

**TOWN OF NORTHFIELD, VERMONT  
SELECT BOARD REGULAR MEETING  
Minutes of June 11, 2024**

- I. ROLL CALL.** Chair K. David Maxwell, Board members Charles Morse, Lydia Petty, Merry Shernock, and John Stevens. Also present were Manager Jeff Schulz, Acting Clerk Kenneth McCann, Pierre Gomez (Police Chief), Mitch Osiecki (Zoning Administrator), Thomas Davis (Economic Development Director), Cassie Morse (Northfield Farmers Market), Bill Clements (Accessibility, Walkability, and Pedestrian Safety [AWPS] Task Force), Kaitlyn Keating (Northfield Community Development Network [NCDN]/AWPS Task Force), Mary Nadon Scott (AWPS Task Force), Carolyn Stevens (NCDN/AWPS Task Force), Laura Hill-Eubanks, Steve Davis, Mark Fournier, Lynn Doney, Pam Ricker, Susan Stillinger, and Elroy Hill.

Chair Maxwell called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

- II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE.** Those present were asked to join the Select Board members in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

**III. PUBLIC HEARING**

- a. Town Zoning Bylaws Revisions.** Chair Maxwell began by quickly reviewing the procedures for public participation before opening the public hearing. He then asked those wanting to contribute their views to keep their remarks under five (5) minutes and allow others wishing to speak to do so before speaking a second time. Manager Schulz said this hearing is an opportunity for Northfield residents to comment on proposed revisions to the local zoning regulations. The Planning Commission (PC) has been working over the past two (2) years to revise the local zoning bylaws in order to reflect recent changes in state law and to make them more readable by eliminating redundant or conflicting language, etc. The Select Board members held an earlier public hearing on this matter on February 13, 2024 and at that time made some suggestions, such as returning the minimum lot size in the low density residential districts back to five (5) acres, that Zoning Administrator Mitch Osiecki incorporated into the current zoning bylaws document. More recently, Mr. Osiecki made further changes to the document to include new provisions of Act 147, also known as the Housing Opportunities Made for Everyone (HOME) Act, which the Vermont legislature approved in June 2023. The intent of the HOME Act was to encourage creation of additional housing units in Vermont by rolling back state and local zoning restrictions that developers considered impediments. Laura Hill-Eubanks is the former PC Chair and she has been in contact with the Select Board members in order to make sure that the local zoning bylaws revisions do include all the new provisions of the HOME Act. She sent a recent email that suggested amending Table B ("Dimensional Standards") (p. 51) to specify that minimum lot sizes in various zoning districts are "per dwelling unit." In addition, the five acre minimum lot size in the low-density residential area now allows for duplexes as well as single-unit dwellings. Ms. Hill-Eubanks also is concerned that some language in the proposed bylaws seems to also allow three- and four-unit dwellings on these lots and she feels this should be better clarified. Board member Shernock felt that the emails Ms. Hill-Eubanks have sent have been very helpful in explaining these matters to the Select Board members. Board member Morse noted that the current zoning bylaws require 1.5 parking spaces per dwelling unit and the proposed revision lowers this to one (1) parking space per dwelling unit. Board member Petty noted that this change is a result of the HOME Act. Board member Morse said a shooting range was recently established in a high-density residential district. He asked if it might be possible to revise the zoning bylaws to specify that such a shooting range is considered an "outdoor recreation club" and thus prohibited in the high-density residential districts. Mr. Osiecki said permission for a shooting range in any district would need to come before the Development Review Board (DRB) for approval. In any case, he is unsure of the specific language that would be needed to prohibit shooting ranges. Manager Schulz felt such a prohibition would be better addressed through a municipal ordinance rather than through the zoning bylaws. Chair Maxwell felt this particular issue should be addressed at later time so that Mr. Osiecki can review the appropriate legal language, etc. Board member Shernock was unsure whether a group of people getting together to shoot guns would constitute a "club." Mark Fournier felt that most municipalities that have concerns about where, when, and the types of weapons discharged within their boundaries have dealt with such issue through the normal ordinance process. He doesn't feel such a major change should be instituted through local zoning regulations. Board member Morse felt making this change in the zoning bylaws at this time would be more expedient than going through the prolonged process of approving an ordinance.

