

TOWN OF NORTHFIELD, VERMONT
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
Minutes of January 12, 2016

- I. **ROLL CALL.** Chair John Quinn III, Selectmen Lynn Doney, Matthew Gadbois, Kenneth W. Goslant, and K. David Maxwell (6:45 p.m.). Also present were Town Manager Jeffrey Schulz, Acting Clerk Kenneth McCann, Finance Director Laurie Baroffio, Fire Chief Peter J. DeMasi, Highway Foreman (Interim) Karl Bailey, Town Health Officer Mark Podgwaite, Mel Adams (Mountain Alliance), Sally Davidson (Recreation Committee), Ranson Hudson (Northfield Fire Department), Steven Tiersch (Northfield Ambulance Service), Ryan Godfrey (Northfield Fire Department), Tim Davis (Northfield Fire Department), Ramon Hudson (Northfield Fire Department), Ben Albury (Northfield Fire Department), Elroy Hill, Jerry Carruba, and Kathleen Lott (*Northfield News*).

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

- II. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE.** The Board members and the public were asked to rise and recite the Pledge of Allegiance.

- III. **SET/ADJUST AGENDA.** Since the public hearing regarding the Mountain Alliance's Solid Waste Implementation Plan (SWIP) had been publically warned for 7:00 p.m., this item will be postponed until the specified time. This was the only change to the posted agenda.

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

- a. **Mark Podgwaite: Health Officer Stipend.** Mr. Podgwaite has been serving as Northfield's Health Officer for about fifteen (15) years and was reappointed to another three (3) year term last spring. He only was aware recently that the \$1000 stipend that went with the position had been eliminated in the FY 2015/2016 budget. He felt that when he applied for reappointment last year he should have been made aware of this fact. Chair Quinn asked if Mr. Podgwaite has a signed contract with the Town that stipulates payment. Mr. Podgwaite believes that there is one but does not have a copy. Chair Quinn noted that the Select Board members eliminated their own stipend at the same time. Mr. Podgwaite felt that was a different situation as the Select Board members agreed to this whereas he was never informed of the Select Board's decision. Chair Quinn would like to postpone any action on this matter until it can be confirmed whether or not a contract exists. Selectman Gadbois asked how many service calls Mr. Podgwaite makes each year. Mr. Podgwaite said that there were thirty-three (33) calls during the 2015 calendar year. Some were rather brief while some took a long time to resolve, such as water testing after the Amtrak derailment. The numbers vary by year and are broken down by category in the Town Health Officer's annual submission in the Town Report. Chair Quinn then thanked Mr. Podgwaite for his service.

V. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

- a. **December 3, 2015 (Special Meeting).** Motion by Selectman Gadbois, seconded by Selectman Goslant, to approve the minutes. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**
- b. **December 7, 2015 (Special Meeting).** Motion by Selectman Doney, seconded by Selectman Goslant, to approve the minutes. **Motion passed 3-0-1, with Selectman Gadbois abstaining.**
- c. **December 8, 2015 (Regular Meeting).** Motion by Selectman Doney, seconded by Selectman Goslant, to approve the minutes. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**
- d. **December 15, 2015 (Special Meeting).** Motion by Selectman Gadbois, seconded by Selectman Goslant, to approve the minutes. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**
- e. **December 17, 2015 (Special Meeting).** Motion by Selectman Gadbois, seconded by Selectman Goslant, to approve the minutes. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**
- f. **December 22, 2015 (Special Meeting).** Motion by Selectman Gadbois, seconded by Selectman Goslant, to approve the minutes. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**

- g. **January 5, 2016 (Special Meeting).** Motion by Selectman Gadbois, seconded by Selectman Goslant, to approve the minutes. **Motion passed 3-0-1, with Selectman Quinn abstaining.**

