

[NORTHFIELD SELECT BOARD MEETING MINUTES]

April 4, 2023

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: Andrea Llamas, Town Administrator; Sandra L. Wood, Town Secretary (remote); Tyler Bourbeau, BNCTV

Others Present: Jennifer Reid; EMS Chief Mark Fortier & Asst. EMS Chief Cam Kennedy; Police Chief Jon Hall; Tristan McKenna; Michelle Wood

- Meeting called to order at 6:01pm
- **Scheduled Appointments**
 - 6:00 pm
 - EMS – Appointment of Paramedic – Jennifer Reid
 - Chief Mark Fortier and Asst. Chief Cam Kennedy introduced Jennifer Reid to request appointment as a per diem paramedic
 - Reid has a 13-year history in the field
 - Handles stress by focusing on the task at hand; compartmentalize; discussing difficult situations with coworkers and hanging out with her dog.
 - Interest in the field came from post 9/11, where Reid had family from NY and wanted to help
 - Long term goal is critical care medicine at paramedic level with 3 years of study to go
 - Adjunct faculty member in NHTI clinical dept. as a go between for staff/students
 - Motion by Meisner, seconded by Cummings the Select Board voted to appoint Jennifer Reid to Northfield EMS as a paramedic term expires 12/31/23
 - Chief Fortier updates: Currently 24 members. Would like more members on staff
 - Meisner requested a 5 year list of members
 - New ambulance in June or July. The van ambulance to be stationed in Erving.
 - Received \$49,000 in reimbursement from USDA emergency rural welfare grant to offset the new ambulance
 - Police Chief Jon Hall – Department Update, School Safety
 - Commendation: Tristan McKenna, Good Samaritan
 - Chief Hall read the commendation letter re: house fire response by McKenna and Officer Welcome
 - Officer Welcome has received his accolade
 - McKenna commented Officer Welcome was above and beyond and small towns need more
 - Other internal department commendation letters to officers throughout the year: Maselli; Shoemaker & Cowan; Cowan; Cobileanschi x2; Lawler x2; Pirozhkov & Sumner; Pirozhkov a trained crisis negotiator; Sumner
 - Chief Hall reviewed his 2022 annual report, hiring Sumner; body cams; alliance with Clinical Support Options; collaborating with Senior Center for installing lockboxes; notable calls; community events; training; moving vehicle violations; 9598 calls for 2022
 - SRO/MOU
 - School Resource officer (SRO) position is in the school to protect if situation occurs; enjoys working with children and community; reach out to parents if child actions have changed, help keep out of criminal justice system;
 - Police equipment: Radio, firearm,
 - Cummings reviewed his position as full time SRO stating there was room for improvement.

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- Review of process of recent major event at the Elementary School with everyone involved and communication with the public. Commended Principal Trill during situation
 - Meisner commented funding should not be a variable and the School Committee should not refute the SRO for safety reasons
 - Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) has been updated and ready for school committee after counsel reviews
 - School budget has 30k for the position for the next 2 years
- Discussion on pay scale, rules and regulations, policy & procedures, emergency service facility, additional officer
- **Review and Approval of Warrants**
 - Motion by Meisner, seconded by Cummings the Select Board voted to approve the 4/5/23 Payroll warrant of \$64,722.60
 - Motion by Meisner, seconded by Bowen the Select Board voted to approve the 4/5/23 Vendor warrant of \$1,515,437.54
- **Meetings/Events attended by Selectboard members**
 - Boudreau- Board of Health
 - Cummings- Emergency Services Facility Committee
 - Jacque- Emergency Services Facility Committee; Finance Committee; FERC/First Light
 - Meisner-with Chief Hall for SRO/MOU review
- **Town Administrator's update**
 - Received \$48,215 USDA National Rural Development Fund – Emergency Rural Health Care Grant to help purchase the new ambulance
 - Vote to accept – Motion by Meisner, seconded by Cummings the Select Board voted unanimously for Barbara Jacque to sign and to approve the USDA grant of \$48,215 for the Northfield EMS ambulance Jacque signed the approved grant
 - ARPA Funding – Spending update. Some project funding not expended will go back into the ARPA funds for use
 - Senior Center Coffee Hour with Operations Project Manager and Architect to explain Emergency Services Building – where we are, building, early estimated costs
 - Working with the Grant Developer and Highway Superintendent on various grants all coming out and/or due in April and May.
 - Proposed grants include:
 - Community Once Stop – putting in up to 5 based on the expressions of interest we submitted in March and received feedback on
 - Working with Engineer to apply for Small Bridge Grant for School Street
 - Complete Streets – working with engineer on application estimate for Highland Street sidewalks
 - Discussed possible funds for environmental grants including one for tree plantings and one that would fund the purchase of land for conservation and passive recreation – due in July
 - Wrapping up the warrant – some changes
- **Business**
 - Retiree COLA Adjustment (PERAC Vote)
 - The Retirement Administration is asking the Select Board in each member Town to consider a vote to increase the retiree Cost-of-Living consider an additional 2% for the current retirees in FY2023
 - The state passed a law, to allow for this one time increase –as a regional system there needs to be 2/3 agreement of all member Towns.

