

**TOWN OF NORTHFIELD, VERMONT  
SELECT BOARD REGULAR MEETING  
Minutes of October 13, 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, Acting Clerk Kenneth McCann, Brian Baker (The Dufresne Group), Mark C. Anarumo (President, Norwich University), Daphne Larkin (Director of Media Relations & Community Affairs, Norwich University), Joel Newsom (Norwich University Army ROTC), Natasha Baning, Bonnie Kirn Donahue, Rowly Brucken, David R. Black, Sally Davidson (Recreation Committee), Bethany Drum (Recreation Committee), Frank Hall (Recreation Committee), Lynn Doney (Recreation Committee), Steve Davis, Denise Russell, Jeremy Hansen, Susan Stillinger, Alison Neal, Catherine Johnston, Elilis O’Herlihy, Mary Nadon Scott, Logan Potkowski, Shannon Doney, Lisa Page, Paulette Gagne, Andrea Melville, Suz Stillinger, Deborah Zuaro, Katie Boyd, Russ Barrett, Amanda Zoecklein, Bonnie Sanders, Neil Cerutti, Allison Cerutti, Jennifer Pixley, Lisa Brucken, Aimee Jacobs, Matthew Borg, Simon Pearish, Genevieve Everett, Lee Ann Monroe, Matthew Currier, Peter Evans, Jeff Ott, Carolyn Stevens, Cassie Hagen, Jodi Leonard, Colin Bright, Ellen Kaye, Eric Howard, Briana Howard, Melanie Smit, Colin Crawford-Stempel, Tanya Crawford-Stempel, Wil Eberle, Merry Kay Shernock, Tossy Garrett, Mike Macijeski, Blanca Distano, Mallory Dutil, Melody Currier, Patricia Coppolino, Julie Ann Sippel-Silowash, Elizabeth Kennedy, Anthony Miller, and Elroy Hill.

Chair Maxwell called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Members of the public had the option of attending the meeting either in person or remotely through Go-to-Meeting.

- II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE.** Those present were asked to rise and recite the Pledge of Allegiance. The remote contingent also participated as much as possible.

- III. SET/ADJUST AGENDA.** There were no changes to the posted agenda.

**IV. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (SCHEDULED):**

- a. Brian Baker, The Dufresne Group: South Main Street Stormwater Project.** Mr. Baker provided an update on the engineering phase of this project, which has the main goals of reducing the amount of stormwater entering into the municipal sewer system and to eliminate Northfield’s last remaining CSO (Combined Sewer Overflow) located on East Street. The plan is to divert most of the stormwater to the collection facility on Holland Place. Mr. Baker said the engineering plans are now at the sixty percent (60%) completion level and he will file them with the State of Vermont after receiving the environmental impact statement for the project. He anticipates no problems with this report so he should be filing the preliminary plans soon. The project area will begin at the Northfield Municipal Building and move southward down South Main Street to its intersection with South Street. There also will be connections to such side streets as Slate Avenue, Elm Street, and Prospect Street. There also will be the use of “green infrastructure” in order to intercept stormwater coming down these streets from Highland Avenue, Byam Street, Hill Street, etc. Manager Schulz asked if the cost projections have changed as the engineering phase has progressed. Mr. Baker said they have not. The full project with connections on all the side streets was estimated at \$2,000,000 but due to cost considerations, the project was scaled back. We are now looking at installing the stormwater collection system along South Main Street at a cost of about \$600,000. The additional work on the side streets can be done gradually over time when funding become available. There will be work done about halfway up Slate Avenue, which will allow for much needed street paving and sidewalk repairs to be done afterwards. Board member Morse is pleased with this as that street has had deferred maintenance for some time. Board member Goodrich asked if Utility Superintendent Patrick DeMasi has been involved in the planning phase for this project. Manager Schulz said Mr. DeMasi has been engaged from the beginning, attending meetings with the engineers, etc. on a regular basis. There will be another project update presented at the next Joint Utility Commissions Meeting (11/02/20). Board member Stevens asked what would happen to the stormwater if it overflowed the interceptors that would divert it to Holland Place. Mr. Baker said it would, unfortunately, go into the sewer lines, which is what happens to much of the stormwater currently. Board member Stevens asked if the interceptors could be cleaned of typical curbside debris, such as cigarette butts, etc. Mr. Baker said there would be the capability to clean out the storm chambers by flushing them out with water, etc. He can provide more details if the Board members wish. Board member Goodrich asked if the infiltration levels would be based on the soil content in the project area. Mr. Baker said they would and now that the sites have been determined, there would be soil testing to determine this. Chair Maxwell thanked Mr. Baker for his report and said he looked forward to his next presentation.

