

**TOWN OF NORTHFIELD, VERMONT  
SELECT BOARD SPECIAL MEETING  
Minutes of December 7, 2023**

- I. ROLL CALL.** Select Board Chair K. David Maxwell, Board members Charles Morse, Lydia Petty, Merry Shernock, and John Stevens. Also present were Manager Jeff Schulz, Laurie Baroffio (Finance Director), Meggan McCusker (Ambulance Chief), Trent Tucker (Highway Foreman), Scott Bagg (Ambulance Service), Thomas Scott (Ambulance Service), Kaelee Bouleris (Ambulance Service), Lawton Rutter (Ambulance Service), Mary Nadon Scott (Accessibility, Walkability, and Pedestrian Safety Task Force), and Elroy Hill.

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

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

**III. DISCUSSION**

**a. Proposed FY 2024/2025 Town Budget**

- 1. Ambulance Service.** Manager Schulz provided a brief summary of the Northfield Ambulance Service (NAS) proposed budget for FY 2024-2025 at the first budget meeting (11/28/23). Ambulance Chief Meggan McCusker is present tonight to help go through the budget more thoroughly tonight. Manager Schulz said the biggest change in the NAS operations and maintenance (O&M) budget is in personnel services. The budget request from Chief McCusker included eight (8) hours of paid administrative time every other Monday so she could process and deliver the NAS payroll to the Accounting Department. The proposed budget has that reduced to four (4) hours. In addition, the NAS budget request included a request for paid staff for the weekend daytime coverage. That request has been included in the proposed budget. Another NAS request was for to increase the overnight on call pay by \$3.00 per hour. This request was included in the proposed budget. There also was a NAS request to increase the weekend coverage pay from \$100 per week to \$200 per week. That request was reduced to \$125 per week in the proposed budget. The major change in NAS personnel expenses that Chief McCusker requested was for \$40,000 to cover the cost of having staff on hand for non-emergency transfers on weekday afternoons. This request was not included in the proposed budget but was discussed further at a recent meeting (12/05/23) of the Public Safety Oversight & Planning Subcommittee. Board member Petty, who serves on this subcommittee with Board member Shernock, said after some discussion, there was a suggestion that as an experiment there could be two (2) weekday afternoons when the paid staff would be available for these transfers.

Board member Morse would like this review of the NAS budget to start with a discussion of NAS projected revenue for FY 2024/2025. In the next fiscal year, projected revenue from NAS service fees will increase from \$630,000 to \$723,000. There will be an additional \$33,700 in NAS revenue from the per capita charges related to NAS emergency coverage of Roxbury and West Berlin. The amount of estimated unpaid NAS fees also will increase from \$253,000 to \$314,000. Manager Schulz said these figures were based on averaging the numbers for the last two fiscal years.

Chief McCusker said when she put her budget request together, she looked at creating some protected time when she could devote herself to preparing payroll paperwork and delivering the same to the Accounting Office every other Monday. Having this protected time keeps her from being distracted by other matters and ensures the documentation will reach the Accounting Office in a timely manner. She also uses this protected time for other administrative purposes like processing run sheets, ordering supplies, etc.

Chief McCusker said having paid staff on Saturday and Sunday allows for proper pay to those EMTs willing to give up their weekends in order to provide emergency coverage for the community. Chief McCusker noted that she did not request hourly wage increases for all EMTs for the next fiscal year but only additional compensation for those providing special services. As for the increase in the hourly wage for overnight coverage, Chief McCusker said this is to recognize that those EMTs have volunteered to make themselves available should an emergency call occur in the middle of the night. If there are no callouts during the night, the EMT is able to sleep through the night with no interruptions. The proposed increase in weekend compensation is for the weekend duty officer who will cover open shifts, arrange non-emergency transfers, order medical supplies when needed, deal with vehicle issues, etc.