Board member Stevens thanked Ms. Hill-Eubanks for clarifying the provisions in Table B. He then asked why there is a maximum of sixteen (16) dwelling units per acre in the Village Center residential district. Mr. Osiecki said this limit was in the current zoning bylaws and is not a recent revision. Board member Stevens would like this limit struck from the current draft document. Mr. Osiecki noted the DRB members do review site plans to determine whether building heights and other factors are appropriate in certain locations. Board member Petty is concerned that certain areas now designated as "Industrial" districts do not allow for the construction of any housing units. Chair Maxwell also has concerns about this. Mr. Osiecki noted that one downtown area now designated as an industrial district, Freight Yard Way, is also located in the Village Center and this would permit the construction of new housing units there as well as commercial developments. Board member Petty felt that the area near the Darn Tough factory on Whetstone Road also is designated as an Industrial district even though that would be a good site for future housing developments. Mr. Osiecki had thought that the Select Board members were looking to approve the zoning bylaws at this time provided that there were in compliance with state law. Other concerns would be addressed at a later time. Board member Petty felt such housing issues are very important and should be addressed at this time and not left for later. She would like to see some areas redistricted to allow for new housing units and the current zoning map updated to reflect those changes. Manager Schulz said there is no urgency in approving the zoning bylaws so it probably would be best to resolve any remaining issues before providing formal approval to the revised zoning bylaws. This might require holding a third public hearing should these additional revisions be considered "substantive." Mr. Fournier would like the minimum parking space issue addressed as he has seen a number of homes with vehicles encroaching too closely on adjacent roads. Board member Morse said the new state requirement only requires one parking space per dwelling. Mr. Fournier said it might then be necessary to approve a separate ordinance to address this. Manager Schulz said current law does allow for ticketing vehicles that are parked within the municipal right-of-way. This is to ensure traffic is not blocked or impeded. Chair Maxwell agreed with Board member Stevens that the sixteen (16) units per acre maximum in the Village Center should be eliminated. He doesn't want to discourage developers from building multi-unit dwellings when the availability of affordable housing is a major concern. There being no other comments from the members of the public, Chair Maxwell closed the public hearing at 7:50 p.m. The Select Board members will discuss this matter later in the meeting when they consider action items.

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

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

- a. Cassie Morse, Northfield Farmers Market: ARPA Funds Request.** Cassie Morse is the Manager of the Northfield Farmers Market (NFM) and she reported NFM has applied for a \$87,783 USDA Farmers Market Promotion program grant. The funds would be used in order to retain current NFM vendors as well as attract new ones with reduced or waived vendor fees. It also would allow for NFM programs that provide food assistance to low income residents, seniors, military veterans, etc. The grant has a twenty-five percent (25%) local match amount, of which \$10,100 will be in the form of NFM in-kind services and \$5,000 will be from in-kind staff hours from Economic Development Director (EDD) Tom Davis. Ms. Morse is asking the Select Board to authorize the use of \$7,000 in ARPA funds to cover the remaining balance. Board member Petty asked about the timeline of the USDA grant application. Ms. Morse said it was submitted on May 14, 2024 and we should know by this September whether or not it was successful. She then thanked Mr. Davis for all his assistance in getting the application submitted by the deadline. Ms. Morse noted the grant match amount will not be required until after NFM has been notified whether the grant has been awarded. Board member Petty thought it might be possible to provide conditional approval for the ARPA funds authorization dependent on whether the USDA grant application is successful. Ms. Morse was fairly confident that the grant would be awarded due to previous NFM success with similar grant applications. She then thanked the Select Board members for their past support for the NFM. This matter will be discussed again later in the meeting as an action item.
- b. Kaitlyn Keating, Northfield Community Development Network (NCDN): ARPA Funds Request Update.** Earlier this year (01/23/24), the NCDN submitted a request for \$50,000 in ARPA funds in order to finance a scoping study, design plan, and grant match funds in order to create a "River Walk" path along the Dog River from the downtown area to the area slightly downstream from the "soon-to-be-removed" Cross Brothers Dam. At that time, the Select Board members awarded \$5,000 in ARPA funds to NCDN so that a conceptual study of the proposed project could be conducted. The intent was to determine whether the River Walk project was feasible before committing any additional ARPA funds.