VI. APPROVAL OF BILLS

- a. **Validation of Warrant #13-16.** Motion by Selectman Gadbois, seconded by Selectman Goslant, to validate the approval by signature of Warrant #13-16 in the amount of \$211,782.21. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**
- b. **Warrant #14-16.** Motion by Selectman Gadbois, seconded by Selectman Goslant, to approve Warrant #14-16 in amount of \$411,030.37. Selectman Doney wanted to know why the Town was paying for a power line extension. Manager Schulz stated that the Northfield Electric Department (NED) is obligated to pay for the first one hundred feet (100'), which becomes part of the municipal infrastructure, but the property owner pays for the rest. Selectman Doney asked who approves these applications. Manager Schulz said that he does after consulting with Utility Superintendent Patrick DeMasi and Utility Office Manager Doug Reed. Finance Director Laurie Baroffio added that the property owner puts their estimated share of the costs in escrow before the work is done. NED pays the bill from Green Mountain Power (GMP) for doing the work and then is reimbursed by the property owner. Selectman Gadbois asked about a legal bill for "buyout" matters. Manager Schulz stated that this bill is related to the flood-damaged properties that are part of the FEMA buyout process. Although the initial Tropical Storm Irene fund has been depleted, the buyout account was replenished by funds made available by subsequent natural disasters, i.e. for ice storms, etc. Manager Schulz does not believe that there will be any additional structures added to the buyout process. Selectman Gadbois asked about an additional purchase of tire chains. Manager Schulz said that there is no set service life for tire chains as this depends on the number of storms, etc. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**
- c. **Approval of Bi-Weekly Payroll through December 6, 2015.** Motion by Selectman Gadbois, seconded by Selectman Goslant, to approve the bi-weekly payroll in the amount of \$90,591.58. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**
- d. **Approval of Bi-Weekly Payroll through December 20, 2015.** Motion by Selectman Gadbois, seconded by Selectman Doney, to approve the bi-weekly payroll in the amount of \$85,043.60. Selectman Gadbois noted that the Northfield Police Department (NPD) overtime for this pay period was over \$2300. Manager Schulz believes that some of this extra cost is related to the arson on Union Street that resulted in a fatality. The NPD had to secure the site for over a day while the initial investigation was conducted. Homeowners insurance should reimburse some of this expense. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**
- e. **Approval of Bi-Weekly Payroll through January 3, 2016.** Motion by Selectman Gadbois, seconded by Selectman Goslant, to approve the bi-weekly payroll in the amount of \$91,948.58. Selectman Gadbois noted that NPD overtime costs were nearly \$1000. Manager Schulz said that it probably due to holiday season coverage. Selectman Goslant said that NPD overtime costs seem to be a problem throughout the year. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**

VII. SELECT BOARD

- a. **Fiscal Year 2016/2017 Municipal Budget.** Chair Quinn asked if there were any outstanding issues before the budget can be finalized for voter approval. Manager Schulz believes that most were resolved at the last budget meeting (01/05/16). One of these was whether to replace the 2005 Mack truck during the next fiscal year. The consensus at that meeting was to install a new truck body rather than purchase a whole new vehicle. Selectman Doney would like to hear from Interim Highway Foreman Karl Bailey for his recommendation. Mr. Bailey said that the vehicle's current value is about \$32,000 and has what he called 80,000 "hard miles." There are no guarantees that the vehicle will last long even with a new truck body. Mr. Bailey emphasized that this is not due to poor maintenance but because of years of hard service. If anyone would like to come down to the Town Garage, Mr. Bailey will be glad to illustrate the vehicle's poor condition.

Selectman Doney asked how much it would cost to repair the vehicle to keep it in service. Mr. Bailey has spoken to the Town Mechanic and he estimates that even with a new truck body, it would cost at least \$5000. He is unsure whether it would be a sound investment to keep putting money into this vehicle. Chair Quinn suggested that since the Town would have to borrow to purchase this vehicle, Manager Schulz can provide his recommendation on this matter after the new fiscal year begins (07/01/16).

Another issue discussed was whether to replace the Fire Pumper truck next year (as originally scheduled) or purchase a new Fire Tanker truck instead. The consensus at the last meeting was that the Fire Tanker truck was in worse condition and should be replaced first. Chair Quinn would like Fire Chief Peter J. DeMasi's recommendation. Chief DeMasi stated that although the Fire Tanker did have some overheating issues this past summer, this issue was resolved and is seen as a one-time problem. He now is applying for a grant to replace the vehicle. Even if the application is unsuccessful, Chief Demasi would prefer to wait a couple more years to replace the Fire Tanker as originally planned. He believes that the Fire Pumper truck should be replaced during the next fiscal year as scheduled.

Selectman Doney said that based upon Chief DeMasi's recommendation, he would favor the Fire Pumper truck purchase. Manager Schulz added that the vehicle it would replace could be sold for between \$50,000 and \$75,000. Chief DeMasi said that a new Fire Pumper truck would cost about \$400,000 and should have the same dimensions as the current one. Selectman Goslant asked how many dealers there were for this vehicle. Chief DeMasi is unsure but added that he would seek bid proposals from as many as possible.

