

[NORTHFIELD SELECT BOARD MEETING MINUTES]

June 13, 2023

Northfield Town Hall
69 Main St

Select Board Present: Alexander Meisner, Chair; Bernard Boudreau, Vice Chair; Sarah Kerns, Clerk; Barbara "Bee" Jacque; Heath Cummings
Also Present: Andrea Llamas, Town Administrator; Sandra L. Wood, Town Secretary; Otis Wheeler, BNCTV
Others Present: Rob Hunter, Fire Department; Matthew Singh; James Staelens; Stacy Bond Recreation Program Director, Gary Conaway, Asst. Summer Program Director, Hannah Bedard, Summer Program Director; Joe Graveline; Steve Stoia; Virginia Hastings;

- Meeting was called to order at 6:00 pm
- **Scheduled Appointments**
 - **6:00 pm**
 - Rob Hunter, 1st Lieutenant, Fire Department (Michael Quinn, as posted, was not able to attend)
 - Members of the fire department are inquiring the process and the Select Boards plans when Chief Dunnell retires
 - Meisner reviewed the process, screening to hiring, and expressed an interest to include members of the fire department, residents and a Select Board member
 - Goal is to maintain integrity of the department. Department does not feel the need for full time Chief.
 - Extension for Chief Dunnell is still in legislation
 - Fire department attended to let the Select Board know they wanted to be part of the process
 - Fire department members are looking into training and certifications required. Select Board will also need to know requirements
 - Hunter said Chief Dunnell saw the position being filled by someone who had some certifications and would complete all requirements within a two-year period.
 - Job description needed to create list of requirements
 - Legislation may not come into effect until fall. Chief Dunnell's birthday is in August. The department would like to have the deputy chief or captain as interim. Llamas to check if an auxiliary member can serve as interim chief
 - Select Board members suggested the fire staff meet to work out what they are looking for and create a database of those who have required certifications. Members of the public could also be invited for their input
 - **6:30 pm**
 - Recreation Summer Program Counselor Appointments
 - Recreation Commission Program Director Stacy Bond, Summer Program Director Hannah Bedard and Assistant Program Director Gary Conaway introduced the recommended appointees to the Select Board
 - Matthew Singh
 - Graduate of Pioneer Valley Regional School (PVRs)
 - Has experience working with children with past camp position
 - Worked with the school committee at PVRs
 - Attending college. Long term goal is aerospace field
 - James Staelens
 - PVRs graduate
 - Past summer recreation program experience in Bernardston
 - Interested in becoming a lawyer with long term goal to become a judge
 - Holds Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation certificate
 - Motion by Jacque, seconded by Boudreau the Select Board voted to appoint Matthew Singh and James Staelens to the position of Summer Program Counselors at grade 3 step 2, \$16.71/hour from June 26 to July 28 as temporary summer hires

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- **Citizens' Concerns**
 - Joe Graveline: read letter of support for Steve Stoia for appointment to the Economic Development Committee
 - Sarah Kerns says if Select Board members are not allowed to represent concerns of the citizen's, what are we doing? Asserts that representing citizen's concerns is expressly part of the job of the Select Board
- **Review and Approval of Warrants**
 - Motion by Jacque, seconded by Cummings the Select Board voted to approve the 06/14/23 Payroll warrant of \$81,571.78
 - Motion by Jacque, seconded by Boudreau the Select Board voted to approve the 06/14/23 Vendor warrant of \$278,895.74
- **Review and Approval of Minutes**
 - Motion by Boudreau, seconded by Kerns the Select Board voted to approve the 5/30/23 minutes as amended
- **Meetings/Events attended by Selectboard members**
 - Kerns: site visits to business parks in Windsor, VT and Schenectady, NY; Northfield VFW social; Chicken BBQ; train talk at West Northfield Playground; Massachusetts Municipal Association (MMA) training
 - Cummings: Road conditions tour and meeting with Llamas and Highway Superintendent Walker
 - Boudreau: Road conditions tour; MMA trainings
 - Meisner: Meeting with school Superintendent Kinsella; with Cummings met with Fire Department; met with Dickinson Library Trustee McGowan on energy concerns
 - Jacque: Northern Tier Rail Study; 2 ARPA meetings; follow up on county nursing services; FRCOG rural economic development plan; Finance Committee; MMA training
- **Town Administrator's update**
 - The State Reclamation Board approved Northfield's membership to the Pioneer Valley Mosquito District. They will be in contact with the Board of Health.
 - New trees on Main Street through the efforts of the "tree-50th" group. Planning for more plantings with locations and approval in process.
 - Approved Highway equipment auctioned. Resulting funds to the town of \$6,475.
 - Correspondence announcing a \$5,000 donation to Northfield EMS from Northfield Mount Hermon in appreciation of services rendered to a student
 - Grant Director Mallory Sullivan, in consultation with Chief Hall, is applying for a Municipal Road Safety Grant from the MA Executive Office of Public Safety – to purchase 2 (or more) radar speed signs for permanent installation, replacing the trailer. The Grant is due June 29th. A letter of support request will be ready for the next Select Board meeting.
 - Parking Survey – looking for volunteers to cover different intervals of the day over about 12 hours –to inventory street parking and parking lots from Mims to the IGA lot, including the opposite side of the street.
- **Business**
 - Economic Development Advisory Committee
 - With a low response of applicants, Llamas recommended putting on hold until fall after attending the Rural Economic Development Planning Session held on June 9.
 - The session discussed Rural Issues and Challenges in regard to economic development with aspects unique to rural towns
 - Kerns commented the advisory team could add more members later
 - Llamas and Jacque would like to see more businesses get involved and set priorities as grant opportunities come in
 - Steve Stoia noted members of the 350th Anniversary, who are involved heavily with the celebration at this time, would be people that would get involved
 - Mission and Objectives