As for the paid transfer crew compensation, this would pay two (2) EMTs to be on hand on a weekday afternoon to conduct non-emergency transfers from one hospital to another; from the hospital to a local nursing home; etc. Chief McCusker said would provide a huge service to the community and local hospitals while providing NAS with a significant and reliable source of revenue. As hospitals often look to transfer patients to a nursing home or their own homes either just after or before the weekend, Chief McCusker said if this service is to be provided on two (2) weekday afternoons, this should be for Mondays and Fridays. When this practice has been established, Chief McCusker will reach out to hospitals and other medical facilities to inform them that NAS is ready to perform transports on those specific days and times. Finance Director Laurie Baroffio said the total cost of this proposal would be \$152 plus benefits per weekday afternoon or about \$8,000 per year for each weekday afternoon. Board member Petty asked if this proposal would be revenue neutral or revenue positive. Chief McCusker hasn't crunched the numbers yet but believes it will be at least revenue neutral but certainly has the potential to be revenue positive over time. She noted that the billable revenue from staffed transports for the last completed fiscal year (2022/2023) was about \$170,000. This amount is based on the run basic rate and charged mileage.

Board member Morse noted that the NAS revenue report in the proposed budget does not have a breakdown of NAS fees charged. Ms. Baroffio said that was because the municipality uses a third party for billing purposes. In addition, insurance companies are billed by certain codes that do not separate entries for non-emergency transfers. She added that the municipality usually receives only fifty-seven percent (57%) of gross billing and that includes non-emergency transfers. Ms. Baroffio noted that Medicaid usually has higher write off rates than private insurance companies or Medicare. Chair Maxwell said these are important metrics that need to be considered when calculating future NAS revenue. Due to these uncertainties, he felt it would be best to start the staffed non-emergency transfer program on a limited basis as suggested by the subcommittee members.

Chief McCusker said when developing the NAS O&M budget, she did focus on EMT compensation. Chair Maxwell asked how NAS compensation compares to other ambulance services in the region. Chief McCusker said we are on the low end. It is not the lowest but certainly not in the top tier. Chair Maxwell thought it should be the practice that Northfield municipal employee compensation should not be either the highest or lowest in the state but somewhere in the middle. Board member Morse believed it usually was best to be within ten percent (10%) of the top. Chief McCusker said NAS compensation is not at that level. Chair Maxwell something should be done about this.

Chief McCusker said NAS compensation is now closer to the bottom than the top compared to what other ambulance services pay. EMT Scott Bagg said in terms of hourly wages, NAS EMT pay is within fifty cents (50¢) to one dollar (\$1.00) from the bottom. The higher paying ambulance services pay between ten and fifteen dollars (\$10-\$15) more per hour. NAS part-time EMTs now make an average of nineteen dollars (\$19) per hour while the higher paying ambulance services pay up to thirty dollars (\$30) per hour. Mr. Bagg added that we have lost a couple of our more experienced EMTs to other ambulance services for higher pay. Chair Maxwell said the municipality probably should develop a study of regional ambulance service compensation to determine exactly how NAS compares. Manager Schulz will look into this. Chief McCusker said when hourly wage increases were proposed for the current fiscal year budget, the amounts were based on information provided by five (5) neighboring ambulance services. There probably should be an update regarding what they are paying at this time. Chair Maxwell thought that was a good idea.

Regarding non-emergency transfer revenue, Mr. Bagg noted that in the past year, between \$160,000 and \$180,000 in potential transfer revenue had to be declined because there were insufficient staff on hand. Having paid staff available the weekday afternoons would result in fewer lost opportunities for such revenue. He believes there could be the potential for significant NAS revenue should the experiment prove successful. Manager Schulz does support having NAS obtain additional revenue from conducting these non-emergency transports but is concerned that NAS has only two (2) units in its fleet. He is concerned about what might happen if an emergency situation arose while one of these units was out of town performing non-emergency transports.

