

**TOWN OF NORTHFIELD, VERMONT
SELECT BOARD REGULAR MEETING
Minutes of April 23, 2019**

- I. ROLL CALL.** Select Board Chair K. David Maxwell, Board members Lynn Doney, Julie H. Goodrich, Kenneth W. Goslant, and Nathaniel Miller. Also present were Town Manager Jeff Schulz, Acting Clerk Kenneth McCann, Cassie Morse (Northfield Farmers Market), Charles Morse (Northfield Farmers Market), Chris Alger, Alana Alger, and Elroy Hill.

Chair Maxwell called the meeting to order at 7:03 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. Cassie Morse, Northfield Farmers Market: Request to use Common for Summer Market.** The Northfield Farmers Market requests the Select Board's permission to hold a summer market on the Common each Tuesday afternoon with the first market on May 14 and the final one on October 8, 2019. There will be twenty-two (22) summer markets scheduled and, unlike last year, there are no plans to cancel the markets that occur after holiday weekends, i.e. Memorial Day, Labor Day, etc. Since market patrons had requested extra time to get to the Common after work, the market time has been extended an additional half-hour and will run from 3:00 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. There was no objection to this request. Chair Maxwell asked if any special events were planned this year. Ms. Morse said the Farmers Market would work with the Recreation Committee again this year in setting up a Maypole on the Common for a traditional Maypole Dance at 3:30 p.m. on Wednesday, May 1, 2019. As last year's inaugural event went so well, Ms. Morse expects twice as many children to participate this year. In addition, the "Night on the Crescent" and "Night on the Common" events will be held again on dates to be determined. Also, Tuesday, August 6, 2019, is the actual bicentennial date for Norwich University so there will be a special summer market held that day to both recognize and commemorate this anniversary. Finally, there will be a winter market held in December to coincide with the annual lighting of the Christmas tree on the Common. Chair Maxwell and the other Select Board members then thanked Ms. Morse and other Northfield Farmers Market organizers for their efforts.

V. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- a. April 9, 2019 (Regular Meeting).** Motion by Board member Goodrich, seconded by Board member Goslant, to approve the minutes. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

VI. APPROVAL OF BILLS

- a. Warrant #20-19.** Motion by Board member Goodrich, seconded by Board member Miller, to approve Warrant #20-19 in the amount of \$92,733.08. Board member Goodrich noted two (2) refurbished defibrillators were purchased by the Northfield Ambulance Service for a total cost of \$46,706. Manager Schulz confirmed this purchase had been agreed upon during the recent FY 2019/2020 budget process. Board member Goodrich noted the total cost was less than had been originally estimated. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
- b. Approval of Biweekly Payroll through April 7, 2019.** Motion by Board member Goodrich, seconded by Board member Miller, to approve the biweekly payroll in the amount of \$89,794.89. Board member Goodrich thought it was good that overtime expenses for the Highway Department and the Police Department had gone down for this pay period. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

VII. LIQUOR CONTROL COMMISSION

a. Liquor License Renewals

- 1. Convenience Plus.** Motion by Board member Doney, seconded by Board member Goslant, to approve the liquor license renewal. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
- 2. Northfield Country Club.** Motion by Board member Doney, seconded by Board member Goslant, to approve the liquor license renewal. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
- 3. The Woods at Wihakowi.** Motion by Board member Doney, seconded by Board member Goslant, to approve the liquor license renewal. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

b. Outside Consumption Permits

- 1. Northfield Country Club.** Motion by Board member Doney, seconded by Board member Goslant, to approve the outside consumption permit. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
- 2. The Woods at Wihakowi.** Motion by Board member Doney, seconded by Board member Goslant, to approve the outside consumption permit. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

VIII. SELECT BOARD

a. Engineering Services Agreement: South Main Street Stormwater/CSO Project.

Manager Schulz said over their past few meetings, the Select Board members have been discussing the possibility of reaching an agreement with The Dufresne Group to design the proposed stormwater project affecting South Main Street, the East Street CSO, and side streets such as Slate Avenue, Elm Street, Prospect Street, etc. Although the current thinking is to delay the construction phase of the project until the level of State funding can be verified, Manager Schulz would like Select Board authorization to reach an agreement so the engineering phase can be finalized. The cost to engineer the total project is \$70,000, with the State of Vermont covering half of the cost. There had been concerns expressed at the previous meeting regarding the "shelf life" of the engineering report should all or part of the project be delayed for some time. Manager Schulz contacted the engineer and was informed, with the exception of cost estimates, the engineering plans should be serviceable for at least seven (7) to eight (8) years. He also checked if the cost of the study could be lowered if its scope were reduced to match the current Select Board consensus to limit the initial construction phase to South Main Street and the East Street CSO with the side streets, etc. done at a later time. Manager Schulz was informed doing so would reduce the engineering costs by \$20,000.

