

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

- I. **ROLL CALL.** Chair K. David Maxwell, Selectmen Lynn Doney (absent), Nathan Freeman, Matthew Gadbois, and Kenneth W. Goslant. Also present were Town Manager Jeffrey Schulz, Acting Clerk Kenneth McCann, EMS Chief Lawton Rutter (Northfield Ambulance Service), Brandon Gallant (Northfield Ambulance Service), Ed Neis (New Life Community Church) John Stevens (Brown Public Library Trustee), and Kathleen Lott (*Northfield News*).

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.** Manager Schulz stated that since the Town still has not received the correct grant reimbursement form from VTrans, its approval will be removed from the agenda.
- IV. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (SCHEDULED):** None.
- V. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**
- a. **June 28, 2016 (Regular Meeting).** Motion by Selectman Gadbois, seconded by Selectman Goslant, to approve the minutes. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**

VI. **APPROVAL OF BILLS**

- a. **Warrant #02-17.** Motion by Selectman Gadbois, seconded by Selectman Goslant, to approve Warrant #02-17 in the amount of \$223,862.34. Selectman Goslant wanted it noted that the Northfield Electric Department spent over \$9000 on this warrant for tree trimming near utility lines at two separate locations. This high cost is why the Select Board has tried to save taxpayers money on roadside foliage clearance. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**
- b. **Approval of Biweekly Payroll through July 3, 2016.** Motion by Selectman Gadbois, seconded by Selectman Goslant, to approve the biweekly payroll in the amount of \$90,816.82. Selectman Gadbois asked why the Northfield Police Department (NPD) expense was \$6000 higher for this pay period. Manager Schulz stated that a full-time officer left and this was the buyout on accumulated vacation time, etc. Selectman Goslant asked how long this officer had worked for the NPD. It was about nine (9) years. Police Chief James Dziobek is advertising widely for a replacement. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**

VII. **LIQUOR CONTROL COMMISSION**

- a. **Outside Consumption Permit: American Legion Club.** Manager Schulz said the American Legion would like permission to serve alcohol to patrons at tables placed in front of their building. This would take up about half the sidewalk and is similar to the situation nearby at O'Maddi's Café. Selectman Gadbois noted that O'Maddi's was given permission to have outdoor seating only until November 15, 2016; the American Legion application has no such time limit. Selectman Goslant added that the American Legion application had an outside consumption time period from 10:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. This seems to start too early and end too late. Chair Maxwell shared their concerns. He suggested tabling this matter for the time being. Selectman Gadbois thought it might be preferable to approve the permit application with conditions attached. Chair Maxwell would like the time frame limited from now until November 15, 2016 and the outside consumption hours limited to 12:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. Selectman Gadbois felt that the consumption hours could be extended for special events such as the Labor Day Weekend Festivities, etc. Selectman Freeman would have liked someone from the American Legion present tonight to answer questions. Motion by Selectman Freeman, seconded by Selectman Goslant, to approve the American Legion's outside consumption permit with the following conditions: the permit would only be valid until November 15, 2016 and (except for special events) the outdoor consumption hours be limited from 12:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**

