

TOWN OF NORTHFIELD, VERMONT
SELECT BOARD MEETING
Minutes of May 22, 2018

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

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.** There were no changes to the posted agenda.

- IV. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (SCHEDULED):** None.

- V. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

- a. May 8, 2018 (Regular Meeting).** Motion by Board member Goodrich, seconded by Board member Miller, to approve the minutes. **Motion passed 4-0-1, with Board member Maxwell abstaining.**

- VI. APPROVAL OF BILLS**

- a. Warrant #23-18.** Motion by Board member Maxwell, seconded by Board member Doney, to approve Warrant #23-18 in the amount of \$65,133.74. Manager Schulz asked that a \$2,950 payment related to the new "Welcome to Northfield" signs be removed from the warrant for the time being. He believes donation funds should be used to cover this expense. There was no objection. Board member Goodrich asked about an \$847.00 charge for "cutting outside concrete wall." Manager Schulz said the pavers working around the Municipal Building recommended lowering for better visibility and other safety reasons the retaining wall between the Municipal Building and the Northfield Savings Bank driveway. **Motion to approve the revised warrant in the amount of \$62,183.74 passed 5-0-0.**
- b. Warrant #23-18A.** Motion by Board member Doney, seconded by Board member Maxwell, to approve Warrant #23-18A in the amount of \$51,086.94. Manager Schulz explained this was a partial payment of an old bank note. The note will be refinanced later in the meeting. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
- c. Approval of Biweekly Payroll through May 6, 2018.** Motion by Board member Goodrich, seconded by Board member Miller, to approve the biweekly payroll in the amount of \$83,689.32. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

- VII. SELECT BOARD**

- a. FY 18/19 Utility Budgets and Rates.** Manager Schulz presented the proposed budget at the last meeting and noted the Utility Commissioners spent the past couple months putting them together. He now is asking the Select Board members to approve the budgets as well as approve the water and sewer rates for FY 2018/2019. These rates will be unchanged from the current year. He added \$169,000 in surplus funds were used to level the rates but an additional \$117,000 in surplus funds were retained in the budget in case of emergency spending, etc. Manager Schulz and the Commissioners expect water and sewer usage to increase in the coming year due to planned expansions on the Norwich University (NU) campus, new and/or expanded local businesses, etc.

Chair Goslant serves as the Select Board's representative on the Water and Wastewater Commission. He also is optimistic regarding the budget and doesn't object to using surplus funds to keep user rates the same. Board member Maxwell does not object either provided sufficient funds have been set aside in case of emergencies. He believes Finance Director Laurie Baroffio recommends having three (3) months of operating costs on hand. Manager Schulz confirmed this has been done. He added the Water Department budget has sufficient funds for waterline replacements in order to keep the infrastructure in good shape. Chair Goslant is pleased the Highway Department now is coordinating its paving projects with long-term utility plans so recently paved roads aren't torn up to put in new waterlines, etc.

Manager Schulz said the new solar farm project on Bull Run will benefit the Sewer Department budget by offsetting about \$9,000-\$10,000 of Northfield Wastewater Treatment Facility electric costs. As for the Electric Department, there are no plans to change user rates at this time. Any change would have to be approved by the Public Utility Commission (PUC). Some surpluses have been incorporated in the budget but it is hard to predict future energy costs due to fluctuating supply costs, new renewable energy mandates, etc. Some of the surplus will be used for infrastructure improvements such as "smart meters," etc. Chair Goslant wanted to commend fellow Utility Commissioner Stephen Fitzhugh for readily providing his great experience and expertise on all matter electric. He truly has been a valuable resource for the community. Board member Maxwell said we were very lucky to have him and Richard Suitor before him to advise the Select Board on these issues. Motion by Board member Goodrich, seconded by Board member Doney, to approve the utility budgets and the FY 2017/2018 water and sewer rates. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

