

**TOWN OF NORTHFIELD, VERMONT
BOARD OF TOWN SELECTMEN
SPECIAL MEETING
Minutes of January 9, 2018**

- I. ROLL CALL.** Chair Kenneth W. Goslant, Selectmen Lynn Doney, Julie H. Goodrich, Kenneth Johnson, and K. David Maxwell. Also present were Town Manager Jeff Schulz, Finance Director Laurie Baroffio, Shannon Palone (Pool Director), Sally Davidson (Recreation Committee), and Elroy C. 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. Municipal Pool.** Manager Schulz noted the Select Board discussed the Municipal Pool budgets at a previous meeting (12/12/17) but Pool Director Shannon Palone was unable to attend due to that night's severe snowstorm. The Select Board then agreed to hold another budget review with Ms. Palone present. Manager Schulz said at the previous meeting the Select Board discussed the relatively low pay for Northfield lifeguards and tentatively raised their hourly wage to \$12.50 per hour, which is \$2.00 above the new minimum wage. There also were discussions about the various types of pool equipment requiring periodic replacement, such as diving boards, etc.

Ms. Palone said Northfield used to pay its lifeguards one of the highest hourly wages in the region but in recent years has paid the minimum wage while lifeguards at the Randolph public pool were making upwards of \$14.00 per hour. She did lose three (3) of her most experienced lifeguards to other public pools last year as they would have been paid about the same hourly rate as younger, recently-qualified lifeguards. Ms. Palone prefers to hire about ten (10) lifeguards each summer with a fairly even split between senior lifeguards with two (2) or more years of experience and junior lifeguards with less. On a normal working day, five (5) lifeguards will be working throughout the day starting in the morning with swimming lessons.

Selectman Johnson felt senior lifeguards should be paid more than the junior lifeguards. Ms. Palone said senior lifeguards do get assigned more work hours each week because of their experience. She would like the senior lifeguards paid a little more in order to retain them. Since the junior lifeguards are younger and less likely to have their own transportation, there is less chance of them taking out-of-town work. Selectman Maxwell noted the line item for "Part-time Guards" tentatively was increased at the previous budget meeting from \$24,000 to \$29,000. This should allow Ms. Palone to work with Manager Schulz on the proper pay scale for Northfield lifeguards that would be competitive with the wages paid at other public pools in the region. Ms. Palone would not oppose an increase in her own compensation, which has not been increased for several years.

Ms. Palone then noted several pieces of pool equipment needing to be replaced sooner rather than later including the pool vacuum, the diving boards, etc. Selectman Maxwell noted there are sufficient funds in Municipal Pool's Capital Equipment Plan (CEP) account for the pool vacuum to be replaced this year. Ms. Palone would like the replacement diving boards to be of a different design that is more kid-friendly. The cost would be about \$4,000. Selectman Maxwell noted there is \$3,200 in this CEP account with an additional \$750 added when the next fiscal year begins on July 1, 2018. Ms. Palone reported the lifeguard chairs and some of the furniture located around the pool deck also need to be replaced. Some of the chairs, tables, etc. are past donations and others are on loan during the summer. Selectman Maxwell would like a full accounting of what belongs to the municipality so equipment replacement can be properly budgeted in the future.

Regarding the issue of increasing pool revenue, Ms. Palone has spoken to Manager Schulz about the possibility of offering additional daytime activities such as water aerobics, etc. She also suggested raising the amount charged for swimming lessons. The \$40.00 charged to residents for a two-week session is quite low compared to what is charged at other public pools in the area. For example, Montpelier charges \$110.00 for a similar course. Selectman Maxwell is surprised at this disparity. Ms. Palone also has looked into offering private swimming lessons at higher prices. It also might be possible to offer additional swimming lesson sessions if another qualified swim instructor can be found. As for the fees charged for seasonal or daily pool passes, Ms. Palone has contacted other public pools and found Northfield's were the least expensive. Selectman Maxwell feels some fees can be raised without too much hardship to the local community. These fee increases could help cover some of the increase in lifeguard pay.

Before the Municipal Pool budget is finalized, Chair Goslant would like more information about how much is brought each year in through donations, fundraisers, etc. Ms. Palone felt with the planned upgrades in Memorial Park (new pavilion, bathrooms, etc.) the municipality might raise the suggested donation amount when sections of the park are reserved for private functions. Chair Goslant and the other Select Board members thanked Ms. Palone for attending tonight's meeting and for providing such valuable information.

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

VI. ADJOURNMENT. Motion by Selectman Goodrich, seconded by Selectman Doney, to adjourn. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

The Board adjourned at 6:54 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.