

## [NORTHFIELD SELECT BOARD MEETING MINUTES]

November 1, 2022

Northfield Town Hall  
69 Main St

Select Board Present: Barbara “Bee” Jacque, Chair; Heath Cummings, Vice Chair; Bernard Boudreau, Clerk; Alexander Meisner; Mary Bowen

Also Present: Sandra L. Wood, Town Secretary; Tyler Bourbeau, BNCTV

Others Present: Beth Walker and Alice Lord, Assessors; James Spencer, President of the Moody Center

- Meeting called to order at 6:02pm
- **Scheduled Appointments**
  - 6:00 pm Tax Classification Hearing w/ Board of Assessors
  - Motion by Jacque seconded by Meisner the Select board voted to open the public classification hearing to discuss the allocation of the local property tax levy among the property classes for FY2023
    - Notice of Tax Classification read
    - Walker called the Assessors to order at 6:05pm
    - Discussion of single vs. split tax rate. Both boards agreed to keep the classification as single
    - No public comment received
    - Excess levy capacity is \$1,313,711.30
    - Motion by Meisner, seconded by Boudreau the Select Board voted to adopt a uniform tax rate, otherwise known as a single tax rate for all classifications for the fiscal year 2023
    - Assessors document signed by the Select Board
    - Motion by Jacque, seconded by Boudreau to close the hearing at 6:15 pm. Unanimous
    - Assessors adjourned at 6:15 pm
- **Review and Approval of Warrants**
  - Motion by Meisner, seconded by Boudreau the Select Board voted to approve the 11/02/22 Payroll warrant of \$72,527.43
  - Motion by Cummings, seconded by Meisner the Select Board voted to approve the 11/02/22 Vendor warrant of \$1,014,479.75
- **Review and Approval of Minutes**
  - Motion by Cummings, seconded by Boudreau the Select Board voted to approve the 10/17/22 Emergency Services Public Forum minutes as amended. Meisner abstained
  - Motion by Cummings, seconded by Meisner the Select Board voted to approve the minutes of 10/18/22 as written.
- **Meetings/Events attended by Selectboard members**
  - Boudreau: Board of Health; Campus Center Community Collaborative Committee (C5); Happy Feet walk
  - Cummings: C5
  - Jacque: Fire Chief & Town Administrator; Town Administrator and First Light pre calendar check; School Committee; EMS Chief and Town Administrator; Agenda with Town Administrator & Town Secretary
  - Meisner: Rag Shag parade
- **Business**
  - ARPA request-Highway request to make sidewalk tractor year round
    - Highway Superintendent Tom Walker requested additional equipment for the tractor being purchased to remove snow from the sidewalks in the winter to use as a mower/spreader in the warmer season.
    - Motion by Cummings, second by Meisner the Select Board voted to approve the ARPA request to \$16,092.95 to purchase a small Kubota tractor
  - Preliminary Review Meeting for Moody Center/Soulfest
    - Jacque gave background on the special permit process and review of how the Select Board would proceed
      - This is a preliminary review; no application has been submitted
      - The Moody Center will make the presentation. Only the Select Board will be asking questions
      - The public can submit questions and concerns in writing by November 22 for future review

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- Any documents presented for this topic will be posted on the town website the following day
- James Spencer, Moody Center President, reported Soulfest would be a 3- day event proposed for August 3-5, 2023, between the hours of 9am-11pm or times according to the town bylaw for noise ordinance. He felt they had the space needed in conjunction with Thomas Aquinas campus.
- Spencer described how the stages and seating would be set up, parking areas on and offsite with approximately 4-5 shuttles. A traffic study would be done to verify. The event anticipates 3,000 parking spots will be needed for 7500-8500 participants per day.
- Explanation requested as to why Soulfest was already selling tickets to an event that has not been approved. Spencer answered Soulfest dealing with a constituency and if the event does not happen here, they would change the venue or refund tickets.
- Spencer has had preliminary conversations the public safety personnel in town noting Soulfest has a good track record with no note of crime and few medical issues. The event has an unarmed “peace patrol” of volunteers.
- Discussion of food truck, camping and porta-potty locations with temporary fencing. Power to the event would either be mobile or permanently installed to the area.
- There has been no clear reason given why Soulfest will no longer be held at Gunstock in New Hampshire
- Further concern by the Select Board for the sewer infrastructure if the alternative to porta-potties was facilities in buildings were used.
- There will be no alcohol during the event
- Review of total square feet of the event, parking, and total expected attendance. Spencer to work on clarifying more specific numbers
- The pre-application was put together by a rep from Soulfest and the Moody Center. The Moody Center would be the applicant for all permitting
- Spencer was asked about the make-up of the Soulfest organization and where they were located. The have four full time staff and volunteers. The internet listed their base as Northfield.
- Spencer does not have experience in applying for special events permits
- Soulfest did come to look at the facility to create a plan
- The Moody Center participates in the Campus Center Community Collaborative Committee and has a PILOT program with the town
- Spencer regretted tickets were being sold before approval. He felt it was in the best interest for Northfield to hold the event, especially with the town’s 350<sup>th</sup> next year to draw people to town. The event would be good synergy for the Moody Center bringing people to the campus
- Financially the Moody Center would break even or with a slight profit but was not being held as a money-making event for the Moody Center.
- Soulfest addressed the COVID protocols at their previous events
- The age group of attendee’s ranges from families to teens and those in their 60’s-70’s
- No one from Soulfest was present per Spencer’s decision. He thought a Soulfest representative would be better during the actual application process
- With the longevity and expertise of Soulfest in events the Select Board felt a more detailed account would have been available at the start to assure the town. Spencer acknowledged everything was contingent on permitting and realizes it may be denied
- Spencer was advised to contact the water and sewer departments as it is not on the permit application but will affect both.
- An internet visual of Gunstock was viewed and discussion included the more remote location of the venue compared to the proposed location for next year. Spencer acknowledged he did not have a good answer and that there was a lot of work to be done as part of the permitting process. Spencer was questioned if the event could be downsized with the established annual concert event at Greenfield Community College

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with a smaller attendance, better parking, and amenable location for comparison. Spencer responded revenue would be an issue with downsizing

- The Select Board advised Spencer to bring the requests back to Soulfest for more detailed information. After bus parking for entertainers, stage sizes, seating area, venue tent location and size minus the total available footage leaves a limited area for the number of people spaced appropriately. The math was not clear and a professional organization like Soulfest should already have the information. Spencer understands it feels like a breach of trust, but Soulfest was not in attendance at Spencer's request. Moody Center will follow the process and convey to Soulfest
- The Select Board thanked Spencer for coming in and participating. Public safety is the main concern.
- Jacque commented on the time spent on this topic and the other projects that need the Select Board's and the public's attention.
- Review of the Select Board calendar for December and a reminder this was a preliminary review, there has been no application submitted. Comments to be collected and addressed at a meeting in December. Jacque thanked BNCTV and explained the process used to not violate open meeting law.

- **Proposed Agenda Items**

- Comcast update
- Jacque read a list of possible topics for November and December: cemetery closing; Finance & School Committee; Auditor; Highway update; road and speed limit inventory; priority list; plowing of the sidewalks; licenses; re-appointments; CSO agreement; First Light negotiations; Six town regional meeting

- **Recognition for Service:** Shout out to Rag Shag event; Meisner recognized Chair Jacque for dedication and level of commitment/volunteerism to the town. Agendas are well thought out for the best interest of the town.
- Motion by Jacque, seconded by Meisner the Select Board voted to adjourn at 8:30 pm

Recorded by Sandra L. Wood, Secretary

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Select Board Clerk

11/15/22  
Date Approved