Board member Goslant asked if this project really could be delayed for several years. Manager Schulz said the State of Vermont is now focusing resources on major stormwater projects in Burlington and Rutland so it could be some time before State funding for this project becomes available. Chair Maxwell noted when representatives from the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources (ANR) addressed the Select Board members recently, one suggestion was for the municipality to bond to cover the entire cost of the project. This way, the project could be completed without having to wait for confirmation of the State funding that would ultimately reimburse the municipality. Chair Maxwell didn't care much for that suggestion but did feel it would be good to have the engineering plans completed and available when the time arrives to move forward. Manager Schulz said having the engineering plans completed would indicate to the State that Northfield realizes the importance of eliminating the East Street CSO in the near future. In addition, having the plan in hand might assist in the procurement of State funding for the project. Manager Schulz favors having the engineering plans for the whole project since the State has committed to half its cost and there are local funds budgeted for the remaining expense. The current thinking is to split this cost evenly between the Sewer Department and the Highway Department. He added the whole project needs to be done eventually so it would be best to plan for all of it at this time.

Chair Maxwell is reluctant to commit to the total cost of the project (now estimated at \$1,742,400) so soon after the municipality has made an extensive capital commitment to rehabilitating the local highway infrastructure. However, he believes it would be wise to have the project design completed should State funding become available. Manager Schulz noted the State is aware Northfield has been pro-active in dealing with local stormwater problems with two (2) such projects completed and another in process.

Motion by Board member Goodrich, seconded by Board member Goslant, to authorize Manager Schulz to finalize an engineering services agreement with The Dufresne Group for the engineering phase of the South Main Street Stormwater/CSO Project for a total cost of \$70,000 with the State covering half this cost. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

- b. Union Street/Water Street Stormwater Project.** Manager Schulz said the bids for completing the construction phase of this project were opened last week (04/17/19) and the apparent low bid was \$455,000. This is considerably below the \$575,000 in State funds Northfield received for this project. The additional funds will be used for sidewalk paving, etc. The project now is moving forward and construction should begin before the end of May and completed this summer.

- c. Northfield Fire Station Roof Replacement Project.** At the last meeting, the Select Board members were provided with the two (2) bids received for this project from Burrell Roofing and Iron Horse Standing Seam Roofing. There were concerns expressed that although Iron Horse seemed to have submitted the lower bid (\$42,600), its submission was less detailed than the one provided by Burrell Roofing (\$65,000) regarding the scope of work to be performed, i.e. installation of ice and water shields, etc. As requested, Manager Schulz contacted Iron Horse and is comfortable their work specifications match those of Burrell Roofing. He therefore recommends awarding the bid to Iron Horse. Manager Schulz added he thought the cost of the roof replacement would be closer to \$60,000, which is the amount of borrowing Northfield voters authorized for this project. Board member Goodrich noted Burrell Roofing quoted an additional cost of \$70 per hour per worker to remove and replace any deteriorated wood discovered during the roof installation. She asked if Iron Horse had provided a similar quote should this work need to be done. Manager Schulz said he had not asked but can check. Board member Doney has inspected the Fire Station roof and doesn't think wood rot should be a major concern (if at all). Motion by Board member Doney, seconded by Board member Goslant, to authorize Manager Schulz to sign an agreement with Iron Horse Standing Seam Roofing to install a new roof on the Northfield Fire Station for \$42,600. Before finalizing the agreement, Manager Schulz will confirm any additional cost should deteriorated wood be found during the roof installation. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
- d. VTans Pedestrian Safety Analysis.** Manager Schulz said some community members had contacted the Select Board regarding the safety of the crosswalk at the intersection of Depot Square and Main Street. It was thought the level of lighting over the intersection wasn't sufficient for pedestrian safety during nighttime hours. Manager Schulz had suggested to the Select Board members that the Vermont Agency of Transportation (VTans) could conduct a safety analysis of the intersection to see if it would have any recommendations regarding improved lighting, new signage, etc. The Select Board members then expressed concerns regarding the two crosswalks adjacent to the Norwich University (NU) campus at ID White Avenue (by Plumley Armory) and by the student commuter parking lot. Manager Schulz requested a VTans pedestrian safety analysis of these three (3) crosswalks and this study was completed in early April 2019.
- On Depot Square, the VTans analysis did make recommendations for improved lighting and signage. It also suggested shifting the East Street crosswalk closer to Main Street. At the other crosswalks, there were similar recommendations for improved lighting and signage. There also were some trees at the west side of the roads that VTans suggested be trimmed for improved visibility. Manager Schulz has spoken to NU administrators about the Select Board members' concerns about the crosswalks near the campus and they have agreed to pay for any safety improvements recommended by VTans.
- Chair Maxwell is pleased NU has committed to funding crosswalk safety improvements but he feels there is a need for a comprehensive safety plan covering all three (3) crosswalks that is agreeable to all parties. He also would like all these crosswalks treated the same in terms of new signage and lighting, such as pedestrian-activated flashing crosswalk signs. There also is a need to eliminate the jaywalking by NU students at the curved blind spot between the South Main Street crosswalks. The foliage planted to prevent this has proved ineffective. After further discussion, it was the Select Board consensus that Manager Schulz will explore whether VTans or other grant funds are available for the purchase of the flashing signs. He also will obtain cost estimates for improved lighting at the Depot Square intersection. Manager Schulz will present his findings at the next regular Select Board meeting (05/14/19). Board member Goodrich suggested going ahead with the suggested roadside trimming in the interim.
- e. DRAFT 2019 Memorial Park Pool Schedule & Fees.** Manager Schulz provided the Select Board members with a draft pool schedule and fee structure for the 2019 summer season. The pool is tentatively scheduled to open on Saturday, June 15, 2019 and close on Saturday, August 17, 2019. Manager Schulz noted the fee structure was updated a couple years ago to conform to what other public pools in the Central Vermont area charge for season passes, daily passes, swimming lessons, etc. There are no plans for any fee increases at this time. Chair Maxwell asked if the current fee structure will support the pool operating budget approved by Northfield voters. Manager Schulz will look into this. Board member Goodrich would like better tracking this summer regarding the number of daily passes purchased at the pool, how they break down between residents and non-residents, etc. Manager Schulz will work on this with Pool Director Shannon Palone.