Manager Schulz said we also have to look at the “burn rate” on the NAS vehicle fleet. Chair Maxwell believes the NAS mission statement is to serve the Northfield community first. Chief McCusker noted that about seventy percent (70%) of non-emergency transfers involve movements between the Central Vermont Hospital (CVH) and Northfield. Chair Maxwell would like to see documentation for this. Ms. Baroffio noted that the transport mileage is billable as the distance is included in the run sheets. Board member Morse noted long highway trips are better for diesel engines than repeated short trips on surface roads. As for the NAS mission statement, Mr. Bagg confirmed that NAS does serve Northfield residents first but it also does support the greater community of Central Vermont. He added that most of the non-emergency transfers involve patients who live in Northfield. Chief McCusker then confirmed that non-emergency transfers would not be limited to Monday and Friday afternoons but whether staffing was available. Mr. Bagg said the paid staff on hand for non-emergency transfers also would respond to emergency calls when needed. Chief McCusker said current EMTs would be able to handle the two afternoon shifts for non-emergency transfers. If this program was expanded in future, that might require additional staffing and more workspace. Mr. Bagg said this would be a future conversation if this did come to pass. Board member Petty asked if NAS would be able to recoup past lost revenue when transfers had to be declined. Chief McCusker said that would not be feasible with the current staffing model. Mr. Bagg noted that NAS revenue has been increasing in recent years due to increased calls for service unrelated to non-emergency transfers. Ms. Baroffio said this also has resulted in an increased number of non-billable callouts. This includes when EMTs are asked by local law enforcement to attend a situation where mental health issues might be involved. In the past, these incidents probably would have been handled by law enforcement officers alone. Ms. Baroffio noted that there was a drop in non-billable calls during the pandemic but those have returned to pre-COVID numbers. Chair Maxwell still would like the compensation figures from regional ambulance services so NAS compensation can be adjusted upward if that is deemed appropriate. He asked Chief McCusker to provide that information to Manager Schulz and Ms. Baroffio. Chair Maxwell also would like a breakdown of how the NAS fee scale was developed, including the billable rate when certain medications are dispensed. Ms. Baroffio said our billable rates are above the Medicaid reimbursement rate.

Manager Schulz said in the NAS O&M budget, the increasing number of callouts and higher purchase costs has resulted in an increase in the budget for medical supplies. Given the rising cost of diesel fuel, Chief McCusker would like the diesel budget to be increased from \$9,500 to \$18,000. The latter figure better matches recent actuals. In addition, the medical supplies budget will increase from \$25,000 to \$30,000. This also better matches actual spending in recent fiscal years. Chief McCusker noted the State of Vermont mandates which medical supplies need to be stocked in ambulance units. Those supplies often have an expiration date and must be disposed of if not used in time. Chair Maxwell said that was an expected write off. Chief McCusker noted the vehicle maintenance budget will increase from \$5,500 to \$8,000 to reflect the greater usage of aging vehicles. Chair Maxwell said newer vehicles also incur great expenses, most especially when they are first purchased.

Manager Schulz then turned to the NAS Capital Equipment Plan (CEP) budget. He said a recent topic of debate during budget season has been whether NAS would operate better with two or three ambulance units. Chief McCusker said the third ambulance unit, the 2006, now sits unused in the Ambulance Bay parking area. There had been a previous NAS proposal to retain it as a backup and perhaps fully equip it. However, that request has been withdrawn. Chief McCusker said we also have the 2022 unit that returned from an out-of-state remount earlier this year and the 2017 unit that previously went through a remount several years ago. The 2017 unit has had electrical system problems recently and the current proposal is to have the 2006 remounted and then sell the 2017 unit when the remounted unit has been returned. The funds that had been allocated for replacing the 2017 unit (\$94,893) with a new unit would instead be used for remounting the 2006 unit, which would cost about \$200,000. Chief McCusker has checked and the earliest slot available for the remounting is in the latter half of 2025. The turnaround for the remount itself is ninety (90) days. Chief McCusker said it probably would be a good idea to ship the 2006 unit to the dealership early in case an earlier slot opens up. Since the 2017 unit has been remounted once already, this cannot be done a second time.

