

TOWN OF NORTHFIELD, VERMONT
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
Minutes of October 10, 2017

- I. ROLL CALL.** Chair Kenneth W. Goslant, Selectmen Lynn Doney, Julie H. Goodrich, Kenneth Johnson, and K. David Maxwell (absent). Also present were Town Manager Jeffrey Schulz, Acting Clerk Kenneth McCann, Will Eberle (Northfield Promise Community), Briana Howard (Northfield Promise Community), Rebecca Pearish (Northfield Promise Community), Leslie Striebe (Northfield Promise Community), Peter Evans (Northfield Promise Community), Britta Eberle (Northfield Promise Community), Mary Nadon Scott (Northfield Farmers Market), Charles Morse (Northfield Farmers Market), Laura Hill-Eubanks (Conservation Commission), Nathaniel Miller (Conservation Commission), Eliza Walker (Vermont Land Trust), Michele Langley (Recreation Committee), Sally Davidson (Recreation Committee), Pam Bailey (Green Mountain United Way), Carolyn Stevens (Northfield Community Development Network), George Silowash, Jeanne Bright, Kathleen Burroughs, Fred Callahan, Mary Callahan, Sonya Rhodes, 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.** The scheduled Department Head Reports have been postponed.

IV. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (SCHEDULED):

- a. Will Eberle et al., Northfield Promise Community: Playground Grant.** Mr. Eberle first thanked all those who had been involved with the successful grant application which resulted in the Town of Northfield receiving \$150,000 in state grant funds to be used "to improve the educational and developmental outcomes for children" in the community. After a meeting of the Northfield Promise Community Steering Committee, the current plan is to split this amount between creating a new children's playpark on Slate Avenue (adjacent to the Brown Public Library) and providing new playground equipment for the Northfield Falls Park. It was decided this would be the best use of the funds as the intention was to create unorganized play opportunities for children 0-6 years old within walking distance of Northfield's population centers. Britta Eberle said Committee members have spoken to the Recreation Committee and it was suggested the horseshoe pit at the Northfield Falls Park could be relocated and the new equipment placed there. Mr. Eberle said final designs, the project budget, etc. remain in draft form so public input certainly is welcome.

Selectman Johnson likes the idea of splitting the grant funds amongst different parts of the community. Selectman Doney concurred. Selectman Goodrich also thanked those who worked to bring these grant funds to Northfield. Chair Goslant felt this was a great development and perhaps the start of a number of community improvements. Mr. Eberle would like the Select Board's support formalized in the form of a motion. Recreation Committee member Sally Davidson noted the Steering Committee seems not to have considered any upgrades to Memorial Park. Ms. Eberle said the grant was intended to serve the youngest children in the community and it was felt it would cost too much of the grant award to bring this park up to full ADA compliance. Mr. Eberle noted this was just one grant. It is possible for the municipality to apply for other public recreation grants which aren't so restrictive regarding how the funds can be spent. Ms. Davidson added the Recreation Committee has its own plans to upgrade Memorial Park by adding a new pavilion and bathrooms next year. Motion by Selectman Doney, seconded by Selectman Johnson, to endorse the Northfield Promise Community's proposal to use the \$150,000 in state grant funds to create a new playpark on Slate Avenue as well as provide new playground equipment for the Northfield Falls Park. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**

- b. Mary Nadon Scott, Northfield Farmers Market: European-Style Winter Market.** Ms. Scott is President of the Northfield Farmers Market, which held its last outdoor summer market on the Common this afternoon. Ms. Scott said the Farmers Market had another successful year as local growers and artisans were provided a venue to sell their wares, more people were brought to the Common to shop at storefront businesses, etc.

Ms. Scott now would like the Select Board's permission to hold an outdoor winter market on the Common the same night as the annual Christmas Tree Lighting (Friday, December 1, 2017). The market would start in the mid-afternoon and last a few hours after the tree lighting but other details still need to be worked out. It was noted many European cities hold such outdoor markets for several weeks prior to Christmas but this would be for one night only. Charles Morse said there would be contingency plans in case of bad weather. The Community Room has been reserved in case it is needed. Whether this is a one-time or annual event depends on how well it goes this time. The Select Board members were supportive of the proposed outdoor winter market provided the organizers work with Manager Schulz on logistics, public notification, etc.

V. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- a. **September 26, 2017 (Regular Meeting).** Motion by Selectman Johnson, seconded by Selectman Doney, to approve the minutes. Selectman Johnson found a typo that will be corrected. **Motion to approve the amended minutes passed 4-0-0.**

VI. APPROVAL OF BILLS

- a. **Warrant #08-18.** Motion by Selectman Goodrich, seconded by Selectman Doney, to approve Warrant #08-18 in the amount of \$749,207.61. Selectman Goodrich asked about a bill for a "Paramedic Intercept." Manager Schulz said the Northfield Ambulance Service (NAS) does not have a certified paramedic on its roster so if it is determined a paramedic is needed during a service call, Barre Town Ambulance is contacted. There is a \$200 charge per paramedic intercept and this charge is included when the patient is billed. Manager Schulz said there was consideration of having the NAS Chief take paramedic certification training but it was determined the time he would be away from work would not make this cost effective. Chair Goslant noted of the total warrant amount, about \$266,521 was spent on the Northfield Electric Department (NED) to purchase power, etc. He did ask Manager Schulz to check on a \$67.61 water charge for the fountain at Memorial Park. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**
- b. **Approval of Biweekly Payroll through September 24, 2017.** Motion by Selectman Goodrich, seconded by Selectman Johnson, to approve the biweekly payroll in the amount of \$86,309.14. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**

VII. SELECT BOARD

- a. **Conservation Commission – Proposed Conservation Easement.** Laura Hill-Eubanks and other Conservation Commission members were at the previous Select Board meeting (09/26/17) to announce there is a possibility of the municipality purchasing land at the top of Paine Mountain to be added to the adjacent Town Forest. The parcel currently is owned by TDS Telecom and should the Select Board approve a conservation easement for the property, the Vermont Land Trust would cover two-thirds of the purchase price. Nathaniel Miller noted the remaining one-third would come from donations, etc. Ms. Hill-Eubanks would like the Select Board to approve the conservation easement tonight so the purchase price and other matters can be negotiated. Mr. Miller said any land use restrictions under the easement would be determined by the municipality. The only exception is the prohibition of future development. Manager Schulz added the easement would ensure public access to the site. Chair Goslant asked if mountain bikes would be allowed. Mr. Miller said this would be the municipality's decision. Chair Goslant is concerned about putting in permanent restrictions which might preclude possible uses not under consideration at this time. Eliza Walker from the Vermont Land Trust said the easement documentation would have a clause allowing for future technology to be accommodated.

Selectman Goodrich asked at the last meeting that any action on this matter be delayed so public feedback could be received. Jeanne Bright lives on South Main Street and she often walks on the public trails in the Town Forest. She enjoys the beautiful surroundings there and would favor any plan to expand the Town Forest so more people can enjoy it. Carolyn Stevens also thinks it is good idea to protect and expand the Town Forest as it is a true community asset. Motion by Selectman Goodrich, seconded by Selectman Johnson, to authorize the Northfield Conservation Commission to move forward with the proposed land purchase and to approve the conservation easement on the Town Forest (subject to Select Board approval of the finalized document). **Motion passed 4-0-0.**

- b. **Norwich University/Town of Northfield Agreement.** Manager Schulz said the latest five-year agreement expired this year and a new agreement now is being negotiated between the municipality and Norwich University (NU). He added the Select Board Subcommittee involved in the negotiations has made significant progress. Chair Goslant noted the last year of the current agreement saw a \$78,000 NU donation to emergency services. He expected this amount to increase in the new agreement. Selectman Goodrich would like any specifics regarding the contract negotiation discussed later in executive session. There was no objection.

VIII. BOARD MEMBERS' COMMENTS, CONCERNS, QUESTIONS

- a. **Tree Clearing Agreement with Limlaw Chipping & Clearing.** Selectman Goodrich asked if Limlaw was still coming to Northfield to trim some backroads this year. Manager Schulz said the tentative schedule is for Limlaw to come in over the next two to three weeks to trim along Stony Brook Road and Smith Hill Road. If time permits, they also will work on Barrows Road. Letters already have been sent out to affected landowners. In addition, Highway Foreman Trent Tucker and Tree Warden Russ Barrett have spoken directly to some landowners about which trees should be taken down, which should be preserved, etc. Manager Schulz added Limlaw's compensation for the roadside trimming is to keep the downed trees for processing. Chair Goslant noted it cost the municipality about \$2000 to remove a few trouble trees on Loop Road recently so this is a good deal.
- b. **Winch Hill Road Paving.** Chair Goslant asked when Pike Industries would be paving the road. Manager Schulz said they are scheduled to start paving in a couple of weeks (10/24/17). Notification letters will be sent to residents soon and any traffic delays should be minimal.