- b. Bond Anticipation Note (FY 11/12 RSMS Program).** Motion by Board member Maxwell, seconded by Board member Goodrich, to approve and sign the Bond Anticipation Note in the amount of \$40,000 at 1.70% interest; to approve and sign the Bond Anticipation Borrowing Resolution; and to approve and sign the Bond Anticipation Tax Certificate. As indicated earlier, this is the refinancing of an old bank note. The initial note was in the amount of \$300,000 and the last payment will be made in FY 2020/2021. Board member Maxwell asked if the new note had the best terms possible. Manager Schulz confirmed Ms. Baroffio contacts several banks and this was the best deal she could find. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
- c. Paine Mountain Trail Footrace: Saturday, August 18, 2018.** Manager Schulz said Lydia Petty addressed the Select Board members at their last meeting (05/08/18) with a request to hold this footrace beginning and ending at the NU Shaw Outdoor Center and going through the Town Forest. Manager Schulz asked then for Ms. Petty to put this request in writing and to provide assurance there would be insurance coverage for the event, there would be adequate parking, etc. Ms. Petty has done all this and Manager Schulz no longer has any objections. Motion by Board member Maxwell, seconded by Board member Miller, to approve the request for a trail footrace through the Town Forest. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
- d. Road Discontinuance Process.** Manager Schulz had presented this proposal to the Select Board members at the last meeting but no action was taken as additional information was requested. Chair Goslant now asked for this matter to be tabled until the Highway Subcommittee has had an opportunity to meet and review this matter again. There was no objection.
- e. Request for Bids – Police Department Painting Project.** Manager Schulz said he solicited bids for this project and two (2) were received by this afternoon's deadline. The bidders were Wright's Painting Company (Northfield, VT) in the amount of \$3,200 and Vermont Painting Company (St. Johnsbury, VT) for \$5,500. Manager Schulz noted Vermont Paint Company recently was awarded the Brown Public Library (BPL) exterior painting project so he is well aware of their expertise and past work experience. Board member Doney said Wright's Painting Company not only is a local business but also has a good reputation. Motion by Board member Maxwell, seconded by Board member Doney, to accept the bid proposal from Wright's Painting Company in the amount of \$3,200. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
- f. Request for Bids - Municipal Building Roof Painting Project.** Manager Schulz said the bidding for this project also closed this afternoon and the same two (2) businesses submitted proposals. Wright's Painting Company's bid amount was \$7,400 and Vermont Painting Company's was \$8,300. Chair Goslant said he has seen Wright's Painting Company do a good job painting metal roofs before. Despite some concerns expressed about differences in the bid proposals on warranties, the number of paint coats to be done, etc., the Board consensus was to go with the lower bidder. Motion by Board member Maxwell, seconded by Board member Miller, to accept the bid proposal from Wright's Painting Company in the amount of \$7,400. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

- g. Engineering Services Agreement – Smith Hill Culvert.** Manager Schulz said the municipality received a \$175,000 state grant last year to install a new culvert and perform other stormwater work on Smith Hill Road. He reached out to several contractors about performing the work but all were reluctant to do so in the absence of an engineering plan. The State of Vermont also would like an engineering plan due to the work's proximity to a stream, etc. Manager Schulz has a proposal from the Dufresne Group to provide an engineering study for \$14,950. Board member Maxwell asked about the location of the work. Manager Schulz said it was on Smith Hill Road about a mile north of its fork with Stony Brook Road. Motion by Board member Maxwell, seconded by Board member Doney, to authorize Manager Schulz to sign the engineering services agreement with the Dufresne Group. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
- h. Norwich Commons Drainage.** As this matter involves legal issues, Manager Schulz would like its discussion held in executive session. There was no objection.

VIII. BOARD MEMBERS' COMMENTS, CONCERNS, QUESTIONS

- a. Right-of-Way Concern.** Board member Maxwell asked if there were state restrictions against putting structures within its rights of way. Manager Schulz confirmed there were. In that case, Board member Maxwell is concerned about the location of the new flag pole in front of Northfield Savings Bank (NSB). He feels it is clearly within the Main Street right-of-way. Board member Goodrich said the new flag pole location was in the plans NSB submitted to the Select Board earlier. Manager Schulz will research this matter and then will reach out to NSB about possibly relocating the flag pole further away from the street. Chair Goslant also has concerns about traffic patterns behind the building and suggested perhaps some one-way signage be installed. Manager Schulz will talk to NSB about this as well.
- b. Request for Additional Road Materials on Backroads.** Chair Goslant would like the Highway Department to put more crushed gravel on the backroads as soon as possible. Manager Schulz said since the gravel budget for the current fiscal year has been depleted, he was waiting for the start of the next fiscal year (July 1, 2018) before having the crew start crushing gravel in the Falls pit. Chair Goslant would like more material put on the roads while they are still soft. Despite his reluctance to deficit spend, Manager Schulz said it was possible to offset this deficit when the next budget kicks in. After further discussion, the Board consensus was to proceed with the gravel crushing and cover the budget deficit at a later time.

