

**TOWN OF NORTHFIELD, VERMONT
BOARD OF TOWN SELECTMEN
SPECIAL MEETING
Minutes of January 4, 2018**

- 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 Jeff Schulz, Finance Director Laurie Baroffio, Highway Foreman Trent Tucker, and Elroy Hill.

Chair Goslant called the meeting to order at 6:00 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. Highway Department Capital Equipment Plan (CEP).** Manager Schulz said the Highway CEP has a proposed increase in the next fiscal year from \$138,470 to \$159,650. There were no significant changes and as the Select Board agreed earlier, funds will no longer be set aside to replace the street sweeper and the current machine will be sold. Chair Goslant asked if there was any interest in the old sweeper. Highway Foreman Trent Tucker said someone is coming to look at it. He estimated its resale value at about \$15,000. Manager Schulz said the Highway operations budget will have \$7,000 dedicated to contracted street sweeping twice a year (spring and fall). Chair Goslant felt this was much better than purchasing a new sweeper for \$400,000 and also paying for frequent repairs. Selectman Doney hopes the old one will sell as soon as possible.

Chair Goslant said the Highway Committee also recommended selling the 2003 backhoe. Manager Schulz added no funds have been set aside for its replacement. Mr. Tucker would like to retain the backhoe for the time being. He said Gillespie's Fuels would allow the municipality to store salt and sand on its Stony Brook property and Mr. Tucker would like to use the backhoe to load trucks with the materials. Being able to load road material at this location would save a lot of time as the trucks working the backroads wouldn't have to drive back to the downtown area to replenish. Manager Schulz asked what Gillespie would want in return. Mr. Tucker said they have asked for nothing and there is power on the site. Gillespie's is waiting for Act 250 approval to operate the site but this should be forthcoming. Selectman Johnson asked about the backhoe's resale value. Mr. Tucker estimated about \$25,000 either in trade-in value or a separate sale. Chair Goslant likes the idea of the Stony Brook reloading site as this will cut down on vehicle usage and the amount of time highway operators are driving empty trucks back to reload. If this arrangement with Gillespie's is possible, Chair Goslant would like to postpone selling the backhoe for at least another year.

Chair Goslant would like to change the planned replacement schedule for one-ton trucks from eight (8) to seven (7) years. Selectman Johnson felt this would mean there would be greater trade-in value for the old vehicle when it is replaced. After further discussion, the Select Board agreed to Chair Goslant's suggestion. However, the replacement schedule for tandem trucks was left at twelve (12) years.

Chair Goslant felt outsourcing maintenance of some backroads as well as privatizing some 1-4 house roads might allow for reducing the highway fleet and allow funds set aside for vehicle replacement to be reallocated.

Finance Director Laurie Baroffio noted an \$87,951 shortfall in the CEP account for replacing the 2005 Mack dump truck. This vehicle did get a new body installed last year that postponed its scheduled replacement to FY 2021-2022. Selectman Johnson suggested leaving this budget as is since the municipality will need to borrow funds for this truck replacement anyway. Ms. Baroffio said there also is a \$62,844 shortfall in the CEP account to replace the 2009 International dump truck in FY 2020/2021. Mr. Tucker felt the \$200,000 estimated replacement was too high and \$160,000 was a more accurate figure. The replacement price will be adjusted to \$160,000 and this will lower the projected shortfall amount.

Chair Goslant said the Highway Committee recommended keeping the 2004 John Deere grader and saw no reason to replace the entire vehicle in FY 2022/2023 for \$300,000 when a new engine could be installed for about \$35,000 beforehand. Ms. Baroffio suggested creating a grader rebuild account to cover this expense. The Select Board consensus was to pursue the engine replacement and postpone replacement of the whole vehicle until FY 2027/2028.

Chair Goslant noted the sidewalk machine CEP budget is properly funded for its FY 2024/2025 replacement. The 2006 Challenger tractor will be retained but there is no planned replacement until FY 2029/2030. \$5,000 will be set aside each year for this purpose. Chair Goslant also would like Mr. Tucker to look into possible rental options.

Mr. Tucker recommends not putting aside any additional funds to replace the chipper as it is used infrequently and one could be rented easily if needed. Chair Goslant would like to eliminate this account and have the current balance (\$17,853) reallocated to more pressing needs, i.e. sidewalks, paving, etc.

