

**TOWN OF NORTHFIELD, VERMONT
SELECT BOARD REGULAR MEETING
Minutes of January 22, 2019**

- I. ROLL CALL.** Select Board Chair Kenneth W. Goslant, Board members Lynn Doney (absent), Julie H. Goodrich, K. David Maxwell (absent), and Nathaniel Miller. Also present were Town Manager Jeff Schulz, Acting Clerk Kenneth McCann, Lydia Petty (Ironwood Adventure Works), Will Robens (Ironwood Adventure Works), Brian Baker (The Dufresne Group), Laura Hill-Eubanks (Conservation Commission), Eric Blaisdell (*Times Argus*), Jonathan Spencer, Carolyn Stevens, John Stevens, Nancy LaVarnway, Gerard LaVarnway, Kaitlyn Keating, Steve Davis, and Elroy Hill.

Chair Goslant called the meeting to order at 7:05 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. Lydia Petty: Permission to Hold Paine Mountain Trail Race.** Ms. Petty and Will Robens from Ironwood Adventure Works are asking for Select Board permission to run the Second Annual Paine Mountain Trail Race on both municipal and Norwich University property. The major change will be the race will be moved from August to July as this seems to better fit the racers' schedules. They also are looking at the possibility of expanding the course route into Berlin and Montpelier but will keep the Select Board informed should it happen this year. Manager Schulz reported there were no problems with the initial race last year. Motion by Board member Miller, seconded by Board member Goodrich, to grant permission for the Second Annual Paine Mountain Trail Race to be held on Saturday, July 13, 2019. **Motion passed 3-0-0.**

- b. Brian Baker, Dufresne Group: South Main Street Stormwater Project.** The Select Board members were provided with copies of Mr. Baker's report just before the meeting so he will provide a general project overview tonight and (if they choose) return to answer their questions at a future meeting. Mr. Baker said the main focus of this project would be on South Main Street between Slate Avenue and South Street. It will mainly impact the side streets (Slate Avenue, Elm Street, and Prospect Street) where the current culverts divert stormwater directly into the municipal sewer system (or into the street) rather than into a separate collection area where it would be treated before infiltration into the soil. There would be a secondary project site on North Main Street where there is a similar situation on Sherman Avenue and Houston Street. Mr. Baker noted the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources (ANR) has been imposing new mandates in order to limit the amount of untreated stormwater going into the Lake Champlain watershed. Therefore, doing nothing really is not an option.

Mr. Baker said the current estimate for total project costs is \$1,900,000. Manager Schulz noted the municipality already has \$300,000 in state "Green Grant" funds provided the construction phase of the project is awarded to a contractor before July 1, 2019. Mr. Baker said additional state grant funds might be available. Unfortunately, waiting for some might mean missing the "Green Grant" deadline. Manager Schulz said there is a possibility of reducing the scale of the project and thus lower the overall cost. He will work with Mr. Baker on this. Manager Schulz noted Vermont municipalities soon will be compelled to undertake such stormwater projects or face massive penalties. In addition, the Northfield Wastewater Treatment Facility's state permit will expire in three (3) years and ANR has made clear it would like its phosphorus levels reduced before the permit can be renewed. This type of stormwater treatment project is the only way to achieve this level of reduction.

Chair Goslant noted Northfield has been one of the more pro-active Vermont communities in dealing with its stormwater problems. However, as other municipalities start to catch up with us, it is possible state grant funds will become much more difficult to obtain in the future. Manager Schulz said regardless of the amount ANR provides for this project the municipality still would have to bond to cover its share of the expenses. The Select Board members noted the estimated cost of this project is significantly higher than they had been informed earlier. They then thanked Mr. Baker for his presentation and his written report and look forward to his next appearance.

V. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- a. **January 8, 2019 (Budget Meeting).** Motion by Board member Goodrich, seconded by Board member Miller, to approve the minutes. **Motion passed 3-0-0.**
- b. **January 8, 2019 (Regular Meeting).** Motion by Board member Goodrich, seconded by Board member Miller, to approve the minutes. Board member Miller had one minor correction. **Motion to approve amended minutes passed 3-0-0.**
- c. **January 10, 2019 (Budget Meeting).** Motion by Board member Goodrich, seconded by Board member Miller, to approve the minutes. **Motion passed 3-0-0.**
- d. **January 14, 2019 (Budget Meeting).** Motion by Board member Goodrich, seconded by Board member Miller, to approve the minutes. **Motion passed 3-0-0.**

