

TOWN OF NORTHFIELD, VERMONT
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
Minutes of June 27, 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, Ambulance Chief Lawton Rutter, Listers Chair Arlington Supplee, Richard Wobby, Eileen Supplee, Lorna Doney, Elroy Hill, Carolyn Stevens, Steve Fitzhugh, Joan Davidson, Steve Hatch, Laura Ranker (CVRPC), and Steve Davis.

Chair Goslant 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.** There were no changes to the posted agenda.

IV. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (SCHEDULED):

- a. Arlington Supplee, Board of Listers: Pond Valuation.** Mr. Supplee said in the interest of fairness and consistency, the Listers worked last winter to create clear guidelines on how much the presence of a pond on a parcel would affect its valuation. The new checklist measures the impact of a pond by considering both its quality (i.e. appearance) and quantity (i.e. size). In rare cases, the potential negative effects of a pond (i.e. flooding/erosion) might result in lowering the parcel's valuation. There are seventy-three (73) discernable ponds in Northfield and all but three (3) are man-made. Selectman Freeman thanked Mr. Supplee and the other Listers for drafting these guidelines. Selectman Maxwell asked if this would have any effect on the Grand List. Mr. Supplee said that the new pond valuation would increase the Grand List by about \$290,000. However, this increase was mostly cancelled out by FEMA buyout properties, etc. Chair Goslant asked if pond valuation has been done before in Northfield. Mr. Supplee learned there was an attempt to do this in the 1960s but nothing came of it. However, it has been standard practice in other Vermont towns for quite some time. Mr. Supplee added there were two hundred and thirty (230) change of appraisal notices sent out this month with six (6) grievance hearings scheduled.

- b. Richard Wobby: Gold Star Families Memorial Monument.** Mr. Wobby said about six (6) months ago he was approached by a national group that designs Gold Star Families Memorial Monuments about situating a monument in Vermont. After consultation with Governor Phil Scott's office, Mr. Wobby recommended that the best location would be in Northfield adjacent to Norwich University (NU). There is a small park-like area between Harmon Drive and Vermont Route 12 that Mr. Wobby favors. The property currently is owned by the municipality so he is seeking the Select Board's permission to site the monument there. He also would like permission to work with Tree Warden Russ Barrett to remove/relocate some trees at this location. The cost of the monument is about \$100,000 and about half has already been raised. Once installed, the monument would be maintained by NU. The original plan was to have a ribbon cutting ceremony on Memorial Day 2018 but Mr. Wobby has been asked if this could be moved up to Veterans Day 2017. There would be no direct cost to the municipality and the monument very likely would attract additional visitors to Northfield.

Selectman Freeman felt this was an excellent proposal and thanked Mr. Wobby for all his work on this to date. He asked if there wasn't already consideration of the municipality selling this particular parcel to NU. Chair Goslant acknowledged that there have been some thought to this. He asked Mr. Wobby if the Crescent area might not be a better location for the memorial. Mr. Wobby disagreed as he thought the Crescent area was too open a space and active throughout the year. He felt the memorial should be located in a place that would allow for quiet contemplation. Chair Goslant noted even though the municipality owns the parcel in question, NU makes use of it ninety-five percent (95%) of the time. Selectman Maxwell felt that since the municipality and NU both appear to be in favor of this project, it should make no difference who ultimately owns the property.

Selectman Maxwell asked this matter be put on the next regular Select Board meeting agenda (07/11/17) for approval. Mr. Wobby can be contacted to answer any questions in the interim. He added although Northfield was his first choice, there are other Vermont communities that would be happy to site the monument. Mr. Wobby also noted the monument would be built by Rock of Ages using Vermont granite.

V. DEPARTMENT HEAD REPORT

- a. **Ambulance Chief Lawton Rutter.** Chief Rutter reported that with less than a week remaining in the current fiscal year (2016/2017), the Northfield Ambulance Service (NAS) has seen increases in the numbers of calls for service (805 to 857), total run sheets (856 to 901), and billable transports (613 to 649). He added run volume has increased every year and monthly totals indicate more NAS responses during the late spring through early fall period when people are more active. Even though the regional population hasn't grown significantly in recent years, the aging of the population has resulted for more calls for service for all regional ambulance services.

