

TOWN OF NORTHFIELD, VERMONT
SELECT BOARD MEETING
Minutes of June 12, 2018

- I. ROLL CALL.** Select Board Chair Kenneth W. Goslant (7:45 p.m.), Vice-Chair K. David Maxwell, Board members Lynn Doney, Julie H. Goodrich, and Nathaniel Miller. Also present were Town Manager Jeff Schulz, Acting Clerk Kenneth McCann, Trent Tucker (Highway Foreman), Diane Scolaro (Norwich University), Thomas Alsheimer (New Life Community Church), Kaitlyn Keating (Northfield Community Development Network), Sally Davidson (Recreation Committee), Laura Hill-Eubanks (Northfield Conservation Commission), Mark Fournier, Steve Davis, Gary Davis, James Tautfest, and Elroy Hill.

Acting Chair Maxwell 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)

- a. Diane Scolaro, Norwich University Associate VP: Norwich University (NU) Bicentennial Celebration.** Ms. Scolaro works out of NU's Office of Alumni and Family Relations and is in charge of organizing the various activities, events, etc. planned in connection with NU's 2019 Bicentennial Celebration. She said NU Homecoming 2018 will be the start of the celebration and Homecoming 2019 will be its conclusion. Ms. Scolaro said NU Homecoming usually attracts about 3,000 visitors to Northfield but she expects about 5,000 this year and perhaps as many as 10,000 in 2019. This year's Homecoming will start with evening events on Wednesday, September 12, 2018, followed by various events over the over the long weekend such as the Sabol Golf Tournament, the ribbon cutting for Mack Hall, the formal Bicentennial Year Kick-Off, the Norwich Cadets' football game against Castleton State, various graduating class parties, etc. A fireworks display also is planned and Northstar Fireworks soon will be submitting its application form to the municipality. Food trucks will be located on the Crescent and members of the general public invited to take part.

Ms. Scolaro and other NU officials are aware of the great impact these activities will have on the Northfield community and she hopes it will be a positive one. There will be increased traffic over the Homecoming weekend and NU Security will be located at various check points to keep traffic flowing smoothly, enhance pedestrian safety, etc. Handicapped and VIP parking areas will be established on and around the NU campus but much of the general parking will be off-campus using the Tops Market and Cabot Hosiery parking lots and other locations to be determined. Shuttle buses will be operating over the weekend and there will be prominent signage along Vermont Route 12 directing visitors to the temporary parking areas. Ms. Scolaro said local community groups will be contacted to see if they can assist with event set-up, help direct visitors, etc.

In order to promote participant safety, Ms. Scolaro said NU will be requesting the end of Central Street from its South Main Street intersection to Washington Street be closed off from traffic over Homecoming Weekend. Acting Chair Maxwell said this request would need to be put in writing and put on a future Select Board agenda for action. Ms. Scolaro said there also was some thought of closing the section of South Main Street adjacent to the NU campus and directing traffic around the Crescent instead. Manager Schulz also would like this proposal submitted in writing. As this is a State Highway, the municipality itself might not have the authority to do this.

Ms. Scolaro said the Northfield community will be kept informed of NU's plans in the coming months. In addition, an ice cream social open to the general public will be held in late August in conjunction with the opening of Mack Hall. Ms. Scolaro said NU would like to have an enhanced role in the 2019 Labor Day Weekend Festivities and will be contacting Northfield Observances about this. Ms. Scolaro will be providing another in-person update to the Select Board in a couple months. Acting Chair Maxwell thanked Ms. Scolaro for the valuable information and added the Select Board will do all in its power to help Norwich University hold a successful bicentennial celebration.

