

TOWN OF NORTHFIELD, VERMONT
SELECT BOARD MEETING
Minutes of March 13, 2018

- I. ROLL CALL.** Select Board members Lynn Doney, Julie H. Goodrich, Kenneth W. Goslant, K. David Maxwell, and Nathaniel Miller. Also present were Town Manager Jeff Schulz, Acting Clerk Kenneth McCann, Sally Davidson (Recreation Committee), Josh Sanders, and Elroy C. Hill.

The meeting was called 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. ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING OF THE SELECT BOARD

- a. Election of Chair.** Motion by Board member Doney, seconded by Board member Maxwell, to appoint Kenneth W. Goslant as Select Board Chair. **Motion passed 4-0-1, with Board member Goslant abstaining.**
- b. Election of Vice-Chair.** Motion by Board member Doney, seconded by Board member Goodrich, to appoint K. David Maxwell as Select Board Vice-Chair. **Motion passed 4-0-1, with Board member Maxwell abstaining.**
- c. Select Board Subcommittee Assignments.** Chair Goslant recommended that the committee assignments be filled as follows: **Budget and Financial Review** (Board members Goodrich and Maxwell); **Town Buildings & Energy** (Board members Doney and Maxwell); **Economic Development** (Board members Goslant and Miller); **Norwich University** (Board members Goodrich and Maxwell); **Highway Planning & Project Oversight** (Board members Goslant and Miller); **Public Safety Oversight & Planning** (Board members Doney and Miller); and **Labor Agreement & Bargaining** (Board members Goodrich and Maxwell). In addition, Chair Goslant will continue to serve as the Select Board's representative on the Water/Wastewater Utility Commission and Selectman Goodrich on the Electric Utility Commission. Board member Miller and Manager Schulz will serve as Northfield representatives to the Mountain Alliance. Stephen Fitzhugh will continue to serve as Northfield's representative to Vermont Public Power Supply Authority (VPPSA) and Manager Schulz will remain the VPPSA alternate representative.
- d. Regular Meeting Schedule (Dates, Time, and Location).** The Select Board will continue to meet on the second and fourth Tuesday of each month at 7:00 p.m. in the Community Room located in the Brown Public Library.
- e. Designation of Official Newspapers.** The *Northfield News*, the *Barre-Montpelier Times Argus*, and the *Washington World* will remain the municipality's official newspapers for legal notices, advertisements, etc. The Front Porch Forum also will be used to post announcements, meeting agendas, etc.

- IV. SET/ADJUST AGENDA.** There were no changes to the posted agenda.

V. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (SCHEDULED)

- a. Sally Davidson, Recreation Committee: Municipal Park Usage Fees.** At a previous Select Board meeting (02/13/18), Ms. Davidson informed the Board members of a Recreation Committee proposal to charge fees for group use of the municipal parks in order to cover maintenance costs. The proposal is to charge for-profit organizations \$125 per day for reserved use of the new pavilion and \$125 per day for use of the fields and bathrooms. Non-profit groups, schools, families, etc. would not be charged these fees but would be asked to make donations. Ms. Davidson said representatives from the Dynamos Soccer Club, which reserves both Memorial Park ballfields to hold week-long soccer camps each summer, attended the last Recreation Committee meeting (03/06/18). They were displeased that they would be required to pay the new fees for use of the fields. However, Ms. Davidson and other Recreation Committee members did not feel it was fair to have a group tie up Memorial Park for a full week without providing any funds to cover field upkeep costs. In fact, the Dynamos will be holding two (2) soccer camps this summer, both run by Challenger Sports. The first in mid-July will be a British Summer Soccer Camp and the other will be a TetraBrazil Summer Soccer Camp held in mid-August. Josh Sanders stated the Dynamos representatives said they only make a small profit from running these camps and this is considered part of their fundraising activities. Board member Maxwell would like Manager Schulz to work with Ms. Davidson and the Recreation Committee to create a formal proposal to charge park usage fees and to update the park use application form to incorporate the new fee structure.

- b. **Sally Davidson, Recreation Committee: 2018 Winter Carnival.** Ms. Davidson reported last weekend's event went very well and the Recreation Committee collected \$551 for its fundraising account. The Recreation Committee plans to hold another Winter Carnival next year with some new items added. Board member Maxwell thanked Ms. Davidson and the other Recreation Committee members for a job well done.

