

**TOWN OF NORTHFIELD, VERMONT
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
Minutes of August 8, 2017**

- I. ROLL CALL.** Chair Kenneth W. Goslant, Selectmen Lynn Doney, Julie H. Goodrich, and K. David Maxwell. Also present were Town Manager Jeffrey Schulz, Acting Clerk Kenneth McCann, Highway Foreman Trent Tucker, Dan Currier (Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission), Donald Wallace, Pam Hepburn, Aaron Rhodes, and Sally Davidson.

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.** Will Eberle from the Vermont Agency of Human Services was to address the Select Board tonight regarding possible grant funds for playground equipment but he has asked to be rescheduled for a meeting next month.

IV. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (SCHEDULED):

- a. Dan Currier, Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission: Municipal Road General Permit (MRGP).** Mr. Currier provided the Select Board members with several handouts indicating when this new permit system would go into effect, the amount of the new permit fees, the reasons behind the new standards, etc. This is part of the State's response through Act 64 to address several problems affecting Vermont waterways including invasive plant and animal species, toxic runoff from farms, and other common pollutants (i.e., phosphorous, sediment, road salt, etc.). There also will be attempts to provide flood resilience along riverbanks through proper ditching, culvert installation, etc. The process will start with an inventory form for evaluating road conditions and recognizing problem areas. Mr. Currier noted the MRGP documents now are in draft form and the public comment period will last until they are finalized in December 2017. The new permits will be circulated to municipalities in January 2018 and will be good for five (5) years. Municipalities are expected to conduct road inventories and draft implementation plans during the first two (2) years with progress reports due every six (6) months. The general purpose of the MRGP program is to bring connected road segments up to basic standards by implementing Best Management Practices (BMPs) in order to reduce road erosion through hydro seeding, installing stone-lined ditches, etc.

Chair Goslant believes the Northfield Highway Department has been following these BMPs for several years. Mr. Currier agreed Northfield and other Vermont communities have followed practices promoted by the Better Backroads Program (now the "Vermont Better Roads Program") for over twenty (20) years. Northfield already has applied for a Better Roads grant that would cover the cost of the initial road inventory. Work on problem areas can be done as soon as they are identified. There also are implementation grants up to \$40,000 available. Mr. Currier estimated between ten to twenty percent (10-20%) of Northfield's backroads will need various levels of attention. He added a new inventory and implementation plan will need to be done every five (5) years during the initial twenty (20) years of the MRGP program. All backroads are expected to be up to standard as the end of this twenty-year period.

Mr. Currier said Vermont Local Roads will provide all the training needed for municipal officials, highway workers, etc. In addition to the grant funds available through the Vermont Agency of Transportation (VTrans), there should be additional monies available through the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC).

Selectman Doney asked when the initial road survey would begin. Mr. Currier thought it would be next spring since the funding already is on hand. Selectman Maxwell felt the input from Manager Schulz and Highway Foreman Trent Tucker would be crucial to the process. Chair Goslant believes the local RSMS (Road Surface Management System) program should be able to provide a database on current road conditions. He is concerned the new fee levels (about \$3,000 per year) will take money away from purchasing road materials, etc. Mr. Currier said municipalities will need to adjust their budgets to account for these new expenses. He warned municipalities should not expect a windfall of grant funding as most Vermont towns will be applying for these grants. Chair Goslant would like to take part in the upcoming public hearings on the draft MRGP documents. He has real concerns about this program's financial impact on municipalities. He then thanked Mr. Currier for the presentation. Mr. Currier said he is available to whoever has any questions about this.

V. DEPARTMENT HEAD REPORT

- a. Highway Foreman Trent Tucker.** Mr. Tucker said he and his crew have been focused recently on the backroad washouts caused by the July heavy rainstorms. He said Rabbit Hollow Road and Bower Road were hit the hardest. In addition, the crew have begun striping the crosswalks, beginning with the ones near the schools. The problem is this is a four-man operation on the busier roads as two (2) flaggers are required. Chair Goslant would like to hold a Highway Subcommittee meeting soon to discuss this and other matters. He would like to look into the possibility of sub-contracting the crosswalk painting in order to free up the Highway crew for road maintenance work. Selectman Maxwell would like the crosswalk painting done earlier in the year since there are more pedestrians out during the warm weather months. Mr. Tucker had hoped to get to it earlier this year but the aforementioned bad storms have kept his crew busy. Chair Goslant felt this was another good reason to look at sub-contracting the work. He would like it done before the local schools let out in mid-June. Selectman Maxwell agreed this is a safety issue and should be addressed as soon as possible. Manager Schulz will make sure the downtown crosswalks are properly striped before Labor Day. Chair Goslant also would like the pedestrian yield sign reinstalled in the middle of the Depot Square crosswalk. Mr. Tucker noted it has been knocked down four or five times already this year. Manager Schulz said a camera now has been directed at this crosswalk so perhaps we'll find out who's been doing it. Selectman Maxwell also has real concerns about some of the sidewalks with grass growing in the cracks. Mr. Tucker said he has had a crew member going around recently with weed killer to fix this. Selectman Maxwell believes the sidewalk situation here may need to be resolved in a major way soon despite the high cost.