- b. Mark C. Anarumo, President, Norwich University (NU).** President Anarumo reported all is going well as the testing of all NU students, faculty, and staff continues. Over nine thousand tests have been done to date and there currently is only active case of COVID-19. This is a remote learning student living in Barre so there is no risk of campus contagion. In addition, the NU website ([www.norwich.edu](http://www.norwich.edu)) now has a "COVID-19 Reporting Dashboard" showing the total number of tests provided so far (9,565), the number of positive tests to date (6), and the number of active cases (1). President Anarumo said up to thirty percent (30%) of NU students are now allowed off campus with permission and they are permitted to assist with local volunteer programs. The Army ROTC did some training on the Paine Mountain trail system over the past weekend. NU will work with the municipality to ensure that when the training spills over from NU property and into the Town Forest, all will be done properly with no site damage, etc. President Anarumo then was pleased to report that recent NU graduate and Northfield resident Mallory Dutil is a Rhodes Scholar nominee. He added Ms. Dutil was a triple major in engineering, environmental science and chemistry with a 3.97 GPA. The NU community is very proud of her achievements. President Anarumo then introduced Colonel Joel Newsom, who is the new ROTC Army Commander. Colonel Scott E. Conway serves the same role in the Navy ROTC. Board member Morse did not have any questions for President Anarumo but he did have some concerns about the ROTC field exercises encroaching on the Town Forest as there are some environmentally sensitive areas there. He hopes this will be a consideration in the future. President Anarumo said Colonel Newsom will make sure all is done correctly from now on. Board member Stevens felt President Anarumo is doing a great job especially given the difficult situation in which he began his tenure. President Anarumo was grateful for the appreciation but said he had no plans to rest on his laurels at least until after the NU students leave campus for the Thanksgiving holiday. The students will not return to campus afterwards but will complete their classes and take examinations remotely. He plans to relax somewhat afterwards. Chair Maxwell is very grateful for the full transparency President Anarumo has shown from the beginning regarding COVID-19 matters, etc. He also looks forward to hearing from President Anarumo again at future Select Board meetings.
- c. Natasha Baning: Support for Adoption of Statement of Anti-Racism.** Ms. Baning is a STEAM (Science-Technology-Engineering-Art-Math) teacher at Northfield Elementary School and she is asking that the Select Board members approve the following statement of anti-racism: *The Town of Northfield stands in support of Black Lives Matter. This means that we support the lives, safety and dignity of Black people and People of Color in our local community, state, nation, and world; and that we stand in steadfast opposition to local bigotry and systemic racism.* Ms. Baning said she grew up in Central Vermont but returned recently after living in Baltimore MD for several years. Although she and her family have found Northfield to be a welcoming community there have been some recent incidents indicating much still need to be done to improve racial relations in our schools and in the general community. Ms. Baning believes adopting the statement above will go a long way to show local leaders are committed to addressing systemic racism in the Northfield community and beyond. She doesn't believe this is a political statement but something all people should be able to rally around. Board member Morse welcomed Ms. Baning back to Vermont and noted being inclusive is something Vermonters have to train ourselves to do. He would prefer to expand the statement to specifically include other groups that have faced persecution such as Indigenous Americans, Asian-Americans, etc. Ms. Baning believes the phrase "People of Color" already is all-inclusive. Creating a list of victimized groups runs the risk of leaving some out by omission. Board member Stevens has a problem with what he views as the big difference between the Black Lives Matter movement and the Black Lives Matter organization, which many feel holds extremist views. In order to avoid alienating some residents from an approved anti-racism statement, he would favor eliminating the phrase "Black Lives Matter" from the statement. Ms. Baning feels the anti-racism statement was written in a way that makes clear the distinction between the decentralized movement and the official organization. This would be a community statement that would proclaim that the lives of People of Color matter in Northfield. Board member Miller would support approving the statement as originally written. Board member Goodrich said she agreed Black lives do indeed matter and that any "decent human being" should agree with those three words. With that said, Board member Goodrich would like to add this endorsement is not in support of some of the movement's more radical positions. This also is not in support of rioting and crimes or defunding/abolishing our police departments. Board member Goodrich does believe the Black Lives Matter is a plea for basic human rights. Chair Maxwell also was concerned approving the statement would indicate support for some of the extreme positions taken by some Black Lives Matter supporters and fringe groups. Chair Maxwell will open up this discussion to the general public later in the meeting when the Select Board members decide whether or not to approve the anti-racism statement as proposed by Ms. Baning.