- b. Thomas Alsheimer, New Life Community Church: Request to Use Common for Community Event.** Mr. Alsheimer is Pastor for the New Life Community Church and is asking for permission to use the Common for a “Kids Fun Night” on Saturday, June 16, 2018, from 4:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. Mr. Alsheimer realized this was a belated request but the event originally planned for later in the summer had to be moved up a few weeks. He added the event would include outdoor games; a bounce house; food and drinks; ice cream sundaes; door prizes; etc. Mr. Alsheimer is asking for use of the Common from 2:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. to allow sufficient time to properly set up for the event and clean up afterwards. He also is asking for access to electric power for the bounce house, etc. It was noted New Life Community Church has held similar events in past years with great success. Motion by Board member Doney, seconded by Board member Goodrich, to permit New Life Community Church to hold this event on the Common. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**
- c. Kaitlyn Keating, Northfield Community Development Network (NCDN): “Night on the Crescent.”** Ms. Keating said the NCDN and the Northfield Farmers Market will be hosting this event on the Crescent from 3:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. on Tuesday, June 19, 2018. She noted the outdoor summer market will be relocating from the Common that afternoon and there also will be live music from the Vermont Fiddle Orchestra as well as expanded food and drink options. This is a spinoff from the “Nights on the Common” held in past years and all Northfield (and beyond) residents are encouraged to attend.
- d. Sally Davidson: Recreation Committee Update.** Ms. Davidson said the construction of the new bathrooms and pavilion at Memorial Park is proceeding well and both projects should be completed in the next couple weeks. There already has been a request to reserve the pavilion for a private event so she would like the Select Board to approve as soon as possible the new park use request form that includes the new fees charged for private functions. Acting Chair Maxwell said approval of the document was scheduled later on tonight’s agenda.
- e. Road Concerns.** Acting Chair Maxwell said there have been several recent complaints about road conditions lately with the bulk of complaints about Union Brook Road. He invited anyone present with such concerns to come forward and take part in an open-ended discussion.
- Steve Davis said Union Brook Road has been in very poor condition for several years. He invited Acting Chair Maxwell to inspect the road with him on Memorial Day to see its many pot holes, dips, cracks, etc. Mr. Davis said some of the pot holes have been filled since then but several others remain. He cannot understand why a citizen like himself needs to repeatedly complain about a certain road before any action is taken. Manager Schulz said some of the worse pot holes on this road were temporarily repaired with cold patch over the winter but the plan was to wait until spring to hire a paving contractor to provide more permanent solutions. He added the budget for the coming fiscal year has increased funds for road repair. Mr. Davis noted there are a lot of other roads in bad condition in this town. Acting Chair Maxwell said patching has been done on many roads this spring. Mr. Davis added there are several sunken spots on Union Brook Road that are road hazards. Manager Schulz said the municipality has applied for emergency state grant funds in order to address the severe dip in the road near Hockman Hill Road. The plan is to go down to the foundation at this location to fix the problem once and for all. Mr. Davis would like any new paving followed up by a consistent program of crack sealing otherwise water gets into these cracks and creates frost heaves over the winter. Manager Schulz had a road expert inspect the various cracks on Union Brook Road and it was found most of them were too wide to treat with sealing; that is why the municipality is looking to grind the road down to the subbase. This will be expensive but is the only long-term solution. Acting Chair Maxwell noted with the municipality paying off some significant bond notes over the next couple of years, there should be more money freed up for road paving in coming years. He also believes an overall infrastructure plan is needed before the municipality embarks on major highway reconstruction projects.
- Mark Fournier also lives on Union Brook Road and every time he rides his motorcycle on the road he is seriously concerned for his safety with all the potholes, cracks, etc. He feels the patch work done so far this year has been a disappointment. Mr. Fournier especially worries when drivers unfamiliar with the road’s problems try to visit its residents. This is a heavily-traveled road but it always is in bad condition with nothing ever being done to properly fix it. He would like something significant done this year as this road has become very dangerous. Acting Chair Maxwell said the Select Board would try to get something done to address these problems.

James Tautfest has lived on Union Brook Road for thirty-three (33) years and he also is very frustrated with the condition of the road. He is surprised there haven't been more accidents given its many problems. He agrees the road needs to be ground down to the subbase and he believes the Select Board should develop a three-year plan to do this. Mr. Tautfest asked if there is anything he or his neighbors could do to expedite the process. Acting Chair Maxwell said coming here tonight and expressing his concerns was a good first step. The Select Board next needs to develop an overall plan and find the funds for major highway reconstruction. He added the municipality has been pro-active in recent years in applying for state and federal grant funds when available.

Board member Goslant arrived at this time.

V. DEPARTMENT HEAD REPORT

- a. Trent Tucker, Highway Foreman.** Mr. Tucker reported the work on Colson Road is nearly completed with just another layer of gravel needed. Manager Schulz added VTrans provided grant funds to fix this road due to its proximity to a stream. Mr. Tucker said the road grader will be out about three (3) days each week for the rest of the summer. Board member Goodrich asked in what order are roads graded. Mr. Tucker said the major, heavily-travelled roads are graded first and then the operator goes back to grade the side roads. He added most of the side roads already are in fairly good condition due to less traffic. The grader usually does about four (4) to five (5) miles a day and whenever possible is left on site at the end of the day. Mr. Tucker said the Highway crew also is working on cleaning up after some tree cutting along Smith Hill Road and upper Stony Brook Road. This involves pulling stumps, spreading grass seed, etc.

Manager Schulz noted the municipality received a \$23,000 VTrans grant for work on Barrows Road. Mr. Tucker confirmed this project would be starting soon and should take a minimum of three (3) weeks to complete. Culverts will be installed, brush will be cleared, and other drainage work done that should help reduce the impact of Mud Season next year. In addition, the crosswalks already have been lined along Main Street and the side streets are now being completed. Mr. Tucker is looking into contracting this painting work out next year as it takes a significant number of his crew away from their regular road maintenance duties. Acting Chair Maxwell said it appears the Highway crew is being kept busy and he and the other Board members appreciate their efforts.