Selectman Maxwell arrived at this time.

Chair Quinn would like the new Fire Pumper truck to be large enough to accommodate the Jaws of Life and other existing equipment. The Jaws of Life currently is housed in an Ambulance unit and placing it on the Fire Truck would allow for the elimination of that unit. In addition, this would allow the Northfield Ambulance Service (NAS) members responding to an accident to focus on the patient(s) rather than have to operate heavy machinery. Steven Tiersch is a volunteer for both the NAS and NFD. He noted that the rescue unit that holds the Jaws of Life has additional functions. Mr. Tiersch added that there does not seem to be any set policy throughout the state on whether ambulance services or fire departments should maintain control of the Jaws of Life. Selectman Gadbois noted that the Barre Fire Department has its own Jaws of Life. Chief DeMasi said that the NAS has been in control of the Jaws of Life for some time and he did not see this as a big issue. If the new Pumper Truck is expected to house the Jaws of Life, the extra compartment space would mean that it will have to be a larger vehicle than the current one.

Selectman Doney would rather keep the Jaws of Life on the Ambulance Rescue vehicle rather than buying a more expensive Fire Pumper Truck. He suggested that when the bid specifications for the new Fire Pumper Truck are developed, the extra compartment space should be included as an option only (should the Select Board decide against the additional expense). Chair Quinn would be interested on what other Vermont communities do with their Jaws of Life and other heavy equipment. In any case, it doesn't seem like a decision can or needs to be made tonight. Manager Schulz suggested that an additional budget meeting could be held this coming Thursday (01/14/16) to resolve this and some other remaining issues. There was no objection to this suggestion.

As 7:00 p.m. had just passed, the regular meeting was suspended to hold the warned public hearing.

VIII. PUBLIC HEARING

- a. **Mountain Alliance Solid Waste Implementation Plan.** Chair Quinn opened the public hearing at 7:08 p.m. The purpose is to take public comment on the proposed Solid Waste Implementation Plan (SWIP) prior to its formal adoption by the Mountain Alliance (comprised of the towns of Randolph, Braintree, Brookfield, and Northfield) and its final submission to the Solid Waste Division of the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources.

Mel Adams is the Randolph Town Manager and he stated that he was contacted about a year ago regarding the possibility of Northfield joining the solid waste management district then known as the Tri-Town Alliance. Northfield then belonged to the Mad River Resource Management Alliance (MRRMA) but there had been concerns expressed about how high its per capita fee might rise after the MRRMA's main source of operating costs, the Moretown Landfill, was closed by the State of Vermont. Mr. Adams reported that Northfield has completed its paperwork and other requirements in order to join the new Mountain Alliance. The last step would be for the Northfield Town Select Board to formally approve the SWIP that had been previously adopted by the Tri-Town Alliance member communities.

Mr. Adams noted that the SWIP version under discussion tonight has undergone some revision in order to conform to Vermont's Universal Recycling Law (Act 148), which was approved in 2012. This law intends to keep as much waste as possible from going into landfills by banning disposal of recyclables (metal, glass, plastics #1 & #2, and paper/cardboard) by July 1, 2015; leaf and yard debris and clean wood by July 1, 2016; and food scraps by July 1, 2020. The Mountain Alliance SWIP is a five (5) year plan to assist its member communities to comply with the new restrictions. Mr. Adams noted that the recycling of organics (food scraps) will be the most difficult hurdle and much of the logistic framework still needs to be developed. He added that the expense to Northfield to maintain compliance should rise to between \$5000 and \$8000 as recording and other costs will increase as the new stipulations come into effect. Additional costs would be incurred if additional household hazardous waste collections are mandated. Mr. Adams stated that the Mountain Alliance held two (2) last year with one in Randolph and the other in Northfield. The Vermont Materials Management Plan (MMP) now requires that this rise to three (3) collections by 2017 and four (4) collections by 2019. Mr. Adams noted that requirement now is being contested in the state legislature as some solid waste management districts do not feel that the benefits of additional collection days justify the additional costs.

Mr. Adams reported that Williamstown now is in discussion with the Mountain Alliance about possible membership. Should Williamstown join, the increase in the number of residents living in its member communities will allow Mountain Alliance access to additional grant opportunities. He noted that when Northfield joined, the number of residents nearly doubled then. With the possible exception of Roxbury, Mr. Adams does not believe that there would be any other communities seeking membership. Selectman Goslant asked if there was any reason to reject Williamstown's application. Mr. Adams did not. However, this probably would be end of membership growth since any further expansion would require more administrative responsibilities than the current structure could handle.