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- Kerns wants to keep the small-town flavor for the mission and did not feel the need for professional help in the beginning
 - Jacque suggested the Select Board spend more time discussing economic development and bring in people during the summer
 - Virginia Hastings suggested the Select Board organize a roundtable discussion
 - Llamas explained about a facilitator similar to the police chief search, would organize a similar event for public input
- Membership
 - By majority poll, the Select Board chose to form the committee from the applications submitted
- Jacque left the room at 7:35 and returned at 7:38
 - Motion by Boudreau, seconded by Kerns the Select board voted to appoint Steve Stoia (business owner), Virginia Hastings, Robin van der Maat, Nohham Cachet-Schilling (residents), Sarah Kerns (Select Board member) and Grant Developer Mallory Sullivan to the Economic Development Advisory Committee. 4 yes, Jacque abstained
 - Motion by Boudreau, seconded by Cummings the Select Board voted the Economic Development Advisory Committee term expire 6/30/24
- Public Meeting Postings, Public Comment Policy
 - Public Comment Policy
 - Llamas attended the Massachusetts Municipal Association (MMA) webinar on June 5th on Regulating Comments at Public Meetings
 - They discussed the Southborough case with two things to consider:
 - Public Participation
 - Civility and Public Speech
 - Llamas suggested the Select Board discuss public participation policy and hold off on the civility speech policy. The MMA is working on a model they hope will meet the needs of communities to update the town's policy
 - Discussion on public participation time limit for agenda and per person time limit
 - Jacque noted Citizen Concerns should be directed to the Town Administrator as some issues could be resolved sooner
 - Motion by Boudreau, seconded by Kerns the Select Board voted to limit the public comment to three minutes per person
 - Public Meeting Postings
 - Kerns stated per conversation with a lawyer at a recent training, the town's postings were not in compliance and the primary posting should be the website vs. the physical posting board in Town Hall
 - Discussion on the problems with electronic posting issues, electrical or server outages
 - Meisner read the Attorney General's policy on posting and verified the town is in compliance. The back entrance and posting board are available and accessible 24/7
 - Kerns to forward attorney's information
- Campus/Center Community Collaborative Committee (C5)
 - Llamas referred to an email sent from Thomas Aquinas representative Steven Cain with his thoughts regarding the committee and its purpose
 - Llamas is in communication with the campus as a liaison for the town
 - Discussion on a resident as a liaison
 - Motion by Boudreau, seconded by Jacque the Select Board voted to disband the C5 committee immediately until further notice with thanks to those who participated