VI. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- a. May 22, 2018 (Regular Meeting).** Motion by Board member Goodrich, seconded by Board member Doney, to approve the minutes. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

VII. APPROVAL OF BILLS

- a. Warrant #24-18.** Motion by Board member Goodrich, seconded by Board member Miller, to approve Warrant #24-18 in the amount of \$455,510.23. Board member Goslant wanted it noted over \$300,000 of the total warrant amount was for purchasing power for the Northfield Electric Department (NED). Board member Goodrich asked about a number of property tax refunds. Manager Schulz stated the final installment of the 2017 taxes were due in mid-May and most of the refunds were due to escrow overpayments. Board member Goodrich thinks it is good some Conservation Fund money is being used to send kids to summer camp. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
- b. Warrant #24-18A.** Motion by Board member Goodrich, seconded by Board member Goslant, to approve Warrant #24-18A in the amount of \$31,874.07. Manager Schulz said this is bank note payment for the 2014 Ambulance. The note will be refinanced at another bank at a lower interest rate. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
- c. Warrant #24-18B.** Motion by Board member Goodrich, seconded by Board member Doney, to approve Warrant #24-18B in the amount of \$284,040.59. Manager Schulz said this was another bank note (2017 Fire Pumper Truck) to be refinanced at a lower interest rate. Board member Goslant anticipates interest rates going up in coming years and suggested it might be a good idea to get long-term notes with locked-in lower rates in the future. Manager Schulz said he and Finance Director Laurie Baroffio have been looking into this possibility. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
- d. Approval of Biweekly Payroll through May 20, 2018.** Motion by Board member Doney, seconded by Board member Goslant, to approve the biweekly payroll in the amount of \$86,286.13. Board member Goslant noted overtime expenses seem to be at lower levels for all departments. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
- e. Approval of Biweekly Payroll through June 3, 2018.** Motion by Board member Doney, seconded by Board member Miller, to approve the biweekly payroll in the amount of \$87,580.22. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

VIII. SELECT BOARD

- a. **Bond Anticipation Note (2017 Fire Pumper Truck).** Motion by Board member Goodrich, seconded by Board member Doney, to approve and sign the Bond Anticipation Note in the amount of \$250,183.00 at 1.70% interest; to approve and sign the Bond Anticipation Borrowing Resolution; and to approve and sign the Bond Anticipation Tax Certificate. Board member Goodrich said the note format appears different this time. Manager Schulz confirmed this is the first time we're worked with Union Bank and their documentation is slightly different. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
- b. **Capital Expense Note (2014 Ford Ambulance).** Motion by Board member Goodrich, seconded by Board member Doney, to approve and sign the Capital Expense Note in the amount of \$15,595.91 at 1.70% interest; to approve and sign the Capital Expense Borrowing Resolution; and to approve and sign the Capital Expense Note Tax Certificate. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
- c. **Approval of Municipal Recreational Facilities Use Form.** Manager Schulz said the form in use for several years recently was revised by the Recreation Committee to reflect changes in Memorial Park, such as the current installation of a pavilion. The major change was to request donation funds for use of the fields and/or the pavilion. This would be voluntary for non-profit groups but mandatory for other groups and is set at \$50 per event for the fields and \$75 per event for the pavilion. Board member Goodrich thought the request for "all parties pick up after themselves" was too weak; she would like a \$100 refundable deposit required instead. Motion by Board member Goodrich, seconded by Board member Goslant, to approve the revised Municipal Recreational Facilities Use Form. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
- d. **Elm Street Retaining Wall – Engineering Services Agreement.** Manager Schulz said the municipality is in the process of hiring an engineer to update an existing plan to fix the wall. The plan is over twenty (20) years old and Manager Schulz has recommended lowering the height of the wall for safety reasons and to reduce construction costs. There are \$12,000 in grant funds available for the engineering study and Manager Schulz thought the services agreement would be available for approval tonight but it has not been received. It will be available for the next regular meeting (06/26/18). Acting Chair Maxwell said there is a CIP account dedicated specifically to repairing retaining walls.
- e. **TDS Telecom Land Purchase.** Manager Schulz noted Northfield voters on Town Meeting Day did authorize the expenditure of \$25,000 towards the purchase of the 48.9 acre parcel at the summit of Paine Mountain. The remaining \$10,000 of the estimated purchase price was to be covered by donations and fundraising efforts. Manager Schulz and Laura Hill-Eubanks from the Conservation Commission have been negotiating with TDS Telecom on a purchase agreement. As this matter involves a proposed contract, he would like to discuss this matter with the Select Board in executive session with Ms. Hill-Eubanks present. There was no objection.
- f. **Norwich Commons Drainage.** As this matter involves legal issues, Manager Schulz would like its discussion held in executive session. There was no objection.