- d. **Bonnie Kirn Donahue: Dog River Park Subcommittee.** Ms. Donahue is representing a group of residents who are concerned about maintaining the Dog River Park as a nature site open to all Northfield residents. The park was formed when several flood-damaged Water Street structures along the Dog River were demolished through a FEMA buyout program. The newly available lands then were transformed into a nature park with walking trails, etc. Ms. Donahue said the park has become very popular with locals in a short amount of time and the group would like to ensure proper attention is given to maintaining the trail system, keeping the local fauna (trees, shrubs, etc.) in healthy condition, and preserving the riverbank that was landscaped to provide flood mitigation for the surrounding neighborhood. A regularly-meeting group would be instrumental in achieving these objectives and the following persons have volunteered to serve: Kim Adams, Russ Barrett, Bonnie Kern Donahue, Fred Nadon, Laura Hill-Eubanks, and Simon Pearish. This assembly would serve as a subcommittee under the aegis of the Northfield Conservation Committee. Motion by Board member Morse, seconded by Board member Miller, to authorize the establishment of the Dog River Park Subcommittee and appoint the individuals listed above to serve on this subcommittee. The Select Board members felt forming the subcommittee would be a positive step in preserving the Dog River Park. Chair Maxwell is pleased to see more Northfield residents willing to provide their efforts to improve this community. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

#### V. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- a. **September 22, 2020 (Regular Meeting).** Motion by Board member Morse, seconded by Board member Goodrich, to approve the minutes. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

#### VI. APPROVAL OF BILLS

- a. **Approval of Warrant #07-21.** Motion by Board member Goodrich, seconded by Board member Morse, to approve Warrant #07-21 in the amount of \$2,124,983.03. Board member Stevens noted a "sales tax expenditure" on the warrant. He thought municipalities were tax-exempt. Manager Schulz said this invoice was related to a purchase by the Northfield Electric Department (NED) and this was one of the few cases when the municipality did have to pay sales tax. Board member Goodrich noted the unusually large warrant amount and explained the municipality recently collected property taxes and now was forwarding \$1,147,500 in tax revenues to the Paine Mountain School District. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
- b. **Approval of Biweekly Payroll through September 20, 2020.** Motion by Board member Goodrich, seconded by Board member Morse, to approve the biweekly payroll in the amount of \$109,486.79. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
- c. **Approval of Biweekly Payroll through October 4, 2020.** Motion by Board member Goodrich, seconded by Board member Morse, to approve the biweekly payroll in the amount of \$90,611.72. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

