

**TOWN OF NORTHFIELD, VERMONT  
SELECT BOARD REGULAR MEETING  
Minutes of July 9, 2019**

- I. ROLL CALL.** Select Board Chair K. David Maxwell, Board members Lynn Doney, Julie H. Goodrich (absent), Kenneth W. Goslant, and Nathaniel Miller (absent). Also present were Town Manager Jeff Schulz, Acting Clerk Kenneth McCann, Diane Scolaro (Norwich University), Eddie Habeck (Norwich University), Jeff Ott, Mark Fournier, 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.** A Green Mountain Transit (GMT) representative was to address the Select Board tonight about the Northfield-Montpelier Commuter Bus service but with GMT undergoing a leadership change, this has been postponed. Manager Schulz will reach out to the new leadership and reschedule this presentation.

**IV. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (SCHEDULED)**

- a. Diane Scolaro, Norwich University Associate Vice-President: Norwich University's Bicentennial Homecoming 2019.** Ms. Scolaro and Eddie Habeck (Director of Alumni & Family Relations) would like to update the Select Board members regarding the next Norwich University (NU) Homecoming Weekend, which will take place September 18-22, 2019 and will include various events celebrating the NU founding two hundred (200) years ago. Ms. Scolaro said the normal turnout for Homecoming Weekend is between 2,500 and 3,000 but the current estimate for this year's festivities is between 6,000 and 8,000. NU has been planning for this event for well over a year and has looked at how this large gathering will affect the scheduled on-campus activities as well as the impact on the Northfield community. Ms. Scolaro said the major concern is traffic and parking. As there are only about five hundred (500) on-campus parking spaces, NU has been looking for parking areas along the Vermont Routes 12 and 12A corridor with shuttle bus service to the campus. They already have permission for parking areas near Cabot Hosier and the former Bean Chevrolet site. In addition, NU will arrange for shuttle bus service for alumni staying at resorts in the Sugarbush area. The shuttle bus service has recommended using the Crescent as the main drop off location so NU will be asking the Select Board members to close off Crescent Avenue to through traffic (with the exception of street residents and those accessing Green Mountain Family Practice).

Another problem will be providing food and drink to Homecoming participants. The plan is to site food trucks, beer tents, etc. on lower Central Street starting on Thursday night (09/19/19). Therefore, NU will request Central Street be closed from its intersection with South Main Street to Woodbury Hall (374 Central Street) starting at 3:00 p.m. Thursday and ending at 8:00 p.m. Saturday night. Chair Maxwell thinks it would be better to extend the closure to the Washington Street intersection. In addition, NU is working with Grucci Fireworks to create a spectacular display on Friday, September 20, 2019 at about 9:00 p.m. The fireworks permit request will be forwarded to the municipality soon and abutting landowners will be contacted. Ms. Scolaro said NU is drafting a flyer to be widely circulated locally with a full listing of events as well as information about off-campus parking, temporary traffic restrictions, etc. There also will be a meeting with downtown merchants soon to discuss the impact of so many visitors to Northfield over Homecoming Weekend.

Chair Maxwell agrees traffic and parking will be the major concerns over this weekend. Mr. Habeck said NU will be hiring a parking coordinator to handle all the logistics involved with so many cars flooding into Northfield. Chair Maxwell asked if meetings have been arranged with Manager Schulz and the heads of the local emergency services. Ms. Scolaro said this will be done soon. She noted two (2) such meetings were held last year regarding NU Homecoming 2018, which marked the beginning of the bicentennial celebration. Chair Maxwell feels traffic control is a serious concern because some participants will insist on parking on or close to campus rather than ride a shuttle bus. Mr. Habeck said extra police officers will be hired to handle traffic control and special signage will be installed to guide drivers to available parking areas. He noted NU Cadets often help out with traffic control but this time they will be too busy helping out with on-campus events. Ms. Scolaro said it is possible NU will reach out for assistance from the Vermont National Guard for crowd and traffic control.