VIII. SELECT BOARD

- a. **FY 2016/2017 Northfield Ambulance Service (NAS) Fee Schedule.** Manager Schulz said NAS Chief Lawton Rutter had presented these fee schedule revisions at the last meeting (06/28/16) during his Department Head Report. This intention is to have NAS fees more in line with what other Vermont ambulance services are charging and to bring in additional revenue at the same time. Chair Maxwell asked why this proposal wasn't brought forward during the last budget deliberations. Chief Rutter said at that time he was focused on switching the ambulance billing process to an outside collector. He added that it is normal practice for ambulance services to have their fee schedules reviewed each year but this hasn't been done in Northfield since 2011. Selectman Freeman asked how many off-road rescues the NAS makes. Chief Rutter said that it happens periodically; there already have been two (2) this summer from Norwich University property. The NAS also does extractions from the ATV and snowmobile trails. Selectman Freeman would like to approve the proposed fee revisions now and then review them again during the next budget meetings. Selectman Goslant felt this was a good idea as the Select Board will have about five (5) months of experience with the new fee schedule to determine whether it is working. Chair Maxwell asked if the per capita rates charged to provide coverage in Roxbury and West Berlin have changed. Chief Rutter said they have not. Motion by Selectman Gadbois, seconded by Selectman Goslant, to approve the FY 2016/2017 NAS fee schedule as proposed. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**
- b. **Brown Public Library (BPL) Roof Repair Bids.** Manager Schulz reported that the Town rebid this project after only one bid was received the first time. Two (2) bids were received by yesterday's deadline: Millbrook Building & Remodeling (\$37,000) and Lajeunesse Construction (\$26,000). Manager Schulz reviewed the proposals with BPL Trustee John Stevens and both are satisfied with recommending the low bidder's proposal. Chair Maxwell asked if there are funds in the budget to cover this. Manager Schulz confirmed that there were. Selectman Gadbois asked if the dust, etc. generated by the work might damage the library materials on display. Mr. Stevens did not think so since the workmen would be accessing the project site through the roof dormer. The work should generate a good deal of noise but not damage books, DVDs, etc. Motion by Selectman Gadbois, seconded by Selectman Goslant, to award the bid for the BPL roof repair project to Lajeunesse Construction for an amount not to exceed \$26,000. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**
- c. **Road Paving Projects.** Manager Schulz said that this discussion began at the last meeting as there are some problem roads (i.e., Cox Brook Road, Slate Avenue, Union Street/Union Brook Road, and Winch Hill Road) that need to be repaved. However, there is not enough money in the highway budget to pay for it all. Slate Avenue is on the priority list for repaving but Manager Schulz has confirmed the road also has serious stormwater drainage issues. This would require installing some new catch basins, etc. The current plan is to have the highway crew do this work in order to save money. Chair Maxwell asked if this meant that the repaving would be put on hold until stormwater concerns are addressed. Manager Schulz said that the State of Vermont will require this work at some point but there is no money in the budget to do it this year. He added that there have been numerous calls regarding the poor condition of the paving on Union Brook Road. He and Highway Foreman Trent Tucker will be meeting with a paver to see what can be done with the funds on hand (\$85,000) for road paving. Manager Schulz will report back at the next meeting (07/26/16).

Selectman Freeman noted that there are grant funds available from the Vermont Better Roads Program for road planning. Manager Schulz said that he and Mr. Tucker are looking into this as well as other funding sources. He added that the Road Surface Management System (RSMS) program already is in place but does need to be updated. He will print off a road inventory for the next board packet.

Selectman Freeman asked if there were less expensive alternatives to the standard hot mix road paving. John Stevens has looked into this and found that there is the "chip seal" method that is similar to the sealer put on driveways with an added top surface of fine aggregate (i.e. sand, gravel, crushed stone, etc.). Vermont towns Cornwall and Georgia have used this on their backroads and have been very pleased. Extra caution does have to be taken during the winter months so that the top layer isn't damaged by snow plowing.

This chip seal process works best for low density roads without much heavy (i.e. weighty) traffic and costs about twenty percent (20%) less than hot mix paving. Mr. Stevens would like the Select Board to look into this possibility. Selectman Goslant noted that municipal vehicles and logging trucks often traverse these backroads. Selectman Gadbois suggested that Mr. Tucker should discuss this option when the paver comes to look at Union Brook Road. The Highway Committee also can look into this.

- d. **Approval of 2016-2017 Tax Rates (Homestead & Non-Residential).** Manager Schulz stated Select Board approval of local property tax rates is an annual event and needs to be done before the bills are mailed out next week. The process begins when the Town Budget is approved in March, followed by the Listers finalizing and filing the Grand List, and the State setting the education tax. There are slight rate increases from last year.

Motion by Selectman Gadbois, seconded by Selectman Goslant, to approve the FY 2016-2017 Homestead Tax Rate in the amount of \$2.3669. Selectman Freeman asked what was the local agreement tax. Chair Maxwell said that it is full and partial property tax exemptions, such as those approved by the voters for the Masonic Temple, Mayo Healthcare, etc. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**

Motion by Selectman Gadbois, seconded by Selectman Goslant, to approve the FY 2016-2017 Non-Residential Tax Rate in the amount of \$2.3936. Selectman Goslant thinks that something is wrong when the non-residential education tax goes down by 0.0038 at the same time the homestead education tax goes up by 0.0485. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**

- e. **New Life Community Church Request to Use Town Common.** Ed Neis said this will be the fifth year that the church, located on East Street, will be holding a week of Vacation Bible School (July 18-22, 2016) in the downtown area. The children will be broken up into four (4) groups and Mr. Neis would like the Select Board's permission to use the Common as one of their meeting sites. He did not expect the first group to get to the Common before 6:30 p.m. Chair Maxwell asked if there had been any problems using the Common in the past. Mr. Neis said there had not. Each group should have about six (6) children and two (2) adults. Selectman Freeman noted that there would be a special event ("Night on the Green") on the Common next Tuesday night (07/19/16). Mr. Neis said that there should not be any problems as they have always been able to work around the Farmers Market, etc. Motion by Selectman Gadbois, seconded by Selectman Goslant, to grant the New Life Community Church's request to use the Common for its Vacation Bible School. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**