#### VII. SELECT BOARD

- a. **Adoption of Statement of Anti-Racism.** As indicated earlier in the meeting, Natasha Baning is asking the Select Board members to approve the following anti-racism statement: *The Town of Northfield stands in support of Black Lives Matter. This means that we support the lives, safety and dignity of Black people and People of Color in our local community, state, nation, and world; and that we stand in steadfast opposition to local bigotry and systemic racism.* Motion by Board member Miller, seconded by Board member Stevens, to approve the statement with the language presented by Ms. Baning. Chair Maxwell then opened the floor to any member of the public who would like to address this matter. State Representative Anne Donahue said that while many may believe racism and bigotry do not exist in Northfield, our local history and recent experiences belie that assumption. Ms. Donahue said about one hundred (100) years ago, her father John Donahue, then about six (6) years old, saw a burning cross erected on a Northfield hill by Klu Klux Klansmen as a message to the local Catholic population that they were not welcome in this community. About a week ago, someone destroyed art installations put up by local students at Dog River Park in anticipation of a planned Vermont Reads Book Discussion of a young adult novel (*The Hate U Give* by Angie Thomas) that focuses on what happens when a young Black woman witnesses the police shooting of one of her childhood friends. Ms. Donahue said many people oppose Black Lives Matter due to a perception that this is a violent organization that expounds extreme views. However, she felt it more accurate to view the Black Lives Matter movement as a forthright statement that the lives of People of Color should and do matter in this society. The Select Board members don't have to parse the language of the proposed statement as it clearly focuses on opposition to racism and can in no way be seen as an endorsement of violence, etc. Ms. Donahue believes adopting this statement should be only the first step in directly addressing bigotry and racial hatred in this community.

Andrea Melville has lived in Northfield for over twenty (20) years and is the owner-operator of the Art, etc. store on the Common, which sell Vermont-made arts and crafts. She supports approval of the anti-racism statement as she (unfortunately) has heard racist remarks uttered by Northfield residents in passing who either don't know or don't care how this kind of bigotry affects others. These hateful actions, however isolated they might be, reflect badly on the community and don't belong in Northfield. Approving this anti-racism statement could help us rise above this and designate Northfield as a place where such bigotry is not tolerated.

Rowley Brucken is a Northfield resident and a Professor of History at Norwich University. He supports approving this anti-racism statement because a study of American history clearly shows that Black lives haven't really mattered over the four hundred (400) years since enslaved Africans were first brought to the Jamestown colony. Many Americans like to believe that racism ended with the Civil Rights Movement. However, even though "separate but equal" facilities are gone, this was not the end of racism as recent events throughout the country have borne out. White lives always have mattered more to many people and apparently still do today. Mr. Brucken feels positive actions must be taken to combat racism and that includes acknowledging and understanding the long history of both open and tacit bigotry in this country. Approving the proposed anti-racism statement tonight will allow the Select Board members to personally undertake the kind of positive action that is needed.

Bonnie Kern Donahue said she and her family have done much soul searching recently as they have reexamined their relationship with the ingrained racism in this society. She also sees the adoption of this anti-racism statement as a much-needed positive step.

Lynn Doney thought it would have been more appropriate had the wording of the anti-racism statement been better publicized beforehand so that all residents would be able to weigh in on this matter. He feels the Select Board should delay action until the next meeting (10/27/20) so it can be properly warned on Front Porch Forum, etc. Manager Schulz did not see any need for delay as this meeting with this agenda item was properly warned in many venues. Board member Goodrich agreed there was no ambiguity that this matter was going to be discussed and tonight's turnout both in-person and remotely shows public awareness.

Lee Ann Monroe is the Principal of Northfield Middle/High School. She feels this is an important issue as nationwide Blacks suspected of crimes are being killed disproportionately by police and Black people in general have been much harder hit by the COVID-19 pandemic and the accompanying economic downturn. This statement would only ask the larger society to recognize this poor state of affairs. These concerns are the guiding principles of the Black Lives Matter movement and Ms. Monroe doesn't see why anyone should feel themselves damaged or threatened by the approval of the proposed anti-racism statement.

Elroy Hill said he himself never views other people based on their race but instead sees them all as fellow human beings.

Liz Kennedy is the wife of a Northfield Police officer but she wanted to make it clear she was speaking on her own behalf and not for her husband or his department. She believes the municipality can make a strong statement that bigotry and racial prejudice are not tolerated in Northfield without reference to the Black Lives Matter movement. Ms. Kennedy believes the Black Lives Matter movement has become associated with extreme views, including great hostility to police officers. She sees no way to properly separate the Black Lives Matter movement from its more extreme advocates so she would favor removing the reference to Black Lives Matter in the anti-racism statement.