VI. APPROVAL OF BILLS

- a. **Warrant #14-19.** Motion by Board member Goodrich, seconded by Board member Miller, to approve Warrant #14-19 in the amount of \$103,309.93. **Motion passed 3-0-0.**
- b. **Approval of Biweekly Payroll through January 13, 2019.** Motion by Board member Goodrich, seconded by Board member Miller, to approve the biweekly payroll in the amount of \$105,684.56. **Motion passed 3-0-0.**

VII. LIQUOR CONTROL COMMISSION

- a. **Liquor License Renewal: South Village Mobil.** Motion by Board member Goodrich, seconded by Board member Miller, to approve the liquor license renewal. Manager Schulz said the Northfield Police Department has confirmed there were no problems with this liquor license last year. **Motion passed 3-0-0.**

VIII. SELECT BOARD

- a. **Approval of 2019/2020 Municipal Budget.** Manager Schulz noted the Select Board members have held thirteen (13) separate budget meetings over the past two (2) months. The proposed budget was finalized at last night's budget meeting with total expenditures of \$4,385,060, of which \$3,025,680 will be raised by property taxes. If approved by the voters on Town Meeting Day, this would result in a 5.3¢ increase in the Town Tax Rate. He noted after much deliberation, the Select Board members decided to increase the Highway Department budget in order to address serious problems on the unpaved backroads. In addition, this highway budget will have about \$200,000 available for paving projects. Manager Schulz hopes this amount will be supplemented by Vermont Agency of Transportation (VTrans) grant funds for which he already has applied. He added this budget also provides for the purchase of Tasers for the Northfield Police Department. Chair Goslant said a considerable amount of funds sitting in dormant Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) and Capital Equipment Plan (CEP) accounts have been transferred in order to fund priority projects and purchases. Another Select Board decision was to discontinue the municipality's support of the Northfield-Montpelier weekday commuter bus services operated by Green Mountain Transit (GMT). This will save taxpayers \$21,000 in the next fiscal year. The weekly shuttle bus service will be retained. Motion by Board member Goodrich, seconded by Board member Miller, to approve the FY 2019/2020 Municipal Budget as presented. **Motion passed 3-0-0.**

- b. Approval of DRAFT 2019 Town Meeting Warning.** Manager Schulz read through the draft warning, highlighting three (3) articles. The first would have voters authorize the creation of a “Northfield Energy Commission” as requested by the group now operating under the title “Northfield’s Energy Future.” Manager Schulz said there had been some conversation over an alternate approach that would have the Select Board members create an energy committee, which would not require voter sanction. He noted in most Vermont communities such groups usually begin as committees and were only later upgraded to commissions (if needed). Board member Goodrich would be happy to establish a Northfield Energy Committee tonight so there would be no need to wait until after Town Meeting to begin its operations. Motion by Board member Goodrich, seconded by Board member Miller, to establish Northfield’s Energy Futures as the new Northfield Energy Committee. **Motion passed 3-0-0.**

Another article would seek voter support for the construction of a solar farm on Cheney Farm. Manager Schulz has spoken to the Utility Commissioners and as they have found a possible alternative site on private property for this project, there are no current plans to build a solar farm on Cheney Farm. Therefore, this article will be removed from the warning. Another item under discussion was the funding article for the GMT Northfield-Montpelier commuter bus service. As noted earlier, the Select Board members have taken this appropriation out of the budget so this article also will be removed from the warning. Chair Goslant said (as was the case last year) the Town Meeting open session will be held the night before Town Meeting Day (Monday, March 4, 2019) starting at 6:30 p.m. in the Northfield Middle/High School Auditorium. Voting on all Australian Ballot articles will be held from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. on Tuesday, March 5, 2019, in the Northfield Middle/High School Lobby. Motion by Board member Miller, seconded by Board member Goodrich, to approve the amended draft warning. The finalized warning will be approved and signed at a Special Select Board Meeting on Tuesday, January 29, 2019, at 5:30 p.m. in the Municipal Building. **Motion passed 3-0-0.**

- c. Approval of VTrans 2019 Certificate of Highway Mileage.** Manager Schulz said every year at this time VTrans asks each municipality to certify their amount of highway mileage and indicate whether there have been any changes from the previous year. There were no changes in Northfield highway mileage during 2018. Motion by Board member Goodrich, seconded by Board member Miller, to approve and sign the VTrans 2019 Certificate of Highway Mileage. **Motion passed 3-0-0.**

