

**TOWN OF NORTHFIELD, VERMONT  
BOARD OF SELECTMEN  
Minutes of February 23, 2016**

- I. **ROLL CALL.** Chair John Quinn III, Selectmen Lynn Doney, Matthew Gadbois, Kenneth W. Goslant (absent), and K. David Maxwell. Also present were Town Manager Jeffrey Schulz, Acting Clerk Kenneth McCann, Highway Foreman Trent Tucker, Michael Charron (Vermont Center for Independent Living), Daniel Pudvah (Central Vermont Home Health & Hospice), Heather DeLeone (The Arts Bus, Inc.), Coco O'Connor (Northfield Teen Center), Kim Daniels, Marty Daniels, Merrill Bent (DG Retail, LLC), Judi Anderson (Turkey Hill Maple), Mike Collins (Turkey Hill Maple), and David Armstrong (Green Mountain Transit Agency).

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

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

III. **PUBLIC HEARING**

- a. **Northfield Town Meeting Australian Ballot Articles.** A Public Hearing was warned for the purpose of providing written or oral views on the warned Town Articles to be voted upon by Australian Ballot at the Annual Town Meeting on March 1, 2016. Select Board Chair Quinn called the Public Hearing to order at 7:03 p.m. He then opened the floor to any member of the public who wished to discuss the Australian Ballot articles (listed below).

**Article 5. Shall the voters authorize the Select Board to borrow an amount not to exceed two hundred eighty-one thousand three hundred dollars (\$281,300) for a period not to exceed ten (10) years for the purchase of a Fire Pumper Truck? (Australian Ballot)** There was no discussion.

**Article 6. Shall the voters authorize the Select Board to enter into tax stabilization contracts fixing and maintaining the valuation of certain grand list properties, fixing and maintaining the rates of tax applicable to such properties, fixing the amount of money which shall be paid as an annual tax upon such properties, and/or fixing the tax applicable to such property at a percentage of the annual tax, as authorized by 24 VSA §2741, provided that the term of any such contracts shall not exceed seven (7) years? (Australian Ballot)** Selectman Maxwell stated that this is the third time that this article has come before Northfield voters. Although it had over sixty percent (60%) support each of the previous two times, it did fall just short of the two-thirds vote that state law requires. The Economic Development Committee developed and now encourages passage of this measure as a way to retain (and expand) current Northfield businesses as well as attracting new businesses. For example, business owners can expand their current facilities and have the property tax fixed on the improvements. Chair Quinn noted that many of our neighboring communities already have this option in place so Northfield would remain at a disadvantage if the article does not pass this time. Selectman Maxwell confirmed this was the case and added that the policy that would go into effect is based upon similar ones in the area with the addition of job creation requirements before a tax stabilization agreement can be reached.

**Article 7. Shall the voters authorize the Town to exempt from local property taxation, to the extent of 50% of the appraised value, the land and premises of Mayo Healthcare, Inc. located at 71 Richardson Street, for a period of three (3) years beginning July 1, 2016? (Australian Ballot)** There was no discussion.

**Article 8. Shall the voters authorize the expenditure of an amount not to exceed twenty-one thousand dollars (\$21,000) for FY17 towards the Northfield Commuter year-round commuter with service between Northfield and Montpelier? (Australian Ballot)** There was no discussion.

**Article 9. Shall the voters authorize the expenditure of \$12,400 for the Central Vermont Home Health and Hospice? (Australian Ballot)** Dan Pudvah is the CVHHH Director of Development and he thanked Northfield voters for their past support. The CVHHH submission in the Northfield Town Report covers the first ten (10) months of 2015 so Mr. Pudvah provided some updated figures, such as the additional twenty-three (23) patients brought the year's total to 207. He also emphasized that CVHHH provides health screenings in the homes of Central Vermont residents who otherwise would be without healthcare services.

