a contractor to perform extensive road work on Barrows Road. Four (4) bids were received and the low bidder was Boulder Excavation LLC (Stowe, VT) in the amount of \$209,837.55. That was about \$90,000 less than the project engineer (Dufresne Group) had estimated for this project. The Dufresne Group reviewed the bid results and the low bidder's qualifications and does recommend awarding the project to Boulder Excavation LLC. Manager Smith concurs with this recommendation. Motion by Board member Shernock, seconded by Board member Stevens, to authorize Manager Smith to contract with Boulder Excavation LLC for the Barrows Road Culvert Replacement Project for an amount not to exceed \$209,837.55. Board member Stevens asked if this project would be partially financed by FEMA. Manager Smith confirmed FEMA would reimburse the municipality for the majority of the project costs. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**

- b. Authorization for Fire Pumper Bond Vote (11/03/26) (6:22 p.m.)** Manager Smith said the Select Board members are being asked to approve the ballot language for this bond vote, which reads "Shall the voters authorize the Select Board to borrow an amount not to exceed eight hundred and fifty-five thousand dollars (\$855,000) for a period not to exceed ten (10) years for the purchase of a Fire Pumper Truck." The warning for this Special Town Meeting will not be approved until September 22, 2026 but the ballot language must be approved at this time so that the ballots can be printed long before the November 3, 2026 general election. Motion by Board member Shernock, seconded by Board member Stevens, to approve the wording of the bond vote article as indicated above. Board member Stevens asked if there were any specific problems with the current pumper truck. Northfield Fire Department (NFD) Chief Peter J. DeMasi said it has been departmental practice to purchase a new pumper truck every ten (10) years with the oldest one retired and the one most recently purchased used as a backup. This is in accordance with National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) requirements that pumper trucks not be in service for more than ten (10) years. Chief DeMasi noted that even if the bond vote is approved, the new pumper truck would not be in service for at least three (3) years. As for the rest of the NFD fleet, Chief DeMasi said the brush truck would be replaced in a couple of years and the ladder truck is scheduled for replacement in FY 2027-2028. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**
- c. Approval of Grand List Errors & Omissions. (6:27 p.m.)** Manager Smith said Listers Chair Thomas Alsheimer has requested that the Grand List be reduced by \$6,200 to account for a mobile home that was sold and removed from town. Motion by Board member Shernock, seconded by Board member Stevens, to approve this request and reduce the Grand List total by \$6,200. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**

VII. TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT. Manager Smith said she has been kept busy the past couple of weeks working with the new police officers in order to bring their accommodations up to standards. She also attended another meeting regarding the negotiations for a union contract with the Northfield Ambulance Service (NAS) part-time employees. Manager Smith added that the Highway Department has been busy working on the backroads ditching and putting in new culverts. She also noted that there was a memorandum by Economic Development Director Thomas Davis in the Select Board meeting packets regarding the public meeting held last week (07/20/26) about potentially establishing a historical district in downtown Northfield.

VIII. BOARD MEMBERS' COMMENTS, CONCERNS, QUESTIONS (6:32 p.m.)

- a. School Street Water Line Replacement.** Board member Stevens asked when this proposed project would begin. Manager Smith said due to the current understaffing in the Utility Departments that project has been postponed for now.
- b. Historic District Community Meeting.** Board member Shernock attended this meeting and found it very informative. As indicated in Mr. Davis's memo, the Vermont Division for Historic Preservation will mail formal notices to property owners in the targeted area to determine whether or not a majority will support (or at least not object to) this designation. Board member Shernock said property owners would only face restrictions should they apply for federal funds to finance building renovations, etc. Otherwise, they can do what they want with their own properties. Manager Smith noted the municipality has no direct role in the nomination process. The ultimate decision will be made by the property owners.
- c. Washington Street/South Main Street Crosswalk.** Chair Maxwell noted this crosswalk was not painted when the other ones on Main Street were done recently. Manager Smith said this omission was inadvertent and the crosswalk will be painted as part of the water main replacement project before the project is closed out.

IX. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (UNSCHEDULED)

- a. **Mark Fournier: Various Highway Concerns. (6:40 p.m.)** Mr. Fournier said there are a couple of locations on Union Brook Road where there are large numbers of vehicles along the roadside. This not only creates a traffic hazard but prevents effective plowing in the wintertime. Manager Smith said this has been an ongoing issue but noted that some cars have been towed recently to address this problem. Mr. Fournier then noted a washout on Union Brook Road near its intersection with Hockman Hill Road. Some work has been done to address this but more permanent solutions are needed. The same is true for the dip on Union Brook Road that keeps being filled each year but remains a problem. In addition, Mr. Fournier felt that given all the traffic it receives, Lovers Lane should be paved and then turned over to the State of Vermont for future maintenance. Board member Petty said there has been recurrent discussion of paving this road but she never heard any indication that the State would take over future maintenance should this happen. Chair Maxwell has spoken to Board member Davis about this and it was his view that paving this road would be a major undertaking and very expensive. In addition, state grant funds were used this past year to install guardrails on this road as a safety measure. Chair Maxwell added that residents of the road with whom he has spoken have said the recurrent groundwater issues on the road would discourage paving it. Mr. Fournier then said there are a couple of utility poles on Carpenter Street that need to be relocated to allow for proper snow clearance there. If the poles cannot be removed, then the snow needs to be promptly removed by hand.
- b. **Kristin Pollard: Memorial Park Water Fountain (6:50 p.m.)**. Ms. Pollard noted this water foundation has been inoperable for some time. Chair Maxwell thanked Ms. Pollard for bringing this to the Select Board's attention and it will be addressed.

X. EXECUTIVE SESSION. Motion by Board member Stevens, seconded by Board member Shernock, to go into executive session, in accordance with 1 VSA 313 (a)(1)], in order to discuss a contract negotiation with Manager Smith present. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**

The Board went into executive session at 6:55 p.m.

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

The Board came out of executive session at 7:35 p.m. No action was taken.

XI. ADJOURNMENT. Motion by Board member Shernock, seconded by Board member Stevens, to adjourn. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**

The Board adjourned at 7:36 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kenneth L. McCann

Kenneth L. McCann, Acting Clerk

A video recording of this meeting is available at: <https://youtu.be/G421JWniiOQ>

These minutes were approved at the Select Board regular meeting of August 11, 2026.