

**TOWN OF NORTHFIELD, VERMONT**  
**BOARD OF SELECTMEN**  
**Minutes of September 26, 2017**

- I. ROLL CALL.** Chair Kenneth W. Goslant, Selectmen Lynn Doney, Julie H. Goodrich, Kenneth Johnson, and K. David Maxwell. Also present were Town Manager Jeffrey Schulz, Acting Clerk Kenneth McCann, Ken Hepburn, Pam Hepburn, Wendy Rea (Northfield Observances/Northfield Savings Bank), Russ Barrett (Conservation Commission), Laura Hill-Eubanks (Planning Commission/Conservation Commission), Eliza Walker (Vermont Land Trust), Sally Davidson (Recreation Committee), Bonnie Donahue (Northfield Promise Community), Briana Howard (Northfield Promise Community), Rebecca Pearish (Northfield Promise Community), Leslie Striebe, Elroy Hill, 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.** Chair Goslant contacted members of the Northfield Promise Community earlier today and would like them put on tonight's agenda to gauge their reaction to a suggestion he has for a possible site for the proposed downtown youth park.

**IV. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (SCHEDULED)**

- a. Wendy Rea, Northfield Observances: Labor Day Weekend Festivities Follow-up.** Ms. Rea wanted to thank the municipality for its support in preparing for (and cleaning up after) the festivities on and around the Common over the holiday weekend. This included putting up the stage lights, delivering the food booths, delivering the golf carts (on loan from the Northfield Country Club), and especially communicating with Amtrak. Ms. Rea said whatever was said to Amtrak this year worked very well as the train went through town very slowly. Ms. Rea said Northfield Observances and its volunteers have been holding these festivities for forty (40) years and looks for ways to keep it fresh each year. The rainstorm on Sunday forced the cancellation of the Classic Car Show and a couple other events but otherwise all went well as people adapted and made the best of the situation with an impromptu talent contest. Ms. Rea said there was a first attempt to track attendance this year and an admittedly unscientific count had over 1600 people entering the Common on Saturday between 2:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. Northfield Observances will try for a more accurate count next year. There also will be an attempt for additional craft booths. Chair Goslant and the other Select Board members thanked Ms. Rea and Northfield Observances for another successful celebration of Northfield's community spirit.
- b. Wendy Rea, Northfield Savings Bank: NSB 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration (11/03/17).** Ms. Rea noted 2017 is the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Northfield Savings Bank (NSB) and the plan is to hold a public celebration on the Common on Friday, November 3, 2017, between 4:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. Free refreshments and entertainment will be provided and a tent will be put up in case of inclement weather. The Select Board members were enthusiastic regarding the proposal and had no objections to the tent placement, etc.
- c. Leslie Striebe and Ken Hepburn: "Welcome to Northfield" Signs.** Ms. Striebe, then representing Go! Northfield, asked several years ago for the Select Board's permission to seek private donations to replace the "Welcome to Northfield" signs on Vermont Route 12 (located in Northfield Falls and South Village). Ms. Striebe and her organization were able to develop proposals regarding how the new sign should look, cost estimates, etc. but fundraising efforts fell short of the needed amount. Since Mr. Hepburn asked at a recent meeting about the possibility of new signage, Ms. Striebe decided to revive this matter. She then provided a PowerPoint display showing similar signs in other Vermont communities, how the new Northfield signs could look, etc. Ms. Striebe would like to maintain the covered bridge motif of the current signs and have them in the same location but would increase their size for better visibility. The current signs are twenty square feet but state law would allow up to sixty-four square feet. There also is the possibility of installing benches near them. The current cost estimate for both signs is about \$20,000.

Chair Goslant was serving on the Select Board when the initial proposal was made. He believes the cost estimates presented could be reduced if locally-sources materials were used and municipal employees were used to install the new signs. Selectman Maxwell wanted to know what Ms. Striebe and Mr. Hepburn would like the Select Board to do tonight. Ms. Striebe would like the Select Board's permission for a fundraising thermometer to be sited on municipal property. In addition, a petition will be circulated to add an article on next year's Town Meeting Warning asking for \$1,500 in public funds to help pay for the new signs. Mr. Hepburn believes residents will make generous donations once they become aware of the project. In this way, it truly will become a community project. Ms. Striebe suggested the old signs could be repurposed and relocated to the town lines on Vermont Route 12A and Cox Brook Road. Mr. Hepburn would like some confirmation that the Select Board is in support of this project. Manager Schulz said he would make sure any zoning or other required permits are obtained. Chair Goslant thanked Ms. Striebe and Mr. Hepburn for coming forward with this proposal and would like to get any update from them in coming weeks.

