

**TOWN OF NORTHFIELD, VERMONT  
BOARD OF SELECTMEN  
Minutes of August 22, 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, William Smith, Aaron Rhodes, Debra Ryan, 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.** Fire Chief Peter J. DeMasi was scheduled to make a report tonight but was called out to an emergency just before the meeting started.

**IV. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (SCHEDULED):**

- a. William Smith, Development Review Board: Permit Fees Schedule.** Mr. Smith has been asked by the other members of the Development Review Board as well as Zoning Administrator Steve Hatch to request the Select Board to adjust two (2) zoning permit fee amounts. The first request is to lower the cost of a sign permit, which now is \$105. This amount includes the cost of the permit itself (\$20), the recording fee (\$10), and the public hearing charge (\$75). Mr. Smith is asking the public hearing charge be waived, which would bring the sign permit cost down to \$30. He added most sign permit requests are relatively simple matters and he doesn't want residents deterred from obtaining permits because of the high cost. This also should reduce the number of signs without permits in our community. The second request is to lower the minimum charge for accessory buildings from \$80 to \$40. Accessory buildings more than four hundred square feet (400 sq. ft.) in size would be charged an additional ten cents (10¢) per square foot. Mr. Smith added there are quite a few unpermitted accessory buildings because residents didn't want to pay the high cost. Chair Goslant hoped having all accessory buildings properly permitted would make it easier for the Listers to determine parcel values, etc. in the future. Selectman Maxwell asked if changing these fee amounts would affect the current fiscal year budget. Manager Schulz said that such fee collections are anticipated revenue but these particular changes shouldn't have a major impact. Selectman Maxwell agrees with removing roadblocks when residents want to improve their properties, etc. as well as the need to keep these improvements in compliance with local zoning regulations. Motion by Selectman Maxwell, seconded by Selectman Goodrich, to waive the public hearing charge for sign permit requests and to lower the minimum fee for accessory buildings from \$80 to \$40. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**

**V. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

- a. August 8, 2017 (Regular Meeting).** Motion by Selectman Doney, seconded by Selectman Goodrich, to approve the minutes. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**

**VI. APPROVAL OF BILLS**

- a. Warrant #05-18.** Motion by Selectman Doney, seconded by Selectman Goodrich, to approve Warrant #05-18 in the amount of \$131,235.24. Selectman Doney would like to see the revenue amounts for municipal pool, which closed for the 2017 season last weekend. Manager Schulz will provide this information. Selectman Goodrich noted the purchase of two (2) used bicycles from the Waterbury Police Department. Manager Schulz said the Waterbury Police Department is disbanding and therefore selling its equipment at reduced prices. In this case, the bicycles each were \$1500 new but the Northfield Police Department (NPD) was able to purchase them for its bike patrol for \$200 each.

Chair Goslant noted that of the total warrant amount, \$42,500 is for the "Flood Buyout Grant." Manager Schulz said this is the first payment for the construction phase of the Water Street River Park project. FEMA grants will pay for ninety percent (90%) of the project costs and state grant money will cover the rest. There will be no direct cost to taxpayers or ratepayers. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**

- b. Warrant #05-18A.** Motion by Selectman Maxwell, seconded by Selectman Doney, to approve Warrant #05-18A in the amount of \$32,293.20. Selectman Maxwell noted this is a payment on an old bank note. Manager Schulz added the final payment will be in 2021. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**
- c. Approval of Bi-Weekly Payroll through August 13, 2017.** Motion by Selectman Maxwell, seconded by Selectman Doney, to approve the biweekly payroll in the amount of \$89,995.72. Selectman Goodrich asked if there were any staffing shortages at this time. Manager Schulz said the NPD was still short one full-time officer but he expected the position to be filled soon as a qualified applicant has been identified. He added that the local household hazardous waste collection did result in some Highway Department overtime. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**

## VII. SELECT BOARD

- a. Bond Anticipation Note (FY 2010/2011 RSMS).** Motion by Selectman Maxwell, seconded by Selectman Doney, to approve and sign the Bond Anticipation Note in the amount of \$90,000 at 2.35% 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 4-0-0.**
- b. Northfield Public Cemetery Fees.** Manager Schulz said the Select Board approved a significant revision to the local cemetery fees at their June 13, 2017 regular meeting. However, there was some concern expressed afterward that the twenty percent (20%) surcharge on burial lots to cover perpetual care expenses was insufficient. Manager Schulz now would like to increase the perpetual care charge to fifty percent (50%) and have this amount included in the advertised lot price (not a surcharge). For example, the cost of a full lot for residents that was \$1600 (not including the 20% perpetual care cost) would instead be \$2,400 (including the 50% perpetual care cost). Motion by Selectman Maxwell, seconded by Selectman Doney, to approve the recommended adjustment of the Northfield Public Cemetery Fees.

Selectman Maxwell asked if the 50% charge actually will cover perpetual care costs. Manager Schulz said it would. He had been under the impression that it had been 20% in the past but was informed that 50% was the actual amount. Manager Schulz felt this was a minor adjustment that would bring in the needed cemetery maintenance funding with less confusion over the actual rates charged.