Wil Eberle grew up in what he considers to be a flagrantly racist environment in Northern Idaho. For example, it was not unusual to see Klu Klux Klan members openly participating in community events including distributing candy to children, etc. He noted white supremacist groups now seem to be enjoying a resurgence nationwide and he feels it is important for Northfield to make a clear and unambiguous anti-racism statement at this time.

Paulette Gagne felt adopting an anti-racism statement for this community is a strong action but much needed. She also believes her daughter has been stopped disproportionately by the police due to her dark skin and something needs to be done to prevent the race hatred now prevalent in this country from further infecting this community.

Shannon Doney supports the anti-racism statement and doesn't believe it should be seen as anti-police. This is a positive statement and should not be brought down by other people's negativity. She also would like to see the Select Board members show leadership on this.

Matt Borg is one of the owners of Carrier Roasting Company, although he is speaking on his own behalf tonight and not representing his business. He is in total support of the anti-racism statement as presented tonight by Ms. Baning. Mr. Borg believes the language is very clear that support for Black Lives Matter is important in addressing systemic racism in this country. He also feels this should not be seen as a "Black problem" as it is the attitudes of certain white people that is causing all the distress. He feels white people should listen to the Black community regarding what should be done to rectify the situation.

Frank Hall agrees with Mr. Doney that too many townspeople were unaware of the issue being discussed tonight. He feels it is wrong to focus only on Black lives as he feels all lives around the world also matter. In addition, Mr. Hall doesn't feel racist views can only be attributed to white people. He believes endorsing the Black Lives Matter movement might cause future problems in this community and if the Select Board should adopt an anti-racism statement tonight, he would prefer any references to the Black Lives Matter movement be excluded.

Mr. Brucken said it is troubling to him that so many people associate the Black Lives Matter movement only with radicalism and violence. He noted the Civil Rights Movement and other attempts at social change faced similar accusations. Indeed, social reformers throughout American history (i.e. abolitionists, suffragettes, etc.) were accused of extremism when trying to change the status quo. Mr. Brucken doesn't believe fear of change should derail this or any other attempts to achieve social justice. Approving this anti-racism statement would show Northfield supports the concept of racial equality and would not be an endorsement of the violence sometimes carried out by fringe groups.

Tanya Crawford-Stempel appreciates all the heart-felt sentiments expressed tonight and said there appears to be a consensus that some form of anti-racism statement should be approved tonight. She understands that some people do have a problem with Black Lives Matter but she believes the signs posted around town indicate support for the movement's goals and not for the leadership of the organization. Ms. Crawford-Stempel would like the statement presented by Ms. Baning adopted as written.

Ms. Monroe said a lot of work has been done at the Northfield schools to encourage the students to show curiosity, compassion, and courage in dealing with such difficult matters as racism, social justice, etc. She hopes the Select Board members will show courage tonight and adopt the anti-racism statement and thus present a good example for our local youth.

Julie Ann Sippel-Silowash fully supports approval of the anti-racism statement. Adopting the statement will show this community is open to everyone and Black lives do matter here. This action also could start a journey putting the community on the proper path.

Peter Evans is a member of the United Church of Northfield, which has displayed a Black Lives Matter since the May 25, 2020 killing of George Floyd. He noted some members of the church were not fully in favor of this action but he believes most have been supportive. Mr. Evans supports the statement presented tonight as it would demonstrate this community's commitment to anti-racism and social justice.

With no one else choosing to speak on this matter, Chair Maxwell concluded the public dialog and noted there was a motion on the table to approve the anti-racism statement as presented. As indicated earlier, Board member Morse would like to amend the statement to become more inclusive. He served for twenty (20) years in the US Navy, which he considered a melting pot of all cultures, races, and education levels. He never had any negative interactions with People of Color. Board member Morse would like this to be less a "Black" statement than one that reaches out to all races and cultures. Motion by Board member Morse, seconded by Board member Stevens, to amend the original motion to have the anti-racism statement read "*The Town of Northfield stands in support of the safety and dignity of Black people and People of Color in the local community, state, nation, and world and stands in steadfast opposition to global bigotry and systemic racism.*"

