

**TOWN OF NORTHFIELD, VERMONT
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
Minutes of November 22, 2016**

- I. **ROLL CALL.** Chair K. David Maxwell, Selectmen Lynn Doney, Nathan Freeman (absent), Matthew Gadbois, and Kenneth W. Goslant. Also present were Town Manager Jeffrey Schulz, Acting Clerk Kenneth McCann, Gail Aloisio (Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission), Chris Bradley (Chair, Water & Wastewater Commission), Gordon Bock, James Baraw, and Steve Davis.

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.** Chair Maxwell noted John Quinn III, who was scheduled to address the Select Board under "Public Participation," will not be present tonight. Gordon Bock, who has some concerns about the Police Chief Search process, will be added to the agenda in Mr. Quinn's place.

IV. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (SCHEDULED)**

- a. **Gail Aloisio, CV Regional Planning Commission: Northfield Hazard Mitigation Plan Update.** At the Select Board's meeting of September 27, 2016, Ms. Aloisio distributed a draft update of Northfield's Hazard Mitigation Plan. This plan would attempt to minimize the impact on the community by natural and/or man-made disasters such as flooding, ice storms, etc. An approved plan also would make Northfield eligible for additional grant funds. She asked at the time that anyone who wished to comment on the document should contact her or Manager Schulz by October 20, 2016 so feedback could be incorporated into the next draft. Based in past on the comments received, some changes were made including an executive summary, climate change language, feedback documentation, etc. Chair Maxwell had one additional suggestion: under staff members, the title "Utilities Superintendent" should be used instead of "Public Works Superintendent." He also had some questions about the NFIP Community Rating System that incorporated a table with very small text. Ms. Aloisio said this was a point system that grades local compliance with hazard mitigation activities, etc. If the community's rating is high enough, residents may become eligible for reductions in their home insurance rates. Manager Schulz noted such rates have increased significantly in recent years so it would be good for the municipality to provide any assistance it can. Ms. Aloisio said if the Select Board accepts the current draft, the plan would go to the Vermont Department of Public Safety's Division of Emergency Management and Homeland Security (DEMHS) for its review before it being forwarded on to FEMA. Since a FEMA review can take several months, the DEMHS will look for any concerns that might cause further delay. Ms. Aloisio would like the Select Board to approve the current draft (with tonight's revisions) that would go into effect after approval by FEMA. If FEMA does make major changes, the process would start over again with a public comment period, etc. Motion by Selectman Gadbois, seconded by Selectman Doney, to accept the current draft Northfield Hazard Mitigation Plan and to authorize the Chair and Vice-Chair to sign the document. **Motion passed 4-0-0.** Ms. Aloisio will keep Manager Schulz advised as the formal approval process continues. Chair Maxwell thanked Ms. Aloisio for all her work on the document.

- b. **Gordon Bock: Police Chief Search Process.** Mr. Bock has some concerns about the search process. He has volunteered to serve as a community member of the search committee and is worried if law enforcement representatives are used to screen the initial pool of applicants, some strong candidates might be rejected for not having what they consider to be the proper qualifications. In addition, since there has been some local discussion of disbanding the Northfield Police Department (NPD) and instead relying on Vermont State Police (VSP) coverage, Mr. Bock felt there would be the appearance of a conflict of interest should VSP representatives be involved in the search process. He also is concerned there might be a mass turnover of NPD officers should an outsider be hired as Police Chief. Therefore, he would like the committee to consider promoting a current NPD officer who already knows the Northfield community. If that is not possible, Mr. Bock would like the committee to look region-wide if not nationally for the best candidate. Chair Maxwell felt Mr. Bock had expressed some valid concerns. When the municipality did its last search for a Manager, the VLCT was engaged to perform the initial screening of applicants. However, Chair Maxwell doesn't feel the municipality would be conducting a Police Chief search if there was serious consideration of disbanding the NPD. He and Manager Schulz have been working on a search timeline so a new Police Chief will be in place before the current Police Chief (James Dziobek) retires in April 2017. Chair Maxwell added when the search committee (comprised of two Select Board members, the Town Manager, community members, and municipal staff) has been finalized, the finer logistical points of the search process can be worked out.

V. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- a. **October 25, 2016 (Regular Meeting).** Motion by Selectman Gadbois, seconded by Selectman Doney, to approve the minutes. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**

VI. APPROVAL OF BILLS

- a. **Validation of Warrant #10-17.** Motion by Selectman Doney, seconded by Selectman Maxwell, to validate the approval by signature of Warrant #10-17 in the amount of \$397,190.36. Selectman Goslant questioned the number of paramedic intercept bills on the invoice. Manager Schulz and Selectman Doney (who serves as a Northfield EMT) both felt the amount was normal for the time period involved. Selectman Goslant wanted it noted about half of the warrant amount was the purchase of power for the Northfield Electric Department. **Motion passed 3-0-1, with Selectman Gadbois abstaining.**
- b. **Validation of Warrant #10-17A.** Motion by Selectman Doney, seconded by Selectman Maxwell, to validate the approval by signature of Warrant #10-17A in the amount of \$24,828.81. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**
- c. **Warrant #11-17.** Motion by Selectman Gadbois, seconded by Selectman Goslant, to approve Warrant #11-17 in the amount of \$91,262.53. Selectman Goslant noted about \$26,000 of the warrant amount was roof repairs to the older section of the Brown Public Library. The payment for the subsequent roof repairs to the building's newer annex should be on the next warrant. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**
- d. **Warrant #11-17A.** Motion by Selectman Gadbois, seconded by Selectman Goslant, to approve Warrant #11-17A in the amount of \$43,335.60. Chair Maxwell said this payment covered the purchase of the 2013 Ford One-Ton truck. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**
- e. **Approval of Biweekly Payroll through October 23, 2016.** Motion by Selectman Gadbois, seconded by Selectman Doney, to approve the biweekly payroll in the amount of \$82,268.68. Selectman Doney thought the NPD overtime expense (\$2000) was rather high. Manager Schulz said this was due to having to fill shifts due to vacations, etc. He will discuss this with Chair Maxwell as the current NPD union contract is very restrictive regarding who can and cannot fill shifts. There also is a limited pool of part-time officers available due to new certification requirements. Chair Maxwell would like to include Chief Dziobek into this discussion. Selectman Doney noted a new NPD contract is being negotiated and he would like changes made to avoid this overtime problem in the future. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**
- f. **Approval of Biweekly Payroll through November 6, 2016.** Motion by Selectman Gadbois, seconded by Selectman Doney, to approve the biweekly payroll in the amount of \$79,002.78. Selectman Doney thought there were more NPD overtime problems during this time period as well. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**

VII. SELECT BOARD

- a. **Northfield Snowmobilers, Inc. (NSI) Trail Requests (Well Field, South View Drive, Fairground Road).** NSI has made its annual request to allow a snowmobile trail through the Well Field. In addition, NSI would like to traverse short distances of Town roads in order to connect their trail system. Utility Superintendent Patrick DeMasi has stipulations that must be accepted before allowing the trail through the Well Field including that the trail must be properly marked, no refueling allowed there, etc. Motion by Selectman Gadbois, seconded by Selectman Goslant, to approve the NSI snowmobile trail requests provided the conditions in Superintendent DeMasi's memorandum are followed to the letter. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**
- b. **Amended Sewer Ordinance.** Chris Bradley, who serves as chair of the Water & Wastewater Commission, stated that prior to municipal merger in July 2014, the Town of Northfield and the Village of Northfield had separate sewer ordinances that had major differences from each other. As the Merger Plan stipulated, when merger came it was the Town Sewer Ordinance that remained in effect. The Water & Wastewater Commission would like to reinstate some of the language and stipulations in the Village Sewer Ordinance, particularly the restrictions on what can and cannot be discharged into the municipal sewer system. The Commission also put in some new language in order to deal with a recurrent problem regarding who is responsible (and financially liable) when a sewer line breaks down: the municipality or the customer? The new language clarifies that the property owner is responsible for problems that occur to the point of connection. Chair Maxwell has seen this issue arise recently and is pleased there will be this clarification. In order to approve the ordinance amendments, the Select Board will need to hold at least one public hearing prior to formal adoption.