Selectman Maxwell would like to table any action on this matter until more information has been provided by management. For example, he would like to know the current balance of the perpetual care fund; how much is expected to be put into this fund each year; how these funds are expended; and how many lots remain in the public cemeteries. There was no objection to tabling this matter until the next regular meeting (09/12/17). In the interim, Manager Schulz will work with the person contracted to maintain the cemeteries (Bruce Wright) to get this information for the Select Board members.

- c. Town Select Board Vacancy (possible executive session).** Manager Schulz said there have been seven (7) letters of interest for the vacant position on the Select Board. Chair Goslant would like to discuss this matter in executive session later in this meeting. Selectman Maxwell did not believe this is what the Select Board members agreed at the last meeting but has no objections at this time.

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

- a. **Radar Speed Limit Signs.** Selectman Doney would like to commend NPD Chief William Jennings for installing these signs both in Northfield Falls and on South Main Street near Norwich University. Like the aforementioned bicycles, these signs were purchased at reduced price from the Waterbury Police Department. Selectman Doney would like the foliage around the Falls sign trimmed for better visibility.
- b. **Town Buildings & Energy Committee Update.** Selectmen Maxwell and Doney met last week to look into the current state of all municipal-owned structures; any deficiencies they might have; the CIP balances for building repair/maintenance; etc. Manager Schulz had prepared a building inventory as well as the financial information.

Selectman Maxwell began with the Municipal Building, which has a number of problems that require attention. For example, building's furnace and lead piping need replacement; the Town Clerk's storage area needs work; the roof needs repainting; the sidewalk in front on the building needs repair; etc. The NPD has been working with the building staff on installing security equipment for the front entrance area where there is public interaction and payment funds are kept. There now is \$83,000 in the building's CIP fund and the new furnace should cost \$18,000.

The Town Garage that houses the Highway Department and the Ambulance Service now has \$12,400 in its CIP account. Selectman Maxwell said this building has a number of deficiencies and there needs to be a detailed plan to address them all. For example, the building's insulation is in poor condition, leading to high heating costs in the winter. He estimated it would cost over \$65,000 to fix the most immediate problems. Chair Goslant believes that this type of metal building comes with an expected life expectancy and this may have been exceeded in this case. Selectman Maxwell would like this determined.

The Fire Station has a number of problems that were identified when the feasibility study was done for a proposed combined EMS facility. This includes deteriorating outer siding, poor lighting, etc. There also are significant safety issues that need to be addressed as soon as possible as they include problems with the building's structural integrity. The current CIP balance for maintaining this building is \$11,714, which is probably insufficient for even the most urgent deficiencies. A detailed action plan for this building also is needed.

The Police Station is less than ten (10) years old and is in overall good condition. Some work on the exterior walls will be done in the near future. The major expense for the Municipal Pool is repainting, which costs \$75,000 and is done every ten (10) years. Manager Schulz noted patchwork is done at the same time as the painting and the pool structure is in overall good condition. Selectman Maxwell would like to see more funds set aside in this CIP account as diving boards, skimmers, etc. need to be replaced every few years.

Selectman Maxwell would like to know how much the Brown Public Library's Board of Trustees contributes to the upkeep of the building. Manager Schulz will check on this. He is aware that donations have been solicited to raise funds to replace the carpeting, etc. Selectman Maxwell asked if the current CIP balance would cover the proposed painting of the building's exterior. Manager Schulz said it would. Manager Schulz added no bids were received recently for this project. He felt this was mainly due to bad timing as contractors are busy with other work. There should be a much better response when this project is rebid next February. Selectman Maxwell felt the CIP account for roof repair/replacement should be reviewed during the next budget sessions to determine whether enough funds are being set aside.

- c. **Highway Committee Meeting.** Chair Goslant noted a number of issues that the committee needs to address in an upcoming meeting, such as the poor condition of several sidewalks in the downtown area. Selectman Goodrich would like to see the estimates for the repair/replacement of the sidewalk on the east side of Central Street. Manager Schulz noted he is also getting estimates regarding Main Street's sidewalks. Chair Goslant would like the Highway Committee to prepare as thorough a report as the Town Buildings & Energy Committee has done.
- d. **Gold Star Families Memorial Monument.** Selectman Maxwell would like a written update on this project in order to confirm the conditions that the Select Board imposed when it agreed to site the monument on municipal property (Center Park) are being observed. This includes adequate nearby parking, etc. Chair Goslant attended a recent meeting held by the Governor's Office regarding this matter and learned that the monument placement has been fast tracked with its dedication planned for Veterans Day 2017.

**IX. TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT.**

- a. **Water Street Park Project.** Manager Schulz said significant progress has been made with material removed from the site, grass seeding completed, etc. Riprap along the riverbank will be installed soon along with walking paths and trees in the nature park area. The area already looks very different.

**X. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (UNSCHEDULED)**

- a. **Debra Ryan: Central Street Sidewalks.** Ms. Ryan reminded the Select Board members that the sidewalks on the east side of Central Street are in bad condition. However, some segments are worse than others and she suggested that sidewalk repair/replacement could be spread over the next three (3) years or so.

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

The Board went into executive session at 8:45 p.m.

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

The Board came out of executive session at 9:28 p.m.

It was the consensus of the Select Board members to postpone any decision regarding the Select Board vacancy until interviews with the applicants can be conducted at the next regular meeting (09/12/17).

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

The Board adjourned at 9:30 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 September 12, 2017.