Mr. Bagg said the worst case scenario is the remounted 2006 unit returns in early 2026. It is hoped that the 2017 unit will remain in good operating condition until then. Chief McCusker added that when the remounted unit returns, the PowerLoad system in the 2017 unit will be removed and installed in the remounted unit. Board member Morse asked what would happen if the 2017 unit suffers a catastrophic failure before the 2006 unit can be remounted. Chief McCusker said it might be possible to purchase a good used unit from a regional ambulance service at a reasonable price. That was the case last year with the 2006 unit, which was purchased from White River Valley Ambulance for \$20,000. Chair Maxwell asked if there are sufficient funds in the NAS CEP budget for the remount. Ms. Baroffio said the current balance would be supplemented by \$35,000 in the intervening fiscal years prior to the 2025 remount. If the remount occurs earlier, CEP funds could be transferred from another account to make up the shortfall. Another option would be to increase the upcoming annual additions to this account. Chair Maxwell would like to keep to the original plan.

Chief McCusker said she provided Manager Schulz and Ms. Baroffio with updated replacement costs for the defibrillators and AutoPulse resuscitation systems. Ms. Baroffio said these revised figures have been included in the proposed NAS budget. The defibrillators are scheduled for replacement in the next fiscal year and the AutoPulse five (5) years later. Chair Maxwell asked if the funding is on track for the scheduled replacement of the 2022 ambulance unit in FY 2032/2033. Ms. Baroffio said it is. The usual plan is to fund half the replacement cost through annual allocations in the CEP budget and then borrow the remaining cost at the time of purchase. The cost of the replacement unit is now estimated at \$400,000 but there is no telling what the actual price will be in nine (9) years. Chair Maxwell asked how the NAS radio units were. Chief McCusker said they were in good shape. A brand new vehicle-installed radio was purchased and put into the 2022 unit when it returned from its remount. She added that there has been the NAS practice of phasing out the use of portable radios in favor of less expensive pagers and cell phones.

Returning to NAS projected revenue for FY 2024/2025, Chair Maxwell would like to revisit whether the per capita charge for Roxbury and West Berling is sufficient. He had read in the *Times Argus* that Barre Town Ambulance would charge Williamstown a per capita charge of about \$75 should the Williamstown Select Board decide to disband its local ambulance service. In light of this, he asked if the now planned increase of the per capital charge from \$32 to \$35 is enough. Chair Maxwell believes Roxbury and West Berlin residents should pay the going rate instead of expecting Northfield taxpayers to subsidize their ambulance coverage. Chief McCusker is unsure about the proper amount; she believes everyone should have access to 911 coverage. Chair Maxwell thinks this matter should be further researched given what Barre Town Ambulance charges in its regional service area. He feels NAS should charge the regional going rate.

Manager Schulz then turned to the NAS Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) budget. The only account in this budget is Building Improvements, which now has a \$284 balance with \$1,000 to be added in the next fiscal year. Manager Schulz feels, given the recent facility renovations, the NAS portion of the Town Garage seems to be in good shape. There is a sewer discharge problem but that is now being addressed.

Chief McCusker said one of the garage doors does need to be replaced next summer as there is some dry rot. There also might need to be some upgrades to the bunkroom should overnight standby coverage increase in coming years. Chief McCusker said the recent renovations did reduce the amount of dust entering the building and improved the heating system in the garage. Mr. Bagg credited Northfield EMT (and former Select Board member) Lynn Doney for all the building renovations he performed over the past couple of years.

Chair Maxwell would like some follow up information on unresolved issues involving EMT wages and the proper per capita charge for Roxbury and West Berlin. He added that he feels the proposal for two weekday afternoon non-emergency transfer paid staff seemed reasonable and the results of this experiment will be monitored. Board member Shernock would like to thank the person who installed the holiday lighting at the ambulance bay. It is very impressive. Chief McCusker said this was mainly the work of EMT Caden Knox, who volunteered to do the work and did an outstanding job. Mr. Bagg added that this light display helps to attract potential customers to the nearby Northfield Ambulance Volunteers, Inc. (NAVI) Christmas tree and wreath sale.