**Article 10. Shall the voters authorize the expenditure of \$6,000 for the Boys & Girls Club of Northfield under the leadership of the Washington County Youth Service Bureau/Boys & Girls Club? (Australian Ballot)** Coco O'Connor has been the director of the Northfield Teen Center/Boys & Girls Club since October 2015. She also thanked Northfield voters for their past support and stated that the Teen Center serves an important role in the community by providing local youth with a place to go after school, connect with various educational/recreational programs, etc. In addition, the Children's Trust Fund will be covering the costs of an upcoming series of workshops for youths interested in filmmaking careers. Chair Quinn asked how much of the annual budget the requested \$6000 would cover. Ms. O'Connor stated that the total budget is \$120,000 with much of it funded by grants, donations, etc. Selectman Gadbois asked how many youths were served by the Teen Center. Ms. O'Connor said that there usually are five (5) to nine (9) youths at the facility each day. About fifty (50) different youths are in attendance throughout the year and about thirty-five (35) of them are involved with intense mentoring. Selectman Gadbois noted that there was a vegetable garden on the site and asked if there were any plans to sell items at the Farmers Market. Ms. O'Connor said that the former director did have a booth set up and, provided a sufficient crop, she might do the same. Selectman Gadbois asked if there was community outreach on the Front Porch Forum. Ms. O'Connor confirmed that there was along with other social media sites, such as Facebook.

**Article 11. Shall the voters authorize the expenditure of \$3,000 for the Central Vermont Council on Aging? (Australian Ballot)** There was no discussion.

**Article 12. Shall the voters authorize the expenditure of \$2,800 for the Good Samaritan Haven? (Australian Ballot)** There was no discussion.

**Article 13. Shall the voters authorize the expenditure of \$2,500 for the Washington County Diversion Program? (Australian Ballot)** There was no discussion.

**Article 14. Shall the voters authorize the expenditure of \$1,250 for the People's Health and Wellness Clinic? (Australian Ballot)** There was no discussion.

**Article 15. Shall the voters authorize the expenditure of \$1,200 for Central Vermont Adult Basic Education? (Australian Ballot)** There was no discussion.

**Article 16. Shall the voters authorize the expenditure of \$1,200 for the Vermont Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired? (Australian Ballot)** There was no discussion.

**Article 17. Shall the voters authorize the expenditure of \$1,000 for Capstone Community Action, Inc. (formerly Central Vermont Community Action Council)? (Australian Ballot)** There was no discussion.

**Article 18. Shall the voters authorize the expenditure of \$1,000 for Circle (formerly Battered Women's Services and Shelter)? (Australian Ballot)** There was no discussion.

**Article 19. Shall the voters authorize the expenditure of \$1,000 for Good Beginnings of Central Vermont? (Australian Ballot)** There was no discussion.

**Article 20. Shall the voters authorize the expenditure of \$1,000 for the Vermont Center for Independent Living? (Australian Ballot)** Michael Charron is the VCIL Civil Rights Specialist. He stated that VCIL has been assisting significantly disabled and/or deaf Vermonters since 1979. During its latest fiscal year (October 2014 through September 2015), VCIL responded to over 3265 requests for assistance, referrals, etc. For example, VCIL works with farmers who have become less abled but want to continue their farming. VCIL helps in the reconstruction of homes to make bathrooms and/or entrances more accessible. In addition, VCIL will help deaf residents get access to captioned telephones that will convert spoken language into text. During the past fiscal year, ten (10) Northfield residents accessed VCIL services such as Meals on Wheels. Mr. Charron said the community has been very supportive of VCIL in the past and he hopes this will continue.

**Article 21. Shall the voters authorize the expenditure of \$800 for the Family Center of Washington County? (Australian Ballot)** There was no discussion.

**Article 22. Shall the voters authorize the expenditure of \$600 for Home Share Now? (Australian Ballot)** There was no discussion.

**Article 23. Shall the voters authorize the expenditure of \$600 for Prevent Child Abuse Vermont? (Australian Ballot)** There was no discussion.

**Article 24. Shall the voters authorize the expenditure of \$500 for Arts Bus, Inc.? (Australian Ballot)** Heather DeLeone is the Development Director for Arts Bus, Inc., which began in 2010 when a local artist donated a bus that was converted into a mobile arts/dance studio. Since Central Vermont is a largely rural area, the intention is to bring the arts to persons who do not have easy access to traditional culture centers. The Arts Bus will go wherever a need is seen, such as local schools, childcare facilities, trailer parks, etc. The bus visited Northfield six (6) times in 2015 and the 2016 schedule is now being developed. The number of events in 2016 will depend on the level of grant funding, donations, etc. Ms. DeLeone added that residents are not limited to attending events in their own communities but can attend any event they want without charge.

**Article 25. Shall the voters authorize the expenditure of \$400 for the Friends of the Winooski River? (Australian Ballot)** There was no discussion.

**Article 26. Shall the voters authorize the expenditure of \$350 for the Sexual Assault Crisis Team of Washington County? (Australian Ballot)** There was no discussion.