Chief Rutter added he is looking into having NAS participate in regional disaster planning, which could bring in additional grant funds. In his role as E-911 Address Coordinator, Chief Rutter reported he recently provided seventeen (17) new addresses, most of which were for new structures. In his other role as Health Officer, Chief Rutter has been dealing with the usual landlord/tenant disputes, dog bite investigations, etc.

Joan Davidson asked Chief Rutter for the percentage of NAS responses that occurred during the night. Chief Rutter said sixty percent (60%) of NAS responses happen Monday through Friday between the hours of 6:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. The rest occur during nights and weekends. Chair Goslant then thanked Chief Rutter for the excellent work he has done.

VI. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- a. **June 13, 2017 (Regular Meeting).** Motion by Selectman Doney, seconded by Selectman Goodrich, to approve the minutes. Selectman Goodrich asked for new wording at the bottom of the first page. **Motion to approve the revised minutes passed 3-0-2, with Selectmen Freeman and Maxwell abstaining.**

VII. APPROVAL OF BILLS

- a. **Warrant #25-17.** Motion by Selectman Doney, seconded by Selectman Maxwell, to approve Warrant #25-17 in the amount of \$129,516.49. Selectman Goodrich asked about a payment to Lyndon Rescue. Manager Schulz said about a year ago NAS started outsourcing its billing services to Lyndon Rescue, which retains ten percent (10%) of the collected amounts. Selectman Goodrich then asked about a payment for the temporary power poles near Northfield Savings Bank. Manager Schulz said the Northfield Electric Department (NED) is paying Green Mountain Power (GMP) for the poles at this time but will be reimbursed later by the bank. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
- b. **Warrant #01-18.** Motion by Selectman Maxwell, seconded by Selectman Goodrich, to approve Warrant #01-18 in the amount of \$41,723.72. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
- c. **Approval of Bi-Weekly Payroll through June 18, 2017.** Motion by Selectman Maxwell, seconded by Selectman Freeman, to approve the biweekly payroll in the amount of \$84,915.45. Selectman Maxwell asked if Manager Schulz had any concerns about overages as the current fiscal year comes to a close. Manager Schulz said the Highway Department and NAS have higher payroll costs than anticipated but this was due to a harsh winter and increased run volume respectively. However, increased NAS revenue should more than offset these overages. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
- d. **Approval of Northfield Police Department (NPD) Retroactive Pay and Benefits.** Motion by Selectman Maxwell, seconded by Selectman Doney, to approve the NPD retroactive pay and benefits in the amount of \$10,198.14. Selectman Maxwell noted this payment was part of the new NPD union contract. New rates of pay were in the contract and it was agreed that they would be implemented retroactively. Chair Goslant said both the municipality and the NPD were pleased with the new contract. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

VIII. SELECT BOARD

a. **2008 Ambulance Rebuild Bid Proposals.** Manager Schulz said the Select Board previously authorized Chief Rutter to solicit bids for a new chassis for the 2008 ambulance unit. This was considered to be a much more cost-effective alternative than purchasing an entirely new unit. Bids were due last Friday (06/23/17) and three (3) were received by the deadline. Chief Rutter reported the bids were from BUHN Emergency Vehicles (\$106,830), Cromwell Emergency Vehicles (\$115,570), and North Eastern Rescue Vehicles (\$122,340). It is Chief Rutter's recommendation that the municipality award the bid to BUHN Emergency Vehicles, which was not only the low bidder but also provided better warranty terms, would provide a suitable loaner unit during the rebuild, a quicker turnaround time, etc. Although this is a relatively new company, Chief Rutter has checked references and discovered nothing concerning. He added all the bids were lower than expected so the work will be fully covered by CIP funds once the new fiscal year begins. Selectman Doney asked if there was any trade-in value for the old chassis. Chief Rutter said BUHN will pay about \$1500 for it. The other companies were not interested. Motion by Selectman Maxwell, seconded by Selectman Doney, to accept the recommendation of Chief Rutter and award the 2008 ambulance rebuild to BUHN Emergency Vehicles for \$106,830. **Motion passed 5-0-0.** Chair Goslant thanked Chief Rutter for his good work on this.