IX. BOARD MEMBERS' COMMENTS, CONCERNS, QUESTIONS

- a. **Night on the Green.** Selectman Freeman said that the Northfield Community Development Network (NCDN) and the Town of Northfield would be hosting this event on the Common on Tuesday, July 19, 2016, from 4:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. The intention is to receive public feedback regarding Northfield community branding and redevelopment of the Mayo Block and Old Freight Yard commercial areas. Refreshments will be provided and Selectman Freeman is hoping for a good turnout.
- b. **Zoning Bylaws.** Selectman Freeman has been working with some potential downtown developers and he has gotten the impression that Northfield's zoning bylaws should be revised in order to encourage local economic growth. Outdated requirements involve off-street parking, building height limitations, etc. Selectman Freeman hopes that the Planning Commission will consider the area-wide development plan when reviewing these bylaws.
- c. **Zoning Administrator Search.** Selectman Gadbois asked about the status of the search. Manager Schulz said that he had interviewed one candidate already and expected to interview at least one other. He expected to have a Zoning Administrator in place within a month or less.
- d. **FY 2015/2016 Budget Status.** Selectman Gadbois asked if any of the municipal accounts went over budget. Manager Schulz said some did but the overall budget should show a surplus. We will have a better idea when all FY 2015/2016 revenues have been received, all FY 2015/2016 invoices have been paid, etc. Finance Director Laurie Baroffio will brief the Select Board after the old fiscal year has been closed.

- e. **Select Board Email Addresses.** Selectman Gadbois believes it would be a good idea if the Select Board members had their own individual municipal email addresses (i.e., Selectman1@northfield.vt.us). This way all official board communications can be archived in case there are any public information requests. Chair Maxwell agreed with this and asked Manager Schulz to set this up. He also would like various technology issues (municipal website update, etc.) as topics for discussion at next month's Board Retreat.
- f. **Highway Committee Update.** Selectman Goslant attended a committee meeting earlier today. His feeling is that the municipality should be more aggressive in acting before roads are allowed to deteriorate. There is an inventory system (RSMS) in place that the Highway Foreman updates each spring. He also would like the Select Board to look at alternative ways to address the large number of bad roads with drainage issues.
- g. **Central Street Stormwater Catch Basin.** Selectman Gadbois looked at the catch basin earlier today and he thinks that if it is cost-effective, decking should be purchased and installed on its sides so that the current railings can be removed. He estimated the cost of decking at between \$3000 and \$4000. Manager Schulz looked into installing metal grates but this would have been very expensive. Chair Maxwell thought that the Central Street catch basin would be addressed at the same time the Holland Place stormwater basins were installed. Manager Schulz said (unfortunately) there were no funds leftover from the Holland Place project as had been expected. Chair Maxwell would like Manager Schulz to work with Dan Currier (CVRPC) on this as a priority.
- h. **Central Street Sidewalks.** Chair Maxwell asked if there were any plans to install new sidewalks on the east side of Central Street to match those on the west side put in during last year's water main project. Manager Schulz said there were not. In fact, it might not be a bad idea to tear up the deteriorating asphalt sidewalks there now, extend the property owners' lawns, and encourage people to use the new sidewalks on the other side of the street. Chair Maxwell thought that sidewalks in general might be another good discussion topic for the retreat.

X. TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

- a. **Plan to Remove Trees from Town Right of Way.** Selectman Gadbois asked if there was an update on the project. Manager Schulz said that Highway Foreman Trent Tucker and Tree Warden Russ Barrett have marked trees along Winch Hill Road that should be removed. The adjoining property owners have been contacted and Limlaw Pulpwood & Chipping should be starting the tree removal soon. Chair Maxwell reminded everyone that Winch Hill is a test area for this project. If all goes well, other roadsides with overgrown foliage will be addressed this summer.

XI. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (UNSCHEDULED)

- a. **Kathleen Lott: Crosswalk Painting.** Ms. Lott asked if the Highway Department has finished painting crosswalks on town roads. Manager Schulz said that this still needs to be done. VTrans did come in and paint the crosswalk on Vermont Route 12 near the Falls General Store since that section of the road is a state highway.

XII. ADJOURNMENT. Motion by Selectman Goslant, seconded by Selectman Gadbois, to adjourn. Motion passed 4-0-0.

The meeting adjourned at 8:22 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 July 26, 2016.