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- Currently, they can only give 3% on the “base amount” – which is \$17,000 for every retiree, regardless of how much they get in retirement – the max they could get would top out at \$850.
- The actual average current retirees get in FY2023 is \$12,926 not the full \$17,000
- Review of charts show the comparison between retirement and Social Security vs. Franklin Regional Retirement.
 - Social Security got 5.9% in 2022 and 8.7% in 2023.
 - Charts show how this proposal looks to keep pace with Social Security
 - Motion by Meisner, seconded by Bowen the Select Board voted to approve the updated cost of living adjustment for fiscal year 2023 for the additional 2%
- Special Town Meeting Warrant – Vote to Sign
- Motion by Meisner, seconded by Bowen the Select Board voted to sign and approve the Special Town Meeting warrant for Northfield, MA on Wednesday April 19, 2023
 - Two articles –
 - First article will authorize the Treasurer, with Select Board approval the amount needed to fund the project.
 - anticipating the number when the bid is open on April 12th.
 - estimating the number around \$14.5 million—the sub bids (trades like roof, floor, HVAC) usually estimated to be about ½ the project, came in 4% lower than the estimated amount.
 - Second article will transfer funds from existing accounts (capital stabilization and cell tower account) to continue to pay for OPM, architect, other project oversight and management costs. These funds will be used to reduce the funds needed to borrow and pay interest going forward.
- Annual Town Meeting Articles and Warrant
 - Omnibus –
 - Motion by Meisner, seconded by Cummings the Select Board voted to recommend and approve the omnibus art for Annual Town meeting
 - Northfield Elementary School Bathrooms – The request is to vote the remaining Free Cash amount to be used for the NES Bathroom renovation project. The estimates came in higher than the funding appropriated last year. The project has been altered to reduce the cost.
 - Motion by Meisner, seconded by Bowen the Select Board voted to approve and recommend the Northfield elementary bathroom article
 - Select Board Stipends
 - Finance Committee is meeting on 4/6/23 to vote their recommendation or not
 - Motion by Meisner, seconded by Cummings the Select Board voted to approve and recommend the article. 3 yes/ 2 no. Passed
 - Fire Chief Term Extension – tabled
- **Citizen Concern** Michelle Wood; Holly Ave: questioned if there was a SRO job description
- **Proposed Agenda Items**
 - Running list
 - MOU/SRO
 - Public comment policy review
- **Announcements**
 - 350th Celebration Events: Dickinson Library coffee hour with presentation of seminary history; Abijah Prince of Northfield on 4/27 at the Trinitarian Church

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- **Recognition for Service**

- Chief Hall for building a collaborative in the police department

Motion by Meisner, seconded by Cummings the Select Board voted to adjourn at 8:16 pm

Recorded by Sandra L. Wood, Secretary

Select Board Clerk

4/18/2023
Date Approved