- d. **Russ Barrett et al., Northfield Conservation Commission: Conservation Easement on Town Forest.** Mr. Barrett said there is an opportunity for the municipality to purchase land from TDS Telecom at the summit of Paine Mountain that could be annexed to the adjacent Town Forest. If the municipality agrees to a conservation easement on the property, the Vermont Land Trust would fund two-thirds (2/3) of purchase price (as yet undetermined). Eliza Walker, the Vermont Land Trust Regional Manager, confirmed this and added the easement would prevent the property from future development or commercial use. Selectman Maxwell noted there is municipal water infrastructure in the area connected to the Cheney Farm Reservoir. Ms. Walker said the easement would be written to provide for this. Selectman Maxwell asked if there was any timeline for this. Ms. Walker said there was no rush as TDS Telecom doesn't appear urgent to sell the parcel. Laura Hill-Eubanks added Attorney William Smith has looked into this matter and found the only access to the property is through the Town Forest. Selectman Maxwell asked if there would be any direct cost to the municipality. Ms. Walker said the municipality would be responsible for one-third (1/3) of the purchase price but there are many possible sources for these funds including grant money. This can be better worked out once the purchase price has been agreed upon.

Selectman Goodrich noted some conservation easements can be very restrictive on what kind of recreation can and cannot be used on the property, i.e. ATVs, etc. Ms. Walker said the municipality already has created rules for the Town Forest and these could be extended to the new property. She added there will be legal costs associated with the purchase and the Land Trust can help with this by using its own attorneys. Chair Goslant would like the land use conditions left as flexible as possible including allowing for hunting, mountain biking, etc. He is confident Manager Schulz will be able to work with the Land Trust and the Conservation Commission to bring this proposal to a successful conclusion. Selectman Goodrich would like Attorney Smith to review the easement conditions on behalf of the municipality to make sure there will be no problems. Selectman Maxwell agreed Attorney Smith would need to review all documents and provide his legal opinion to the Select Board before anything is approved. He did not object to the Land Trust taking the lead on legal matters related to the land sale itself.

Mr. Hepburn asked if signage would be installed on the new property to inform users of allowed and prohibited activities. Ms. Walker said some towns put up informational kiosks but this is a local option. Selectman Maxwell also would like to wait until some public feedback can be received. He would like the Select Board to provide a "yellow light," i.e. proceed with caution, rather than a red or green light so more information can be obtained. Chair Goslant thanked Mr. Barrett and Ms. Walker for coming forward with this proposal.

- e. **Bonnie Donahue et al., Northfield Promise Community: Proposed Playground Project.** Chair Goslant spoke to a number of people before and during tonight's "Night on the Common" event (see below) about a possible alternate site for the proposed downtown children's park for which the Northfield Promise Community has obtained \$150,000 in state grant funds. Chair Goslant noted a youth event at the Brown Public Library (BPL) earlier today and suggested the municipal property on Slate Avenue between the BPL and the Kingston Funeral Home could be used. He has spoken to the funeral home owners (Michael and Robin Donahue) and they have no objection. Selectman Johnson noted at last week's special meeting the Select Board did express support for the concept of a downtown youth playground but did object to the proposed site on Wall Street behind the Northfield Police Station. He felt using the Slate Avenue site would solve many problems. Brianna Howard felt this was a possibility but the Northfield Promise Community Steering Committee would have to meet to discuss the matter. Rebecca Pearish believes the proposed site's proximity to the BPL and the downtown was positive but since the site is off South Main Street, there would be a lack of visibility to the general public. Selectman Johnson believes visibility will not be a problem once people know of the playground's existence. Ms. Donahue said if this is a serious offer from the municipality, the Committee will give it serious consideration.

Selectman Doney remains concerned about adding another public park and taking money away from the maintenance of the existing parks. He asked if it were possible to divert some of the grant money to the Falls Park. Ms. Pearish said it would not be a problem if any equipment installed could be used by the targeted age group (ages 0-6). Chair Goslant asked if any funds could be used in Memorial Park. Ms. Pearish said this would be more difficult as there are real ADA-accessibility issues there. She was concerned the cost of bringing the park up to compliance would use most of the grant funds. In addition, the public feedback regarding the proper use of the grant funds did indicate a preference for a downtown park. Ms. Pearish felt this was not a problem for the Falls Park as young children living nearby would benefit from their own walking-close playground. Selectman Maxwell suggested the Committee could meet before the next regular Select Board meeting (10/10/17) and provide an update then. Ms. Donahue said this was possible. In addition, the Select Board would need to consider the ramifications of bringing Memorial Park up to full ADA compliance. Chair Goslant is very willing to work with the Committee to get this project moving forward. He also would like the BPL Board of Trustees and the Recreation Committee involved in the process.