IX. BOARD MEMBERS' COMMENTS, CONCERNS, QUESTIONS

- a. **Economic Development.** Board member Goslant attended a Central Vermont Economic Development Corporation (CVEDC) meeting on the Norwich University campus this morning and learned there were a number of positive developments in the region. Micro-brewing facilities remain popular and Board member Goslant suggested Northfield as a good location for these due to our good water supply and low sewer rates.
- b. **Turkey Hill Maple.** Board member Doney has met with Howard Anderson regarding his request to revise the current lease agreement so he could tap additional trees. Manager Schulz added local forester Rose Beatty and Utility Superintendent Patrick Demasi reviewed the site and found an additional five to six thousand (5,000-6,000) maple trees that could be tapped. This will bring in additional revenue for the municipality and/or Water Department. Board member Goodrich noted Mr. Anderson had asked for a new agreement before July 1, 2018. Manager Schulz said the revised agreement should be ready for approval at the next regular meeting and this will meet his deadline.
- c. **"Welcome to Northfield" Signs.** Acting Chair Maxwell said one of the new signs was installed in South Northfield earlier today. \$2,500 in donation funds have been received already for this purpose and Acting Chair Maxwell has heard a generous donor might provide the bulk of the remaining \$2,000 needed.

- d. **Damaged Covered Bridge.** Acting Chair Maxwell asked for an update on the Third Covered Bridge on Cox Brook Road damaged over the winter. Manager Schulz said the bridge does need to be repaired but the first potential contactor contacted requested closing the road for an entire day, which was considered unrealistic. A tractor-trailer did most of the damage and the liability insurance check already has been received. Acting Chair Maxwell doesn't feel closing the road for a day isn't too much of an imposition provided residents are informed in advance and detour signs are in place. He would like the repairs made as soon as possible.
 - e. **Street Sweeper Sale.** Acting Chair Maxwell asked why the municipality's street sweeper hasn't been sold yet. Manager Schulz said someone has expressed interest in purchasing it for some time but cannot commit to a sale price. Acting Chair Maxwell would like this potential buyer given a deadline. Otherwise, the municipality should look for another buyer.
 - f. **Northfield Savings Bank Building Renovation.** Acting Chair Maxwell said this project turned out very well and really has enhanced Northfield's downtown area. He still would like the flagpole relocated back away from the street to its old location closer to the building.
 - g. **Proposed Solar Project.** Acting Chair Maxwell said the State of Vermont and VPPSA has encouraged electric companies to increase their purchase of renewable energy sources for several years. The Northfield Electric Department was contacted about the possibility of siting a solar farm on Cheney Hill and the Utility Commissioners have discussed this possibility in recent meetings. Manager Schulz said at their meeting last night, the Utility Commissioners suggested a joint meeting with the Select Board to discuss this matter fully in a public forum. The suggested date was Monday, June 25, 2018. There was no objection.
 - h. **Water/Union Street Stormwater Basin Project.** Acting Chair Maxwell asked how the project was progressing. Manager Schulz said it was on schedule but may be going slightly over budget. It might be necessary for the municipality to provide additional in-kind services in order to keep costs down. This should not be a major hurdle to project completion and Manager Schulz will provide additional information at the next regular meeting.
- X. TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT**
- a. **Municipal Pool Opening.** Manager Schulz said the pool has been filled, new equipment (i.e. diving boards and chairs) has been installed, and the pool is ready to open this coming Saturday (06/16/18).
- XI. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (UNSCHEDULED)**
- a. **Mark Fournier: NED Problems.** Mr. Fournier is an electric contractor and often has had problems working with the Utility Office to get Green Mountain Power (GMP) to come to Northfield and perform needed line work. He suggested the municipality might consider selling NED to GMP for more efficiency. Acting Chair Maxwell noted as a public utility, NED has one of the lower power rates in the state. He suggested instead streamlining the process through which GMP is asked to perform work in Northfield.
- XII. EXECUTIVE SESSION.** Motion by Board member Goodrich, seconded by Board member Miller, to go into executive session, in accordance with 1 VSA 313 (a)(1), in order to discuss a contract, a legal matter, and a personnel issue with Manager Schulz present. Laura Hill-Eubanks also will be present during the discussion of the proposed TDS Telecom land purchase. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

The Board went into executive session at 9:20 p.m.

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

The Board came out of executive session at 10:15 p.m.

Motion by Board member Doney, seconded by Board member Goodrich, to authorize Manager Schulz to sign the agreement with TDS Telecom for the purchase of the 48.9 acre parcel at the summit of Paine Mountain. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

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

The Board adjourned at 10:20 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 June 26, 2018.