The leaf picker engine & blower is scheduled for replacement in FY 2021/2022 and of the estimated \$21,000 replacement cost, there is a current balance of \$14,553. Ms. Baroffio noted funding this machine was a contentious Town versus Village issue in the years prior to merger. Selectman Goodrich thinks it is important to keep the storm drains from being clogged with leaves each fall. Manager Schulz would like a new cost estimate for its replacement and if the new figure is lower he would like future set asides reduced as well.

Manager Schulz said the CEP account for the traffic light has a \$4,000 balance even though it has several issues including a need to update its electronics. He will talk to the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission (CVRPC) about grant possibilities. However, he felt this year's set aside should be increased from \$1,000 to \$5,000 because even if the grant application is successful there would be a local match amount. Chair Goslant would like to talk to Northfield Police Chief William Jennings to see if the "no right turn on red" restriction can be eliminated.

Manager Schulz said there are no changes in the radio account and the vehicle lift remains in good shape and not scheduled for replacement until FY 2040/2041. In addition, the "Tire & Balance Machine" was purchased in 2015 and should be good for another thirty (30) years. The computer replacement account is well-funded.

Ms. Baroffio noted the Volvo excavator and the Volvo loader are under lease/purchase agreements with the last payments in 2021. If the Select Board wants to continue these agreements, it would be possible to transfer the ±\$11,000 in their vehicle replacement accounts elsewhere. This would require voter approval. Manager Schulz would like to keep these accounts as is to cover any future repair costs. Ms. Baroffio will research this matter further.

Highway Department Operations & Maintenance (O&M). Selectman Doney would like the amount proposed for the gravel/stone raised from \$50,000 to \$62,000. Mr. Tucker noted he will be crushing gravel in the Falls pit again this year and this should produce about 5,000 yards of road material. The cost of crushing comes from this same account. Chair Goslant would like this account increased to \$66,000 based on past actual expenses.

Highway Department Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). Chair Goslant noted there is about \$17,000 in the Northfield Center Drainage account and, if there are no plans to use these funds in the near future, he would like them reallocated for sidewalks, paving, etc. He said the area is damp for a few weeks in the spring but fine the rest of the year. Ms. Baroffio said this transfer would require voter approval. Selectman Goodrich felt there might be some resistance from residents living in the area. Manager Schulz said there was an old study on this matter that can be used to answer any questions.

As indicated at a previous budget meeting, Manager Schulz said the plan is to transfer \$19,000 from the Mapping and Sign/Post CIP accounts to the Bridges CIP account, which would create a balance of about \$150,000. Even though VTrans has tagged only one local bridge (Main Street Bridge) as “insufficient,” there are some other bridges also needing attention. He added Northfield has a large number of bridges (23) for a community this size and he is working with Mr. Tucker on a priority list for bridge repairs. Selectman Johnson felt \$150,000 won’t go far when you start taking bridges apart to be repaired.

Chair Goslant asked if the \$46,000 in the Drainage CIP account is sufficient to address the problems in the Slate Avenue/South Main Street area. Manager Schulz said we cannot know for sure until the engineer’s report has been completed. The stormwater issues there will need to be addressed before the municipality needs to apply for a new stormwater permit in 2020. The intention is to divert the stormwater coming down Slate Avenue to the “rain garden” behind Holland Place. Manager Schulz does not expect the construction phase of this project until 2019.

Selectman Johnson noted about \$310,000 is projected for paving in the RSMS Road program budget. Mr. Tucker said there were plans to pave both ends of Lovers Lane as well as a section of Berlin Pond Road near Sanders Drive. Selectman Johnson likes these smaller projects that can be completed within budget. He estimated it would cost about \$750,000 to repave Union Brook Road.

Chair Goslant would like to see a summary of all suggested changes in the Highway Department’s budget to date. Manager Schulz will provide a written report. Chair Goslant is concerned interest rates might rise significantly in the next few years so this might be a good time to borrow for projects, equipment replacement, etc. Manager Schulz felt it prudent to hold off on this for another year.

Chair Goslant and the other Select Board members then thanked Mr. Tucker for the information provided tonight and for his good work throughout the year.

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

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

The Board adjourned at 8:26 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 23, 2018.