b. **Adoption of Local Hazard Mitigation Plan.** Manager Schulz said Gail Aloisio from the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission (CVRPC) worked with him and the various department heads to update Northfield's hazard mitigation plan. There was a public comment period for the initial draft during which the Select Board members and the public could suggest changes. The Select Board formally approved the revised version at its November 22, 2016 regular meeting. The document then was sent to the Vermont Department of Public Safety and FEMA for their approval. They have signed off on the draft with minor changes. Laura Ranker now represents CVRPC on this and asked the Select Board approve the finalized version. Having this document in place allows the municipality to apply for grants for disaster planning as well as disaster recovery. Once FEMA has given its final approval, the plan will be in effect for five (5) years. Motion by Selectman Maxwell, seconded by Selectman Doney, to approve and sign the Local Hazard Mitigation Plan.

Selectman Maxwell found a couple mistakes in the current draft. On page three under "Executive Summary," one of the upcoming projects listed was to "Seek voter approval at Town Meeting 2017 to construct a new ambulance facility..." This did not occur. Manager Schulz said this was changed to Town Meeting 2018 later in the document but this section was not updated. Selectman Maxwell would like this sentence deleted. In addition, Selectman Maxwell noted on page seven James Dziobek is still listed as NPD Chief; he was replaced by William Jennings earlier this year. Ms. Ranker will make this correction. She added that this plan is a living document and it is recognized that circumstances can cause municipal priorities to change within the five-year timeframe. Selectman Freeman would like the various goals in the document distributed amongst the appropriate Select Board committees and department heads to better achieve implementation. Motion by Selectman Freeman, seconded by Selectman Maxwell, to revise the original motion to include the minor changes discussed earlier. **Motion passed 5-0-0. The revised motion then passed 5-0-0.**

c. **Authorization to sign Water Street Flood Hazard Mitigation Project Contract.** At a previous meeting (05/23/17), the Select Board awarded the construction phase of this project to WB Rogers. As authorized at that time, Manager Schulz has put together a draft contract based on state models and reviewed by legal counsel. Motion by Selectman Maxwell, seconded by Selectman Freeman, to approve and authorize Manager Schulz to sign the Water Street Flood Hazard Mitigation Project Contract with WB Rogers. Chair Goslant asked when construction would begin. Manager Schulz said the tentative date is July 10, 2017. As specified in the contract, work must be completed by September 15, 2017.

Stephen Fitzhugh became involved with this project as NED consultant and as Chair of the Electric Utility Commission. He said the project originally did not require that all transmission lines and poles be relocated to the east side of the Dog River but this became the Commission's recommendation as the project developed. It was felt best to remove this infrastructure from the flood plain while this construction was taking place. Mr. Fitzhugh added that this relocation and improved access to the NU electric substation would strengthen the NED transmission system, which has several redundancies allowing for quick recovery after a system-wide outage due to downed lines, etc. Chair Goslant added that the current property owner where the new poles would be sited is allowing this to happen. This might not happen in the future. Also, the new location will make the poles more accessible for servicing, etc. Manager Schulz added there are grant funds available to cover this relocation. The work will not be done by WB Rogers but another contractor (such as GMP). **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

- d. Approval and Authorization to sign Bull Run Solar Net Metering Agreements.** Manager Schulz said after the previous meeting he met with William Veve and Victor Veve from VWSD in order to finalize these agreements. He added that they have received the Certificate of Public Good from the Public Service Board and are ready to begin installing the solar farm. VWSD's initial offer for net metering credits for the municipality was ten percent (10%) but after negotiation this has been increased to seventeen percent (17%). The agreements have been reviewed and accepted by legal counsel specializing in utility matters. Mr. Fitzhugh said that this is one of a number of similar agreements NED will need to reach in order to increase its renewable energy portfolio to meet increasing PSB mandates. There is no need to increase NED rates at this time but this may be necessary at a future date due to the higher cost of renewable energy sources. Motion by Selectman Maxwell, seconded by Selectman Freeman, to approve and authorize Manager Schulz to sign the Bull Run Solar Net Metering Agreement between VWSD and the Town of Northfield. **Motion passed 5-0-0.** Motion by Selectman Maxwell, seconded by Selectman Freeman, to approve and authorize Manager Schulz to sign the Bull Run Solar Net Metering Agreement between VWSD and the Northfield Sewer Department. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
- e. Letter of Intent to Participate in Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) Roads Grants-In-Aid Pilot Project.** Manager Schulz said the DEC is making a greater effort in requiring municipalities to better handle stormwater issues. As part of this, there are \$15,800 in grant funds available for Northfield to work with CVRPC to "implement best management practices" on municipal roads. Motion by Selectman Maxwell, seconded by Selectman Freeman, to approve and sign the DEC Municipal Roads Grants-in-Aid Pilot Project Letter of Intent. Selectman Maxwell asked if accepting these funds would adversely affect any current road maintenance projects. Manager Schulz said it should not. Chair Goslant said this would bring actual money into the community to fix its roads. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
- f. Bond Anticipation Note (Fire Pumper Truck).** Motion by Selectman Maxwell, seconded by Selectman Goodrich, to approve and sign the Bond Anticipation Note in the amount of \$277,981.00 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.**

