

**TOWN OF NORTHFIELD, VERMONT
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
Minutes of May 10, 2016**

- I. **ROLL CALL.** Chair K. David Maxwell, Selectmen Lynn Doney, Nathan Freeman, Matthew Gadbois, and Kenneth W. Goslant. Also present were Town Manager Jeffrey Schulz, Acting Clerk Kenneth McCann, Peter J. DeMasi (Fire Chief), Tim Davis (Fire Department), and James Roux (Mayo Healthcare).

Chair Maxwell 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. **SET/ADJUST AGENDA.** Utility Superintendent Patrick DeMasi was to provide a Department Head Report tonight but had to cancel due to a family obligation. He will be on the next regular meeting agenda. In addition, Washington County State's Attorney Scott Williams was scheduled to provide an update of his office's activities but he also is not present.

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

V. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

- a. **April 26, 2016 (Regular Meeting).** Motion by Selectman Gadbois, seconded by Selectman Goslant, to approve the minutes. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

VI. **APPROVAL OF BILLS**

- a. **Warrant #22-16.** Motion by Selectman Gadbois, seconded by Selectman Goslant, to approve Warrant #22-16 in the amount of \$409,193.91. Selectman Doney asked about a payment for "stray animal services." Manager Schulz said that this is what the municipality has to pay to have stray dogs picked up and sheltered at the Humane Society. He added that it has become increasingly difficult to collect the \$75 penalty for each violation. Selectman Doney would like the Humane Society informed that the stray dogs should not be released to the owners without proof that the penalty has been paid. Manager Schulz admitted that the municipality does need to get a better handle on this. Selectman Doney asked about the purchase of mop heads for the Police Station. Manager Schulz stated that the municipality purchases disposable cleaning supplies for the janitorial service. Selectman Gadbois asked if janitorial services were put out to bid. Manager Schulz said that there is a month-to-month contract currently but this could be put out to bid in the future if the Select Board desires. Selectman Doney asked about a payment to the State of Vermont for "dog license fees." Manager Schulz said that a portion of the dog license fees collected by the Town Clerk's Office has to be forwarded to the state. Chair Maxwell noted that the municipality does make some money issuing dog licenses but not a significant amount. Selectman Goslant asked about a payment to Efficiency Vermont. Manager Schulz said that there is a mandated surcharge on electric bills that the Northfield Electric Department collects and then sends on to Efficiency Vermont. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
- b. **Approval of Biweekly Payroll through April 24, 2016.** Motion by Selectman Gadbois, seconded by Selectman Goslant, to approve the biweekly payroll in the amount of \$66,987.15. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

VII. **SELECT BOARD**

- a. **Northfield Observances, Inc. Labor Day Coin Drop Request.** Nancy Smith from Northfield Observances has requested permission to hold a coin drop at two (2) locations on Labor Day morning. The funds generated would be used to support the Labor Day Weekend Festivities. Motion by Selectman Gadbois, seconded by Selectman Goslant, to approve the request. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

- b. Elm Street Wall Reconstruction.** Manager Schulz stated that last autumn bid proposals were solicited for the repair of the deteriorating retaining wall on Elm Street. Five (5) proposals were received before the deadline (09/21/15) that ranged from \$9,000 to \$34,000. The bid was initially awarded to Otter Creek Engineering (\$22,315) but this was later withdrawn when it was determined that even with the state grant monies on hand there wasn't enough money in the current budget to cover the expense. Additional funding subsequently was added to the 2016/2017 municipal budget to make up the shortfall. Manager Schulz said that the state is requiring that the project must be engineered with an updated study so he is recommending that the Select Board re-accept the bid from Otter Creek Engineering so that the engineering phase of the project can be completed. Selectman Gadbois wants to know why the previous study couldn't be reused at a discount cost by the new engineers. Manager Schulz stated that engineering firms are reluctant to sign off on someone else's work. In addition, the new study would provide up-to-date cost estimates for the construction phase of the project. Once that figure has been received, the municipality can start applying for grant monies to cover construction costs. Chair Maxwell asked if there were any cost estimates at this time. Manager Schulz said there were not. Selectman Doney would like sufficient funds in the project budget so that if the road has to be dug up the whole street can be repaved so there aren't any cutouts, etc. like what happened after the Central Street Water Project. Selectman Freeman agreed that he would like good results after the project is completed. Selectman Doney asked what would happen to the waterline near the project site. Manager Schulz has spoken to Utility Superintendent DeMasi about this and he confirmed that it would need to be replaced. Selectman Goslant would like it made clear that this will be a big project that will be expensive to complete. Chair Maxwell is reluctant to spend money on the engineering services if there is no plan yet to fund the construction phase. He would like to table this discussion for now until Manager Schulz has conducted further research regarding available grant funds, etc.
- c. Emergency Services Facility Grant.** Manager Schulz stated that a preliminary report on co-siting the Northfield Fire Department (NFD) and the Northfield Ambulance Service (NAS) on Wall Street was done in 2014. One plan had the NFD and NAS sharing one expanded facility at the cost of \$1,300,000 and another plan was for a new stand-alone NAS building that would cost \$1,200,000. There remains \$10,000 in grant funds to finalize the planning. Manager Schulz recently asked for and received an extension on this grant but some discussion is needed regarding whether this is something the Select Board would like to pursue. Selectman Goslant was on the committee that reviewed the initial proposals and at the time he was very concerned about the cost estimates. He doesn't believe that this is a sustainable project unless there is a strong possibility that grant funds will cover most (if not all) of the construction costs. Selectman Freeman asked what was the reason for moving the NAS from its current location on Dog River Drive. Manager Schulz said that the NAS now shares a building with the Highway Department that is situated in a floodplain. As a result, many medical supplies were either destroyed or damaged by Tropical Storm Irene flooding in the area. Selectman Gadbois added that there also was the idea to have all the emergency services (Fire, Police, and Ambulance) in one location on the Wall Street municipal property. Selectman Doney would like the Select Board's Town Buildings & Energy Committee to work with the NFD and NAS Chiefs to determine what would be the preferred course of action before meeting again with the architect. He also would like hard figures on construction cost estimates, the amount of grant funding that might be available, etc. Selectman Freeman said that the Select Board should expect construction costs to rise above \$1,000,000, which is at face value a very high number but not unreasonable. He agreed with Selectman Doney that the committee should investigate this matter further and then come back to the full board with recommendations. Manager Schulz agreed with this course of action.

