

**TOWN OF NORTHFIELD, VERMONT  
BOARD OF TOWN SELECTMEN  
SPECIAL MEETING  
Minutes of December 12, 2017**

- I. ROLL CALL.** Chair Kenneth W. Goslant, Selectmen Lynn Doney (absent), Julie H. Goodrich, Kenneth Johnson, and K. David Maxwell. Also present were Town Manager Jeff Schulz, Finance Director Laurie Baroffio, Katie Wawrzyniak (Brown Public Library), John Stevens (Brown Public Library), Cynthia Bushey (Brown Public Library), Carolyn Stevens, and Elroy Hill.

Chair Goslant called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m.

- II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE.** The Board members and the public were asked to rise and recite the Pledge of Allegiance.

- III. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (Scheduled):** None.

**IV. BUDGET WORK SESSION**

- a. Brown Public Library (BPL).** John Stevens, who serves as Treasurer on the BPL Board of Trustees, began by thanking Selectman Lynn Doney and the other volunteers who helped with many recent building repairs, such as fixing the lighting in and outside the building. Mr. Stevens said the BPL was asking for a slight increase in salary/benefits for the Library Director but this would be offset by a decrease in the amount budgeted for part-time employees. He added that part-time employee expenses were down for this past fiscal year as the Youth Librarian position was vacant for several months.

Manager Schulz said BPL building maintenance costs have been steady in recent years. Painting the building's exterior will be put out to bid this spring with the expected cost in the \$50,000 range. Manager Schulz added he worked with Mr. Stevens on a grant application to the Vermont Division for Historical Preservation. If the grant application is successful, the municipality would receive about \$20,000, which could cover part of the painting expense. Mr. Stevens added that the building's front steps also need some attention but this is not urgent.

In the BPL's Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) account, \$75,000 will be set aside for the building painting and other maintenance projects. Selectman Maxwell noted \$4,144.52 in the Community Room Donation account. BPL Trustee Katie Wawrzyniak said some groups who use the room regularly provide donation funds at the end of the year. In addition, when private events are held in the room, a \$25 fee is charged beforehand to cover potential cleaning costs. The fee is refunded if it is not needed. Selectman Maxwell asked if there was a policy regarding how donation funds were spent. Manager Schulz said there was not. Selectman Maxwell suggested it could be used to purchase new chairs, tables, etc. for the Community Room. Finance Director Laurie Baroffio confirmed the funds could be spent however the Select Board chose. Manager Schulz noted Sally Pedley from the Northfield Historical Society, which sometimes uses the Community Room for its functions, has been looking into the possible purchase of new chairs and tables.

Chair Goslant and the other Select Board members then thanked the BPL Trustees for operating the library in such an efficient manner. Chair Goslant said the building seems to be more active now than it has in years. He then asked if the new play park proposed for Slate Avenue would have any adverse effect on the library. Ms. Wawrzyniak said the Youth Librarian, Britta Eberle, is a member of the Northfield Promise Community that secured the grant for the new park and she will work to prevent any problems with excessive noise, litter, etc. In fact, it is hoped the new park can be used to enhance the library's existing youth programs.

- b. Municipal Pool.** Manager Schulz said Pool Director Shannon Palone was asked to attend tonight but was not present (probably due to tonight's heavy snowstorm). Manager Schulz said expenditures for operation of the municipal pool are proposed to increase 11.7% with much of this increase due to increases in lifeguard pay. Vermont's minimum wage will increase from \$10.00 to \$10.50 per hour on January 1, 2018. Most of the lifeguards are paid minimum wage or slightly over. At a previous Select Board meeting (06/13/17), Ms. Palone expressed concerns that this relatively low pay (compared to other Central Vermont public pools) might lead some experienced lifeguards to look elsewhere for employment. Chair Goslant shares this concern. He believes Waterbury pays at least two dollars (\$2.00) above minimum wage. Selectman Johnson felt this has been a problem for some time and needs to be addressed. Manager Schulz said Select Boards in recent years have focused on keeping the pool's operating expenses as low as possible.

Reviewing the fee amounts for pool passes that the Select Board approved last June, Selectman Maxwell felt that they are quite reasonable. For example, a family season pass cost \$125.00 for the eight (8) weeks the pool is open each year and this compares favorably to how much it now costs to take a family to the movies. Perhaps some fee adjustments are possible to bring in additional revenue. Manager Schulz added Ms. Palone had suggested charging for private swimming lessons as another new revenue source. Carolyn Stevens asked if provisions are made for families or individuals who cannot afford the pool fees. Chair Goslant doesn't believe there is a set policy but allowances have been made for hardship cases in the past. Selectman Maxwell believes the Town Manager is authorized to waive fees on a case-by-case basis. Selectman Johnson would like the pool fees revisited next spring before the pool reopens. Any additional revenue could help cover increases in lifeguard pay. After further discussion, the consensus was to raise lifeguard hourly wages to \$2.00 above minimum wage. Ms. Baroffio noted this would raise this line item from \$24,000 to \$29,000.

In the Municipal Pool's CIP account, Manager Schulz said repainting the pool was the major recurring expense. The estimated cost is \$60,000 and as it is done every ten (10) years, \$6,000 is set aside each year. In addition, the pool has thirty (30) skimmers that collect debris, etc. Replacing each one costs \$2,000 and \$10,000 is budgeted each year so that five (5) can be replaced each year.

In the Municipal Pool's Capital Equipment Plan (CEP) account, the big expense is replacing the pool's filter every twenty (20) years, which costs between \$80,000 and \$100,000. Each year, \$5,000 has been budgeted to cover this expense. Given the current balance in this account, Selectman Maxwell felt this would result in a shortfall when the next replacement is due in 2024. He would like this increased to \$7,500 each year. There was no objection. Manager Schulz said both the pool's diving boards need to be replaced this spring. This would cost \$3,200 and this is the exact amount in the CEP account. \$400 is set aside each year for future replacement. Selectman Johnson asked how often the diving boards were replaced. Manager Schulz was uncertain and will check on this. Selectman Maxwell suggested raising his amount to \$750. There was no objection.

**V. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (Unscheduled).** There was none.

**VI. ADJOURNMENT.** Motion by Selectman Maxwell, seconded by Selectman Goodrich, to adjourn. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**

The Board adjourned at 7:02 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 January 9, 2018.