

**TOWN OF NORTHFIELD, VERMONT  
SELECT BOARD REGULAR MEETING  
Minutes of January 8, 2019**

- 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, Gail Hall (Northfield's Energy Future), Jane Pekol (Northfield's Energy Future), Denise MacMartin (Northfield's Energy Future), Sarah Wolfe (Northfield's Energy Future), Josh Sanders (Recreation Committee), Carolyn Stevens (Northfield Community Development Network), Mary McDaniel, Reba Korban, Elijah Gleason, and Elroy Hill.

Chair Goslant called the meeting to order at 7:04 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.** Manager Schulz said a representative from Green Mountain Transit was to attend tonight's meeting but had to reschedule until the next regular meeting (01/22/19).

**IV. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (SCHEDULED):**

- a. Jane Pekol & Gail Hall, Northfield's Energy Future: Ballot Item Request.** Ms. Pekol said eight (8) Northfield residents have been meeting regularly since April 2018 in order to help encourage local energy-saving measures, encourage the development of a renewable energy policy for the community, pursue grants and donations for energy initiatives, etc. Taking the name "Northfield's Energy Future," this group has met with Northfield's Utility Commissions, Conservation Commission, and Planning Commission as well as holding workshops and other public outreach events. They also have provided information tables at Northfield Farmers Markets, school open houses, etc. At this time, the group is asking the municipality to formally establish them as a municipal body by putting an article on the 2019 Northfield Town Meeting warning that would authorize the creation of a Northfield Energy Commission. Ms. Hall said Northfield's Energy Future has developed a set of goals over the past few months and the main one is to promote Northfield's long-term transition to one hundred percent (100%) renewable energy sources. To achieve this, the new Energy Commission would assist the Town Manager and Select Board members in developing policies to develop local renewable energy sources, help reduce local energy consumption, locate and obtain outside funding for energy initiatives, and keep community members fully aware of and involved in all decisions related to local energy policy. Once the Energy Commission is established, the plan is for Ms. Pekol to serve as Chair; Ms. Hall as Vice-Chair; Denise MacMartin as Secretary; Sarah Wolfe as Treasurer; and Nick Laskovski as Outreach Coordinator. They also would ask Stephen Fitzhugh, who serves as Chair of the Northfield Electric Utility Commission, to act as their advisor on public utility matters. Ms. Pekol said in addition to the workshops already held, the Energy Commission members would like to work closely with Norwich University and its student body to encourage energy conservation efforts both on and off campus. Ms. Hall noted they also have been working with the Planning Commission to help update the "Energy" section of the local Town Plan now under revision.

Chair Goslant serves as one of the Select Board's representatives on the Northfield Utility Commissions and he reported that at last night's joint meeting the Commissioners endorsed the creation of a Northfield Energy Committee. This could be an immediate action and would not require voter authorization on Town Meeting Day. It was noted the establishment of an energy committee would allow the municipality greater access to grant funds available for energy efficiency programs and local renewable energy efforts. Manager Schulz said whether the new entity was a commission or committee, it still would have standing as a municipal body and would serve as an advisory group to the Select Board. He said either approach was possible. However, it is his and Mr. Fitzhugh's recommendation the group begin operations as the Northfield Energy Committee.

Ms. Hall asked if the committee would be able to have its own bylaws like a commission. Manager Schulz said it could and there would not be much functional difference between a committee and commission. The decision whether or not a ballot article is needed will be made at the next Select Board meeting. If it is put on the warning, the wording will be similar to what was used when the Northfield Conservation Commission was established at the 2008 Annual Town Meeting. Board member Maxwell said the Select Board members would support the new energy group whether it is a commission or committee.

- b. **Josh Sanders: Recreation Committee update.** Mr. Sanders said the Recreation Committee met last night and discussed the possible location for a hockey rink recently donated by a community member. The Recreation Committee is asking the Select Board members to authorize siting the hockey rink in the area behind the Northfield Fire Station as this would provide access to municipal water and nearby parking. Manager Schulz said this was the same location Recreation Committee Chair Sally Davidson recommended at a previous meeting. Chair Goslant said a hockey rink was placed there several years ago and seemed to work well. Mr. Sanders said most of the water needed would be when the rink was first set up. However, future access would be needed for periodic rink maintenance. Chair Goslant endorses this action since the current Recreation Committee membership seems more than willing to provide the labor needed to get this going and maintained. There was no objection from the other Select Board members provided the logistics can be worked out by the Recreation Committee in concert with Manager Schulz. Mr. Sanders also reported the Recreation Committee plans to hold another Winter Carnival event this year, probably in mid-March. The Committee will keep the Select Board members and Manager Schulz informed as the particulars are developed.

