

**TOWN OF NORTHFIELD, VERMONT
SELECT BOARD MEETING
Minutes of September 25, 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, Bonnie Donahue (Northfield Promise Community), Briana Howard (Northfield Promise Community), Rebecca Pearish (Northfield Promise Community), Scott Benoir (Scotty B's Trucking), Eric Davis (All Clean Waste Systems), Carolyn Stevens (Northfield Community Development Network), John Stevens, 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):

- a. Bonnie Donahue: Northfield Promise Community Update.** Ms. Donahue said the Northfield Falls Park now has a nearly-completed children's playground due to the great turnout for last weekend's "community build." She noted a good number of Norwich University students were present to do a lot of the heavy lifting. Ms. Donahue said the remainder of the work would be done this week and there would be a "grand opening" ceremony held this Friday (09/28/18) at 4:00 p.m. for the new named "Northfield Falls Community Playground." Briana Howard noted the new playground would not be visible from North Main Street and asked to have signage installed in order to direct visitors to the facility. There is similar signage near Depot Square for Memorial Park and the Municipal Pool. Manager Schulz said Highway Foreman Trent Tucker will be tasked to order and install the new directional signs.

Manager Schulz asked about the status of the proposed children's park to be sited next to the Brown Public Library on Slate Avenue. Ms. Donahue said an ADA-compliant pathway needs to be put in before any additional work can be done and she is waiting to hear back from the contractor. The park fencing can be installed anytime over the winter.

Chair Goslant thanked the Northfield Promise Community members for tonight's update and for all the hard work done to date on all these projects. This includes the successful state grant application that brought \$150,000 to Northfield for the purchase of new children's playground equipment. Board member Goodrich concurred as the considerable time and effort spent on this was much appreciated.

V. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- a. September 11, 2018 (Regular Meeting).** Motion by Board member Maxwell, seconded by Board member Doney, to approve the minutes. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

VI. APPROVAL OF BILLS

- a. Warrant #06-19.** Motion by Board member Goodrich, seconded by Board member Doney, to approve Warrant #06-19 in the amount of \$1,310,986.71. Board member Goodrich noted that of the total warrant amount, \$1,067,500 represented property taxes collected by the municipality and later forwarded to the new Paine Mountain School District. Board member Goodrich then asked if it really cost \$300 to have the new Water Street Park mowed by a private contractor. Manager Schulz said this mowing included not just the park but other FEMA buyout properties along Water Street. The mowing is done twice a month. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

- b. **Approval of Biweekly Payroll through September 9, 2018.** Motion by Board member Goodrich, seconded by Board member Doney, to approve the biweekly payroll in the amount of \$93,509.24. Manager Schulz said the overtime expense for the Northfield Police Department were up for this payroll period due to the new twenty-four (24) hour coverage on the Northfield Common over the Labor Day holiday weekend. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

VII. SELECT BOARD

- a. **Smith Hill Road Culvert Project.** Manager Schulz said the municipality received a \$175,000 Vermont Agency of Transportation (VTrans) grant to replace the culvert on Smith Hill Road installed after the previous one was washed out by Tropical Storm Irene. Since the grant required a significant local match amount, this project was delayed until the needed funds were budgeted. However, the engineer hired to design the project has estimated the project would cost over \$335,000 in order to meet new VTrans specifications. Manager Schulz requested additional VTrans grant funds but these were not available. The current culvert then was inspected and found to be in very good condition. Manager Schulz now recommends postponing the culvert replacement for the time being, which would require returning the VTrans grant. Board member Maxwell asked about the size of the culvert that failed. Manager Schulz said it was twenty-four inches (24") wide and the current one is forty-eight inches (48") wide. The engineer and Highway Foreman Tucker believe the current culvert would withstand another Irene-sized storm event. Chair Goslant sees no reason to spend municipal money when there is no good reason. Manager Schulz said about \$5,000 was spent on engineering but ninety percent (90%) of this expense would be covered by grant funds.
- b. **Pleasant Street Bridge.** Manager Schulz said VTrans recently inspected the bridge near the intersection of Pleasant Street and Union Street. The abutments were found to have significant structural problems. VTrans subsequently sent a letter to the municipality outlining the problems and asking for formal confirmation that the letter had been received by the Select Board members and the municipality would develop an action plan to address this matter within the next sixty (60) days. Manager Schulz believes VTrans will provide grant funds to cover most if not all of the repair expense. He added this is a relatively short bridge so this would not be a major project. Scott Benoir lives on Pleasant Street and he noted the bridge deck has a number of problems with nails coming loose, etc. He felt something had to be done to improve the bridge. Board member Maxwell is reluctant to commit the municipality to repairing the bridge until there is more certainty grant funds would be available. Manager Schulz said it was possible to table this matter until the next regular meeting (10/09/18). In the interim, he will check on the availability of grant funds as well as estimated repair costs. There was no objection. Board member Maxwell would like the bridge's deck repaired in the meantime.
- c. **Northfield Transfer Station Agreement.** As Manager Schulz reported at the last Select Board meeting, Earth Waste & Metal recently informed him they no longer wanted to operate the Northfield Transfer Station on behalf on the municipality as it was no longer profitable. After exploring several options, Manager Schulz determined the best course to keep the facility in operation was to reach an agreement with one of the local waste disposal businesses to run the facility. After having entered into negotiations with All Clean Waste Services (Eric Davis), Manager Schulz now has a draft agreement that he would like to discuss with the Select Board in executive session later in the meeting. Board member Maxwell asked if Manager Schulz had reached out to all the waste disposal businesses in the area. Manager Schulz confirmed he had. After speaking with Mr. Davis, he felt All Clean Services presented the best choice for the municipality.