- c. **Rabbit Hollow Road (TH #57) – Bridge 65.** The Vermont Agency of Transportation (VTrans) had sent the municipality a letter documenting the major problems with this bridge that spans the Dog River and railroad tracks. Manager Schulz said the Town has closed the bridge and he has been reviewing whether the bridge repairs should be the responsibility of the municipality or the railroad. According to VTrans records, the bridge belongs to the New England Central Railroad (NECR) but Manager Schulz said railroad ownership has changed since the railroad made any bridge repairs in the 1990s. He has asked CVRPC to see if any grant funds are available as well as any VTrans emergency grant funds. Chair Maxwell asked if VTrans wanted the bridge repaired or replaced. Manager Schulz said the VTrans letter indicated the entire span needed to be replaced. He is looking into the possibility of leasing a temporary bridge that can be put into place (as was done when the Fairground Road Bridge was being replaced). Motion by Selectman Doney, seconded by Selectman Goslant, to acknowledge receipt of the VTrans letter and to verify the bridge has been closed. **Motion passed 4-0-0.** Selectman Goslant feels sorry for the residents affected but noted VTrans' own records show the bridge is not municipal property and he feels NECR should be held financially responsible for any work that has to be done.
- d. **Computer Server Maintenance Agreement.** Manager Schulz has discussed at previous meetings the need to hire someone to monitor and maintain the municipality's computer servers. Quotes have been received from three (3) companies: SymQuest, rb Technologies, and Dominion Tech. Chair Maxwell noted this is a necessary expense but there also is the need to choose the proper contractor. Selectman Goslant asked if there wasn't anyone more local who might be interested. Manager Schulz said a wide net was cast to find someone appropriate but no one local was interested. Selectman Goslant was not happy with the quotes, which were all about \$1200 per month. Chair Maxwell said a decision did not have to be made tonight but should be at the next regular meeting (12/13/16). He would like Manager Schulz to work with Chris Bradley, a former Town Selectman who owns and operates ACK Computing on South Main Street, for his recommendation. Manager Schulz confirmed Mr. Bradley had been contacted about providing this service but he declined as he doesn't have sufficient manpower to do it.
- e. **FY 2016/2017 Fuel Bids.** Chair Maxwell noted the bid proposals for heating oil, propane, and diesel fuel were due yesterday. Selectman Goslant was surprised ten (10) fuel suppliers were contacted but only three (3) responded. Manager Schulz acknowledged this was the case and noted Gillespie Fuels had provided low bids for heating fuel, propane, and diesel. He also recommended the fixed price (when available) be accepted rather than market price or capped. Chair Maxwell agreed and added that this year's prices compare well with last year's. Motion by Selectman Goslant, seconded by Selectman Doney, to award the heating fuel bid to Gillespie Fuels for a fixed price of \$1.90 per gallon; the propane bid to Gillespie Fuels for a fixed price of \$1.12 per gallon; and the diesel fuel bid to Gillespie Fuels for the market price of \$1.82 per gallon. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**