Board member Goslant felt this will be a huge weekend for Northfield. Manager Schulz said he met with the chiefs of the local emergency services recently and they are generally aware of the traffic and parking concerns. Ms. Scolaro said NU is planning on 3,500 available parking spaces but she also hopes the actual number needed will be reduced by carpooling, etc. There also has been an attempt to reduce the traffic flow by staggering major events over the weekend. Chair Maxwell asked how many parking spaces have been created so far. Mr. Habeck said 500 on-campus spaces and 1,500 off-campus spaces have been secured so far. They are conducting wide public outreach to find other possible parking locations. Mark Fournier suggested contacting the Sugarbush resorts to see if day trippers would be allowed to park there (and use the shuttle bus service to the NU campus).

Board member Goslant asked if there would be sufficient emergency services coverage. Manager Schulz said the plan is to have ambulance units on campus just in case and to hire additional stand-by EMTs over the weekend. Chair Maxwell would like a solid emergency plan in place to ensure there will be quick emergency responses if needed. He would like NU to finalize its plans over the next month and update the Select Board members at one of their regular meetings in August. The Select Board members then will take action on NU's traffic, parking, and other logistical requests. He thanked Ms. Scolaro and Mr. Habeck for the valuable information presented tonight and for their undertaking the monumental task of organizing this event.

## **V. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

- a. **June 25, 2019 (Regular Meeting).** Motion by Board member Doney, seconded by Board member Goslant, to approve the minutes. **Motion passed 3-0-0.**

## **VI. APPROVAL OF BILLS**

- a. **Warrant #01-20.** Motion by Board member Doney, seconded by Board member Goslant, to approve Warrant #01-20 in the amount of \$514,084.48. Board member Goslant wanted it noted of the total warrant amount, about \$250,000 was spent purchasing power for the Northfield Electric Department. Chair Maxwell asked about a \$1,402 payment for a "Norwich Light." Manager Schulz said this was for the municipal flashing light near the Norwich University campus. Chair Maxwell noted a \$6,900 invoice from FreshCoat Asphalt for putting down eight (8) tons of asphalt over three (3) days. He questioned whether this much asphalt could be put down so quickly. Manager Schulz will check on this. **Motion passed 3-0-0.**
- b. **Approval of Biweekly Payroll through June 30, 2019.** Motion by Board member Doney, seconded by Board member Goslant, to approve the biweekly payroll in the amount of \$106,419.37. Board member Doney is pleased the Northfield Police Department (NPD) continues to make use of part-time officers to reduce overtime costs. **Motion passed 3-0-0.**

## VII. SELECT BOARD

- a. **Approval of FY 2019-2020 Tax Rates (Homestead & Non-Residential).** Manager Schulz said now that the Grand List has been finalized and the Vermont Department of Taxation has provided the FY 2019-2020 Education Tax Rates, local tax rates have to be approved so tax bills can be sent out. He noted the Homestead Tax Rate will be 2.4131 (up from 2.3947 in FY 2018/2019) and the Non-Residential Tax Rate will be 2.6175 (up from 2.5280). Motion by Board member Doney, seconded by Board member Goslant, to set the FY 2019/2020 Homestead Tax Rate at 2.4131 and the Non-Residential Tax Rate at 2.6175. Board member Goslant noted these are significant tax rate increases but added there are a number of municipal infrastructure problems that really need to be addressed. He hopes more people will show up for the next set of budget meetings so they can see for themselves what a difficult and painful process this is. **Motion passed 3-0-0.**
- b. **DRAFT Northfield Town Plan 2019-2027.** Manager Schulz said the latest draft (06/27/19) of the revised Northfield Town Plan was distributed to the Select Board members in their packets. As the Select Board and Planning Commission will be holding a Joint Board Meeting on Tuesday, July 23, 2019, the copies distributed are for information only at this time. This is a complicated document that needs to be updated every five (5) years. Chair Maxwell said he found some typos and outdated information in the current draft. He will forward his comments to the Planning Commission. He also hopes the public will participate in this process.