Board member Miller doesn't support the amended motion because it removes Black Lives Matter from the statement and thus waters it down. He also thought it is laughable to say there is no racism in Northfield as he has heard a considerable number of casual bigoted remarks since he moved here. Board member Goodrich believes people are smart enough to differentiate between the Black Lives Matter movement and the organization of the same name. She believes the Select Board should make a strong stand against anti-racism in this community and would prefer to stay with the original statement wording. Chair Maxwell also supports the original statement despite similar concerns with some of the extreme views and actions taken by the organization. He felt the original statement should be approved with the understanding that the Select Board action does not indicate support for the Black Lives Matter organization. **Motion to amend the original motion failed 2-3-0, with Board members Goodrich, Maxwell, and Miller voting in opposition.**

Board member Goodrich asked if there is any need to delay approval of the anti-racism statement. Manager Schulz saw no real need for this as this matter was put on the meeting agenda in the normal manner and was properly warned. The Select Board members could decide to table the motion if some uncertainties remain. Board member Goodrich agreed this matter was clearly on the agenda. **Motion to approve original motion passed 5-0-0.**

- b. Policy Regulating the Placement of Signs on Municipal Property.** Manager Schulz said a number of unsanctioned signs have been placed on the Common and other municipal properties recently. He therefore has drafted a policy that would regulate the posting of signs and banners on municipal property and allow for their removal in case of a policy violation. The proposed policy reads as follows: *"The purpose of this policy is to regulate the placement of signs and banners on municipal property and to limit the signs to those that serve a governmental purpose. No persons, groups, entities shall install, locate or place a sign or banner on municipal property without the approval of the Select Board or its designee. The Select Board or its designee in the review and consideration of requests to locate signs on municipal property shall only authorize signs or banners that serve a governmental purpose, and such signs shall be limited to the advertisement of municipal or school projects or events, and directional signs for traffic related purposes or to direct persons to municipal, cultural or historical facilities."* Manager Schulz said this is a draft document for the Select Board members' consideration and can be amended based on their suggestions. Board member Morse believes there are local zoning regulations that already put limits on off-premise signs. Manager Schulz agreed but the zoning regulations don't differentiate between private or municipal property. He spoke to Zoning Administrator Mitch Osiecki on this matter and both agreed it would be best to create a separate policy governing the placement of signage on municipal property. Colin Bright is a member of the Development Review Board (DRB) and he stated this matter was discussed at the last DRB meeting and there was consensus then that the zoning regulations focus solely on commercial signage. The regulations do not cover the placement of political or other non-commercial signage on municipal property. Manager Schulz added that the municipality cannot regulate political signs based simply on their content. There then were questions whether the new policy would ban signage on the Common for the Northfield Farmers Market and other Select Board sanctioned activities. There also were concerns on how far the municipality's right-of-way extends into private property. Chair Maxwell suggested Manager Schulz should rewrite the draft to permit signage for events that have been approved by the Select Board. Board member Goodrich also would like it stated specifically in the policy that the municipality has the authority to remove unauthorized signage. Manager Schulz will make the changes and return with a revised draft.
- c. Discussion regarding Waiver of Petition Process.** Manager Schulz said the municipality has received two (2) requests from organizations that had funding articles on the last Town Meeting Warning asking that due to COVID-19 concerns the petition process to be put on the next warning be modified or eliminated. There were concerns that signature collecting may be very difficult or impossible in the current situation. Manager Schulz asked how the Select Board members would like to proceed on this matter. Board member Morse would allow organizations that have been on previous warning to be placed directly on the 2021 Town Meeting Warning. However, there should be some mechanism for organizations making new requests to show some public support beforehand. Board member Stevens asked how any ban or discouragement of petition gathering would affect those planning to seek elective office at the next Town Meeting. There now is a requirement for at least thirty (30) signatures before being placed on the ballot. Chair Maxwell said this would have to be addressed as well in any new policy. Board member Miller feels the petition process should be temporarily suspended due to the COVID-19 situation. Board member Goodrich believes the petition process should be waived for organizations that have been on the warning for several years. Chair Maxwell will ask Manager Schulz to further research petition requirements for potential elected officers in light of current COVID-19 restrictions.
- d. Adoption of Extra-Mile Proclamation.** Manager Schulz said the municipality has been contacted by the organization Extra Mile America regarding its willingness to approve a proclamation that the Town of Northfield recognizes November 1, 2020 as Extra Mile Day and thereby honors those who "go the extra mile" to benefit their communities. The proclamation reads as follows: *"WHEREAS, Northfield, Vermont is a community which acknowledges that a special vibrancy exists within the entire community when its individual citizens collectively "go the extra mile" in personal effort, volunteerism, and service; and WHEREAS, Northfield, Vermont, is a community which encourages its citizens to maximize their personal contribution to the community by giving of themselves wholeheartedly and with total effort, commitment and conviction to their individual ambitions, family, friends, and community; and WHEREAS, Northfield, Vermont is a community which chooses to shine a light on and celebrate individuals and organizations within its community who "go the extra mile" in order to make a difference and lift up fellow members of their community; and*