VI. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- a. **February 27, 2018 (Regular Meeting).** Motion by Board member Maxwell, seconded by Board member Doney, to approve the minutes. **Motion passed 4-0-1, with Board member Miller abstaining.**

VII. APPROVAL OF BILLS

- a. **Warrant #18-18.** Motion by Board member Maxwell, seconded by Board member Goodrich, to approve Warrant #18-18 in the amount of \$1,535,497.25. Board member Goodrich asked about some legal fees associated with Tops Markets' recent filing for bankruptcy protection. Manager Schulz said he asked an attorney working on behalf of the Northfield Electric Department (NED) to look into this matter in order to ensure that we would be able to collect the \$16,000 to \$17,000 that the local Tops Market owes our utility department. Chair Goslant wanted it noted that of the total warrant amount, \$1,068,700 represented property tax funds collected by the municipality and forwarded to the Northfield School District. About another \$250,000 was spent purchasing power for NED that will be sold later to its customers. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
- b. **Warrant #18-18A.** Motion by Board member Maxwell, seconded by Board member Goodrich, to approve Warrant #18-18A in the amount of \$36,066.51. Manager Schulz noted this was the refinancing of an old bank note. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
- c. **Approval of Biweekly Payroll through February 25, 2018.** Motion by Board member Goodrich, seconded by Board member Doney, to approve the biweekly payroll in the amount of \$87,564.45. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

VIII. LIQUOR CONTROL COMMISSION

- a. **Liquor License Renewals**
 - 1. **Champlain Farms.** Motion by Board member Goodrich, seconded by Board member Miller, to approve the liquor license renewal. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
 - 2. **Craft Beer Armory.** Motion by Board member Goodrich, seconded by Board member Miller, to approve the liquor license renewal. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
- b. **Outside Consumption Permit**
 - 1. **Cornerstone Burger.** Motion by Board member Goodrich, seconded by Board member Maxwell, to approve the outside consumption permit. Board member Doney wanted to be sure that any barriers placed in the parking spaces in front of the restaurant will be removed each night. Manager Schulz spoke to the restaurant's owner about this as well as the fact that in addition to this state permit, Cornerstone Burger will need to sign a separate lease agreement with the municipality to use the parking spaces. This agreement also would reflect the concerns of neighboring businesses who don't like having these parking spaces unavailable for their own customers even when the restaurant is closed. Manager Schulz added Cornerstone Burger also is considering holding a "block party" this year but the planning for it still is in the preliminary stages. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

IX. SELECT BOARD

- a. **Town Highways Annual Financial Plan.** Manager Schulz said the Vermont Agency of Transportation (VTrans) requires each municipality to file documentation after Town Meeting Day indicating how much it plans to budget for highway maintenance, road construction projects, etc. in the next fiscal year. Municipalities are expected to spend at least \$300 per mile of Class 1, 2, and 3 Town Highways. Based on the budget drafted by the Select Board and approved by the voters, Northfield will raise and spend \$1,603,290 on road maintenance, etc. during fiscal year 2018/2019. Motion by Board member Maxwell, seconded by Board member Goodrich, to approve and sign the Town Highways Annual Financial Plan. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

- b. Certification of Compliance: Town Highway Road and Bridge Standards.** Manager Schulz said another annual document VTrans requires is verification that each municipality has proper standards in place for highway and bridge maintenance. If this documentation is not provided to VTrans, the municipality can be punished by having its local match amount for state grants increased and also might have natural disaster relief funds partially withheld. The Northfield Select Board last revised its highway and bridge standards in 2013 and they still comply with all state requirements. Manager Schulz added VTrans now is looking to revise its requirements in the next couple of years to include new stormwater provisions, etc. Board member Goodrich asked if all the Highway Department employees are aware of these standards. Manager Schulz said the Highway Foreman is in charge of compliance. Motion by Board member Maxwell, seconded by Board member Goodrich, to approve and sign the Certificate of Compliance for Town Road and Bridge Standards. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
- c. TDS Telecom Land Purchase.** Manager Schulz said the voters on Town Meeting Day approved the article that authorized the expenditure of \$25,000 to purchase the parcel at the summit of Paine Mountain to be added to the Town Forest. The remaining \$10,000 of the estimated \$35,000 purchase price is to be obtained through fundraising and donations. The sales agreement now is being negotiated and as this involves various legal matters, Manager Schulz recommends discussing this later in the meeting in executive session.
- d. Bond Anticipation Note (RSMS Program FY 2013/2014): \$30,235 at 3.03% interest.** Motion by Board member Goodrich, seconded by Board member Maxwell, to approve and sign the Bond Anticipation Note in the amount of \$30,235 at 3.03% interest; to approve and sign the Bond Anticipation Borrowing Resolution; and to approve and sign the No-Arbitrage and Use of Proceeds Certificate. Manager Schulz said this is a new bank note for an old loan. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
- e. Norwich Commons Drainage Issue.** Manager Schulz said this issue also involves a legal matter and should be discussed in executive session.

