

**TOWN OF NORTHFIELD, VERMONT
SELECT BOARD REGULAR MEETING
Minutes of February 12, 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, Thomas M. Brown (Vermont Agency of Natural Resources), Brian Baker (Dufresne Group Consulting Engineers), Patrick DeMasi (Utility Superintendent), Katrina DeMasi, Jane Pekol (Northfield Energy Committee), Sarah Wolfe (Northfield Energy Committee), Nicholas Laskovski (Northfield Energy Committee), Mary McDaniel, Charles Morse, Chip Gianfagna, 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. Thomas M. Brown, Vermont Agency of Natural Resources (ANR): South Main Street Stormwater/CSO Project.** Manager Schulz said Mr. Brown was present tonight to discuss various financing options for this project. The purpose of the project is to keep stormwater runoff in the South Main Street/Slate Avenue area from reaching the Wastewater Treatment Facility (WWTF) and to address stormwater overflow concerns on East Street. The State of Vermont is expected to cover a large portion of the total project costs through grants, low interest loans, and no-interest loans. Mr. Brown said this was a transition year as the criteria for ANR awarding Pollution Control (PC) grant funds for wastewater and stormwater projects will change on July 1, 2019 from categorical to points based. The town is also hoping to participate in the CWSRF GSI pilot program. The new point-based system is taking a number of new factors into consideration (such as local per capita income, etc.) when establishing a new priority list. The current estimate of total project costs is \$1,900,000 and the ANR GSI Pilot Program would provide loan funds that would not have to be repaid (i.e., "forgiven") with a maximum amount of one-tenth of total project costs (i.e., \$190,000). This is contingent on the construction phase of the project starting by July 1, 2019. In addition, ANR will cover half of the project design costs, which would be \$35,000. Mr. Brown said Northfield is not currently in the fundable range for the current categorical Pollution Control grant funds of approximately \$400,000 but could apply for the next fiscal year points based PC Grant (estimated at 34% of total project costs). If project construction doesn't start by the target date, Northfield would lose the GSI pilot program funds but still would be able to use the new grant methodology to apply for Pollution Control grant funds. Since the municipality would need to seek voter approval to obtain bond loans, Mr. Brown recommended putting the bond amount at total project cost so the project would not have to be halted if there is a delay in obtaining ANR PC Grant funding. He added the start of the construction phase does not necessarily require ground to be broken. ANR would consider the construction phase to have begun once there has been a successful bond vote, project design plans have been finalized, and any required permits (i.e., Act 250) have been obtained.

Manager Schulz asked what would happen if the municipality decided to delay the bond vote until the summer. Mr. Brown said the pilot project funds would be lost and Northfield would have to apply for PC grant funds under the new methodology grant system. The amount of grant funds available in the next fiscal year also would be dependent on how much the state legislature appropriates for wastewater and stormwater mitigation projects. Manager Schulz said the next step would be for the municipality to make an agreement with Dufresne Group Consulting Engineers to finalize the project design plans. Brian Baker from the Dufresne Group confirmed this and added this step would be followed by ANR approving the project design loan application and the project contract itself. Manager Schulz asked if the \$1,900,000 estimated project cost was accurate. Mr. Baker said some project scope reductions might lower the total cost but this cannot be confirmed until the project design is finalized.

Manager Schulz would like Mr. Brown, Mr. Baker, and Lynnette Claudon, who serves as ANR's Chief Pollution Control Design Engineer, to attend the next Select Board regular meeting (02/26/19) with definitive information regarding project costs and the extent of state financial assistance available. If all is acceptable, the Select Board will formally approve the project design contract with Dufresne Group at that time. Mr. Brown felt another important decision needing to be made soon is the timing of the bond vote. Chair Goslant noted Northfield is facing a number of expensive infrastructure projects in the near future, such as the replacement of the Main Street Bridge, and felt this is a lot of money to spend at one time. He then thanked Mr. Brown and Mr. Baker for the valuable information provided tonight.

V. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- a. **January 15, 2019 (Budget Meeting).** Motion by Board member Goodrich, seconded by Board member Miller, to approve the minutes. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
- b. **January 17, 2019 (Budget Meeting).** Motion by Board member Goodrich, seconded by Board member Doney, to approve the minutes. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
- c. **January 21, 2019 (Budget Meeting).** Motion by Board member Goodrich, seconded by Board member Doney, to approve the minutes. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
- d. **January 22, 2019 (Regular Meeting).** Motion by Board member Goodrich, seconded by Board member Miller, to approve the minutes. There was one correction: the body of water Board member Miller mentioned during the Coventry Landfill discussion was Lake Memphremagog (not Lake Champlain). **Motion to approve revised minutes passed 3-0-2, with Select Board members Doney and Maxwell abstaining.**
- e. **January 29, 2019 (Special Meeting).** Motion by Board member Goodrich, seconded by Board member Miller, to approve the minutes. **Motion passed 4-0-1, with Select Board member Doney abstaining.**

VI. APPROVAL OF BILLS

- a. **Warrant #15-19.** Motion by Board member Goodrich, seconded by Board member Maxwell, to approve Warrant #15-19 in the amount of \$426,586.83. Board member Doney wanted to know why the Northfield Police Department is reimbursing one of its officers who paid for "prisoner food." Manager Schulz will check on this. Board member Goodrich asked why a wrecker was paid \$225 by the Northfield Ambulance Service. Manager Schulz said one of the units did go off the road in Roxbury. The crew was able to shift it back on the road before the wrecker arrived but still had to pay for the callout. Chair Goslant noted over half of the total warrant amount (\$231,636) represented what the Northfield Electric Department paid for power to be resold to its customers. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
- b. **Approval of Biweekly Payroll through January 27, 2019.** Motion by Board member Maxwell, seconded by Board member Doney, to approve the biweekly payroll in the amount of \$96,074.07. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

VII. LIQUOR CONTROL COMMISSION

- a. **Liquor License Renewals**
 1. **American Legion Club.** Motion by Board member Goodrich, seconded by Board member Doney, to approve the liquor license renewal. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
 2. **Champlain Farms.** Motion by Board member Goodrich, seconded by Board member Doney, to approve the liquor license renewal. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
 3. **Cornerstone Burger.** Motion by Board member Goodrich, seconded by Board member Doney, to approve the liquor license renewal. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
 4. **Norwich University.** Motion by Board member Goodrich, seconded by Board member Doney, to approve the liquor license renewal. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
 5. **O'Maddi's Deli & Café.** Motion by Board member Goodrich, seconded by Board member Doney, to approve the liquor license renewal. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
 6. **Rustic Restaurant.** Motion by Board member Goodrich, seconded by Board member Doney, to approve the liquor license renewal. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
 7. **Tops Market.** Motion by Board member Goodrich, seconded by Board member Doney, to approve the liquor license renewal. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
- b. **Outside Consumption Permits**
 1. **American Legion Club.** Motion by Board member Maxwell, seconded by Board member Doney, to approve the outside consumption permit. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

2. **Cornerstone Burger.** Motion by Board member Maxwell, seconded by Board member Doney, to approve the outside consumption permit. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
3. **O'Maddi's Deli & Café.** Motion by Board member Maxwell, seconded by Board member Doney, to approve the outside consumption permit. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

VIII. SELECT BOARD

a. **Green Mountain Transit (GMT) Northfield-Montpelier Commuter Bus Service.**

Manager Schulz noted there have been a number of emails and Front Porch Forum postings over the couple weeks related to the Select Board's decision to remove from the 2019 Northfield Town Meeting Warning the Australian Ballot article seeking voter authorization for the \$21,000 local match amount required to continue the weekday GMT commuter bus service. One complaint was since this article has been approved by voters for three straight years, it should automatically go onto the warning. However, Manager Schulz said this policy only pertains to funding requests that have been petitioned, which this article never was. Since informing GMT of the Select Board's decision, Manager Schulz has received a letter from them indicating there is the possibility of reducing the number of trips the commuter bus makes each weekday. The commuter bus currently has two roundtrips in the early morning, one at midday, and two in the late afternoon. GMT's proposal is to eliminate the midday trip, which would reduce the local match amount by \$4,800. Manager Schulz said the Select Board members have expressed their concerns over the past three years that the low ridership of this service did not justify the \$21,000 annual expense. Manager Schulz said he would continue to work with GMT on possible cost reductions and obtain a formal proposal in writing. Chair Goslant noted many Vermont communities have expressed similar concerns about the high cost of underutilized GMT services. Board member Maxwell added it is possible GMT could work with some of Northfield's major employers to obtain their contributions towards this service. Manager Schulz will check on this. Chair Goslant thought it would be nice to keep the commuter bus service in operation at a more reasonable price. He suggested another option would be to have one early morning trip and one later afternoon trip.