Ms. Keating said Timber & Stone LLC, which focuses on “Recreational Trail Design and Construction,” has completed this initial study. It was not ready in time to be distributed with the Select Board packets last Friday but was emailed to them last night and hardcopies were made available prior to tonight’s meeting. As this study is lengthy with several photographs from areas along the proposed path route, Ms. Keating will provide a brief overview of it tonight with the understanding that the Select Board members might not have had time to fully digest it. She added that the cost estimates for the project are not included with the report but should be available by the end of this week. Ms. Keating noted the River Walk would be about one-half mile of “universally accessible trail” along the Dog River and Timber & Stone have divided the proposed path into four (4) separate segments. She noted these segments are not dependent on each other and could be constructed independently in any order. Timber & Stone has suggested that the Act 250 for the senior housing complex known as Green Mountain Apartments might need to be updated to allow the new path to be situated in close proximity to it. Ms. Keating noted preliminary studies indicate that there are no wetlands issues related to the project. She would like to know what additional information the Select Board members would require before they authorize the remaining \$45,000 in ARPA funds for this project. Board member Morse would still like to see the cost estimates for this project first. As Ms. Keating indicated earlier, these should become available in the next few days. Board member Morse is concerned that the path travels so close to the aforementioned senior housing that there might be privacy issues. He doesn’t want path users looking into residents’ windows. Ms. Keating believes there would be proper screening as part of the final project design. Board member Shernock would prefer it if the cost estimates were split between the different segments of the proposed path. Ms. Keating said that information should be provided when the project cost estimates are provided. If it is not, it will be requested. Board member Shernock asked what the likely sources for grant funds for this project would be. Carolyn Stevens believes that there would be USDA grant opportunities available. Ms. Keating said making sure the path is “universally accessible” should result in a good number of grant opportunities becoming available. Board member Petty felt that if this project really does result in riverside paths, that will become a great asset for the Northfield community. She then asked if the ARPA funds would go directly to NCDN or whether the municipality would oversee the project and manage the project funds. Ms. Keating said the intention was always to have the municipality as the guiding force for this project with NCDN members providing assistance by seeking grant opportunities, etc. Board member Petty is not comfortable committing ARPA funds to this project before any grant sources have been identified. However, there has been some discussion of the municipality setting aside some ARPA funds in the municipal budget as surplus funds that could be used as match funds for upcoming projects. That could become a possibility for this project. Board member Petty said should the construction phase of this project commence, she would favor starting with the northernmost segment by the Dollar General as that would provide the fewest initial obstacles with such issues as private property access, etc. Ms. Keating thought it was very possible that this part of the path could be created first and connected to other segments at a later time. Existing walking paths in the downtown area could fill gaps in the meantime. Board member Petty thought should the municipality assume control of the river walk project, there probably should be a committee formed of interested residents who could make recommendations to the Select Board members as the project progresses. Chair Maxwell also would like to see the total cost estimates for this project before taking any additional action on this. He also would like to see a listing of possible grant sources for a project of this nature. Chair Maxwell does feel that having this preliminary study in hand is a very good starting point. Ms. Keating said the cost estimates will be available soon and NCDN members should be able to identify possible grant fund sources. This information should be available for the next Select Board regular meeting (06/25/24). Board member Morse advised that EDD Tom Davis is a very skilled grant writer and the NCDN should consider him a very valuable resource for this project.

## **VI. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

- a. **May 28, 2024 (Regular Meeting).** Motion by Board member Morse, seconded by Board member Stevens, to approve the minutes. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

## **VII. APPROVAL OF BILLS**

- a. **Approval of Warrant #23-24 & 23-24A-E.** Motion by Board member Morse, seconded by Board member Stevens, to approve Warrant #23-24 & 23-24A-E in the amount of \$1,646,482.87. It was noted that of the total warrant amount, \$1,142,732.45 represented property taxes collected by the municipality and then forwarded to the Paine Mountain School District. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