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- Special Event Policy – Indemnification (Hold Harmless) language addition
 - Recommended for the legal protection of the town
 - Motion by Jacque, seconded by Boudreau the Select Board voted to add indemnification language to the Special Event Policy
- School Resource Officer (SRO) Update
 - Meisner met with PVRs Superintendent Kinsella
 - The SRO memorandum of understanding is under review of the Curriculum Personnel Subcommittee
 - There has been no response. Warwick is leaving the district, and the chair is a Warwick resident and will be off of the subcommittee possibly delaying a response until the committee reorganizes
 - Meisner advocates writing a letter and reading at a school committee meeting. Kerns, Cummings and Jacque reviewed the advantages of the position
 - Cummings stated the school is fully responsible if anything happens
 - Current MOU expires in June
 - Meisner referred to the law on resource officers
 - Llamas to draft a letter and review with Meisner
- ARPA Approvals
 - Store Front Improvement Grant – Stellar Kayaks
 - To improve garage for manufacturing and retail space
 - Motion by Boudreau, seconded by Kerns the Select Board voted to approve the ARPA Storefront Improvement grant for Stellar Kayaks for \$11,584.69
 - COVID Premium Pay
 - This is an initiative the ARPA Committee and Select Board have discussed multiple times. Jacque also thanked Chief Mark Fortier and Chief Jon Hall for the idea and suggestions respectively
 - Llamas commended Jacque’s extended work on the project
 - Review of criteria and implementation calculations based on employees duties
 - \$62,000 reserved. Approximately \$47,000 requested
 - Motion by Boudreau seconded by Kerns the Select Board voted to approve ARPA funds for COVID premium pay for \$46,872.25
- Vote End of the Year Transfers
 - Llamas gave a brief explanation of causes for yearly transfers
 - Motion by Jacque, seconded by Boudreau the Select Board voted to transfer \$1,451.95 from Town Hall Capital projects to Street Lights
 - Motion by Jacque, seconded by Boudreau the Select Board voted to transfer \$417.00 from Selectmen Other to Town Reports
 - Motion by Jacque, seconded by Boudreau the Select Board voted to transfer \$1,874.00 from Computer Supplies & Services to Accountant Salary
 - Motion by Jacque, seconded by Boudreau the Select Board voted to transfer \$40,000.00 from Highway Regular Wages to Snow Removal Wages
 - Motion by Jacque, seconded by Boudreau the Select Board voted to transfer \$738.92 from Town Hall Building Maintenance to Elementary School Maintenance
 - Motion by Jacque, seconded by Boudreau the Select Board voted to transfer \$109.00 from Veterans Memorial Committee to Memorial Day Supplies
 - Motion by Jacque, seconded by Boudreau the Select Board voted to transfer \$15,000.00 from Highway Bridges and Rails to Machine Maintenance & Repair
 - Motion by Jacque, seconded by Boudreau the Select Board voted to transfer \$800.00 Registration-Census to Assistant Town Clerk
- Sign Regional Energy Planning Assistance Grant MOU with FRCOG for technical assistance

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- Assist with grant application, Annual Report Preparation, presentation of Annual Report to a municipal board, developing a net-zero emissions plan for municipal buildings and operations, including establishing a Green House Gas emissions baseline
 - Motion by Boudreau, seconded by Jacque to sign the Regional Energy Planning Assistance Grant MOU with FRCOG for technical assistance
- Sign Letter of support for Small Bridge Program Application
 - Letter from the Select Board supporting application for the Small Bridge grant to rehabilitate the bridge on School Street.
 - Motion by Jacque, seconded by Kerns the Select Board voted to sign a letter of support for the Small Bridge Program Application
- Time Off Request
 - Motion by Jacque, seconded by Meisner the Select Board voted to approve the time off request
- Motion by Jacque, seconded by Kerns the Select Board voted to go into executive Session at 9:00 pm for **Emergency Services Facility real estate options under M.G.L. c.30A, Sec. 21 (6)** To consider the purchase, exchange, lease or value of real estate, if the chair declares that an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the negotiating position of the public body and to return to open session. On a roll call vote Kerns yes, Cummings yes, Boudreau yes, Meisner yes and Jacque yes.
 - The Select Board came back into open session at 9:25 pm
 - Special Town Meeting Warrant
 - Motion by Cummings, seconded by Jacque the Select Board voted to approve Article 1 as written
 - Motion by Jacque, seconded by Cummings the Select Board voted to approve Article 2 as written. 4 yes/1 no-PASSED
 - Motion by Jacque, seconded by Cummings the Select Board voted for \$500,000 as a recommendation to consider on Article 2. 4 yes/1 abstain- PASSED
 - Motion by Cummings, seconded by Jacque the Select Board voted to approve Article 3 as written
 - Motion by Jacque, seconded by Cummings the Select Board voted to approve Article 4 as written
 - Motion by Jacque, seconded by Kerns the Select Board voted to approve Article 5 as written
 - Motion by Jacque, seconded by Kerns the Select Board voted to approve Article 6 as written
- **Proposed Agenda Items**
- **Recognition for Service**
 - Patter Field and organizers of the Chicken Barbeque
 - The 350th Celebration events over the weekend
 - The Highway Department and tree planting team
 - To Sgt. Pirozhkov for stranded motorist assistance
- Motion by Jacque, seconded by Cummings the Select Board voted to adjourn at 9:35 pm

Recorded by Sandra L. Wood, Secretary

Select Board Clerk

6/27/23
Date Approved

10/17/23
Date Amended and re-approved