Scott Benoir is the owner/operator of Scotty B's Trucking and he also presented a proposal to Manager Schulz for the operation of the Transfer Station. As part of his proposal, Mr. Benoir said he would cover all the expense of keeping the area plowed out during winter months as well as pay for any utility charges. Because of his good faith he had shown in his negotiations with Manager Schulz, Mr. Benoir was surprised to see Mr. Davis operating the Transfer Station on an interim basis before any formal agreement had been reached. Mr. Benoir feels he has been discriminated against even though he has many more years of experience in this field than Mr. Davis and he felt his fee structure was more equitable to Northfield residents. He also wondered if the fact Mr. Davis has a relative on the Select Board played any factor in this decision. In any case, Mr. Benoir will be exploring his options and may seek legal recourse to address this injustice. Board member Doney acknowledged Mr. Davis is his cousin and said he has never tried to hide this. In fact, he is proud of Mr. Davis' achievements. Board member Doney added he and the other Select Board members did authorize Manager Schulz to negotiate a new agreement for the continued operation of the Transfer Station but they had no role in choosing which business would do this. Chair Goslant would like to continue the rest of this discussion in executive session as it pertains to possible contact negotiations and legal matters. There was no objection.

- d. **Norwich Commons Drainage Issue.** As this matter involves legal issues and possible contract negotiation, Manager Schulz would like to hold this discussion in executive session. There was no objection.

VIII. BOARD MEMBERS' COMMENTS, CONCERNS, QUESTIONS

- a. **Town Grader Schedule.** Board member Goodrich had asked for a list showing the roads graded over the summer months as well as plans for future grading before winter sets in. Manager Schulz said he is working on that now with Highway Foreman Tucker. Chair Goslant said the Highway Subcommittee would be meeting soon to go over this as well. Board member Maxwell also would like to get this information as he doubts nine (9) miles of backroad is graded each week, which was the amount presented recently. Chair Goslant knows Little Northfield Road and Evans Road were graded fairly recently but the Highway Subcommittee will work with Manager Schulz and Mr. Tucker to produce the full list.
- b. **Northfield Police Chief Search.** Chair Goslant noted the Search Committee will be meeting tomorrow night (09/26/18) to interview the job candidates. Manager Schulz hopes the Committee will be making a recommendation so one of the applicants can be introduced at the next Select Board meeting as the next Northfield Police Chief.
- c. **Gold Star Families Memorial Monument Dedication.** Chair Goslant said there would be a formal dedication ceremony for the monument held on Friday, October 5, 2018, at 2:00 p.m. Vermont Governor Phil Scott and Medal of Honor recipient Hershel "Woody" Williams will be among those scheduled to be on hand.
- d. **Air Force Colonel Andrew Hird Retirement Ceremony.** Chair Goslant attended the retirement ceremony held for Colonel Hird on the Norwich University campus late this afternoon. It was noted Colonel Hird and his family were honored for "twenty-seven (27) years of loyal and dedicated service" to our nation. Chair Goslant added Colonel Hird and his wife Alicia have resided in Northfield for only three (3) years but have already distinguished themselves as valuable community members and good neighbors.
- e. **Turkey Hill Maple Lease Agreement.** Chair Goslant was contacted by someone who feels Turkey Hill Maple is tapping more trees on municipal property than their current lease agreement allows. He would like the site inspected to see if this is true. It was noted the recent revision of the lease agreement allows Turkey Hill Maple to install an additional 10,000 taps.

IX. TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

- a. **Annual Financial Audit.** Manager Schulz said the contracted auditors had completed all their on-site work in the Municipal Building and should have a completed audit for Select Board review within the next couple months.
- b. **Draft Norwich University-Northfield Police Department Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).** Manager Schulz said former Police Chief William Jennings had been working on the draft MOU and asked if the Select Board members would like to proceed on it at this time or wait until the new police chief was on board. The consensus of the Select Board members was to put this on hold so the new police chief can provide input. Board member Maxwell noted the Select Board has a subcommittee specifically for Norwich University-related matters and he felt its members (i.e., Select Board members Goodrich and Maxwell) should have been brought into this process much earlier.
- c. **TDS Telecom Land Purchase.** Manager Schulz had been working with Town Attorney William Smith to finalize the purchase agreement. In order to meet the upcoming deadline, the closing will be by the end of this week.

X. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (UNSCHEDULED)

- a. **Carolyn Stevens, Northfield Community Development Network (NCDN): "Night on the Common" Update.** Ms. Stevens wanted to thank all those who made the Third Annual "Night on the Common" held last Tuesday night (09/18/18) such a great success. The celebration did a good job of highlighting the effective work of local volunteers and she looks forward to next year's event.

- 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 legal matters and possible contract negotiations with Manager Schulz present. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

The Board went into executive session at 8:05 p.m.

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

The Board came out of executive session at 8:35 p.m. No action was taken.

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

The Board adjourned at 8:35 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 October 9, 2018.