Chair Maxwell then thanked Chief McCusker and Mr. Bagg for the valuable information provided tonight and for their exceptional work throughout the year. They will be informed beforehand should they be asked to attend another budget meeting to help resolve any remaining issues with the NAS budget.

- 2. Highway Department.** Manager Schulz noted that in the Highway Department O&M budget, there will be a 4.3% in personnel costs mainly due to scheduled compensation increases in the municipal employee union contract, regional COLA adjustments, etc. Since one Highway employee is taken the health insurance buyout due to coverage from another source, this increase is a little lower than expected. In the Contract Services budget, the major change is to add a new \$7,000 line item for crack sealing. Chair Maxwell said one of the best decisions the Select Board members made in recent years was to sell the municipality's street sweeper and instead hire a contractor to perform this service. This has saved a lot of money in vehicle maintenance and repairs. Highway Foreman Trent Tucker agreed that this change did work out very well for the department. Manager Schulz said the contracted line marking also went well this year as a different material was used that resulted in more lasting results. Chair Maxwell said some of the red and yellow painted curbs have faded in recent years. Perhaps a few locations should be repainted next summer. Mr. Tucker said there usually is signage accompanying the colored curb where parking is prohibited or limited. He usually has his crew repaint a few locations that have high traffic volume each year. Returning to the crack sealing, Manager Schulz said this work has been important but it is sometimes difficult to find local contractors. This work is preventative in order to avoid expensive repaving jobs in the future. Manager Schulz said the Permit Fees budget will stay at \$3,500 in the next fiscal year. This covers the expenses of stormwater permits, etc.

In the Materials/Supply budget, Manager Schulz said there will be an attempt to save money by crushing reclaimed road material in the town pit. Mr. Tucker said McCullough Crushing is doing this work now and we hope to stockpile about five thousand (5,000) yards of serviceable road material when they are done. Board member Morse noted that the Cross Brother Dam Removal project is expected to remove a lot of riverbed material as part of the project. He asked if that material could be used by the Highway Department. Mr. Tucker said it would if it proves suitable for the backroads. Manager Schulz said the project consultants said a lot of riverbed material would be removed and they hoped to relocate it locally. Board member Morse said we should be able to find someplace to store it for later use should it prove to be acceptable road material.

Manager Schulz said the Gravel/Stone will remain at \$40,000 in the next fiscal year and the \$35,000 for Mud Season/Stone also will remain the same. The current stockpile will supplement any new road material purchases. Mr. Tucker confirmed those budget figures were sufficient. The Gasoline/Diesel budget will increase from \$55,000 to \$60,000 to reflect rising fuel prices. Chair Maxwell suggested adding a little more to this budget to be on the safe side. Manager Schulz noted the prices of road sand and salt have remained fairly stable over the past couple of years. There had been fears of a spike in road salt prices but that did not occur. Mr. Tucker said we now get the road salt locally from Tabor Earth Extractors but may have to search further afield if their supply dwindles in the next few years.

Manager Schulz then turned to the Highway CIP budget. Regarding the Bridges budget, Manager Schulz noted Northfield is responsible for the maintenance of a number of bridges and there now are a few that the Vermont Agency of Transportation (VTrans) have flagged as needing repairs in the near future. This includes two bridges on Vermont Route 12 just south of its intersection with Lovers Lane. Repair costs for the bridge on Town Highway #93 are estimated at \$45,000 and this will be covered by the use of Town Highway surplus funds. The other one, Jerry Bridge, needs much more extensive repairs and the estimated cost is \$220,00. Manager Schulz has spoken to VTrans about the deadline for addressing this problem. The current plan is to allocate \$110,000 in Town General surplus funds over the next two fiscal years. He hopes that VTrans will accept this timeline for bridge repairs.

