

**TOWN OF NORTHFIELD, VERMONT**  
**BOARD OF SELECTMEN**  
**Minutes of May 23, 2017**

- I. ROLL CALL.** Chair Kenneth W. Goslant, Selectmen Lynn Doney, Nathan Freeman, Julie H. Goodrich, and K. David Maxwell. Also present were Town Manager Jeffrey Schulz, Acting Clerk Kenneth McCann, Stephen Hatch (Zoning Administrator), Arlington Supplee (Planning Commission/Board of Listers), William Smith (Development Review Board), Sally Davidson (Recreation Committee), Chris Bradley, and Elroy Hill.

Chair Goslant called the meeting to order at 7:03 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.** There were no changes to the posted agenda.

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

**V. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

- a. May 9, 2017 (Regular Meeting).** Motion by Selectman Doney, seconded by Selectman Freeman, to approve the minutes. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

**VI. APPROVAL OF BILLS**

- a. Warrant #23-17.** Motion by Selectman Freeman, seconded by Selectman Doney, to approve Warrant #23-17 in the amount of \$84,212.95. Selectman Goodrich saw a \$595 charge for "Alice Instructor Certification Training" for one of the Northfield Police Department (NPD) officers. She asked what this was. Manager Schulz said this was active shooter response training. "Alice" is an acronym for Alert, Lockdown, Inform, Counter, and Evacuate. Selectman Goodrich asked about a \$26,000 payment for a new dump body. Manager Schulz said the Select Board discussed last year whether to replace the entire vehicle but decided instead to save some money by retaining the chassis and replacing the dump body alone. The chassis is in good shape but the dump body was in very poor condition with serious rust problems. Chair Goslant concurred Highway Foreman Trent Tucker said that the vehicle would last several additional years with the new dump body. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

- b. Warrant #23-17A.** Motion by Selectman Freeman, seconded by Selectman Doney, to approve Warrant #23-17A in the amount of \$21,695.12. Manager Schulz noted that \$11,207 of this warrant amount would be used to refinance the Bond Anticipation Note that will be approved later tonight. The balance of this warrant was to pay off the bank note that financed a new roof at the Wastewater Treatment Facility. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

- c. Approval of Bi-Weekly Payroll through May 7, 2017.** Motion by Selectman Freeman, seconded by Selectman Doney, to approve the biweekly payroll in the amount of \$79,188.42. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

**VII. SELECT BOARD**

- a. Approval of Town Zoning Bylaw Amendments.** Motion by Selectman Freeman, seconded by Selectman Doney, to approve the Town Zoning Bylaw Amendments as presented. Selectman Freeman had worked with Manager Schulz to incorporate into the current draft some of the suggested changes that the Development Review Board (DRB) had recommended. This included relaxing some restrictions on building height limitations, parking spaces, etc.

Selectman Freeman also had a few additional revisions that he would like made to the document under consideration tonight. Under Article IV (General Regulations), Section IV.03 (Home Occupations), he would like the size limit for signage increased from four square feet to six square feet. Also, he would like it specified that the size limit for overhanging signs is “per side.” In Article VII (Definitions), Selectman Freeman would like the limits on unit size deleted from the definitions of Accessory Dwelling Units (Permitted and Conditional Use). He feels that the thirty percent (30%) limit is far too low. Instead of trying to determine the optimal amount at this time, he feels these restrictions should be eliminated.

In addition, the zoning map that will accompany the zoning bylaws has been corrected and slightly revised to allow the municipality to apply for Village Center Designation for Northfield Falls. This area will remain zoned as medium density. Selectman Freeman wanted to thank DRB Chair William Smith, Zoning Administrator Stephen Hatch, the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission (CVRPC), and all those involved for their help getting to this point.

Selectman Freeman believes that the changes made in the document since the last public hearing held (04/11/17) are non-substantive so it will not need to be sent back to the Planning Commission (PC) for further public comment, etc. Selectman Maxwell asked if this meant that no additional public hearings are needed. Mr. Smith said this would need to be confirmed by the CVRPC but he doesn't feel that the changes made are substantial. Should the Select Board approve the zoning bylaw amendments tonight, the new regulations would be in effect when the DRB holds its June 2017 meeting. Manager Schulz has spoken to CVRPC himself and was told the changes are minimal and would not require the document to go back to the PC. There was a suggestion that the Select Board itself could hold another public hearing if it wants to err on the side of caution.