IX. BOARD MEMBERS' COMMENTS, CONCERNS, QUESTIONS

- a. Northfield Falls Traffic Control.** Selectman Doney asked when the radar speed sign would be installed in Northfield Falls as residents there have complained about speeding cars along Vermont Route 12. Manager Schulz has submitted the paperwork to the state to do this and will check the status of this request tomorrow. Selectman Maxwell suggested that a second radar sign should be purchased for the south end of town. Manager Schulz will discuss this with NPD Chief Jennings.
- b. Municipal Employee and Volunteer Recognition.** At the last meeting, Chair Goslant recognized and named several municipal employees and volunteers for benefiting the community. He later was told he neglected to thank the officers and volunteers of the Northfield Fire Department (NFD) at that time. Chair Goslant would like to correct that oversight and commend all NFD members for their good work.

- c. **North Main Street Wall Mural.** Chair Goslant would like to thank Leslie Striebe and the Northfield students for the wonderful mural that replaced the graffiti on the wall opposite Videos & More. Selectman Freeman also would like to mention the efforts of art teacher Eric Howard and recent graduate Abigail Detrick, who designed the mural.
- d. **Northfield Falls Speed Limit.** Chair Goslant saw in the board packets a copy of a letter from the Vermont Agency of Transportation (VTrans) to Manager Schulz regarding a request to decrease the speed limit from 35 MPH to 25 MPH along Vermont Route 12 in Northfield Falls. He had assumed that the requested new speed limit was 30 MPH. Manager Schulz will inform VTrans that the preferred speed limit is 30 MPH. Selectman Doney has noticed increased NPD patrols at night and he believes this already has had an impact on speeders.

X. TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

- a. **Rabbit Hollow Road Bridge.** Manager Schulz confirmed that with the repairs to the bridge completed, Rabbit Hollow Road has reopened to through traffic.
- b. **Sale of Retired Fire Truck.** Manager Schulz noted that there is a \$15,000 offer to purchase the old fire truck that was replaced by a newer one. Chair Goslant noted the original estimate for its resale value was \$45,000. This seems to have been a poor calculation. He added the public was told resale of the old truck would partially pay for the new one. Selectman Maxwell doesn't see any reason to rush the sale if there is a chance of a higher sale price. Manager Schulz will re-advertise the vehicle.

XI. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (UNSCHEDULED)

- a. **Laura Ranker: Local Emergency Operations Plan.** Ms. Ranker said Northfield's plan is out of date and should be revised as soon as possible. She added that since a number of local elected and appointed officials change on or after Town Meeting Day, the emergency contact list should be updated annually. Manager Schulz had hoped to put this on tonight's agenda but had to delay it due to a couple remaining questions. He will work with Ms. Ranker and put this on the next regular meeting agenda (07/11/17).

XII. EXECUTIVE SESSION. Motion by Selectman Freeman, seconded by Selectman Doney, to go into executive session, in accordance 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 9:27 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 10:25 p.m.

Motion by Selectman Goodrich, seconded by Selectman Maxwell, to authorize Chair Goslant and Vice-Chair Maxwell to negotiate with Manager Schulz on a one-year extension of his employment contract. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

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

The Board adjourned at 10:25 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 revised and approved at the regular Select Board meeting of July 11, 2017