Chair Maxwell would like an updated local bridge inventory so we will know which bridges might need expensive repairs in the near future. VTrans does inspect every local bridge every other year but there have been cases when a favorable report was issued one year but urgent repairs were needed when the next inspection was done. This occurred with the Slaughterhouse Covered Bridge and the municipality had to spend over \$100,000 in unbudgeted funds in order to maintain its previous maximum weight limit.

Manager Schulz noted the Main Street Bridge Replacement project is scheduled for 2025 and the municipality has been allocating funds to cover the grant's local match amount. This is about five percent (5%) of the total \$7,000,000 project cost. This should be about \$350,000 and this CIP account now has a \$266,633 balance with \$30,000 in Highway surplus funds to be added in the next fiscal year. Similar amounts will be added in the following two fiscal years. This should be sufficient to cover the local match amount. Manager Schulz said \$55,000 in Town General surplus funds will be added to the next fiscal year budget to cover repairs to the footbridge next year. Mr. Tucker said a new bridge deck would be installed. He added that the bridge structure itself is sound. In the Sidewalks CIP account, Manager Schulz said there is a \$26,056 balance with \$100,000 in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds to be added in the next fiscal year. The Paving/RSMS account now has a \$30,228 balance and \$200,000 will be added in the next fiscal year. In addition, the Gravel Resurface account has a \$81,222 balance with \$200,000 to be added in FY 2024/2025. This will provide for the resurfacing of about three to four miles of backroads. Mr. Tucker said this has proved to be a good program for maintaining the dirt roads. Manager Schulz concurred, stating that previous work on Little Northfield Road, West Hill Road, etc., has been very successful in reducing mud season problems, etc. Regarding the proposed road paving budget, Chair Maxwell would like the Select Board members to get updated copies of the Road Surface Management System (RSMS) documentation that rates the conditions of Northfield's paved roads. He then asked if the tentative list of paving projects for next year has been set. Manager Schulz said we are looking at repaving Dickinson Drive, East Street, and Doyon Road. Chair Maxwell asked if \$200,000 was enough for all this work. Mr. Tucker said perhaps a little more funding might be needed to complete everything. Manager Schulz suggested raising the amount to \$230,000.

In the Highway CEP budget, Manager Schulz said no major equipment purchases are planned for the next fiscal year. However, the amounts allocated for future vehicle purchases were increased in order to better reflect the actual replacement costs at the expected time of purchase. This includes the one-ton plow trucks, which are now both scheduled for replacement in FY 2025/2026. Chair Maxwell asked how these plow trucks are operating with their wings. Mr. Tucker said both are working very well. These Dodge Rams are very good and reliable vehicles. Manager Schulz noted that there have been some recent expensive repairs jobs on the Chevy salt truck. He believes the cost of these repairs should have been covered by the warranty but the dealership is disputing that. There will be additional conversation about this matter. Mr. Tucker said there haven't been any problems with the Dodge Rams, which are under warranty. Manager Schulz noted that the new sidewalk plow has been put into action for this winter. Chair Maxwell asked if this machine has an expected ten (10) year life span. Mr. Tucker confirmed this. Ms. Baroffio said Highway surplus funds will be used to make up a shortfall in this account. Board member Petty asked about the traffic signal at the intersection of North Main Street and Vine Street. Manager Schulz said a contractor has been hired to update the traffic signal. This work is long overdue and although there isn't an exact timeline for the work, it should be done within the next couple of months.

Board member Morse asked if there was any place in the Town Garage where the 2006 ambulance unit could be stored inside. Manager Schulz has spoken to Mr. Tucker and Utility Superintendent James Russo if they had any storage space long enough for this unit. They both seemed doubtful. Chair Maxwell suggested renting a temporary tent structure that would protect it from the elements over the winter. Manager Schulz said it remains a priority to get this vehicle under cover. Elroy Hill suggested contacting Bean Chevrolet, which now specializes in providing indoor storage for large vehicles.