Mr. Hatch has reviewed the proposed changes and he agrees that they are not substantive but rather minor. He is comfortable with the additional suggestions made tonight and would like the Select Board to go ahead with formal approval at this time. Chris Bradley asked if there were any upcoming projects that might be affected by the proposed changes. Mr. Hatch did not know of any. Mr. Bradley noted that the DRB has some flexibility on granting variances so perhaps the suggested changes were not needed. Chair Goslant said at a previous meeting it was noted potential developers like to deal in certitudes and would prefer delineated rules rather than leaving things to the DRB's discretion. There is less financial risk involved that way. Manager Schulz concurred and added that state laws do place some limitations on the DRB's ability to grant variances. **Motion to approve the proposed Town Zoning Bylaw Amendments with the revisions in the current draft as well as those presented tonight was approved 5-0-0.**

- b. Project Bids – Water Street Flood Hazard Improvements and Park Amenities.** Manager Schulz reported that bid proposals for this project were opened last week (05/18/17) and the two apparent low bidders are W.B. Rogers (\$347,707) and Dale E. Percy (\$375,625). After reviewing the bid proposals, references, etc., it is management's recommendation that the project be awarded to low bidder W.B. Rogers with an added \$55,200 for additional park landscaping, etc. Motion by Selectman Freeman, seconded by Selectman Maxwell, to award the project to W.B. Rogers for a total project cost of \$402,907.

Selectman Doney would like the insurance bond in hand before any work begins and/or any payment is made. Chair Goslant noted this stipulation already is part of the RFP requirements. He also would like to be sure that the work is done to the municipality's complete satisfaction before the final payment is made. Manager Schulz noted W.B. Rogers has done two major projects in Northfield. Their work on installing the culvert on Central Street was completed in an exemplary manner without any complaints. There had been some concerns about some post-Irene riprap repairs W.B. Rogers performed but they did come back to Northfield and fix the problem. Manager Schulz said the municipality would have protection in the project contract to ensure that the work is done correctly and before the projection completion deadline (08/31/17). Chair Goslant would like Mr. Tucker to work with the contractor throughout the project to make sure everything is done the right way. He is confident that this will be done. Selectman Goodrich asked if W.B. Rogers has experience in this kind of floodplain work. Manager Schulz and Chair Goslant confirmed they have done such work for other towns. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

- c. **Montpelier Charter Change Update: Regulation of Public Waters, House Bill 6.** Chris Bradley had approached the Select Board at the last two meetings regarding this House bill that, if approved, would provide the City of Montpelier complete control over Berlin Pond and its watershed sources. This probably would mean a complete prohibition of recreational use of Berlin Pond. At the last meeting (05/09/17), the Select Board approved and signed a resolution expressing its opposition to the bill. Mr. Bradley attended another regional meeting today on this topic and it seems that due to opposition from neighboring communities (Northfield, Berlin, Williamstown, etc.) Montpelier now is trying to get any concessions in can as regards to protecting its main water source. Mr. Bradley feels that the bill's prospects in the state legislature are dismal but will keep the Select Board informed of any new developments. Selectman Freeman and the other Board members thanked Mr. Bradley for the update and for bringing this matter to their attention in the first place.
- d. **Approval of FY 2017/2018 Water, Sewer, and Electric Budgets.** Motion by Selectman Freeman, seconded by Selectman Maxwell, to approve the FY 2017/2018 Water, Sewer, and Electric Budgets as presented by management. Manager Schulz said the Utility Commissions have been working on these budgets for several months. Due to cost savings and the use of prior year surplus funds, there will be no need for any rate increases in the next fiscal year. There are no major changes in the utility budgets from previous years. Some minor changes will be that the Water Department will be purchasing its own backhoe, in the future private cemeteries will be charged for their water usage, etc. The backhoe purchase will be funded by transferring money that had been set aside for a now-delayed smart meter project. Chair Goslant, who also serves on the Water and Wastewater Commission, added the surpluses in recent years have been so large that he does not see the need for rate increases in the foreseeable future. He is very comfortable with the current utility rates, which are among the lowest in the state. Selectman Maxwell asked if it were possible to use some of the surplus funds to pay off early the bond debts incurred by past water projects. Manager Schulz believes that any loans secured through the Vermont Bond Bank could not be paid off early but he will check on this. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
- e. **Approval of FY 2017/2018 Water and Sewer Rates.** Motion by Selectman Freeman, seconded by Selectman Maxwell, to approve the FY 2017/2018 Water and Sewer Rates. As indicated above, the rates remain unchanged from the previous fiscal year. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