- d. Letter of Support - New England Waste Services - Coventry Landfill Expansion.** Manager Schulz said Casella Waste Management (also operating under the name “Northeast Waste Services”) is seeking state permission to expand the Coventry landfill, which is the last one operating in Vermont. It is projected in its current configuration the landfill only has three (3) years of operation left. There has been local opposition to the expansion due to odor and health concerns and some environmental groups have raised concerns as well. Manager Schulz said if the facility is not expanded soon, Northfield and other municipalities might need to go out of state to dispose of their solid waste. Casella has asked for letters of support for its expansion plans and Manager Schulz will draft one should the Select Board members authorize him to do so. Board member Miller has some reservations about this as there appears to be some vagueness in Casella’s proposal. There also has been evidence the Coventry Landfill has been leeching chemicals into the Lake Memphremagog watershed for some time and any expansion would only exacerbate this. Board member Miller noted the landfill has been making money by accepting out-of-state solid waste. For these reasons, he would not support this letter of support at this time. Chair Goslant suggested tabling this matter until more information can be gathered. Manager Schulz said there was no urgency. Board member Goodrich would like the out-of-state disposal options explored.

IX. BOARD MEMBERS’ COMMENTS, CONCERNS, QUESTIONS

- a. Better Connections Grant Application.** Board member Goodrich noted this grant application had a January 31, 2019 submission deadline and asked if all was on schedule. Lydia Petty, whose organization Northfield Recreation Trails Committee has been spearheading this effort, said they have been working with Dan Currier from the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission (CVRPC) on finalizing the application and they expect to submit it on time.

- b. Brown Public Library (BPL) Window Replacement Project.** Board member Goodrich asked about the status of the window replacement project. John Stevens, who serves as Treasurer on the BPL Board of Trustees, said the contractor has measured the windows and will seek quotes from several suppliers. The new windows will be installed as soon as they arrive. Chair Goslant had heard a quote of about \$3,500. He added there is a lot of heat loss in the building due to the poor condition of the current windows. He thanked Mr. Stevens for getting this done.
- c. Main Street/Depot Square Crosswalk.** Board member Goodrich asked if there had been any success in getting a VTrans representative to provide a safety evaluation of this intersection and whether new lighting and signage should be installed. Manager Schulz said he has made contact with VTrans and is waiting for a response.
- d. Town Budget Process Summary.** Chair Goslant said the Select Board members had just completed a lengthy budget process and he wanted to especially thank Manager Schulz and Financial Director Laurie Baroffio for their efforts. He felt the Select Board has approved a budget that provided the most community benefit for the taxpayer dollar. Chair Goslant also noted Elroy Hill attended nearly every budget meeting and he thanked him for his valuable advice and for the refreshments he provided. Under the circumstances, Chair Goslant believes he and his fellow Select Board members did a fantastic job.

X. TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

- a. Vermont Village Waste Disposal.** Manager Schulz has been working with Vermont Village, which bottles vinegar and other products at the old Chouinard facility, with their need to dispose of their waste. They had been given permission to dispose of it at the Wastewater Treatment Facility (WWTF) but some problems developed there due to the large amount of it and its excessive acidity. Manager Schulz and Utility Superintendent Patrick DeMasi have been working with Vermont Village to help reduce the acidity level and to spread out the disposal into manageable amounts. The waste is going to the WWTF again now these problems have been resolved. Manager Schulz felt it was good for the municipality to work with and help support local businesses whenever possible. Chair Goslant added it was good to see Cabot Hosiery putting part of the Nantanna plant back in use as a storage facility. He has heard of a couple new businesses perhaps coming to Northfield and will provide more information when available. Chair Goslant noted the budget just approved by the Select Board will provide funds to improve sidewalks in the downtown area and this should be a boon to economic development.

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

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 personnel matter with Manager Schulz present. **Motion passed 3-0-0.**

The Board went into executive session at 8:20 p.m.

Motion by Board member Goodrich, seconded by Board member Miller, to come out of executive session. **Motion passed 3-0-0.**

The Board came out of executive session at 8:40 p.m. No action was taken.

XIII. ADJOURNMENT. Motion by Board member Miller, seconded by Board member Goodrich, to adjourn. **Motion passed 3-0-0.**

The Board adjourned at 8:40 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 February 12, 2019.