

[NORTHFIELD SELECTBOARD MEETING MINUTES]

May 18, 2021

Northfield Town Hall
69 Main St

Selectboard Present: Heath Cummings, Chair; Barbara “Bee” Jacque; Alexander Meisner; Bernard Boudreau; Mary Sullivan-Bowen
Also Present: Andrea Llamas, Town Administrator; Sandra L. Wood, Town Secretary (remote); Tyler Bourbeau, BNCTV
Others Present: Rebecca McManus, EMS; Cameron Kennedy, EMS Asst. Chief; Karen Boudreau, Bd. of Health; John Schuster, Pratt Hollow Rd
Others present Remote: EMS Chief Mark Fortier; Frank Froment, Council on Aging Chair

- **Meeting was called to order at 6:00 pm**

- Read for the record: Pursuant to Governor Baker’s March 12, 2020 Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A, §18, and the Governor’s March 15, 2020 Order imposing strict limitation on the number of people that may gather in one place, this meeting of the town of Northfield Selectboard will be conducted via remote participation to the greatest extent possible. Specific information and the general guidelines for remote participation by members of the public and/or parties with a right and/or requirement to attend this meeting can be found on the Town of Northfield’s website, at northfieldma.gov. For this meeting, members of the public who wish to watch the meeting may do so in the following manner: The meeting will be filmed and broadcast in live time by BNCTV, Channel 17 and a link will be posted on the Town’s website at northfieldma.gov. Limited in-person attendance of members of the public may be permitted. Every effort will be made to ensure that the public can adequately access the proceedings in real time, via technological means. In the event we are unable to do so, despite best efforts, we will post on the Town’s website an audio or video recording, or other comprehensive record of proceedings as soon as possible after the meeting

- **Reorganization of the Selectboard**

- Officers:
 - Motion by Jacque, seconded by Meisner the board voted to appoint Heath Cummings Chair & Member to Trustees of Soldiers’ Memorials
 - Motion by Jacque, seconded by Bowen the board voted to thank Meisner for serving as Chair
 - Motion by Cummings, seconded by Jacque the board voted Bernard Boudreau Selectboard Clerk
- Regional Organizations
 - Motion by Cummings, seconded by Boudreau the board voted Barbara Jacque to the Franklin Regional Council of Governments Council
 - Motion by Cummings, seconded by Boudreau the board voted to appoint Alexander Meisner as Alternate to the FRCOG Council.
 - Motion by Cummings, seconded by Jacque the board voted to appoint Bernard Boudreau to the FRCOG Planning Board
 - Motion by Cummings, seconded by Jacque the board voted to appoint Bernard Boudreau to the Regional Emergency Planning Committee
 - Motion by Cummings, seconded by Bowen the board voted to appoint Floyd “Skip” Dunnell as Community Emergency Response Coordinator
 - Motion by Cummings, seconded by Meisner the board voted to appoint Barbara Jacque to the FRCOG Comprehensive Economic Development Committee as a nomination
 - Motion by Cummings, seconded by Jacque the board voted to appoint Alexander Meisner to the Housing & Redevelopment Authority Citizen Advisory Committee
 - Motion by Cummings, seconded by Meisner the board voted to appoint Mary Bowen to the Franklin Regional Transit Authority
 - Motion by Cummings, seconded by Meisner the board voted to appoint Denis Brennan to the Upper Pioneer Valley Veterans Services
- Subcommittees/Special Projects
 - Motion by Jacque, seconded by Meisner the board voted to appoint Heath Cummings to the Emergency Services Facility Committee
 - Motion by Cummings, seconded by Jacque the board voted to appoint Alexander Meisner to the Town Hall Master Plan Committee
 - Motion by Cummings, seconded by Boudreau the board voted to appoint Alexander Meisner to the 350th Anniversary Committee
 - Motion by Cummings seconded by Boudreau the board voted to appoint Barbara Jacque to the America Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Committee
 - Motion by Cummings, seconded by Meisner the board voted to appoint Brian Brault as at-large member of the America Rescue Plan Act Committee