*WHEREAS, Northfield, Vermont acknowledges the mission of Extra Mile America to create 500 Extra Mile cities in America and is proud to support "Extra Mile Day" on November 1, 2020. NOW THEREFORE, the Town of Northfield Select Board, does hereby proclaim November 1, 2020, to be Extra Mile Day. The Select Board urges each individual in the community to take time on this day to not only "go the extra mile" in his or her own life, but to also acknowledge all those who are inspirational in their efforts and commitment to make their organizations, families, community, country or world a better place."* Motion by Board member Goodrich, seconded by Board member Stevens, to approve the proclamation stating that November 1, 2020 will be Extra Mile Day in Northfield. Board member Miller would like to know more about this particular organization before giving his approval. He has done some Internet research and has some concerns. The motion was withdrawn.

- e. **FY 2020/2021 Fuel Bids.** Manager Schulz said each fiscal year the municipality solicits fuel bids from regional suppliers of heating fuel, propane, diesel, and no-lead gasoline. Ten (10) potential suppliers were sent the bid forms with instructions and two (Gillespie Fuels and Irving Energy) submitted bids prior to this afternoon's deadline. Manager Schulz noted in the past the municipality has preferred to award the bid to the company with the low bid for capped prices. He therefore recommends award the heating fuel and propane bids to Gillespie Fuels. Motion by Board member Goodrich, seconded by Board member Miller, to award the heating fuel bid to Gillespie Fuels for the capped price of \$1.65 per gallon and the propane bid to Gillespie Fuels for the capped price of \$1.50 per gallon. Manager Schulz noted capped prices were not submitted for diesel or no-lead gasoline. Board member Goodrich believes capped prices, which create a ceiling for floating fuel prices, are better when it come to setting budgets for the coming fiscal year. Chair Maxwell agrees but he would have liked to have seen recent fuel consumption figures for the municipality. **Motion passed 5-0-0.** Manager Schulz said Gillespie Fuels and Irving Energy provided only floating prices submittals for diesel. The Gillespie Fuels bid amount is slightly higher (\$1.58 per gallon) that the bid submitted by Irving Energy (\$1.44 per gallon) but this doesn't take into account the fact that Gillespie Fuels is the current supplier and there would be an added expense to switch out the collecting tanks for a new supplier. He therefore recommends awarding the diesel bid to Gillespie Fuels. Chair Maxwell noted in the past the municipality has favored this local company even if their price was a little higher. Motion by Board member Miller, seconded by Board member Goodrich, to award the diesel bid to Gillespie Fuels for a floating price of \$1.58 per gallon. **Motion passed 5-0-0.** No bids were submitted for no-lead gasoline so this will be purchased through spot sales (as in recent years).
- f. **Union Brook Road Reconstruction Project.** Manager Schulz has not much new to report. The project contractor (J. Hutchins, Inc.) started work on September 21, 2020 and since has replaced culverts and is now working on underdrains. When this has been completed, the focus switch to the five (5) problem areas that required special treatment, i.e. full road reconstruction. Road traffic had to detoured for one day last week but all went well. Electric detour signs were rented but we don't anticipate another road closure in the near future. A couple minor adjustments were made to the project plans after adjacent property owners made requests regarding road runoff, etc. Board member Stevens observed some of the culvert replacement last week and confirmed the old culverts had been in very bad shape.
- g. **Public Hearing (Water Ordinance): Tuesday, October 27, 2020.** Manager Schulz noted the draft of the proposed ordinance was provided to the Select Board members at their last meeting (09/22/20) and, as agreed at that time, a public hearing has been scheduled for the beginning of the next regular meeting. Some minor changes to the document were suggested by Select Board members and they will be incorporated into the final draft.