#### V. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- a. **December 6, 2018 (Budget Meeting).** Motion by Board member Goodrich, seconded by Board member Miller, to approve the minutes. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
- b. **December 11, 2018 (Budget Meeting).** Motion by Board member Goodrich, seconded by Board member Miller, to approve the minutes. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
- c. **December 11, 2018 (Regular Meeting).** Motion by Board member Goodrich, seconded by Board member Maxwell, to approve the minutes. Board member Goodrich questioned whether the \$3,500 quote for two (2) new streetlights near the Common actually included installation. Manager Schulz believes this is the case but has not confirmed this with the supplier. The reference to installation costs will be deleted from the minutes. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
- d. **December 13, 2018 (Budget 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.**
- e. **December 18, 2018 (Budget Meeting).** Motion by Board member Goodrich, seconded by Board member Miller, to approve the minutes. One typo was found and will be corrected. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
- f. **December 20, 2018 (Budget Meeting).** Motion by Board member Goodrich, seconded by Board member Miller, to approve the minutes. **Motion passed 4-0-1, with Board member Doney abstaining.**

#### VI. APPROVAL OF BILLS

- a. **Validation of Warrant #12-19.** Motion by Select Board member Maxwell, seconded by Board member Goodrich, to validate the approval by signature of Warrant #12-19 in the amount of 133,388.81. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
- b. **Validation of Warrant #12-19A.** Motion by Select Board member Maxwell, seconded by Board member Goodrich, to validate the approval by signature of Warrant #12-19A in the amount of \$113,993.11. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
- c. **Warrant #13-19.** Motion by Select Board member Goodrich, seconded by Board member Miller, to approve Warrant #13-19 in the amount of \$484,008.92. Board member Goodrich noted a \$755 charge to upgrade the traffic signal at the intersection of North Main Street and Vine Street. She felt this was quite expensive for general maintenance. Manager Schulz was informed by Highway Foreman Trent Tucker that with this upgrade the traffic signal should be in good shape for some time. Manager Schulz said this warrant includes a \$25,000 reimbursement to the company operating the Bull Run solar farm because they paid too much in advance for the upgrade of the powerlines near the solar farm. Chair Goslant noted the total warrant amount includes almost \$250,000 spent to purchase power for the Northfield Electric Department. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
- d. **Approval of Biweekly Payroll through December 16, 2018.** Motion by Select Board member Maxwell, seconded by Board member Doney, to approve the biweekly payroll in the amount of \$95,174.42. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
- e. **Approval of Biweekly Payroll through December 30, 2018.** Motion by Select Board member Maxwell, seconded by Board member Goodrich, to approve the biweekly payroll in the amount of \$98,211.95. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

## VII. SELECT BOARD

- a. **Recreation Committee Appointment.** Manager Schulz noted the committee has a vacant position due to a recent resignation and South Main Street resident Elijah Gleason has submitted a letter of interest. It was noted Mr. Gleason met with the Recreation Committee members at their meeting last night and they recommend his appointment. Mr. Gleason said he grew up in Northfield and is very enthusiastic to work with the committee to not only help maintain the existing recreational facilities but also work towards possible expansion. He is a graduate and employee of the Vermont Law School so he has some expertise regarding Vermont's land use laws. Board member Maxwell is one of Mr. Gleason's neighbors and added Mr. Gleason (then a child) was among the first people to welcome him to Northfield. Motion by Board member Goodrich, seconded by Board member Miller, to appoint Elijah Gleason to fill the vacancy on the Recreation Committee. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
- b. **Better Connections Grant Application Resolution.** Manager Schulz said the local group known as the Northfield Recreation Trails Committee came together when this grant opportunity became available and has asked the Select Board members to submit an application. If the grant application is successful, the funds would be used to develop strategies and mapping in order to expand Northfield's current trail system. The grant has a ten percent (10%) local match amount and the Select Board already has authorized use of up to \$7,000 in existing economic development funds for this. The grant application is due January 31, 2019, and does require the Select Board to approve and sign a formal resolution. Motion by Board member Maxwell, seconded by Board member Goodrich, to approve and sign the Better Connections Grant Application Resolution. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
- c. **Vermont State Revolving Loan – Engineering Services – Stormwater Project.** As he has reported at previous Select Board meetings, Manager Schulz has been trying to obtain state grant funds to cover some of the engineering and construction costs for a stormwater improvements project on South Main Street, Slate Avenue, Elm Street, Prospect Street, and Highland Avenue. He now has an agreement that the municipality will apply for a five-year revolving loan from the Vermont Municipal Bond Bank in the amount of \$36,480. The loan will be interest free and a portion of the loan amount (\$15,140) will not have to be paid back (i.e., "forgiven"). Manager Schulz hopes the engineering phase of this project can be completed quickly so the construction phase can start before July 1, 2019. Board member Maxwell asked if applying for this loan would commit the municipality to the construction phase should cost estimates prove untenable. Manager Schulz confirmed it would not. He added he has applied for another state stormwater mitigation grant in the amount of \$200,000 to be used for this project's construction phase. Manager Schulz said the timeline is tight for starting this project within the grant's parameters but he is hoping it can all come together. Board member Maxwell said this particular infrastructure improvement has been under discussion for some time and definitely needs to be done in the near future. Chair Goslant noted this municipality has been successful recently in obtaining state and federal funding for similar projects. Manager Schulz said over \$800,000 in outside funding had been received and this meant the municipality didn't have to pay for most of the cost of these projects. Motion by Board member Maxwell, seconded by Board member Miller, to approve and sign the Vermont State Revolving Fund Loan Agreement in the amount of \$36,480 at 0% annual interest; to approve and sign the General Obligation Note; and to approve and sign the General Obligation Resolution and Certificate. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