- b. **Approval of Warrant #24-24A.** Motion by Board member Morse, seconded by Board member Stevens, to approve Warrant #24-24A in the amount of \$20,405.54. This is the annual bank note payment for the Northfield Fire Department (NFD) 2024 tanker truck. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
- c. **Approval of Warrant #24-24B.** Motion by Board member Morse, seconded by Board member Stevens, to approve Warrant #24-24B in the amount of \$29,701.33. This is the annual bank note payment for the NFD 2024 pumper truck. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
- d. **Receipt of Biweekly Payroll through May 26, 2024.** Motion by Board member Morse, seconded by Board member Stevens, to receive the biweekly payroll in the amount of \$80,960.75. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

#### VIII. SELECT BOARD

- a. **Town Zoning Bylaws Revisions.** Manager Schulz felt there was a good discussion earlier this evening during the public hearing and it appears the Select Board consensus is to make further changes to the proposed zoning bylaws before providing final approval. If these changes are considered "substantive," that would require holding an additional public hearing. For the purposes of discussion, it was felt that a motion should be made beforehand. Motion by Board member Morse, seconded by Board member Stevens, to approve the zoning bylaws revisions as presented. Board member Morse said there are certain to be several adjustments in the draft document based on the conversation held earlier tonight. That would include removing the sixteen dwellings per acre limit in the Village Center, allowing for housing constrictions in industrial zoning districts, perhaps revising the zoning district map, etc. Board member Petty thought it might be useful to rewrite the definition of industrial zones to allow for new housing units to be built there. Mr. Osiecki believes that would be a good course of action as he believes Freight Yard Way, now designated as an industrial zone, would be better suited for housing units and commercial use rather than for industrial purposes. He added the zoning bylaws could be revised to allow for conditional use in the area now designated as industrial. This might eliminate the need to revise the zoning district maps at this time. Board member Petty would like Ms. Hill-Eubanks' suggested changes for Table B included in the next set of revisions of the zoning bylaws. She also would like there to be future review of the current zoning districts with the possibility of allowing for "smart growth" in the low-density residential areas where current circumstances would make creating additional housing units both feasible and desirable. Chair Maxwell does support Board member Petty's suggestion at a previous meeting that once the proposed zoning bylaws revisions have been formally approved, a planning consultant should be hired in order to review whether there should be exceptions to the current blanket five (5) acre minimum lot size in the low-density residential areas. Other issues that the consultant could explore would include whether there should be special protections in the bylaws for the Town Forest, etc. **Motion to approve the zoning bylaws revisions as presented failed 0-5-0.** Chair Maxwell said Mr. Osiecki will be making the suggested changes in the zoning bylaws and preparing a finalized document for further Select Board discussion and possible approval. Mr. Osiecki also will seek guidance regarding whether or not the new revisions will require an additional public hearing be held.
- b. **Appointment of CVFiber Delegate.** The position of Northfield delegate to CVFiber has been vacant for several months but Thomas Davis has indicated his willingness to serve. Motion by Board member Morse, seconded by Board member Stevens, to appoint Mr. Davis as Northfield's delegate to CVFiber. Board member Morse noted in September 2022, the Select Board members awarded CVFiber \$90,000 in ARPA funds to provide high-speed internet access to underserved Northfield residents. Given that TDS Telecom has extended its broadband services to the more rural areas of Northfield over the past year, Board member Morse hopes Mr. Davis will be able to provide the Select Board members with a full accounting on how those ARPA funds would be spent in Northfield. There also is the issue of CVFiber's planned merger with Northeast Kingdom (NEK) Community Broadband and how that will affect timelines for expanding their high-speed internet service networks. Board member Petty believes CVFiber will provide healthy competition for TDS Telecom in Northfield's rural areas and perhaps provide more reasonable service prices. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