#### **VIII. TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT**

- a. **Road Paving.** Manager Schulz said Pike Industries was in town recently and they paved a good number of roads. All the work was done well and within the approved budget.
- b. **Vermont Agency of Transportation (VTrans) Highway Grants.** Manager Schulz said VTrans has notified Northfield and other municipalities that it will not be awarding any highway paving or structures grants this year. They are optimistic that the grants will be awarded next year and current applications will be kept on file. Manager Schulz had been hoping the application for a structures grant to fix Stony Brook Road Bridge would be successful. He now will keep the Select Board members informed of any updates. He did note VTrans informed him that there will be an additional \$7,000,000 in the State Highway Fund that is distributed to municipalities each year based on local highway mileage.

- c. **South Main Street Sidewalk Project.** Manager Schulz said the project started with good initial progress but there have been some delays recently. The project contract does specify that the work has to be completed this year and Manager Schulz has been applying pressure to ensure the contractor (Josh Fenoff, Inc.) stays on schedule. The contractor has promised to bring more crew and machinery into town. In the off chance the work is not completed this calendar year, Manager Schulz said no grant funds would be lost.
- d. **COVID-19 Safety Banner.** Manager Schulz said a street banner encouraging mask use, social distancing, etc. has been ordered and will be installed upon its arrival. He expects it to be up before the next regular meeting.
- e. **COVID-19 Reimbursement Grants.** Manager Schulz has applied for additional state grant funds to cover the additional costs related to the pandemic. He expects about \$7,000 in state funding. The amount anticipated to be received from FEMA is about \$30,000 but it could be some time before these federal funds actually arrive.

**IX. BOARD MEMBERS' COMMENTS, CONCERNS, QUESTIONS**

- a. **Financial Statements.** Board member Morse would like to see updated financial statements provided in the next meeting packets. He especially would like to see the FY 2019/2020 year-end statements. Manager Schulz said the hired auditors are scheduled to address the Select Board members with a full report at their first meeting in November (11/10/20) but he can provide a preliminary draft in the interim. He also try to provide statements for the first three (3) months of the current fiscal year through September 2020.
- b. **FY 2021/2022 Town Budget.** Board member Morse serves on the Town Budget & Financial Review Subcommittee with Board member Goodrich. He asked the other Select Board members to provide some feedback over the next few weeks regarding guidelines on how management should prepare the initial draft of the FY 2021/2020 budget. He himself suggests that any personnel expenses should be limited to the federal COLA (Cost-of-Living Adjustment) figure. He felt other budget line items should have increases of no more than five percent (5%). Double-digit increases would be unacceptable.
- c. **Composting Bins Discounts.** Board member Miller noted the solid waste management district for Montpelier (CVSWMD) is offering discounts on in-ground composters. He asked if it were possible for Northfield's solid waste management district (Mountain Alliance) to do something similar. Manager Schulz will contact them to see if this is possible.

**X. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (UNSCHEDULED)**

- a. **Patricia Coppolino, Dynamos Youth Soccer.** Ms. Coppolino has concerns about the new policy to change both a \$75 refundable deposit fee and a non-refundable \$75 usage fee to non-school affiliated youth groups using the municipal fields for baseball, soccer, etc. She would like the Select Board members to revisit this policy as it seems they are actively discouraging local youth from taking part in organized sports.

**XI. EXECUTIVE SESSION** Motion by Board member Morse, seconded by Board member Goodrich, to go into executive session, in accordance with 1 VSA 313 (a)(1), in order to discuss personnel matter with Manager Schulz and members of the Northfield Recreation Committee present. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

The Board went into executive session at 10:30 p.m.

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

The Board came out of executive session at 11:05 p.m. No action was taken.

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

The Board adjourned at 11:05 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 are subject to approval at the next regular Select Board meeting.