

**TOWN OF NORTHFIELD, VERMONT
SELECT BOARD REGULAR MEETING
Minutes of May 28, 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, Sally Davidson (Recreation Committee), Steve Davis, and Elroy Hill.

Chair Maxwell 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. Sally Davidson: Recreation Committee Update.** Ms. Davidson first thanked all those who helped out with the Spring Cleanup of the municipal parks a couple weeks ago (05/18/19). Although attendance was sparse, they were able to accomplish quite a lot at Memorial Park and Northfield Falls Park in just a few hours. However, the main reason Ms. Davidson is here tonight was to request the Select Board's permission to contract the Recreation Committee from seven (7) members to five (5). It has been difficult in recent years to have seven active Recreation Committee members and this has made it difficult to achieve quorums for their monthly meetings. As there now are two unfilled positions, this action would not require removing anyone. Motion by Board member Doney, seconded by Board member Miller, to reduce the number of Recreation Committee members from seven (7) to five (5). **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

V. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- a. May 14, 2019 (Regular Meeting).** Motion by Board member Goodrich, seconded by Board member Doney, to approve the minutes. Board member Miller would like the fourth paragraph on page 5 (i.e., "Highway Subcommittee Update") rephrased in order to clarify his position regarding the preferred timetable for repaving Union Brook Road. **Motion to approve the revised minutes passed 5-0-0.**

VI. APPROVAL OF BILLS

- a. Warrant #22-19.** Motion by Board member Goodrich, seconded by Board member Doney, to approve Warrant #22-19 in the amount of \$117,034.94. Board member Doney noted the purchase of several mini-sensors for the Northfield Ambulance Service and wanted to know how many and why they were purchased. Manager Schulz is unsure about this but will check. Board member Doney believes it is very easy to misplace or lose these mini-sensors so it is important to keep a tight inventory of them. Board member Doney asked about Green Mountain Power (GMP) bills related to the recent expansion at Nantanna. Manager Schulz said upgrades had to be done to allow for Cabot Hosiery's plan to use the facility for product storage, etc. The property owner will reimburse the Northfield Electric Department (NED) for some (but not all) of the work done. Board member Goodrich noted a \$4,000 GMP bill for work on Moody Lane. She asked how much of this charge would be borne by the customer. Manager Schulz will investigate this and get the details. He noted NED's tariff governs what infrastructure work can be charged to the customer and what cannot. He suggested future warrants could include notations indicating reimbursable expenses. Board member Doney asked about a \$4,800 expense to repair a section of pavement on South Main Street. A broken water main was responsible for the damage. Manager Schulz said he was surprised by the high cost himself and asked Utility Superintendent Patrick DeMasi about this. He learned the repair became very involved due to deep pavement, etc. Also, since this is a highly travelled road, there was an emphasis on getting the repairs done properly the first time. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
- b. Warrant #22-19A.** Motion by Board member Goodrich, seconded by Board member Doney, to approve Warrant #22-19A in the amount of \$10,678.13. Manager Schulz noted this warrant was the paying off an existing RSMS (Road Surface Management System) loan prior to refinancing at a lower interest rate (see below). The roadwork mainly was mat and gravel installation on the backroads. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

- c. **Approval of Biweekly Payroll through May 19, 2019.** Motion by Board member Doney, seconded by Board member Goslant, to approve the biweekly payroll in the amount of \$92,371.79. Board member Doney felt Northfield Police Department (NPD) overtime expenses seemed high. Manager Schulz said one officer is taking military leave and two others took some vacation time. There also was an investigation that required some overtime. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