- c. **Select Board Goals.** Chair Maxwell said an updated list of short-, medium-, and long-term goals for the community was prepared in the wake of last month's Select Board Retreat (05/07/24). He would like the Select Board members to review the list and state whether they had any additions or deletions to suggest. Board member Shernock would like the short-term goal "Honor Volunteers Annually" moved to the list of ongoing short-term goals. She would like this done in the Town Report each year and asked if this would require a motion. Chair Maxwell said this could be warned as an action item on a future agenda. Board member Petty volunteered to go through the list and report back on any needed changes.
- d. **American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Fund Requests.** Manager Schulz said a new request for ARPA funds has been received from Concerned Citizens from Northfield, who are represented tonight by Sara Nevin. The request is for \$218,400 in ARPA funds in order to install streetlights at certain road intersections in areas outside the former Village boundaries, mainly the unpaved backroads. This would require the installation of 140 poles and is intended to promote pedestrian safety for adults and children walking at night on dark backroads. The purchase of the streetlights is estimated to cost \$210,000 and the remaining \$8,400 of the requested amount would cover the first year of power and maintenance expenses. Motion by Board member Morse, seconded by Board member Stevens, to approve the request from Concerned Citizens from Northfield for \$218,400 in order to install streetlights at certain road intersections in areas outside the former Village boundaries. Board member Morse noted since these streetlights would be located outside of the Northfield Electric Department (NED) service area, the municipality would need to contract with Green Mountain Power (GMP), the Washington Electric Co-op (WEC), or a third party to install them. The request doesn't state where the streetlights would be located but he is concerned that in a rural setting they might become very susceptible to vandalism. Therefore, ongoing light replacement might become a major expense over time. Board member Morse noted revised zoning bylaws might lead to the aforementioned "smart growth" in the low-density residential districts and better street lighting would be required should that come to pass. However, he would not support this request as this time. Board member Shernock is not sure people living on the backroads would welcome the additional nighttime illumination. Many people move to rural areas to escape the light pollution that accompanies downtown living. Ms. Nevin said she does see the need to enhance pedestrian safety along the backroads, especially for children who have to walk to school bus stops in early morning darkness. She added that the lights would be installed at strategic locations and not necessarily in front of people's houses. Elroy Hill noted that improved lighting does deter vandalism in most cases. Mr. Fournier lives on Union Brook Road and he would not like to see the backroads lit up. He suggested that pedestrians walking in the dark should be able to carry flashlights or other forms of personal illumination. Board member Stevens has not heard of anyone in Northfield being hit by vehicles due to dark backroads. He also felt the estimated \$8,400 in annual maintenance costs is far too low given the amount of electric power that would be needed. Board member Petty lives in the downtown area and she thinks streetlighting in close proximity to homes is not always welcome. She also feels that there might be other ways to promote pedestrian safety along the backroads so she does not support this request. Chair Maxwell agrees that the estimated annual maintenance cost is probably too low. He added that the ARPA fund request would cover only the first year of this cost and this expense would thereby be charged to Northfield residents afterwards. In addition, there is the possibility of considerable pushback from people living on the backroads who don't want the streetlighting. Therefore, Chair Maxwell cannot support this request. **Motion failed 0-5-0.** Chair Maxwell did thank Ms. Nevin for bringing these pedestrian safety concerns on the backroads to the Select Board members' attention. He hopes alternate solutions can be found.

Chair Maxwell then turned to the request presented earlier tonight from Cassie Morse from the Northfield Farmers Market (NFM) for \$7,000 in ARPA funds to be used as a local match amount for an already submitted USDA grant application. Motion by Board member Morse, seconded by Board member Petty, to approve the request from the Northfield Farmers Market for \$7,000 in ARPA funds. As Board member Morse is married to Ms. Morse, he will recuse himself from this discussion. Board member Petty asked if the ARPA fund award could be made contingent on the grant application being successful. This condition was added to the motion as a friendly amendment. **The revised motion passed 4-0-0, with Board member Morse recusing himself.**

Board member Petty noted that the Select Board members previously authorized an amount up to \$100,000 in ARPA funds for the purchase of emergency generators for the Police Station, Fire Station, Ambulance Bay, and Municipal Building. She asked about the status of this. Manager Schulz said he is finalizing the RFP for this project and it should go out later this week. Board member Petty also asked about the management request for \$10,000 in ARPA funds in order to update the billing system for the Northfield Utility Office and Town Clerk's Office in order to allow for credit card, bank card, etc. payments. Manager Schulz is finishing a proposal for this that should be ready for discussion at the next regular meeting (06/25/24). Board member Petty also would like to see an update for the request submitted by EDD Tom Davis for \$200,000 in ARPA funds to be used to establish a municipal account that would be used for local match amounts for grant applications. She felt there were a number of proposed projects that would benefit from this. Chair Maxwell would like the current list of potential ARPA projects reviewed in order to determine which should be further pursued and which, for various reasons, should be eliminated from future consideration.