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- **Review and Approval of Warrants**
 - Motion by Cummings, seconded by Meisner the board voted to approve the 05/06/2021 Payroll warrant of \$49,563.05
 - Motion by Cummings, seconded by Jacque the board voted to approve the 05/06/2021 Vendor warrant of \$73,923.55
 - Motion by Cummings, seconded by Boudreau the board voted to approve the 05/20/21 Payroll warrant of \$55,094.33
 - Motion by Cummings, seconded by Meisner, the board voted to approve the 05/20/21 Vendor warrant of \$117,914.72
- **Review and Approval of Minutes**
 - Motion by Jacque, seconded by Meisner the board voted to approve the minutes of 4/27/21 as amended
 - Motion by Jacque, seconded by Meisner the board voted to approve the minutes of 05/03/21as amended
- **Interim Selectboard Meetings**
 - 5/3/21 before Town Meeting/Mosquito Option
 - 5/3/21 Town Meeting
 - 5/6/21 w/ Bd of Health/Mosquito Option
- **Meetings/Events attended by Selectboard members**
 - Jacque: Finance Committee; Energy Committee; Agricultural Commission; Comcast hearing; calls to Town of Deerfield & Pioneer Valley Mosquito District; MassDOT re: crosswalks
 - Meisner: 350th Anniversary Committee
 - Cummings: Campus/Center Community Collaborative Committee
- **Scheduled Appointments:**
 - Rebecca McManus; Full Time Paramedic position
 - 20 years' experience
 - 2 ½ years with EMS dept.
 - Training officer; American Heart Association instructor; internal EMS education
 - Interest started in 2000; 2001 started with EMS class
 - As training Captain keeps staff certifications current
 - 2016 came to the area and decided to move here
 - 5- year career plan: see dept grow; more training with community
 - Likes teaching; looks forward to more
 - Motion by Cummings, Seconded by Meisner the board voted to appoint Rebecca McManus as a full- time paramedic grade 9 step 1
 - Frank Froment; Senior Center Director job description
 - Job description missing level of service provided by past director Rebecca Sommers-Petersen
 - Review of changes: certification; education; experience
 - Goal to address social and psychological well-being; more programs; track well-being of seniors
 - Boudreau recused himself for any ruling due to his association with the Friends of the CoA
 - Motion by Meisner, seconded by Cummings the board voted to accept the Senior Center Director job description as written
 - Reclassification team will be Jacque, Llamas and a member of the Finance Committee
- **Business**
 - Western MA EMS Save Award: Rebecca McManus and Todd Czernich
 - Letters from Western MA EMS Committee Inc. addressed to Rebecca McManus and Todd Czernich read
 - Chief Fortier explained the event leading to the recognition
 - Motion by Meisner, seconded by Cummings the board voted to recognize the lifesaving efforts of Rebecca McManus and Todd Czernich
 - Resignation of Board of Health member Flora Sadri
 - Resignation read from April 27, 2021
 - Motion by Cummings, second by Meisner the board voted to accept the resignation of Ms. Sadri.
 - The Selectboard thanked Sadri for her service to the town
 - Citizen Interest forms can be submitted for the vacated seat
 - FRCOG Fuel Bid Authorization for May 20
 - Authorization signature needed for Franklin Regional Council of Government to bid on the town's behalf
 - Motion by Cummings, seconded by Jacque the board voted to accept the bid and authorize Andrea Llamas to docu-sign the bid

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- Cross Walk request from Camp Northfield
 - Letter from Thomas Jackson, Executive Director of Camp Northfield requesting the Selectboard submit petition to MassDOT to reduce the speed and provide a crosswalk on Rte. 10
 - Discussion reducing speed to 45 to match New Hampshire posting; crosswalk placement
 - Llamas to draft letter to MassDOT
 - Motion by Cummings, seconded by Meisner the board voted to authorize Llamas to write a letter to MassDOT regarding lowering the speed limit to 45 mph in that area as well as investigating the installation of a crosswalk
- Mosquito Control Options
 - Llamas checked with several towns. Found only Montague voted to opt-out due to comfort with procedure not being necessary unless there is a breakout; the state must notify before spraying. Towns did not want to be responsible for mosquito control and costs associated.
 - **Presentation from Jacques**
 - Spoke with Deerfield Selectboard member Carolyn Ness and the Director of the Pioneer Valley Mosquito Control District
 - **OVERVIEW**
 - Communication with other towns & the Pioneer Valley Mosquito District indicate opting out of aerial spraying is more complicated than first thought. While we focus on spraying, we should not lose sight of mosquito adaptability and the decline of their predators (birds, bats, dragonflies, frogs, spiders, & others) as the larger “root issue.” Below is my understanding of what I’ve read & heard — my goal is to give a sense of the challenge and point to decisions & actions to be considered.
 - **MOSQUITOES**
 - 50+ species in Massachusetts
 - They adapt — now active during day not just dusk/dawn
 - Wet, rainy weather is not a simple predictor — wet conditions are important for breeding (especially WNV), but some mosquitoes like dry conditions & dry conditions (even dry days) can cause an increase in biting (dehydrated mosquitoes seek blood)
 - Zika mosquito is making its way north
 - 2019 was a big year for EEE risk (the Town of Heath lost a person)
 - **MOSQUITO CONTROL**
 - Year-round for the most part
 - Important & more effective to control early & all stages in mosquito life cycle
 - Spraying, especially aerial, is costly & less effective
 - Spraying in 2020 occurred in Southeastern Massachusetts
 - **PIONEER VALLEY MOSQUITO DISTRICT**
 - \$5K is the minimum & covers surveillance & testing plus educational assistance from the Director
 - Unlike other districts, funding is “voluntary contribution” vs “cherry sheet”
 - Voluntary means towns in this district can pick & choose services
 - Shoestring budget — one employee, no physical space
 - Requires a town vote (not sure if annual vs special is relevant)
 - Given the new state program and the interest of towns in joining, the district should be funded at a higher level to provide add’l employees or contractors & physical space (e.g., storage)
 - **STATE**
 - July 2020 kicked off the new legislation/program, but specific regs didn’t begin to roll out until Spring 2021
 - Not all the details are known — the 2-year state task force created releases its findings in August 2021
 - “Exclusion” is/was a term used before — “opt-out” seems to be a new term & has captured all the attention, especially absent other details
 - Organic farmers & property owners (based on size of property) can apply for exclusion individually
 - Education alone does not seem to be an acceptable plan for opting out — it seems to be “required” so the state can make education mandatory