**Article 27. Shall the voters authorize the expenditure of \$250 for OUR House of Central Vermont? (Australian Ballot)** There was no discussion.

There being no other questions or comments, the Public Hearing closed at 7:27 p.m.

**IV. SET/ADJUST AGENDA.** Manager Schulz confirmed there were no changes to the posted agenda.

**V. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (SCHEDULED)**

- a. Mike Collins and Judi Anderson, Turkey Hill Maple: Request for Temporary Lease of Town Property.** Mr. Collins is a local sugar maker employed by Ms. Anderson and her husband. He stated that the Andersons leased some property from Tim Santry and Jim Kingston off Turkey Hill Road and the tap tubing was installed on site. However, due to confusion over parcel mapping, some of this infrastructure was installed on the neighboring municipal property. Since the equipment is already on site, the Andersons are asking for a temporary lease of the municipal property so that the trees can be tapped in return for a fixed payment. Mr. Collins emphasized that none of the trees on municipal property have been tapped yet and none will be without the Town's permission. Selectman Gadbois asked if other Vermont communities have leased their property in this manner. Manager Schulz said that he looked into this and found no examples of this being done to allow trees to be tapped. His main concern is that the value of the trees for timber harvesting might be reduced should any be damaged during the tapping process. He has asked a local forester to survey the trees to determine if this is a valid concern. There is no set value for the trees at this time. Mr. Collins said that he has worked with foresters in similar situations and the standard practice was for the forester to mark high quality trees that would not be tapped. He added that the tubing system now is spread out over approximately twenty (20) acres of the municipal property. Manager Schulz asked if the tubing would be hard to remove if permission is not given. Mr. Collins said that it is not difficult but the equipment would be damaged in the process and could not be reused.

Selectman Doney's main concern is potential liability to the Town should one of the tappers be injured on municipal property. Mr. Collins said that Turkey Hill Maple carries its own liability insurance so the Town would not be held responsible. Selectman Doney then reviewed the draft contract and noted that the Town would be paid \$1.00 per tap with the estimated number of taps between 1500 and 2000. Mr. Collins confirmed that this was the standard payment amount. Selectman Doney asked if the Town would have to take any additional action once the agreement is signed. Mr. Collins said that the only thing the Town would have to do is cash the payment check. Chair Quinn asked how the exact number of taps would be determined. Mr. Collins said that the workers use a clicker while installing the taps in order to get an accurate count. He added that the Town could do its own count afterwards if it wanted confirmation of the exact number.

Selectman Doney is concerned about the provision in the draft lease allowing for third-party arbitration in case of dispute. He felt that the Town should retain the right to cancel the lease for cause without having to go to arbitration. Chair Quinn felt that this provision could be removed from the agreement if that is the Board consensus. Chair Quinn then asked Mr. Collins what was the timeline for an agreement. Mr. Collins said that the workers already have started tapping trees on the non-municipal property and he would like to start on the rest as soon as possible. Manager Schulz asked if Mr. Collins had any idea of the timber value. Mr. Collins said that he was not an expert on this. Unless the timber is of high quality, tapping would not decrease its pulpwood value and in the meantime the Town would make money off the lease. Manager Schulz would like to wait until the forester has had the opportunity to inspect the parcel. In addition, this will provide time for the lease wording to be finalized. Selectman Gadbois sees this as an opportunity for the Town to make some money off of land that is not being used. Motion by Selectman Doney, seconded by Selectman Maxwell, to authorize Manager Schulz to negotiate a lease agreement with Turkey Hill Maple. This authorization is contingent on the forester's report, on Turkey Hill Maple carrying sufficient liability insurance, etc. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**

- b. **Marty and Kim Daniels: Proposed Land Donation to the Town of Northfield.** Ms. Daniels stated that she has spoken to Manager Schulz for some time regarding the possibility of she and her husband donating to the Town the Northfield Falls parcel on which their former apartment complex stood before it was completely destroyed by fire in 2014. The Daniels believe that the area is too small to rebuilt a similar five-unit building and it is probable that the Vermont Agency of Transportation would deny a permit as there is not a sufficient setback from Vermont Route 12. They also have contacted other entities such as the Habitat for Humanity but there has not been much interest yet. Since the property does not seem to have much commercial value, the Daniels thought that the Town might be able to convert it into a park. In addition, since the property is adjacent to the three covered bridges on Cox Brook Road, it could be used as off-street visitor parking. Chair Quinn asked if any of the neighbors had any interest in the property, which is estimated to be between one-eighth and one quarter of an acre. Ms. Daniels said that there did not seem to be any interest. Chair Quinn said that there would be a number of steps taken, including holding a site visit, before the Select Board could consider taking this action. Mr. Daniels said that he and his wife did not expect a decision at this time and would be very happy to provide the Select Board with any information needed.