VII. SELECT BOARD

- a. **Naming of the Pavilion at the Municipal Park on Water Street.** Chair Maxwell said here has been community discussion in favor of naming this pavilion to honor those most responsible for it. At a recent park ceremony (05/18/19) in remembrance of Sally Nadon Pedley, Chair Maxwell announced the pavilion would be named in honor of Sally Pedley, Jay Pedley, and the Northfield High School (NHS) Class of 1957. He now would like the Select Board to codify this and thus recognize those who led the fundraising to build the park itself, the pavilion, and other park amenities. Board member Goslant noted this event was well attended and he heard a lot of positive feedback in support of this action. Motion by Board member Goslant, seconded by Goodrich, to name the Water Street municipal park pavilion the Jay and Sally Pedley and the NHS Class of 1957 Pavilion. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
- b. **Naming of the Municipal Park on Water Street.** Chair Maxwell noted the new park has been called a number of different names, including the Water Street River Park, etc., but he felt it was now time for the Select Board to decide upon one. He asked some members of the NHS Class of 1957 and their recommendation was to name it "Dog River Park." He added there is an \$18,000 balance in the park's fundraising account and there has been discussion of turning these funds over to the municipality for future park upkeep, etc. Motion by Board member Miller, seconded by Board member Doney, to formally name the new park on Water Street "Dog River Park." Ms. Davidson is concerned people might assume from this name that this is a leash-less dog park. Chair Maxwell said park signage would clarify this. In addition, there already are rules in place requiring that dogs in all municipal parks be leashed. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
- c. **Bond Anticipation Note (FY 2011/2012 RSMS Program).** Motion by Board member Goodrich, seconded by Board member Doney, to approve and sign the Bond Anticipation Note in the amount of \$30,000 at 2.35% interest; to approve and sign the Bond Anticipation Borrowing Resolution; and to approve and sign the Bond Anticipation Tax Certificate. As Manager Schulz indicated earlier, this is the refinancing of an old RSMS bank note at a different bank with a lower interest rate. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
- d. **Road Paving Projects.** Board member Miller said at the last Select Board meeting there was discussion of the need to totally reconstruct Union Brook Road and Cox Brook Road down to the subbase. We currently are waiting to hear if Northfield will be awarded a Vermont Agency of Transportation (VTrans) grant this year to pave Cox Brook Road. As both roads are in deplorable condition, Board member Miller would like the Select Board to commit to bonding for the Union Brook Road reconstruction and to either bond or borrow the funds needed to reconstruct Cox Brook Road (depending on whether or not the grant application is successful). In the interim, Manager Schulz has looked into the possibility of fixing the worst pot holes on Union Brook Road with asphalt, which should hold over the winter and until the roadwork is done next year. This would cost about \$3,000 and take the pavers about one day to complete. There are funds in the RSMS Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) account to cover this expense and there would be no need to wait for the next fiscal year to begin. Depending on the grant outcome, Manager Schulz said similar work could be done to fix the worst potholes on Cox Brook Road for about \$2,300. Board member Miller noted in both cases this would be a temporary solution prior to total road reconstruction. Manager Schulz felt the repair work on Union Brook Road is especially urgent as there are some sections that used to be merely annoying but now constitute true safety hazards. Chair Maxwell agreed this work should be done as soon as possible if safety concerns are involved.

After additional discussion, the Select Board consensus appeared to be to have the potholes on Union Brook Road repaired right away and to prepare the way for a bond vote for funds to completely reconstruct Union Brook Road during next year's construction season. Any final decision regarding Cox Brook Road will be delayed until the outcome of the paving grant application is determined. Board member Goodrich asked if the Highway Subcommittee has discussed this suggestion to repair the worst potholes on these roads with asphalt. Board member Miller said this possibility only arose after the last subcommittee meeting was held.

Manager Schulz said if the grant application is unsuccessful this year, he will ask VTrans about the possibility of Northfield borrowing sufficient funds to start the Cox Brook Road project early next year and then repay the loan with future VTrans grant funds. This borrowing (as opposed to a bank bond) would not require voter approval but the Select Board members might feel the need to hold a public vote. Board member Miller thought, given the urgency and apparent public consensus to move forward on this, it might be preferable to bypass a public vote to avoid the additional time required. Chair Maxwell felt there would be some inevitable delays in getting these projects started as the pavers have their own schedules and would not consider this emergency work. Since the results of the grant application will be known before the next regular meeting (06/11/19), that will be the time to take appropriate action on both these roads. In the interim, the Select Boards members requested some outreach to potential pavers regarding work scheduling, the need to obtain an updated quote for the Cox Brook Road project, and the need to obtain definitive work scopes for both projects (to show whether culvert work would be included, etc.). Board member Goslant would like a Highway Subcommittee meeting held early next week so that all aspects of these projects can be explored in depth. He also would like a couple of additional quotes for the proposed pothole repairs before proceeding with the work. Since the funds to do this work already are in the CIP budget, formal Select Board authorization would not be required. Chair Maxwell looks forward to receiving the Highway Subcommittee's recommendations at the next regular meeting.

- e. **Ambulance Billing Abatements.** Manager Schulz said the Select Board is being asked by the Accounting Department to abate uncollected NAS bills in the amount of \$43,279.40. He added this was last done two (2) years ago, so this figure is in line with the \$19,000 yearly average for uncollectable bills. Manager Schulz noted most of these bills involved deceased patients and this debt responsibility cannot be transferred to their survivors. Motion by Board member Doney, seconded by Board member Miller, to approve the NAS bill abatements as presented in the amount of \$43,279.40. Board member Doney felt there were a lot of uncollected NAS bills for the period immediately after NAS contracted bill collection with Lyndon Rescue, Inc. in October 2015. Perhaps it might be better to seek another bill collector when the current contract expires. Manager Schulz felt the spike in the number and amount of uncollected payments might be due to factors outside of Lyndon Rescue's control, such as hikes in the fees NAS charges for certain services, the steady annual increase in NAS call volume, etc. Despite such mitigating factors, Chair Maxwell definitely wants to revisit this when Lyndon Rescue's contract is up for renewal. It might be more cost effective to go out to bid again. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
- f. **Local Emergency Operations Plan.** Manager Schulz said Vermont Emergency Management contacts municipalities each spring on the need to update their local emergency operations plans. These plans specify proper procedures and contact information in case of local natural disasters, etc. Municipalities that fail to comply are in danger of not receiving disaster reimbursement funds or having grant applications rejected out of hand. Motion by Board member Goodrich, seconded by Board member Miller, to approve the updated Local Emergency Operations Plan for Northfield as presented. Board member Goslant noted a couple new daycare centers are not listed in the plan. Chair Maxwell had a few other suggested changes. Manager Schulz will add this information. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