There will be a second public hearing tomorrow night in Randolph. In addition, the member communities need to formally confirm their acceptance of the proposed SWIP. The wording has been pre-approved by the State of Vermont and Mr. Adams would like to submit it by early February 2016. There being no other comments or questions, the public hearing closed at 7:25 p.m. and the regular meeting resumed.

IX. SELECT BOARD (continued)

- b. Annual Town Meeting Warning.** Chair Quinn noted that a DRAFT warning had been included in the packets for the Select Board members' review. Manager Schulz added that Mayo Healthcare, Inc. has requested in writing that an article be added to the warning to seek voter authorization for the Town to "exempt from local property taxes, to the extent of 50% of the appraised value, the land and premises of Mayo Healthcare located at 71 Richardson Street, for a period of three (3) years." The voters approved similar articles in 2008 and 2011. Selectman Maxwell asked if we know the exact amount of this exemption. Ms. Baroffio stated that the exempt value would be removed from the Grand List and the FY 2016/2017 tax rate would have to be adjusted accordingly. Since we will not know the education tax rate until June, the impact on the tax rate cannot be determined now. Motion by Selectman Maxwell, seconded by Selectman Goslant, to put this article on the warning. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

Manager Schulz said that there were three (3) new articles on the DRAFT. These would authorize the elimination of the offices of Grand Juror, Town Agent, and First Constable. These are outmoded and redundant positions that already have been abolished by most Vermont communities. There was no objection to keeping these on the warning.

- c. **Capital Expense Note (2014 Western Star).** Motion by Selectman Gadbois, seconded by Selectman Goslant, to approve and sign the Capital Expense Note for the 2014 Western Star in the amount of \$40,915 at 1.45% interest; to approve and sign the Capital Expense Borrowing Resolution; and to approve and sign the No-Arbitrage and Use of Proceeds Certificate. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
 - d. **Bond Anticipation Note (Fire Pumper Truck).** Motion by Selectman Gadbois, seconded by Selectman Goslant, to approve and sign the Bond Anticipation Note for the Fire Pumper Truck in the amount of \$15,000 at 1.45% interest; to approve and sign the Bond Anticipation Borrowing Resolution; and to approve and sign the No-Arbitrage and Use of Proceeds Certificate. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
- X. **MEMBERS' COMMENTS, CONCERNS, QUESTIONS.** There was nothing more from the Select Board members.
- XI. **TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT.** There were no questions or comments regarding Manager Schulz's written report.
- XII. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (UNSCHEDULED)**
- a. **Sally Davidson, Recreation Committee.** Ms. Davidson would like to provide an update from the Recreation Committee which met last evening (01/11/16). She said that the annual Winter Carnival has been scheduled for Saturday, March 12, 2016. This will be an all-day event starting at 10:00 a.m. and will include public skating at Norwich University, indoor volleyball (location TBA), cross-country skiing starting at the Falls Recreation Park, etc. There would be a chili cook-off at the American Legion to be followed by dancing. Unlike last year's event, it is hoped that there will be enough snow on hand this time. In addition, the Recreation Committee is looking into holding a family fun day on the Northfield Common on Saturday, July 2, 2016. There would be a bazaar, food and drink available, and perhaps a street dance. The committee will come back to the Select Board for its permission when the plans have been finalized and the date confirmed. In addition, there still are plans to replace the large spruce tree on the Common with a smaller, healthier tree. Chair Quinn thanked Ms. Davidson for the update.
- XIII. **EXECUTIVE SESSION.** Motion by Selectman Goslant, seconded by Selectman Maxwell, to go into executive session, in accordance with 1 VSA 313 (a)(1), in order to discuss a contract with Manager Schulz present. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

The Board went into executive session at 7:55 p.m.

Motion by Selectman Gadbois, seconded by Selectman Goslant, to come out of executive session.
Motion passed 5-0-0.

The Board came out of executive session at 8:40 p.m. No action was taken.

- XIV. **ADJOURNMENT.** Motion by Selectman Gadbois, seconded by Selectman Maxwell, to adjourn.
Motion passed 5-0-0.

The meeting adjourned at 8:41 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 regular Select Board meeting of January 26, 2016.