IX. TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

- a. Main Street Sidewalk Replacement.** Manager Schulz recently met with a VTrans representative about the availability of grant funds for this project. Given the poor state of the sidewalk and potential ADA issues, the indication was a grant application (or applications) would have a good chance of success. There is no way to know the possible local match amount at this time but there should be sufficient funds in next year's sidewalks budget to cover it. Chair Goslant is pleased Manager Schulz is being proactive in this matter.
- b. Colson Road Stormwater Work.** Manager Schulz said there was a \$24,000 state grant received last year to address problems on Colson Road. The work now had begun with culverts being installed, trees being removed, etc.
- c. Street Sweeping, etc.** Manager Schulz said the rented street sweeper has been in town over the past couple weeks and will return soon to finish up the job. In addition, the Highway crew has been working on painting crosswalks. Board member Maxwell said some faded curbing also needs to be repainted.
- d. Systemic Local Road Safety Program (SLRS).** Manager Schulz said VTrans has a local road safety program attempting to lower the number of one-car accidents by identifying dangerous curves and determining ways to mitigate the hazard. This includes new signage that VTrans would provide free of charge. Municipalities would only have to pay for replacement signs. Manager Schulz asked for the Select Board members to authorize Northfield's participation in this program. There was no objection.

- e. **Turkey Hill Maple.** Manager Schulz has met with Howard Anderson from Turkey Hill Maple regarding his request to alter the current agreement he has with the municipality in order to tap an additional 6,000 trees on property belong to the Water Department. Local forester Rose Beatty also has been included in these discussions. The next step would be to walk the property to determine which trees can be tapped and which should be preserved for possible future harvesting. Board member Maxwell trusts Ms. Beatty's expertise on such matters and would like to hear her recommendations. Manager Schulz will forward this information to the Select Board members when it becomes available. Mr. Anderson would like this matter resolved before July 1, 2018.
- f. **Ladder Truck Update.** Manager Schulz spoke with Fire Chief Peter J. DeMasi this afternoon and learned the ladder truck has been repaired and put back into service. The cost was \$1,700, which was less than had been expected.
- g. **Municipal Pool.** Manager Schulz said the Water Department crew has done all the springtime preparations needed and will start filling the pool at the beginning of June. The pool is scheduled to open on Saturday, June 16, 2018, and will close on August 18. New diving boards will be installed this summer.
- h. **Memorial Park New Pavilion and Bathrooms.** Manager Schulz said the Recreation Committee and Board member Doney have done an excellent job preparing for the installation of the new pavilion and bathrooms. The contractor would like a deposit before installing the pavilion. Manager Schulz learned of this after tonight's warrant had been prepared so he is asking if the Select Board members would authorize this. There was no objection. Recreation Committee Chair Sally Davidson is confident the contractor will do a good job and the work should be completed in a couple weeks. She added the work on the bathrooms also is proceeding well.

X. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (UNSCHEDULED)

- a. **Kenneth Johnson: Side Roads Maintenance, etc.** Mr. Johnson lives on Hockman Hill Road and he feels his road and other side roads have not been getting sufficient attention. He understands the Highway crew does have to focus on the heavier travelled roads but doesn't want side roads ignored. His road still has serious ruts. He also asked when the serious dip on Union Brook Road would be addressed. Manager Schulz said he has submitted three (3) separate state grant applications for funds to pay for this.
- b. **Elroy Hill: Road Discontinuance Process.** As he stated at the last meeting, Mr. Hill doesn't feel discontinuing one- and two-house roads would reap the cost savings some have suggested. He also did not feel it would be fair to make residents suddenly responsible for the cost of maintaining their access roads. Chair Goslant said the anticipated savings would not just be money but also the time of the Highway crew. Mr. Hill believes it is the municipality's responsibility to continue maintaining these roads.

XI. EXECUTIVE SESSION. Motion by Board member Goodrich, seconded by Board member Maxwell, to go into executive session, in accordance with 1 VSA 313 (a)(1), in order to discuss a legal matter and a personnel issue with Manager Schulz present. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

The Board went into executive session at 8:50 p.m.

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

The Board came out of executive session at 9:45 p.m. No action was taken.

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

The Board adjourned at 9:45 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.