Katrina DeMasi said a good number of Northfield residents use this service for other reasons than workday commuting to and from Montpelier or Northfield. Some use it for medical and other appointments in Montpelier and cancelling the midday trip would mean they would have to spend the entire day in Montpelier because of a one- or two-hour appointment. Board member Doney suggested maintaining the midday trip but eliminating one of the late afternoon trips. Charles Morse felt the decision to eliminate this service only should have been made after seeking public input as well as bringing in GMT representatives beforehand to discuss this possibility. He felt 7,000 commuter bus trips each year is a significant number and well justified the \$21,000 annual local expense. Mr. Morse would like the \$21,000 put back in the FY 2019/2020 municipal budget on Town Meeting Day and any future decisions regarding route reductions delayed until this matter has been discussed at length. He believes Northfield having public transportation access to Montpelier and beyond is an important local resource. Board member Doney noted it was the drastic step of removing this funding from the warning that brought GMT to the negotiating table.

Board member Maxwell believes GMT should better market this service to Northfield and Montpelier residents. It currently runs at only ten percent (10%) of capacity. Nicholas Laskovski serves on the new Northfield Energy Committee and he felt publicizing and extolling the virtues of local public transportation should be one of the committee's responsibilities. Increasing the commuter service's ridership would contribute greatly towards its long-term sustainability. Board member Goodrich said the possibility of cancelling this service was brought up during last year's budget sessions but she opposed it then. This year, GMT representatives had been invited to address the Select Board at their January 8, 2019 regular meeting but had cancelled due to a bad snowstorm. It had proven impossible to reschedule their appearance before the budget decision had to be made. Board member Goodrich would not oppose keeping the commuter bus service as is for an additional year while efforts are made to reduce costs, increase ridership, etc. Board member Maxwell feels further communication with GMT certainly is needed. Chair Goslant said he has sought negotiation with GMT over the past couple years but nothing substantial happened until the recent Select Board decision. He said this action should not have been a surprise to anyone given how many times Select Board members have raised these concerns in recent years.

- b. Letter of Support - New England Waste Services - Coventry Landfill Expansion.** At the previous regular meeting (01/22/19), the Select Board members discussed the possibility of providing a letter of support for Casella Waste Management (also operating under the name "Northeast Waste Services") and its plans to expand the Coventry Landfill. As only three (3) members were present at this meeting and Board member Miller raised some major objections, it was decided to table further discussion until tonight.

Manager Schulz has looked into Select Board member Miller's expressed concerns, such as the possibility of the expanded landfill leeching waste into nearby Lake Memphremagog and the reason for the landfill running out of operating space is the acceptance of out-of-state solid waste. He found Casella plans to put in extra safeguards (i.e., double-lining the landfill cells, etc.) to prevent groundwater contamination and out-of-state waste is not being accepted at this time. Manager Schulz added without this expansion, Northfield will need to find somewhere else to send its solid waste when the landfill's capacity limit is reached within three (3) years. Since the closure of the Moretown landfill, this is the last one operating in the state.

Board member Miller also has researched this matter further and still has the same objections as before. For example, given the expanding solid waste recycling requirements here in Vermont, it is very likely the amount of local solid waste destined for the landfill will decline significantly in the next few years. When this happens, Casella will need to find new customers to justify the landfill expansion. In addition, Board member Miller thinks whatever steps Casella might take, the eventual leeching of hazardous chemicals into the groundwater is inevitable. He is particularly worried about perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), which the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) considers "emerging contaminants." PFAS are highly toxic chemicals used in a variety of everyday products such as cookware, clothing, and food packaging. Board member Miller noted PFAS never break down; enter the bloodstreams of both people and animals; and have been linked to cancer, thyroid disease, and other health issues. Despite calling them a "national emergency," the EPA still hasn't developed clear guidelines for their safe disposal and long-term storage.

Board member Miller doesn't believe Northfield's input will affect the Act 250 decision one way or another but also doesn't want Select Board members to support Casella and its scare tactics. Board member Miller would like the municipality to start looking for other options for its waste disposal. Manager Schulz said the only alternative is to ship the waste to another state or into Canada. Chair Goslant said Governor Phil Scott and his advisors inspected the landfill site recently and found no problems with Casella's proposal. Board member Miller doesn't feel the long-term effects have been sufficiently investigated. Board member Maxwell asked why Northfield is being asked for its support. Manager Schulz said Northfield and the other Mountain Alliance member communities were asked by Casella to provide endorsing letters but there is no requirement to do so. Mr. Morse agrees with Board member Miller's concerns regarding groundwater contamination, etc. Given the number of issues raised tonight, Board member Goodrich sees no reason to proceed further in this matter.