- f. **Zoning Administrator Position (possible executive session).** Manager Schulz reported the municipality has advertised for a new Zoning Administrator since the previous one resigned in early February. He said the Planning Commission did interview two (2) candidates at their meeting last week and has made a recommendation that one of them be hired as Zoning Administrator. Since this topic is a personnel matter, Manager Schulz would like to hold any additional discussion in executive session. There was no objection.
- g. **Green Up Day.** This year's Green Up Day will be held on Saturday, May 4, 2019. Northfield residents who wish to participate should meet behind the Northfield Fire Station (128 Wall Street) at 8:30 a.m. At that time, Green Up Day bags will be distributed, area assignments will be given, etc. The Northfield Rotary Club is spearheading the effort again this year so please email northfieldvtrotary@gmail.com for additional information.

IX. BOARD MEMBERS' COMMENTS, CONCERNS, QUESTIONS

- a. **Handicapped Parking Spaces.** Board member Doney feels the one handicapped parking space on East Street near Good Measure Brewing is inadequate. He would like to see at least one more installed at that location.
- b. **East Street/Northfield Main Street Sidewalk Project.** Board member Goslant asked if the sidewalk project on East Street and the east side of North Main Street from Subway to the Main Street Bridge was ready to proceed. Manager Schulz said funding for this project is in the FY 2019/2020 budget but the project might have to be rebid. The cost estimate provided last fall was not a formal bid and probably is outdated. Chair Maxwell said the plan to fix the sidewalk along South Main Street from Depot Square to the NU campus also needs to move forward. Manager Schulz said he is working with the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission (CVRPC) on grant applications, which need to be submitted by June.
- c. **Mud Season Road Conditions.** Board member Goslant asked how the backroads are holding up this Mud Season. Manager Schulz said recent rainstorms resulted in a few washouts that the Highway crew were able to fix relatively quickly. He added that most of the backroads are performing well overall but some have bad spots causing problems for drivers. This include parts of Turkey Hill Road, Little Northfield Road, Rabbit Hollow Road, Stony Brook Road, Hallstrom Road, etc. By contrast, some roads are much better than they have been in past years including Bull Run Road, West Hill Road, etc. Manager Schulz felt the roadside tree trimming program has had a positive effect on several backroads and the increased gravel budget for the next fiscal year should help to mitigate the impact of next year's Mud Season. Board member Goslant asked if there was any additional road material in the Town's pit. Manager Schulz said there is some material there but it is not suitable for Mud Season work. Some additional road material had to be purchased, which will result in a deficit in this year's gravel/stone budget. However, there should be surpluses in other Highway Department line items and in the General Town Budget to offset this.
- d. **Better Connections \$88,000 Grant Award.** Board member Goodrich asked about this grant award, which was publicized recently in the *Times Argus* (04/13/19). Manager Schulz said of the total grant amount, \$55,000 came from VTrans and the Agency of Commerce and Community Development and can be used to finance a planning study for improved pedestrian and bicycle trails that will better connect the downtown area to Memorial Park, Northfield Falls Park, Water Street Park, etc. The remaining \$33,000 came from an ANR Clean Water grant and Manager Schulz is unsure what the plans are for these funds.

X. TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

- a. **Turkey Hill Maple Farm Lease Agreement.** There have been public concerns expressed that the owners of Turkey Hill Maple Farm (Howard and Judith Anderson) have been in violation of their agreement with the municipality that permits them to tap maple trees on Town-owned property in return for a payment of \$1.25 per tap. The complaints include the installation of too many taps in the area, the destruction of apple trees, a structure built in violation of the agreement, etc. The municipality hired local forester Rose Beatty to inspect the Turkey Hill parcel to determine whether there was any validity to the complaints. Ms. Beatty has reported that trees have not been damaged and the structure built was allowed under the agreement.

Ms. Beatty did have an issue with smaller trees being tapped and this concern will be discussed with the Andersons. In addition, the Andersons will have to report the total number of taps next month so they can be billed accurately by the municipality. Manager Schulz now believes Turkey Hill Maple Farm has (in the main) been in accordance with the conditions of the lease agreement. Chair Maxwell said there had been a suggestion the structure was not built on municipal property (as permitted) but instead on a neighbor's private property. It might be possible to hire a drone operator to confirm this.

- b. Northfield Transfer Station & Recycling Depot.** Manager Schulz said an application has been submitted with the State of Vermont so All Clean Waste Services (Eric and Amy Davis) can operate the Northfield facility on a more permanent basis rather than as a "fast trash" drop off location. The new status would require more paperwork, including monthly reports, but would allow for vehicles to be left on site during non-collection hours, etc. Chair Maxwell believes the Davises are doing an outstanding job in operating the facility.
- c. Northfield Wastewater Treatment Facility (WWTF) Sludge Disposal.** Manager Schulz said the municipality is having problems finding somewhere to dispose of the sludge generated by the WWTF. Casella Waste Management had been trucking the sludge to its Coventry, VT landfill but is unwilling to do so now because of allegedly excessive odor. There are fifteen (15) tons of sludge at the WWTF now waiting to be removed. This amount will double in a few days. This problem is not isolated to Northfield and there are a number of communities affected by Casella's actions. Manager Schulz has contacted landfills in New Hampshire and New York as well as seeking assistance from the Vermont State government but hasn't had much luck yet. Board member Goodrich asked about the possibility of a Canadian landfill taking the sludge. Manager Schulz has looked into this but there are some transportation issues involved. He added the WWTF operators have changed the dewatering process at the facility which should eliminate this problem in the future but doesn't solve the problem of what to do with the sludge already accumulated. Manager Schulz noted this problem arose rather quickly and there have been suggestions Casella is using this issue as a way to pressure the State government into approving its landfill expansion request. Whether or not this is a manufactured crisis, Chair Maxwell felt it must be resolved quickly.

XI. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (UNSCHEDULED)

- a. Chris Alger: Highway Subcommittee Meetings.** Mr. Alger attended a previous Select Board meeting (03/26/19) and expressed his interest then in attending future Highway Subcommittee meetings provided they be held evenings when he can attend. Mr. Alger was a longtime employee of the Northfield Highway Department and feels he has much to contribute on this matter. He is disappointed he has not heard back from the Select Board members regarding this possibility. Board member Miller said the Highway Subcommittee would like to accommodate Mr. Alger but it is difficult to find a nighttime meeting time convenient to the affected Select Board members (Goslant and Miller), Highway Foreman Trent Tucker, Manager Schulz, etc. When this has been resolved, they will be sure to contact Mr. Alger with the agreed upon meeting time.

- XII. EXECUTIVE SESSION** Motion by Board member Goodrich, seconded by Board member Goslant, to go into executive session, in accordance with 1 VSA 313 (a)(1), in order to discuss two (2) separate personnel matters. Manager Schulz will be present for one discussion but not the other. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

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

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

The Board came out of executive session at 10:00 p.m. No action was taken.

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

The Board adjourned at 10:01 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 May 14, 2019.