

**TOWN OF NORTHFIELD, VERMONT
SELECT BOARD SPECIAL MEETING
Minutes of April 21, 2020**

- I. ROLL CALL.** Select Board Chair K. David Maxwell, Board members Julie H. Goodrich, Nathaniel Miller, Charles Morse, and John Stevens. Also present were Town Manager Jeff Schulz and Acting Clerk Kenneth McCann.

Chair Maxwell called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. In keeping with Governor Phil Scott's COVID-19 "stay at home" directive, the meeting was held remotely.

- II. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (SCHEDULED):** None.

III. DISCUSSION

- a. COVID-19 Update.** Manager Schulz said the municipality's tax and non-tax revenues seem to be on track but we will have a better picture in the next couple weeks. The due date for the final installment of 2019 property taxes is Friday, May 15, 2020. There seems to be no major concerns at this time. There has been a decline in utility revenue due to Norwich University and some local businesses closing or reducing their operations. There has been some increase in residential usage but this will not offset the commercial and industrial declines. Manager Schulz said all the municipal departments have been operating well with some operating on split schedules in order to conform to social distancing requirements. The Highway Department has been operating as normal with road grading, etc. The amount of activity for the Northfield Ambulance Service is about the same for this time of year. Manager Schulz said the municipality has started to receive some federal stimulus funds from the Department of Health and Human Services. He is hopeful more such funding will be on the way soon.

Manager Schulz noted Governor Scott has relaxed some of the social distancing rules for outside activities. This includes road construction projects with some restrictions. Manager Schulz spoke with Ron Lyon, Project Engineer for the Union Brook Road reconstruction project, and authorized the required soil borings. They should be completed by Tuesday, May 5, 2020. In addition, he has allowed the cemetery maintenance contractor (Bruce Wright) to start working on mowing, repairs, etc. in the public cemeteries. In addition, the contracted street sweeper was authorized to start operating again. Similar contracted street work, such as line striping, crosswalk painting, etc., usually isn't scheduled to start for a couple months. Manager Schulz now is finalizing the RFP for the South Main Street sidewalk project so that it can be distributed to potential bidders as soon as possible.

As indicated at the last regular meeting (04/14/20), several bids were received from dealers regarding the proposed purchase of a new fire tanker truck. However, the purchase process has been put on hold until the municipality's financial situation becomes clearer.

Board member Stevens is pleased the Union Brook Road soil borings are going forward as he doesn't want to see any unnecessary delays in this project. Board member Morse asked if the federal stimulus funds could be used to offset revenue losses in the utility departments (i.e. "enterprise funds"). Manager Schulz is not sure but will research this matter. Usually such funds go into the Town General budget. Board member Morse felt the use of these funds could hold off any need for rate increases. Manager Schulz noted the Bond Bank has suspended required payments for old utility bonds, which should free up about \$250,000. The payments still have to be made in the future after the current crisis has passed.

Board member Morse saw a half-page advertisement in the *Times Argus* recently in which the Town of Barre thanked its volunteers by name for their all their hard work throughout the year. He would like something similar done by the Northfield municipality with a full-page ad in the *Northfield News*. Manager Schulz will look into the cost of this. He also suggested posting on the *Front Porch Forum* as a no-cost alternative. In any case, he will draft the notice and forward to the Select Board members for comments, suggestions, etc.

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

V. EXECUTIVE SESSION. Motion by Board member Morse, 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 5-0-0.**

The Board went into executive session at 6:20 p.m.

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

The Board came out of executive session at 8:02 p.m. No action was taken.

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

The Board adjourned at 8:03 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 April 28, 2020.