## VIII. BOARD MEMBERS' COMMENTS, CONCERNS, QUESTIONS

- a. **Notable Recent Deaths.** Chair Goslant noted the Northfield community suffered grievous losses with the recent passing of former police Chief William Jennings and former Select Board member Donald Wallace. Chair Goslant said Chief Jennings had a pronounced and positive impact on the Northfield Police Department during his brief time here and will be sorely missed. Mr. Wallace taught at Norwich University's College of Engineering for over fifty (50) years and served on the Town Select Board from 1999 to 2008. In addition, he was a longtime volunteer for the Northfield Ambulance Service and was one of the founders of Northfield's Recycling Center/Transfer Station.
- b. **Municipal Facilities Update.** Board member Doney, who serves on the Town Buildings & Energy Subcommittee, reported much work has been done at the Ambulance Bay, Police Station, Town Garage, and Municipal Building in recent weeks. In addition, new windows are on order for the Police Station and will be installed as soon as they arrive.

- c. **Brown Public Library Building.** Chair Goslant said some of the building's Plexiglas windows were in poor shape and will need to be replaced soon. There also are drafts in the basement needing to be addressed.
- d. **Nantanna Mill Lease Agreement.** Chair Goslant reported Cabot Hosiery is negotiating a long-term lease agreement with Nantanna Mill. He views this as a very positive development since it would mean Cabot and its Darn Tough Vermont Socks brand would be staying in Northfield for the foreseeable future.

**IX. TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT**

- a. **Bull Run Solar Farm Net Metering.** Manager Schulz said the municipality records the solar farm's master meter and allocates net metering credits among eight (8) separate municipal facilities as follows: Wastewater Treatment Facility (53%), Well Field (28%), Brown Public Library (6%), Town Garage (4%), Municipal Building (3%), Police Station (3%), Municipal Pool (2%), and Fire Station (1%). This helps reduce electric charges for each of these facilities. The municipality also retains seventeen percent (17%) of the solar farm's renewable energy credits. Board member Maxwell noted this project provides substantial energy savings for the municipality.
- b. **Main Street/East Street Intersection Lighting.** Manager Schulz has received quotes for installing additional lighting at this intersection and has discussed various options with Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission (CVRPC) analyst Dan Currier. Select Board members had suggested pedestrian-activated flashing crosswalk signs. Manager Schulz has learned these signs also require voice activation due to ADA requirements and would cost about \$8,000 each. There are grants available to cover some or all of the cost. Board member Maxwell believes there are other, less expensive models available. He thinks having such signs in place would be more effective than increasing the nighttime lighting. Mr. Sanders is concerned the current intersection lighting is so poor drivers might find the flashing signs more of a distraction than an assistance. He would rather drivers focus on the pedestrian rather than the sign. Manager Schulz said the Vermont Agency of Transportation (VTrans), if requested, will send an engineer to provide an analysis of the intersection and crosswalk. The final report would recommend what steps should be taken in terms of lighting and signage. Board member Maxwell felt VTrans input would be very useful. Board member Doney would like the inspection to take place at night because that's when there's a problem. Manager Schulz will contact VTrans so this can be done as soon as possible.
- c. **Town Meeting Day 2019.** Manager Schulz said the 2019 Annual Town Report and Town Meeting Warning are now being put together. A draft version of the 2019 Town Meeting Warning will be available for Select Board review at the next regular meeting (01/22/19). Formal approval of the warning is now scheduled for a special meeting on Tuesday, January 29, 2019. He noted the Utility Commissions discussed last night the proposed article regarding the Cheney Hill Solar Farm Project. The members suggested a few minor tweaks to the phrasing suggested by Gerard LaVarnway at the last Select Board meeting. For example, they would like to specify the actual size of the project rather than just call it "large." Also, Manager Schulz would like it stated the proposed location is at the entrance of the Town Forest (not within it). These changes will be on the draft warning. Board member Goodrich asked if there would be an article related to the Select Board's proposal to discontinue maintenance of certain one- and two-house roads. Manager Schulz thought the wording might be difficult but this would be the Select Board's decision. Chair Goslant said the Highway Subcommittee would meet soon to discuss this possibility and other matters.

**X. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (UNSCHEDULED).** There was none.

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

The Board adjourned at 8:22 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 revised and approved at the regular Select Board meeting of January 22, 2019.