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

- a. Main Street Bridge Replacement Project.** Manager Schulz has been informed by the Vermont Agency of Transportation (VTrans) that this project has been delayed by a year until Summer 2026. The main reason given for this was their inability to obtain in a timely manner sufficient steel for the new bridge's support structure. Chair Maxwell said the installation of a new bridge over Interstate 89 at Richmond faced delays for similar reasons. Manager Schulz said the local preparation for the project, such as utility relocation, will continue in the interim. Board member Morse noted several local businesses had started to make their own preparations for the bridge closure so they and the general public should be informed of this development as soon as possible. Manager Schulz will take care of this.
- b. Highway Department update.** Manager Schulz announced that Karl Bailey, a longtime Northfield Highway Department employee who has been serving as Acting Foreman in recent months, has been formally promoted to Highway Foreman. Chair Maxwell and the other Select Board members congratulated Mr. Bailey on this. In addition, Manager Schulz said a job offer has been extended to one applicant. The paperwork is being finalized. Once that person is on the job, there will still be two (2) full-time position vacancies in the department.
- c. Union Brook Road Work.** Manager Schulz has hired a contractor to work on the sides on Union Brook Road, which can be quite rough at some locations.
- d. Town Common Revitalization Project.** Manager Schulz said there will be "Community Design Event" as part of this project to be held in Howe's Hall located in the United Church of Northfield (58 South Main Street) on Thursday, June 20, 2024 from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. This will be an opportunity for Northfield residents to provide their own visions of how the Common should be rehabilitated.
- e. Memorial Park Vandalism.** Manager Schulz said nighttime surveillance cameras have been ordered in response to the recent vandalism at Memorial Park. They will be hardwired and notifications will be sent to the Police Chief, Town Manager, etc. In addition, replacements have been ordered for the damaged basketball court backboards. Manager Schulz also is seeking quotes for an electronic gate that would automatically close at night.

#### **X. BOARD MEMBERS' COMMENTS, CONCERNS, QUESTIONS**

- a. Personnel Policy update.** Board member Morse asked about the status of the revised document. Chair Maxwell said a finalized update has not been provided for Select Board approval. Manager Schulz believes the Policy Review Subcommittee (Board members Morse and Stevens) should meet soon to make any additional revisions before the document is finalized for Board approval. Board member Petty would like the Vermont League of Cities & Towns (VLCT) to review the finalized document to see if it passes legal muster before it goes to the Select Board members for approval.
- b. Crosswalk Painting.** Board member Shernock had a request from a resident to repaint the crosswalk at the intersection of Washington Street and South Main Street. Board member Petty said the contracted line strippers were in town recently. They did considerable work on the side streets but neglected to repaint this crosswalk or the one at the intersection of Prospect Street and South Main Street. Manager Schulz will contact them again so they will come back to Northfield and complete all the remaining work.