## V. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- a. **September 12, 2017 (Regular Meeting).** Motion by Selectman Doney, seconded by Selectman Maxwell, to approve the minutes. Selectman Goodrich found a typo that will be corrected. **Motion to approved amended minutes passed 4-0-1, with Selectman Johnson abstaining.**
- b. **September 18, 2017 (Special Meeting).** Motion by Selectman Maxwell, seconded by Selectman Johnson, to approve the minutes. **Motion passed 3-0-2, with Selectmen Doney and Goodrich abstaining.**

## VI. APPROVAL OF BILLS

- a. **Warrant #07-18.** Motion by Selectman Maxwell, seconded by Selectman Doney, to approve Warrant #07-18 in the amount of \$228,867.54. Selectman Goodrich asked about a payment to remove trees on Loop Road. Manager Schulz was told by Highway Foreman Trent Tucker there were five or six problem trees on a curve that had to be removed. The trees were in the municipality's right-of-way and the adjacent property owners were contacted beforehand. Chair Goslant asked why the highway crew didn't bring the trees down. Manager Schulz said the municipality doesn't have the proper equipment to bring down trees that tall. Selectman Goodrich noted a legal expense related to the possible land purchase previously discussed. Manager Schulz confirmed he asked Attorney Smith to look into Town Forest access concerns. Selectman Goodrich asked if it really cost \$6744 to "hook up" a generator to the municipal pool. Manager Schulz said the power outage at the pool was due to a failure on the electric system so some new lines had to be installed, etc. The generator used was borrowed from the Wastewater Treatment Facility. Chair Goslant said he looked into this and confirmed there was a lot more work involved than a simple hookup. Chair Goslant noted of the total warrant amount, about \$139,000 was used to purchase stock for the Northfield Electric Department (NED). Manager Schulz said this type of NED stock purchase is done periodically and usually brings in a twelve percent (12%) return on the investment. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
- b. **Approval of Biweekly Payroll through September 10, 2017.** Motion by Selectman Maxwell, seconded by Selectman Doney, to approve the biweekly payroll in the amount of \$85,934.77. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

## VII. SELECT BOARD

- a. **Municipal Planning Grant Application.** Manager Schulz said the Planning Commission (PC) is looking to apply for state grant funds to cover the costs of updating the Northfield Town Plan, which needs to be revised by 2019. PC Chair Laura Hill-Eubanks said the grant amount is \$14,000 with \$12,000 coming from the State and the remainder the local match amount. This would cover the bulk of revision costs with most of the expense related to public outreach efforts. Selectman Maxwell noted the process has become so complex you really need professional assistance with this. Selectman Johnson agreed it is much more complicated than when he served on the PC several years ago. Motion by Selectman Maxwell, seconded by Selectman Goodrich, to approve and sign the Municipal Planning Grant Application Resolution. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
- b. **Sidewalk Replacement Project – Main Street – Mayo Block.** Manager Schulz noted the Northfield Savings Bank (NSB) is renovating its Northfield facility as part of a downsizing effort now its corporate headquarters have moved to Berlin. This includes removing part of the structure, installing drive-through tellers, putting in new parking, etc. As part of the process, NSB will be improving the sidewalk in front of the building on South Main Street. NSB is offering to pay for the engineering study needed before the rest of the Mayo Block sidewalk can be repaved. The municipality would be responsible for the construction costs. Selectman Maxwell noted there had been a third phase planned for the Northfield Common Rehabilitation Project that included putting new sidewalk on the Mayo Block and East Street. Manager Schulz has looked at the plans but they were only preliminary and did not provide much detail. A new engineering study will be needed. Selectman Maxwell asked if the utility lines in the area would be buried (as they were in the earlier phases of the Common Project). Manager Schulz has obtained estimates for this and they were in the \$90,000 range. None of the lines belong to NED but instead to TDS Telecom and Trans-Video. Manager Schulz is doubtful either would be willing to pay that much to have the lines buried. Chair Goslant suggested contacting them to confirm this. Selectman Maxwell asked about the project timeline. Manager Schulz said NSB wants to finish the sidewalk work this fall. They would like an answer regarding the engineering study within the next couple of weeks. Selectman Maxwell would like Manager Schulz to look into who actually owns the sidewalk area, if there are municipal funds to install new sidewalks from the NSB building to the Brown Public Library (including the area in front of the Municipal Building), etc. Selectman Goodrich doubts if either TDS Telecom or Trans-Video would be willing to contribute funds to this project.
- c. **Municipal Winter Sand Bids.** Manager Schulz said the Highway Committee drafted the specifications for the purchase of winter sand and bids subsequently were solicited. Three (3) bids were received from Hebert Excavation Corporation, Tabor Earth Extractors, and Newton Construction, LLC. The Highway Committee recommended awarding the bid to the low bidder, which is Hebert Excavation Corporation at \$13.80 per cubic yard delivered. Chair Goslant serves on the Highway Committee and he noted Berlin has used Hebert winter sand the past two years and have been very pleased with the material. In addition, the Highway Committee decided it would be better to have the winter sand delivered directly to the Northfield Falls pit rather than tie up crew members driving out of town to pick it up. Motion by Selectman Maxwell, seconded by Selectman Doney, to award the winter sand delivered bid to Hebert Excavation Corporation at \$13.80 per cubic yard. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