- c. Letter to State of Vermont – Main Street Bridge.** Manager Schulz said this bridge has been identified by the Vermont Agency of Transportation (VTrans) and the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission (CVRPC) as requiring replacement as soon as possible. It now is listed fifteenth on the VTrans priority list but Manager Schulz feels it is important for the municipality to keep in steady contact with VTrans and CVRPC in order to emphasize the importance of this project to Northfield. He would like the Select Board members' permission to send a letter out to this effect. There was no objection. Manager Schulz also would like residents to realize the municipality is doing all it can to expedite the bridge replacement. Board member Maxwell is interested in seeing how traffic will be rerouted during the construction process, whether a temporary bridge would be installed, etc.
- d. Appointment of Acting Zoning Administrator.** Manager Schulz said Zoning Administrator Stephen Hatch has submitted his letter of resignation after serving for the past three (3) years. Manager Schulz is willing to serve again as Acting Zoning Administrator during the search for a permanent replacement. Motion by Board member Maxwell, seconded by Board member Doney, to accept with regret Mr. Hatch's letter of resignation. **Motion passed 5-0-0.** Motion by Board member Maxwell, seconded by Board member Miller, to appoint Manager Schulz as Acting Zoning Administrator. **Motion passed 5-0-0.** Manager Schulz will advertise the position as soon as possible. Chair Goslant noted it was Mr. Hatch's decision to step down, he had been doing a good job for the municipality, and he will be missed.

- e. **Select Board Public Hearing (Australian Ballot Articles): Tuesday, February 26, 2019.** This public hearing is required by state law and will be held at the beginning of the next regular meeting. The non-profit organizations with funding articles on the Town Warning already have been contacted by mail regarding the time and location.

IX. BOARD MEMBERS' COMMENTS, CONCERNS, QUESTIONS

- a. **BBQ Chicken Dinner Fundraiser.** Board member Doney said the Recreation Committee be holding another BBQ Chicken dinner fundraiser soon. The meals will consist of half a chicken, mostaccioli, coleslaw, roll, dessert, and a beverage for \$12. The meals can be picked up at the Kenyon's Hardware store parking lot on Sunday, March 3, 2019, from 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. One hundred and fifty (150) tickets will be sold beforehand and can be purchased from Committee members, etc. The proceeds will be used to help refurbish the basketball court at Memorial Park. Board member Doney said a similar event was held last year and was very successful.
- b. **Pothole near Norwich University (NU) Campus.** Board member Doney said the pothole was caused by a sewer line repair done by Norwich University last fall and has been expanding steadily since then. He has heard a lot of negative feedback about this from drivers and he is glad Manager Schulz has reached out to NU to fix the problem. Manager Schulz said he has heard back and NU is planning to fix the problem this spring.
- c. **Economic Development Subcommittee.** Chair Goslant said he and Board member Miller met last night and they will provide more information and some recommendations for the Select Board at the next regular meeting (02/26/19).
- d. **Carl H. "Wally" Reed.** Chair Goslant said life-long Northfield resident Carl Reed passed away at his Pleasant Street home last Sunday (02/10/19). Mr. Reed had worked at Nantanna Textile Mill and Cetrangelo Finishing Works for several years prior to his retirement in 1995. He and the other Select Board members send their condolences to his children Doug Reed, Steve Reed, Gregory Reed, Kevin Reed, and Gina Reed Sargent. He noted Doug Reed is currently employed as Northfield's Utility Office Manager and Steve Reed is a former Northfield Village Highway Department employee.
- e. **Tabor Gravel Pit.** Chair Goslant wanted to thank Jerry Tabor for opening up his gravel pit for the Highway crew. They were able to get an additional thousand yards of sand, which will be needed in coming weeks. Chair Goslant noted this has been a crazy winter.

X. TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

- a. **Main Street/Depot Square Crosswalk.** Manager Schulz recently contacted VTrans about performing an on-site analysis of this intersection, which would include recommendations whether new lighting and/or signage should be installed to promote pedestrian safety. He has heard back and the analysis will be done before the end of March. Chair Goslant felt the two (2) crosswalks on South Main Street adjacent to Norwich University also have safety issues with poor visibility, etc. He suggested VTrans could look at them at the same time.

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

XII. EXECUTIVE SESSION Motion by Board member Goodrich, seconded by Board member Doney, to go into executive session, in accordance with 1 VSA 313 (a)(1), in order to discuss contract negotiations with Manager Schulz present. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

The Board went into executive session at 8:45 p.m.

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

The Board came out of executive session at 9:15 p.m. No action was taken.

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

The Board adjourned at 9:15 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 26, 2019.