VIII. BOARD MEMBERS' COMMENTS, CONCERNS, QUESTIONS

- a. Central Street Signage and Yellow Curbing.** Selectman Doney believes that some of the parking signs and yellow curbing on Central Street were not reinstalled properly after the completion of the Water Project. This is causing some parking problems there and on adjacent streets. Manager Schulz will have Highway Foreman Trent Tucker look into this.

- b. **Northfield Community Development Network (NCDN) update.** Selectman Freeman noted that there will be a NCDN meeting next Wednesday night (05/18/16) in the Community Room. The main topic will be Brownfields Redevelopment. Selectman Freeman will be receiving up-to-date information through a conference call the day before.
- c. **Water Rates Flyer.** In the Select Board's packet was a draft flyer that was to be sent out with the next utility bills. It is intended to inform ratepayers that with the closure of one of their largest customers (Chouinard Comfort Colors), the Water and Sewer Departments now expect revenue losses of approximately twenty percent (20%) in the coming year. As a result, ratepayers are warned to expect a water rate increase of about nine percent (9%). With the use of budget surplus funds, there should be no increase in the sewer rates. Chair Maxwell believes that the flyer should be held until the utility budgets have been finalized and approved by the Select Board. Manager Schulz noted that the draft budgets are ready and will be presented at the next regular meeting (05/24/16). The Select Board then will have over a month to discuss and approve the budgets prior to the start of the next fiscal year (07/01/16). Chair Maxwell still feels it is premature to send out the flyers before any budget meetings have been held. Selectman Gadbois believes that the flyer would provide ratepayers with background information that would explain why the Select Board is looking to increase the water rates. Manager Schulz confirmed that the Utility Commissioners drafted the flyer with this intention. Chair Maxwell suggested that the flyer's wording could be reworked to remove the estimated 9% rate increase amount since that has not been formally approved.
- d. **Fire Pumper Truck Purchase.** Selectman Goslant asked about the status of the proposed purchase. Manager Schulz said that specifications and other bid documents have been finalized and will be sent out soon to six (6) manufacturers. The submission deadline is mid-June. Fire Chief Peter J. DeMasi then will present his recommendations to the Select Board. If all goes according to schedule, the new vehicle should be delivered to Northfield and ready for service by next February. Chair Maxwell noted that all the Select Board members will have input when the decision is made on awarding the bid.

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

X. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (UNSCHEDULED)**

- a. **James Roux, Mayo Healthcare: Water Charges.** Mr. Roux has been reviewing the utility bills that Mayo Healthcare has been receiving and he had some questions. For example, he asked what was the Equivalent Residential Unit (ERU) charge and how the amount was determined for each customer. He had asked about the ERU charge at the Utility Office and was told that it pays for line maintenance. Manager Schulz confirmed that the water and sewer bill amounts are determined by customer usage as well as spread charges that are used to maintain the infrastructure. The ERU charge is set when a rate study is done. There are state guidelines on how much ratepayers should be charged based on whether the structure serviced is single-family, a duplex, apartment units, etc. Selectman Freeman said that there was a discussion at a recent NCDN meeting about whether the utility bills should be updated to provide fuller explanations of the various charges. Chair Maxwell noted that the Water Department distributes an annual Consumer Confidence Report that explains various aspects of the municipal water system.

XI. **ADJOURNMENT.** Motion by Selectman Goslant, seconded by Selectman Doney, to adjourn.
Motion passed 5-0-0.

The meeting adjourned at 8:07 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 are subject to approval at the next regular Select Board meeting.