- f. Northfield Falls Village Center Designation Application.** Manager Schulz noted Northfield's downtown area already has been designated as a Village Center. There has been discussion in recent years of obtaining this status for Northfield Falls as well but the sentiment was to hold off until a permanent Zoning Administrator had been hired. Now that this has been done, the application now is being prepared and will be forwarded to the Vermont Department of Commerce and Community Development (VT C&CD) for its approval. If this Village Center Designation application is successful, the new status would allow the municipality to apply for community development grant funds, make it easier for potential developers to apply for business loans, etc. Selectman Freeman said Richard Amore from the VT C&CD has attended some meetings of the Northfield Economic Development Network and provided some valuable information on this. With his assistance, proposed boundaries for this Village Center have been developed. At this time, the Falls Trailer Park would not be included in the target area. Selectman Goodrich asked if there would be any expenses incurred by the application process. Manager Schulz said there would not. Motion by Selectman Maxwell, seconded by Selectman Doney, to authorize an application to the Vermont Department of Commerce and Community Development to obtain Village Center Designation for Northfield Falls. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
- g. Bond Anticipation Note (FY 11/12 RSMS Program).** Motion by Selectman Maxwell, seconded by Selectman Freeman, to approve and sign the Bond Anticipation Note in the amount of \$50,000 at 2.15% 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.**
- h. Police Union Contract (possible executive session).** Manager Schulz said that after some negotiation, the Police Union Contract now is ready for Select Board approval. Since this is a personnel matter, he would like any further discussion of the contract details held in executive session (see below).

#### **VIII. BOARD MEMBERS' COMMENTS, CONCERNS, QUESTIONS**

- a. Falls Cemetery.** Selectman Freeman said that the Rector at St Jacob of Alaska Orthodox Church would like permission to install a gate at the cemetery for easier transit to the Church. There would be no cost to the municipality. Chair Goslant suggested the Rector should contact Manager Schulz regarding any specifics.
- b. Municipal Parks Update.** Selectman Doney reported that mulch was delivered to both Memorial Park and the Falls Park so new swing sets could be sited. Additional mulch needs to be put down to allow for softer cushioning. He added the water fountain at Memorial Park is still leaking. Chair Goslant thought this had been fixed. Selectman Doney said a lot of fill is needed at Memorial Park near the high school ballfield. He wondered if some of the fill generated by the Water Street Project could be used. Manager Schulz will look into this.
- c. Northfield Police Department.** Selectman Doney has been very pleased with the NPD in recent months as the officers seem to be out on patrol more often; new NPD Chief William Jennings is out and engaged with the community; etc. He would like Manager Schulz to convey this appreciation to the NPD in a letter to be shared with all NPD members.

- d. **Cornerstone Burger Company Outside Seating Update.** Manager Schulz has discussed the proposed lease of the two public parking spaces with the restaurant's owners. The contract terms are being negotiated and should be finalized soon.
  - e. **Robinson Road.** Selectman Maxwell would like a more substantial barrier installed where Robinson Road now ends. Manager Schulz will look into this.
  - f. **VTrans Work on Vermont Route 12A.** Chair Goslant would like to be sure as part of the project guardrails are installed near the wellfield where there is a steep drop off. Selectman Freeman also would like to see the road widened where there are some narrow corners, etc.
  - g. **Central Street Sidewalks Update.** Manager Schulz said that the old sidewalk on the east side of Central Street has deteriorated badly. Since a new concrete sidewalk was installed on the other side of the street, there have been suggestions to tear up the old sidewalk rather than try to repair it. Selectman Maxwell favors this action. However, there are several questions regarding how this would affect existing driveways, etc. that need to be resolved before any action is taken.
  - h. **Better Road Category A Grant Award.** Chair Goslant reported the municipality was awarded an \$8000 grant that will be used to generate an inventory of road-related erosion and/or culvert problems along our backroads. Once the inventory is complete, the municipality will be able to apply for grant funds to fix the problems identified.
  - i. **Norwich University Property Tax Agreement.** Selectman Maxwell noted the current agreement with Norwich University will expire at the end of June 2017. A new agreement is being negotiated and the Select Board will be kept informed of any developments.
- IX. TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT.** Manager Schulz had nothing to add to his written report.
- X. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (UNSCHEDULED).** There was none.
- XI. EXECUTIVE SESSION.** Motion by Selectman Freeman, seconded by Selectman Maxwell, 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 5-0-0.**

The Board went into executive session at 9:15 p.m.

Motion by Selectman Freeman, seconded by Selectman Doney, to come out of executive session. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

The Board came out of executive session at 9:30 p.m.

Motion by Selectman Freeman, seconded by Selectman Doney, to approve the proposed contract between the Town of Northfield and the New England Police Benevolent Association Local 406. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

- XII. ADJOURNMENT.** Motion by Selectman Doney, seconded by Selectman Freeman, to adjourn. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

The Board adjourned at 9:32 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 June 13, 2017.