VIII. BOARD MEMBERS' COMMENTS, CONCERNS, QUESTIONS

- a. **Barry T. Chouinard.** Selectman Goslant noted the recent passing of Barry T. Chouinard, who was not only a personal friend of his but also a very generous benefactor of the Northfield community. He will be greatly missed.
- b. **Roadside Road Trimming.** Selectman Goslant felt a lot of misinformation has been distributed on social media site such as the Front Porch Forum regarding the recent clearing of roadside foliage. He has looked at the roads affected and is very pleased with the work that has been done. Selectman Goslant added this is normal road maintenance that should have been done much sooner. He thanked Limlaw Pulpwood & Chipping for the fine work.
- c. **Town Common Trees.** Selectman Goslant noted the large blue spruce has been removed and almost all of the people he has spoken with were pleased with its removal. They would like the other trees on the Common pruned back for greater visibility, etc. The Recreation Committee has been working on Star Sticks on the Common and other locations around the community for the holiday season. A temporary tree will be brought in and decorated for the Christmas season. Selectman Goslant would like the Select Board to decide whether to plant a permanent tree near where the blue spruce was removed or to continue with bringing in a new tree each year.
- d. **Brown Public Library Roof Replacement.** Selectman Goslant noted Burrell Roofing completed their roof replacement of the building's newer section (housing the Children's Reading Area, the Community Room, etc.) ahead of schedule and everyone appears to be pleased with the work done.
- e. **FY 2017/2018 Budget Process.** Selectman Goslant would like Finance Director Laurie Baroffio to provide an overview of the whole budget process at the beginning of the first budget session. The first formal budget meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, December 6, 2016, at 6:00 p.m. in the Brown Public Library's Community Room.

- f. **Municipal Union Contract.** Chair Maxwell said the new contract with the union employees has been approved by both sides. He thanked all those who took part in the process. Chair Maxwell hopes the NPD union contract can be completed in the near future. Manager Schulz added his next meeting with the NPD union representative will be on December 1, 2016. Selectman Gadbois noted both contracts expired on June 30, 2016 and he doesn't understand why the new contracts had to be negotiated well into late fall. He felt there should be more planning ahead in such matters. Selectman Goslant serves on the negotiating committee and confirmed these negotiations have been especially difficult and time consuming.
- g. **NAVI Tree and Wreath Sale.** Chair Maxwell stated Northfield Ambulance Volunteers, Inc. (NAVI) will be holding their annual sale of Christmas trees and wreaths at the Ambulance Bay (31 Dog River Drive) beginning on Saturday, November 26, 2016 and lasting through Christmas Eve (or until supplies are gone). The trees and wreaths will come in various sizes and are priced accordingly. Free local delivery is available.

IX. TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT. There were no questions regarding Manager Schulz's report.

X. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (UNSCHEDULED)

- a. **James Baraw: Police Chief Search, etc.** Mr. Baraw is the former Northfield Ambulance Supervisor and a resident of Cross Street. He first wanted to thank Manager Schulz and Utility Superintendent DeMasi for resolving a stormwater issue on his property that had its origins when new sewer lines were installed in the area. The new catch basin put in solved all the problems and he is very grateful. Regarding the Police Chief Search, Mr. Baraw also is interested in serving as a community member of the search committee. He also suggested the committee may want to look into the possibility of hiring someone who would be in charge of all emergency services (Fire, Police, and Ambulance) in a reorganized, combined municipal department. In addition, in response to Selectman Goslant's earlier concerns about the high costs of paramedic intercepts, Mr. Baraw suggested the Select Board might want to consider paying for Ambulance Chief Lawton Rutter to take formal paramedic certification training. The cost would be about \$10,000 but this might save money in the long run with reduced paramedic intercept costs.
- b. **Gordon Bock: NPD Staffing Levels.** Mr. Bock noted the concerns expressed about NPD overtime costs and asked if the Select Board had considered adding an additional full-time officer to mitigate this problem. Manager Schulz said this could be part of the upcoming budget discussions. Chair Maxwell added both Chief Dziobek and his sergeant will be taking part in the budget process in the interest of departmental continuity.

XI. EXECUTIVE SESSION. Motion by Selectman Doney, seconded by Selectman Goslant, to go into executive session, in accordance with 1 VSA 313 (a)(1), in order to discuss a personnel matter with Manager Schulz present. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**

The Board went into executive session at 9:05 p.m.

Motion by Selectman Doney, seconded by Selectman Goslant, to come out of executive session. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**

The Board came out of executive session at 9:35 p.m. No action was taken.

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

The Board adjourned at 9:36 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 December 13, 2016.