VI. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- a. **July 25, 2017 (Regular Meeting).** Motion by Selectman Doney, seconded by Selectman Goodrich, to approve the minutes. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**

VII. APPROVAL OF BILLS

- a. **Warrant #04-18.** Motion by Selectman Maxwell, seconded by Selectman Goodrich, to approve Warrant #04-18 in the amount of \$390,651.36. Selectman Doney would like the monthly water bill (\$511) for running the Common Fountain either reduced or the fountain shut down. Manager Schulz will look into various options including fixing the fountain to recirculate the water. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**
- b. **Approval of Bi-Weekly Payroll through July 30, 2017.** Motion by Selectman Maxwell, seconded by Selectman Doney, to approve the biweekly payroll in the amount of \$89,673.59. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**

VIII. SELECT BOARD

- a. **Town Select Board Vacancy.** Manager Schulz has received six (6) letters of interest regarding the vacant position. He asked how the Select Board members would like to proceed on this. Selectman Maxwell suggested the applicants could be interviewed at the next regular meeting (08/22/17). Chair Goslant agreed with this. An executive session could be held at the end of the meeting so a decision can be made. The vacancy notice now says letters of interest will be accepted until the position is filled but Chair Goslant would like a deadline of noon Friday (08/18/17) before this next meeting.
- b. **Mountain Alliance Update.** Northfield joined with Randolph, Braintree, and Brookfield two years ago to form the Mountain Alliance Solid Waste Management District. Since then, the Town of Randolph has been handling its administration but now is looking to share this responsibility by establishing an organizational structure through a formal agreement between the municipalities. This will be discussed at the next Mountain Alliance public meeting next month. Northfield's annual membership cost is \$8,300, which Manager Schulz feels is a relative bargain compared to other options. Had Northfield remained with the Mad River Resource Management Alliance (MRRMA), he estimated the annual cost would have been about \$23,000. Chair Goslant agreed belonging to the Mountain Alliance has been cost-effective.
- c. **Interim Select Board Committee Assignment.** Chair Goslant would like Selectman Goodrich to act as the Select Board's representative to the Electric Utility Commission. This position had been held until recently by former Select Board member Nate Freeman. There was no objection to this. Manager Schulz then provided Selectman Goodrich with a brief summary of the Utility Commissions meeting the previous night. This included an update on the Water Street River Park Project, a discussion of future renewal energy mandates, the Union Street water project, State efforts to require reduced phosphorous levels in the water processed and released by wastewater treatment facilities, etc.

IX. BOARD MEMBERS' COMMENTS, CONCERNS, QUESTIONS

- a. **North Main Street Wall Mural.** Selectman Doney would like the Highway crew to remove the grass growing above and around the new wall mural. He felt the local kids did such a great job on this and he wants nothing to distract from it. Manager Schulz will contact Mr. Tucker about this.

- b. Northfield Falls Village Center Designation.** Selectman Goodrich asked about the status of the designation application. Manager Schulz said the State has received the paperwork and there will be a hearing next month.
- c. Radar Speed Display Signs, etc.** At the last meeting, the Select Board had asked Manager Schulz to look into purchasing an additional unit so there could be one at both ends of town. He now reported the Waterbury Police Department will be disbanding at the end of the year and is donating its equipment to other local departments. Northfield should obtain a couple free radar speed display signs when this happens. Selectman Doney noted many local speed limit signs are obscured by tree branches, etc. and would like the Highway crew to fix this.
- d. Police Chief William Jennings.** Chair Goslant encountered Chief Jennings in a local restaurant recently and was very impressed not only with their conversation but also with Chief Jennings' easy and positive interaction with community members. Northfield residents are very fortunate to have him here.
- e. Municipal Swimming Pool, etc.** Chair Goslant noted the pool has been operating off a generator the past three (3) weeks after the underground lines feeding it broke down. These power lines should be repaired by the end of this week. Manager Schulz confirmed this was a much more extensive project than had been first thought. Chair Goslant added the gates at Memorial Park recently have been locked at 7:00 p.m. even though the sign there says the park is open until 9:00 p.m. Manager Schulz has spoken to Chief Jennings and his officers will make every effort to delay the closure until 9:00 p.m.

X. TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT.

- a. Winch Hill Paving Project.** Manager Schulz has received a revised cost estimate from Pike Industries that was lower than the one previously submitted. The paving is scheduled to begin next month.

XI. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (UNSCHEDULED). There was none.

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

The Board adjourned at 9:40 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 August 22, 2017.