Chair Maxwell then asked Mr. Tucker about departmental staffing at this time. Mr. Tucker said the full-time crew is in good shape although it would be helpful to find a part-time employee who could operate the sidewalk plow this winter. There had been some discussion at a previous budget meeting about perhaps bringing the summer maintenance of the public cemeteries inhouse by having the Highway Department's grounds maintenance employee do the work. Mr. Tucker did not think that was feasible as this would be too time consuming and probably would preclude the maintenance employee from properly mowing the public parks, etc.

Ms. Baroffio asked if the Highway Department now had seven (7) full-time employees. Mr. Tucker confirmed that was the case. Ms. Baroffio noted that prior to Town-Village merger, The Town and Village Highway departments had a total of eight (8) employees. Mr. Tucker said we went through this past summer with only six (6) employees as one position remained vacant for quite some time. Chair Maxwell then thanked Mr. Tucker for attending tonight's budget meeting and for his good work throughout the year.

The Select Board members had requested the development of a sidewalk inventory as a community short-term goal. That inventory was recently completed and Manager Schulz now distributed copies to the Select Board members. He added that compiling this inventory took considerable effort and time but now we have an assessment of the condition of every segment of local sidewalk. The conditions of the sidewalks were rated on a one to four ranking scale with the lowest scores being the best. He noted that the sidewalk segment with the highest (i.e., worst) score was on North Main Street from Vine Street on both sides of the street to the Nantanna Mill entrance (i.e., Belknap Street). The second worst was the east side of South Main Street from Prospect Street southward to Spring Street. The sidewalks with the lowest (i.e., best) scores were the newer sidewalks on Prospect Street, Central Street, East Street, and the west side of South Main Street. Chair Maxwell asked about the total amount of sidewalk surveyed. Manager Schulz said it was 27,500 feet, which is about five (5) miles. This includes 14,100 feet of asphalt sidewalk and the rest is concrete sidewalk. Board member Morse believes the sidewalk in front of the Northfield Savings Bank (NSB) is private as the bank paid for its upgrade the last time. Ms. Baroffio said NSB did contribute towards the work but that doesn't necessarily mean ownership. Board member Petty said it would be good to know which sidewalks would be addressed in the next few years. Manager Schulz said a priority list will be created as \$100,000 ARPA funds will be added to this CIP account in the next fiscal year. Board member Petty thought another consideration when developing the priority list should be the pedestrian detour route that will be established when the Main Street Bridge is removed and replaced in the summer of 2025. There are some segments along this route that have very poor or missing sidewalk. Manager Schulz then asked the Select Board members to review the sidewalk inventory and let him know if there are any discrepancies, etc. Chair Maxwell believes the municipality should be looking at obtaining additional funds through bonding as this would allow the bulk of problems to be addressed in a relatively short timeframe. As the resulting product should be good for forty (40) to fifty (50) years, there should be serious planning for this work.

Board member Shernock was very grateful for the completion of the sidewalk survey and thought it would be a good idea to share this document with the Accessibility, Walkability, and Pedestrian Safety Task Force members. They have been waiting for such a document for some time. Board member Shernock does believe that the walking routes that local students take to and from the public schools should be high on the priority list. Chair Maxwell said walkable sidewalks are an important component of our local infrastructure. He felt any future sidewalk project should be done right and there should be world-class sidewalks as a result. He then thanked Manager Schulz and all those who helped in creating this sidewalk inventory.

#### **IV. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (UNSCHEDULED)**

##### **a. Mary Nadon Scott (Accessibility, Walkability, and Pedestrian Safety Task Force).**

Ms. Scott asked if indeed the NSB does own the sidewalk in front of the building, who should be contacted if there are any concerns about its condition. Board member Morse said anyone with concerns probably should contact the Town Manager first, as he is the public liaison in such matters. He then would work with NSB to address any problems.

#### **V. ADJOURNMENT.** Motion by Board member Morse, seconded by Board member Shernock, to adjourn. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

The Board adjourned at 8:14 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

*Kenneth L. McCann*

Kenneth L. McCann, Acting Clerk

An audio recording of this meeting is available in the Town Manager's Office.

These minutes were approved at the Select Board regular meeting of January 9, 2024.