X. BOARD MEMBERS' COMMENTS, CONCERNS, QUESTIONS

- a. Ford One Ton Truck Problems.** Board member Goodrich asked for an update on the 2013 Ford One Ton. Manager Schulz said during a routine inspection of all Highway Department trucks, a crack was found in its front frame. He added a similar problem was discovered in the 2014 Ford One Ton and when that vehicle was brought to the dealership for warranty service, this was declined because a side wing plow had been installed. Despite numerous requests for Ford to take responsibility and make the repair under warranty, this wasn't done. In addition, since the crack was considered the result of wear and tear rather than from an accident, our insurance company also refused to cover the cost of repair. The municipality ended up spending \$10,000 to fix the problem. In the case of the 2013 Ford One Ton, the crack is not as bad as the one on the 2014 vehicle and a side wing plow was never installed on this truck. Ford now is willing to cover twenty-five to thirty percent (25%-30%) of the repair costs, which Manager Schulz feels is unacceptable. He has spoken to other Vermont municipalities and at least six (6) others have had similar problems with their Ford One Tons. The newer models have been redesigned to eliminate the cracking problem. Chair Goslant would like Manager Schulz to be aggressive on this as this appears to be a widespread problem with older Ford One Tons that should have led to a general recall. Manager Schulz will next speak to Vermont's Consumer Protection Agency. Board member Maxwell has used them before and found them very effective. Board member Goodrich asked if the 2013 Ford One Ton still is in service. Manager Schulz said it is since Highway Foreman Trent Tucker feels it is safe to use for the time being.
- b. Winter Highway Maintenance.** Chair Goslant asked about the status of the municipality's sand pile. Manager Schulz said it was good for now but he has concerns about the amount of gravel left for Mud Season. Chair Goslant travelled through a number of communities on his way to St. Johnsbury this morning and found road conditions about the same as in Northfield. Board member Maxwell said he and Chair Goslant inspected some of the backroads recently and saw some of the challenges that the Highway Department will need to address this spring and summer. He did feel the Highway Department employees are doing their best under the conditions. As for Mud Season, Manager Schulz said the Highway Department will focus on fixing the worst areas. The recent thaw left a number of deep ruts on some backroads. Chair Goslant felt if a road needed to be fixed to make it passable, it will be repaired. The result may not be as perfect as some people might hope but there are limits on what can be achieved with the available funds and manpower. Chair Goslant would like a meeting of the Highway Subcommittee next week in order to address current problems as well as develop ways to resolve the drainage problems that plague many of our backroads.

- c. **Town Meeting Day.** Board member Maxwell was pleased with the turnout at the Open Meeting, which this year was held on Monday night at 6:30 p.m. He also wanted to point out this year's Town Report was dedicated to Sally Davidson and would like to thank the municipal employees for all their hard work over the past year.

XI. TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

- a. **"Welcome to Northfield Signs."** Manager Schulz has started getting invoices for the new signs and would like the Select Board members to be aware of this before they start showing up on the warrants. Board member Maxwell has a number of questions he would like answered before authorizing any payments. For example, he would like to see a project budget, etc. Also, even though the ballot article approved by the voters said the authorized public funds would come from the Economic Development Fund, Board member Maxwell would like to make sure this expenditure is in accordance with the Select Board policy approved in September 2015. Board member Doney would like assurance the new signs are high quality and will last for some time. Chair Goslant would prefer economic development funds were used to bring in new businesses or expand current ones. Ms. Davidson has been informed that the two (2) new signs will cost \$4,500 each for a total of \$9,000. If this is the case, why did the ballot article ask for \$15,000? Manager Schulz said there would be additional costs to install the signs, etc. However, it is not expected that the full \$15,000 will be spent on this project as the municipality will provide some in-kind services.
- b. **Municipal Pool Fees.** Manager Schulz is working on updating the fees charged for seasonal or daily pool use in order to bring in additional revenue. He will bring his proposal to the Select Board at their next meeting (03/27/18).
- c. **Union Street Stormwater Project.** Manager Schulz said a consultant has been hired for this project and the plans will be revised so that Pearl Street storm runoff will also be collected and treated.
- d. **Possible Local Solar Projects, etc.** Manager Schulz said VPPSA has been looking through the state for possible sites for new solar farms and has identified Cheney Farm in Northfield as one possibility. Proposals from potential developers are being solicited but the project still is in the preliminary stages. Board member Maxwell believes our utility department has been very proactive in developing alternative energy sources, encouraging energy conservation, etc. He suggested our newly-reappointed VPPSA representative Stephen Fitzhugh could create a report on this for public consumption to show how much has been done to date, what is planned for the future, etc.

XII. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (UNSCHEDULED). There was none.

XIII. EXECUTIVE SESSION. Motion by Board member Maxwell, seconded by Board member Goodrich, to go into executive session, in accordance with 1 VSA 313 (a)(1), in order to discuss two (2) separate legal matters with Manager Schulz present. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

The Board went into executive session at 8:40 p.m.

Motion by Board member Goodrich, seconded by Board member Doney, to come out of executive session. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

The Board came out of executive session at 9:06 p.m. No action was taken.

XIV. ADJOURNMENT. Motion by Board member Goodrich, seconded by Board member Maxwell, to adjourn. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

The Board adjourned at 9:07 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.