## VI. DEPARTMENT HEAD REPORT

- a. **Highway Foreman Trent Trucker.** Mr. Tucker has been on the job for a couple weeks and is enjoying it so far. Chair Quinn said that he has heard recently a number of positive comments about the Highway Department and asked Mr. Tucker if he had any thoughts yet regarding upcoming road projects. Mr. Tucker believes that a lot of work needs to be done on the roadsides including brush clearing, ditching, etc. Chair Quinn encouraged Mr. Tucker to keep the Select Board informed throughout the year about any concerns, suggestions, etc. so that they all don't show up at budget time. Mr. Tucker said he would do this. Manager Schulz and Mr. Tucker will be developing a work plan over the next month or so. There are a number of backroads that need some attention. Mr. Tucker confirmed that there were some problem areas that a plow truck cannot even reach. Selectman Gadbois believes that Mr. Tucker has done a fine job so far. Selectman Doney asked Mr. Tucker if he had inspected the Highway equipment and found anything that needs to be addressed. Mr. Tucker said that the dump body on the Mack truck is in very bad condition. It was noted that money for its replacement is in the next fiscal year budget.

## VII. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- a. **January 19, 2016 (Special Meeting).** Motion by Selectman Gadbois, seconded by Selectman Maxwell, to approve the minutes. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**
- b. **February 9, 2016 (Regular Meeting).** Motion by Selectman Gadbois, seconded by Selectman Maxwell, to approve the minutes. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**

### VIII. APPROVAL OF BILLS

- a. **Warrant #17-16.** Motion by Selectman Gadbois, seconded by Selectman Doney, to approve Warrant #17-16 in the amount of \$74,614.95. Selectman Gadbois asked about a maintenance contract for ArcView. Manager Schulz said this was mapping system software used by the Utility Department, the Town Clerk's Office, Zoning, the Listers, etc. Selectman Gadbois asked about a payment for a "radio site." Manager Schulz said this was the annual lease payment for the land on which the municipal radio tower is located. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**
- b. **Approval of Biweekly Payroll through February 14, 2016.** Motion by Selectman Gadbois, seconded by Selectman Maxwell, to approve the biweekly payroll in the amount of \$80,317.42. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**

### IX. LIQUOR CONTROL COMMISSION

- a. **Liquor License Application**
  1. **Dollar General Store.** Motion by Selectman Gadbois, seconded by Selectman Maxwell, to approve the liquor license application. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**
- b. **Liquor License Renewals**
  1. **Falls General Store.** Motion by Selectman Gadbois, seconded by Selectman Maxwell, to approve the liquor license renewal application. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**
  2. **Northfield Country Club.** Motion by Selectman Gadbois, seconded by Selectman Maxwell, to approve the liquor license renewal application. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**
  3. **Norwich University.** Motion by Selectman Gadbois, seconded by Selectman Maxwell, to approve the liquor license renewal application. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**
  4. **Rustic Restaurant.** Motion by Selectman Gadbois, seconded by Selectman Maxwell, to approve the liquor license renewal application. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**
  5. **South Village Mobil.** Motion by Selectman Gadbois, seconded by Selectman Maxwell, to approve the liquor license renewal application. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**
  6. **Tops Market.** Motion by Selectman Gadbois, seconded by Selectman Maxwell, to approve the liquor license renewal application. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**