VIII. BOARD MEMBERS' COMMENTS, CONCERNS, QUESTIONS

- a. **Tree Trimming Update.** Board member Goodrich asked if the tree trimming schedule has been set. Manager Schulz said Highway Foreman Trent Tucker has been working with Limlaw Pulpwood & Chipping as well as Turkey Hill Road property owners to expedite tree trimming along the road. He noted it is often difficult to get advanced warning from Limlaw regarding exactly when they will be in town. Manager Schulz is certain the work on Turkey Hill Road will be completed before the end of this year.

IX. TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

- a. **Barrow Road Grant Award.** Manager Schulz reported Northfield recently received a grant for additional roadwork on Barrows Road. A grant award last year paid for tree trimming along the road so this year the Highway crew will focus on ditching and other roadside work. The grant will cover all local expenses.
- b. **Terry Hill Road Grant Award.** Manager Schulz learned today that Northfield was awarded a \$20,000 Better Backroads grant for work to be done on Terry Hill Road. The municipality has a full year to complete the work, which will mirror what was done on Barrows Road with tree trimming, ditching, culvert work, etc.

- c. **Utility Commissions.** Manager Schulz said the Utility Commissions will meet next Tuesday evening (06/04/19) at 6:30 p.m. in the Municipal Building. The main topic for discussion will be the proposed NED budget for FY 2019/2020. This budget will be finalized before it is presented to the Select Board members at their next meeting.
- d. **Updated Town Plan.** Manager Schulz said the Planning Commission will discuss the latest revision of the Town Plan at their next regular meeting (06/17/19). The draft that emerges from this meeting will be forwarded to the Select Board members for their review before the Planning Commission schedules its two (2) PC public hearings on this matter.
- e. **Dog River Park Oversight Committee.** Manager Schulz said Northfield Conservation Commission (NCC) members and other Northfield residents have requested the formation of a committee to oversee the new park's future maintenance and development. Chair Maxwell suggested involving members of the NHS Class of 1957 in the process. He would like Manager Schulz to start the outreach process and select tentative dates for the initial meeting.
- f. **New Zoning Administrator.** Manager Schulz reported the new Zoning Administrator, Mitch Osiecki, will start his first day of work here tomorrow. Mr. Osiecki already serves as the part-time Zoning Administrator in Middlesex and Marshfield so he is quite experienced in Vermont zoning laws, etc. Among other things, Manager Schulz will work with Mr. Osiecki to make him aware of zoning concerns and issues specific to Northfield.

X. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (UNSCHEDULED)

- a. **Steve Davis: Union Brook Road, etc.** Mr. Davis has attended a good number of Select Board regular meetings in recent years and has tried to keep Select Board members aware of the poor condition of Union Brook Road as well as provide suggestions on how this should be addressed. He is pleased with the recent focus on this problem but doesn't see any reason to delay fixing the worst potholes as the roads have been dry for the last month. Mr. Davis also would like Highway Foreman Tucker (or members of his crew) to report adverse road conditions to Manager Schulz as soon as possible. He doesn't feel this should be the responsibility of the general public. In addition, Mr. Davis feels some routine but necessary highway maintenance projects (i.e., ditch cleaning) are being neglected in favor of larger projects like the one on Barrows Road. Lastly, Mr. Davis would like members of the Highway crew given more leeway to take courses in basic highway operations. This would include training in operating the grader. He felt it would be good if the Highway Department had more than one employee trained in specific skills so there are no work delays due to sickness, vacation time, etc. Chair Maxwell noted such organizations as the Vermont League of Cities & Towns (VLCT) hold numerous such training sessions throughout the year at little or no cost and he has encouraged Manager Schulz to make sure members of the Highway crew are able to take full advantage of these opportunities. Manager Schulz confirmed several members will be attending a VOSHA (Vermont Occupational Safety & Health Administration) training session tomorrow.

- XI. 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 a personnel matter and ongoing contract negotiations with Manager Schulz present. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

The Board went into executive session at 9:05 p.m.

Board member Miller left the meeting at 9:20 p.m.

Motion by Board member Goslant, seconded by Board member Goodrich, to come out of executive session. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**

The Board came out of executive session at 9:25 p.m. No action was taken.

- XII. ADJOURNMENT** Motion by Board member Goslant, seconded by Board member Goodrich, to adjourn. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**

The Board adjourned at 9:25 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 June 11, 2019.