- c. **Norwich Students (NU) Noise Complaint.** Board member Shernock heard another concern raised about NU students walking along Stony Brook Road at 4:00 a.m. with music blaring. Manager Schulz will contact NU administrators about this.
- d. **Town-Wide Reappraisal update.** Board member Stevens asked about the status of the local town-wide reappraisal, which the State of Vermont has mandated. Manager Schulz said Listers Chair Thomas Alsheimer did solicit bids for the work and it was decided to hire the New England Municipal Resource Center (NEMRC) to perform the project. Unfortunately, since many Vermont communities received the same state mandate at the same time, the project probably won't start here for at least another year.
- e. **Sidewalk Repair Project.** Board member Stevens asked if the RFP for the sidewalk work on Vine Street, Cross Street, and Water Street has gone out yet. Manager Schulz said he is working with a consulting engineer to obtain all the information needed to develop the RFP. The bid documents should be sent out soon.
- f. **Paine Mountain School District.** Board member Petty noted that at the recent Board Retreat, there was discussion of increased interaction with the local school district in order to facilitate long-term planning, etc. She would like joint board meetings scheduled when the new school year starts this fall.
- g. **Vermont Outdoor Recreation Economic Collaborative (VOREC) Grant Implementation Committee update.** Board member Petty reported the committee solicited bids for the first phase of its Wayfinding Signage project. The received bids were reviewed at last night's meeting and one company was chosen to manufacture and install the signage along the Town Forest trail system as well as at some downtown locations. If all goes well, the new signage should be installed by this fall. In addition, the committee will be spending grant funds on a number of upcoming outdoor recreation events and presentations. The full schedule of events will be widely publicized once it has been finalized.
- h. **Economic Development Subcommittee update.** Board member Petty reported that the subcommittee (Board members Morse and Petty) met yesterday morning. The first application in some time was received looking to borrow funds from the local revolving loan fund. The subcommittee members decided to recommend the creation of a revolving loan fund committee that would draft revised rules for the fund in order to make the loan program more attractive to local entrepreneurs. There also needs to be some discussion of how to keep the loan fund growing over time. Chair Maxwell said this matter will be put on a future regular meeting agenda for discussion.
- i. **Northfield Gardeners Appreciation.** Chair Maxwell wanted to thank the Northfield Gardeners (i.e., Sally Davidson, Bethany Drum, Kim Adams, Lucinda Sullivan, Nancy Motyka, Carol Jenkinson, Brett Murphy, Debbie Zuaro, and Stevie Balch) for all the outstanding work they have done this spring on and around the Common.
- j. **The New Northfield News.** Chair Maxwell said the Northfield News has been sold to Kim and Dave Abare who will turn this into a monthly publication with an emphasis on local news. They have asked Chair Maxwell to provide periodic updates on Select Board activities and he has agreed to do this.

#### **XI. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (UNSCHEDULED)**

- a. **Mary Nadon Scott, Accessibility, Walkability, and Pedestrian Safety Task Force: Sidewalk Repairs RFP.** Ms. Scott asked if the RFP to be sent out for the sidewalk work will include a traffic study to determine whether the crosswalks on Vine Street should be relocated to improve pedestrian safety. Chair Maxwell said a consulting engineer has been engaged to help develop the RFP and that person will look into such pedestrian safety improvements in the project areas. Ms. Scott also wanted to thank the Select Board members for moving forward with these needed sidewalk improvements.
- b. **Lynn Doney: Sidewalk Repairs Project Concerns.** Mr. Doney is concerned this project might suffer the same construction delays as the stormwater mitigation project on South Main Street that was finished several months behind schedule. If there are significant delays in completing the sidewalk work, Mr. Doney would like the contractor held responsible and perhaps penalized with reduced payments, etc. Manager Schulz said the contracts for such major projects usually do have provisions for penalties in case of work delays. In the case of the work done on South Main Street, the State of Vermont funded the bulk of this project and thus had the final determination regarding whether the contractor should be penalized for the work delays. In the end, it was felt pandemic-related material and manpower shortages were largely responsible for the project delays so no penalties were imposed.

- c. **Lynn Doney: Lovers Lane Problems, etc.** Mr. Doney said there were major potholes on the paved section at the west end of Lovers Lane. If they cannot be permanently fixed, perhaps the whole road should be graveled. Manager Schulz said this road gets a lot of steady traffic and that does result in significant road damage over time. Board member Morse felt there were drainage problems at that location that should be addressed as the major source of the pothole problem. Mr. Doney also felt the approaches to the Wall Street Bridge need considerable work. They should be ground down to make it a smoother ride for drivers. In addition, Mr. Doney felt the roadside mowing is far behind schedule and that has resulted in some tight road corners having limited visibility. Due to the aforementioned full-time employee shortage in the Highway Department, Manager Schulz said it is likely that the roadside mowing will need to be contracted out this year.

- XII. EXECUTIVE SESSION.** Motion by Board member Morse, seconded by Board member Stevens, to go into executive session, in accordance with 1 VSA 313 (a)(1)], in order to discuss a contract negotiation with Manager Schulz present. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

The Board went into executive session at 10:20 p.m.

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

The Board came out of executive session at 10:35 p.m. No action was taken.

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

The Board adjourned at 10:35 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.

A video recording of this meeting is available at <https://youtu.be/IqwRGpzfHx8>

These minutes were approved at the Select Board regular meeting of June 25, 2024.