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- If the state declares an emergency, it is possible they could mandate spraying anyway & bill opted-out towns

- **NORTHFIELD**

- Our low/remote risk designation by the state is based on geography, proximity to other towns, & possibly, occasional tests from the DPH
- If we were next to Heath in 2019, for example, our risk level would have been Moderate (Yellow)
- If we had one person with EEE or WNV, our risk level would be Critical (Red)
- To effectively manage the health risk & to deal with the state, we need multi-year data on mosquito species in our town & where they exist
- In managing & adapting a plan each year, as well as educating the public, the Board of Health would need funding
- In dealing with culverts & standing water, and applying control measures like bactericide rings, the Highway Dept would need funding
- We are not currently part of the FRCOG Pollinator Program

- **RECOMMENDATIONS / CONSIDERATIONS**

- Ask FRCOG to set up a meeting with towns & delegation — impact on towns, funding for towns, funding for District, funding for proactive measures
- Evaluate August 2021 results from state task force
- Use Town Meeting to present plan & its funding requirements
- Make sure plan deals with how & when spraying would or would not occur
- Possibly create a bylaw or policy to address spraying
- Identify the opportunity to engage on proactive measures to address the decline of mosquito predators — role of community & other committees
- Recommended not opting out due to risk with no plan in place

- Karen Boudreau of the Board of Health joined the discussion

- Asked when the last time Northfield was sprayed and how decision will be made to opt out
 - Discussion on developing plan with Board of Health and possibly holding special town meeting in the fall for funding.
 - Llamas to reach out to FRCOG for possible regional assistance
 - Risk too great if opt out without a plan
 - Plan requires 5 years of data

- Decision

- Not enough information or data to process before the deadline
- Plan for next town meeting; education for Board of Health; identify problem areas
 - Resident John Schuster added his comments on the lack of info and short time frame from the state
- Motion by Cummings, seconded by Meisner the board voted to not opt out of the mosquito spraying program due to lack of time and availability.
 - Possibly create a subcommittee
 - Keep moving forward to get a plan in place
 - Collect questions from Board of Health and Selectboard and concerns, bring to Llamas
- Next steps
 - Develop plan
 - Source funding for possible participation in Mosquito District or other groups available, Highway department and Board of Health
 - Questions to Llamas

- **Town Administrator's update**

- COVID UPDATES: Recommend Town Hall return to full open hours; keep mask mandate; open public restrooms; allow public meetings; allow departments to use safety precautions; keep sanitizing stations

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- American Rescue & Recovery Plan: Finance Committee member appointed; see Reorganization section for Selectboard appointments
- Route 2-Gulf Rd sign in place and junction 10 & 63
- 6 beacons planned for Main St. pedestrian crossings
- Congressionally Directed Spending Request from Senator Warren's office
- Thank you letter from visitor for help provided by Tom Walker-letter read
- Schell Bridge appraiser and review appraiser hired. Met with MassDOT, town counsel and Firstlight to resolve Right of Way questions and agreement
- **Correspondence:** Notice of Retirement from Library Director Deb Kern- letter read
- **Proposed Agenda Items-**invite Schell Bridge Advisory Committee
- **Announcements:** Citizen Interest in Board of Health position

Motion by Cummings, seconded by Meisner the board voted to adjourn at 8:40 pm

Recorded by Sandra L. Wood, Secretary

Selectboard Clerk

06/01/2021
Date Approved