### X. SELECT BOARD

- a. **Reappointment of Arlington Supplee to Planning Commission.** Mr. Supplee's term on the Planning Commission expires next month. Instead of reappointment to a full four (4) year term, he has requested a one year reappointment only. Motion by Selectman Gadbois, seconded by Selectman Doney, to reappoint Mr. Supplee to the Planning Commission for one additional year. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**
- b. **Vermont Agency of Transportation (AOT) Certificate of Highway Mileage.** Manager Schulz stated that each year the AOT asks local legislatures to confirm the amount of various classes of roads in their municipality. Any additions or subtractions must be noted and documented. This past year, there were two (2) small reductions in Northfield. At the request of residents, a small section (0.31 mile) of a Class 3 Road (Robinson Road) was privatized. The AOT will be donating some guardrail so that the road's western loop can be closed off. In addition, the entirety of Fox Farm Road (0.10 mile), a Class 4 Road, was privatized at the property owner's request. Motion by Selectman Maxwell, seconded by Selectman Gadbois, to approve and sign the AOT Certificate of Highway Mileage. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**
- c. **Vermont Agency of Transportation Resurfacing Project on Vermont Route 64.** Manager Schulz received an email from the AOT regarding plans to resurface Vermont Route 64 in Northfield and Williamstown this summer. In addition, work will be done at the intersections (i.e., Barrows Road, Gillespie Road, Loop Road, Robinson Road, and Berlin Pond Road) along the way. There also will be improved signage, an upgrade to the runaway truck ramp, and a possible reconfiguration of the intersection with Vermont Route 12 in order to reduce the number of accidents. Manager Schulz will keep the Select Board members informed as the project proceeds.

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

- a. **Labor Day Weekend Fireworks Display.** Selectman Gadbois saw that a new letter from Manager Schulz had been sent to the LaVarnways as promised. However, he feels that there remains some confusion over the number of times the LaVarnways called 911 on the night of the fireworks display. Manager Schulz spoke to Police Chief James Dziobek about this and it was confirmed that there were two (2) 911 calls. However, since the first call only mentioned concerns about the fireworks display, the dispatcher categorized the call as a notification rather than as a request for service. Selectman Gadbois asked if it were possible to get a printout of the call log. Manager Schulz said that Chief Dziobek felt this probably would require a court order. Selectman Gadbois asked if nothing else could be done. Manager Schulz has asked Chief Dziobek to look into the apparent communication breakdown between the 911 dispatcher and the Northfield Police Department (NPD). Selectman Doney, who is a volunteer with the Northfield Ambulance Service, would like the Select Board's permission to go to the 911 center in Waterbury himself and look into the documentation. He would like this confusion resolved once and for all. Manager Schulz said that the LaVarnways at this point seem more concerned with a revision of the current local fireworks display policy in order to prevent a repetition of the bad experience they had. Chair Quinn thinks that it remains an issue that the 911 calls did not result in proper police response that night. Motion by Selectman Gadbois, seconded by Selectman Maxwell, to authorize Lynn Doney to investigate this matter further and, if possible, obtain copies or transcripts of the aforementioned 911 calls. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**
- b. **Recognition of Chair John Quinn III.** Selectman Gadbois wanted to thank Chair Quinn, who is not seeking reelection next week, for his years of service on the Select Board. He felt that Chair Quinn's leadership was instrumental in the creation of municipal budgets that served the needs of the community while not proving too burdensome to the local taxpayer. Selectmen Maxwell and Doney shared his gratitude for Chair Quinn's service.
- c. **Possible Brownfields Projects.** Selectman Maxwell spoke to a local businessman recently who was concerned about his property being listed as a possible Brownfields site. He would like Manager Schulz to contact all the property owners who might be eligible for this project and first confirm that they are in fact interested in taking part.
- d. **Annual Town Meeting.** Chair Quinn noted that Town Meeting Day is one week away (03/01/16). He wanted to remind residents that voting on Australian Ballot articles will take place in the Northfield Middle/High School Cafeteria from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. The Open Session will be in the school's Mary Granai Corrigan Auditorium and will start at 10:00 a.m.
- e. **NPD Early Morning Coverage.** Selectman Doney said that he went by the Police Station at 4:30 a.m. last Friday morning (02/19/16) and the building was completely dark. He wanted to know if an officer was on duty at that time and, if so, where was he or she. Manager Schulz will look into this.
- f. **Western Avenue Municipal Property.** Selectman Doney asked if the former property owner (Larry Drown) still had some of his belongings on site. Manager Schulz said that he asked Chief Dziobek to contact Mr. Drown and let him know that he had to remove it as soon as possible. Selectman Doney would like Manager Schulz to send Mr. Drown a certified letter giving him one (1) week to remove the items. Manager Schulz added that he has been contacted by a possible buyer for the property and will keep the Select Board informed. Chair Quinn noted that the Town went through quite a lot to obtain this property so he would like to be sure that it sold for an appropriate amount that covered the costs.

**XII. TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT.** Manager Schulz had nothing to add to his written report.

**XIII. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (UNSCHEDULED).** There was none.

**XIV. ADJOURNMENT.** Motion by Selectman Gadbois, seconded by Selectman Doney, to adjourn. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**

The meeting adjourned at 8:45 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 March 8, 2016.