- d. **Highway Department Truck Purchase.** Manager Schulz said the small Dodge truck now used for grounds maintenance is in very poor condition and cannot pass state inspection without at least \$3000 in repairs. The plan is to purchase a 2018 Chevrolet Silverado with plow for the Highway Foreman and the vehicle he now is driving would go to the maintenance worker. Quotes were obtained from Shearer Chevrolet in South Burlington (\$32,284) and Cody Chevrolet in Montpelier (\$33,833). The main difference in the bid amounts is Shearer will give \$3,000 as trade-in for the old Dodge but Cody only will give \$1,000. Selectman Johnson noted both bids included the cost of a new plow for about \$5,800. He suggested the old plow be re-used and this amount removed from the quotes. Chair Goslant recommended the Select Board should approve the purchase without the plow tonight. If Mr. Tucker later confirms a new plow is needed, it can be purchased separately later. Motion by Selectman Maxwell, seconded by Selectman Goodrich, to purchase a 2018 Chevrolet Silverado (without plow) from Shearer Chevrolet for \$26,554. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

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

- a. **Town Garage Diesel Pump.** Selectman Johnson said there was a problem with the pump, preventing it from shutting off automatically when the tank was filled. He would like this fixed as soon as possible to prevent fuel waste and also eliminate a safety hazard.
- b. **Scheduled Power Outage.** Selectman Goodrich asked if the scheduled power outage last Sunday morning (09/24/17) went well. Manager Schulz said the outage notice said it could last up to seven (7) hours but the power was back on within three (3). One affected business was upset due to lost trade but it was explained the outage was necessary. There were some calls from customers unaware that this outage had been scheduled. Selectman Goodrich asked if it were possible to provide better notification next time. Manager Schulz said there had been some discussion of sending every customer an individual notice but there were time and cost constraints. Chair Goslant added the scheduling had been based on the availability of Green Mountain Power (GMP).
- c. **Second Annual Night on the Common.** Selectman Maxwell thanked everyone who organized tonight's event and all those who attended. We need more community events like this throughout the year. (Chair Goslant believes after the aforementioned NSB anniversary celebration, the next big event on the Common will be the Christmas Tree Lighting in early December.)
- d. **FEMA Natural Disaster Funds.** Chair Goslant asked if we could expect to obtain FEMA money to cover the costs of this summer's road washouts caused by heavy rainstorms. Manager Schulz said a FEMA representative will be in Northfield in a couple weeks (10/14/17) to view the affected sites. The municipality should get about \$20,000 in reimbursement funds for materials used, manpower, etc. Chair Goslant thanked all those who worked to obtain these funds. Selectman Maxwell noted Laura Ranker from the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission had been especially helpful.
- e. **Roadside Leaf Collection.** Chair Goslant noted the leaf picker will start operating on Northfield streets starting on Monday, October 9, 2017. It is unfortunate some people already have been piling leaves into the road even though the foliage season has just begun.

**IX. TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT.** Manager Schulz had nothing to add to his written report.

**X. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (UNSCHEDULED)**

- a. **Sally Davidson, Recreation Committee.** Ms. Davidson said on Halloween night (10/31/17), a "Trunk or Treat" will be held on the south side of the Common. Candy will be distributed there with Northfield Emergency Services on hand for set up, etc. Ms. Davidson would like the road on the Common's south side closed to traffic from 4:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. for safety reasons. Selectman Maxwell would like Manager Schulz to coordinate with Ms. Davidson on this and other logistical matters. He also cautioned Ms. Davidson to prepare for at least four hundred (400) trick-or-treaters. Ms. Davison hadn't expected so many.

**XI. EXECUTIVE SESSION.** Motion by Selectman Doney, seconded by Selectman Maxwell, to go into executive session, in accordance with 1 VSA 313 (a)(1), in order to discuss a legal matter with Manager Schulz present. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

The Board went into executive session at 9:45 p.m.

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

The Board came out of executive session at 10:10 p.m. No action was taken.

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

The Board adjourned at 10:11 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 October 10, 2017.