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

- a. **Northfield Cleanup.** In anticipation of the large crowds expected for NU Homecoming this year, Board member Doney hopes the paving on Cox Brook Road will be completed by then as well as any repairs to the covered bridges there. Board member Goslant agreed the covered bridges are big attractions for visitors to our community so they should be spruced up. Manager Schulz confirmed all this work will be done by mid-September. Board member Doney also would like the student-painted wall mural on North Main Street cleaned up. Manager Schulz said the Highway crew has done this before and will do so again soon.
- b. **Memorial Park Basketball Courts, etc.** Board member Doney reminded the public the basketball courts at Memorial Park will be closed for refurbishment, relining, etc. for two (2) weeks from Sunday, July 14, 2019 through Sunday, July 28, 2019. He added the old hoops will repurposed to create an additional half court. New balls have been donated and should be left on site. In addition, the baseball dugouts will be repainted within the next few weeks.
- c. **Sidewalk Grant Update, etc.** Board member Doney asked about the state grant application for funds to repave the sidewalk on the west side of South Main Street. Manager Schulz said the bid awards should be announced by mid-August. This is a very competitive grant and there are other grant opportunities should this particular application prove unsuccessful. Board member Doney also wanted to commend the Highway crew for cleaning up the sidewalks recently.
- d. **Grader Training, etc.** Board member Goslant asked if the grader training has been completed. Manager Schulz said it has. Highway Foreman Trent Tucker reported it went very well and the instructor had twenty-five (25) years of highway operations experience. It was the instructor's opinion the maximum amount one trained highway worker should be able to grade each day is about a mile and one-half. Mr. Tucker said a lot of useful information was provided during the training session. Board member Goslant still would like to see the roadside mowing contracted out so the Highway crew can focus on grading, etc. Chair Maxwell said that can be discussed again during the next budget sessions.

- e. **Dog River Park Naming Ceremony.** Chair Maxwell learned from members of the Northfield High School Class of 1957 that there would be a formal renaming of Dog River Park and the pavilion there on Saturday, July 20, 2019 at 4:00 p.m.
- f. **Appreciation for Northfield Gardeners.** Board member Doney would like to thank Christine Barnes, Sally Davidson, and the other members of Northfield Gardeners who have done a lot of work recently to beautify the Common.

**IX. TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT**

- a. **Sidewalk Paving.** Manager Schulz said we should be receiving bids soon for the project to fix the sidewalks on East Street and North Main Street from the Subway restaurant to the bridge. In addition, a paver will be coming in soon to fix the sidewalk on the east side of South Main Street from the Municipal Building to Prospect Street. Chair Maxwell said there were a couple bad spots on the other side of the street also needing attention.
- b. **Northfield Ridge and River Routes Master Plan RFP.** Manager Schulz said an RFP has been solicited to hire a consultant to develop better trail systems, etc. The finalized master plan will include ideas for stormwater treatment improvements.
- c. **Water Street and Union Street Stormwater Project.** Manager Schulz said this project has been proceeding well but there have been some concerns expressed by residents regarding traffic diversion, delays, etc. Some additional barriers have been sited to promote pedestrian safety. Manager Schulz viewed the site himself after receiving a telephone complaint and he believes the situation is much better than it was. This project is mostly funded by state grants and includes the replacement of waterlines over one hundred (100) years old. Manager Schulz feels this project will bring significant improvements to Northfield at minimal cost to residents. Mr. Fournier lives on Union Brook Road and has been affected by the traffic delays. He suggested temporarily making Cross Street a two-way street while school is out. Manager Schulz will look into this.
- d. **Union Negotiations.** Manager Schulz said negotiations are ongoing between management and the union representing NPD officers (the New England Police Benevolent Association) and the one for other municipal union employees (IBEW). He feels some progress is being made. Chair Maxwell would like to discuss this matter more fully in executive session.

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

**XI. EXECUTIVE SESSION.** Motion by Board member Doney, seconded by Board member Goslant, 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 3-0-0.**

The Board went into executive session at 8:35 p.m.

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

The Board came out of executive session at 8:55 p.m. No action was taken.

**XII. ADJOURNMENT.** Motion by Board member Goslant, seconded by Board member Doney, to adjourn. **Motion passed 3-0-0.**

The Board adjourned at 8:55 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 July 23, 2019.