IX. TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

- a. **Zoning Regulations Revisions.** Manager Schulz said the Select Board approved revisions to the local zoning regulations at its May 23, 2017 regular meeting. The Planning Commission still needs to comment on these changes and then return the updated document to the Select Board for final approval. Since this approval must be done in conjunction with a public hearing, this would be done at the Select Board's first meeting in November (11/14/17).
- b. **Mayo Block Sidewalks.** Manager Schulz has spoken with representatives from the Northfield Savings Bank (NSB) regarding the proposed paving on the sidewalk in front of and adjacent to the NSB building. NSB will pay for the paving of the sidewalk in front of its building and for the engineering study to pave surrounding sidewalks. Selectman Goodrich was disappointed a local newspaper article implied NSB has broken its commitment to pay for all the paving. This possibility may have been under discussion at one time but there never was any agreement. Chair Goslant said the improvements NSB is making are good for all of us. He also believes this could be a spur to economic development.
- c. **Union Brook Road.** Selectman Johnson would like the Highway Subcommittee to look into a trouble spot on Union Brook Road near the old Town/Village line. Chair Goslant said this would be done. Manager Schulz suggested a better Backroads Grant application might be a good way to get funding for road repairs.
- d. **Water Street Project.** Manager Schulz said the State of Vermont has been expecting throughout this project that the municipality would approve a conservation easement for the parcels purchased through the FEMA flood buyout program. This would prevent any development on the properties, ensure public access, etc. However, since FEMA already put down its own strict restrictions regarding future land use, Manager Schulz delayed action on this until he could get the Select Board members' view on whether this easement really is needed. Chair Goslant felt the FEMA restrictions should be sufficient and doesn't want any new state mandates imposed. Selectman Johnson agreed with Chair Goslant, noting the current FEMA restrictions are very clear. He doesn't want the state getting involved with this project unless it is willing to provide some money. Selectman Goodrich also sees no need for the state easement since development already is prohibited for the buyout properties.

- e. **Village Center Designation: Northfield Falls.** Manager Schulz confirmed the State of Vermont has granted Village Center Designation for Northfield Falls. This will allow businesses in the area to apply for low-cost loans, state grant funds, etc. This also opens additional grant opportunities for the municipality.
- f. **Bull Run Solar Farm.** Manager Schulz said the project is going forward and he expects ground to be broken within the next month.

X. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (UNSCHEDULED)

- a. **Sally Davidson, Recreation Committee: Halloween Night “Trunk or Treat.”** Ms. Davidson said ten (10) parking spots remain on the south side of the Common for residents who would like to hand out candy there on Halloween night (Tuesday, October 31, 2017). Parking for participants will begin at 4:30 p.m. and the trick or treating will be from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. Ms. Davidson hopes those handing out candy will be in costume (and perhaps also decorate their vehicles appropriately).
- b. **Sally Davidson, Recreation Committee: Memorial Park Upgrades.** As indicated earlier in the meeting, there are plans to renovate Memorial Park next year with a new pavilion and bathrooms. These will be sited on the park’s lower section and the cost estimate for both is about \$40,000. Ms. Davidson said there now is about \$10,000 in CIP funds for park upgrades, etc. Selectman Goodrich asked if residents have asked for this pavilion. Ms. Davidson has heard several requests since there is no other shaded area in the park. Chair Goslant said this would make Memorial Park a lot more user-friendly. Ms. Davidson suggested the municipality could look into the RiseVT program as a possible source for grant funds. Although RiseVT now serves only northwestern Vermont, it is looking to expand its “Healthier Lifestyle” programs statewide.

XI. EXECUTIVE SESSION. Motion by Selectman Doney, seconded by Selectman Goodrich, to go into executive session, in accordance with 1 VSA 313 (a)(1), in order to discuss contract negotiations with Manager Schulz present. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**

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

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

The Board came out of executive session at 9:20 p.m.

Motion by Selectman Goodrich, seconded by Selectman Doney, to accept and approve the agreement between the Town of Northfield and Norwich University as presented tonight. The agreement will be effective October 10, 2017. Selectman Goodrich thanked the representatives from Norwich University (Lauren Wobby and David Whaley) and the Town of Northfield (Selectmen Goodrich and Maxwell; Manager Schulz; and Finance Director Laurie Baroffio) for their hard work on the negotiations for the new agreement. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**

XII. ADJOURNMENT. Motion by Selectman Goodrich, seconded by Selectman Johnson, to adjourn. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**

The Board adjourned at 9:50 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 are subject to approval at the next regular Select Board meeting.