

[NORTHFIELD SELECTBOARD MEETING MINUTES]

June 15, 2021

Northfield Town Hall
69 Main St

Selectboard Present: Heath Cummings, Chair; Barbara "Bee" Jacque; Alexander Meisner; Bernard Boudreau

Selectboard Absent: Mary Sullivan-Bowen

Also Present: Andrea Llamas, Town Administrator (remote); Sandra L. Wood, Town Secretary; Otis Wheeler, BNCTV

Others Present: Jesse Martin, Eversource; Tom Walker, Highway Superintendent; John Schuster, Pratt Hollow Rd.

- Meeting was called to order at 6:00 pm
- **Review and Approval of Warrants**
 - Motion by Cummings, seconded by Meisner the board voted to approve the 6/17/21 Payroll warrant of \$77,308.13
- Motion by Cummings, seconded by Jacque the board voted to approve the 6/17/21 Vendor warrant of \$112,392.99
- **Review and Approval of Minutes**
 - Motion by Jacque, seconded by Boudreau the board voted to approve the minutes of 06/01/21 as written. Meisner abstained.
- **Meetings/Events attended by Selectboard members**
 - Cummings: Campus/Center Collaborative Committee; Local Rapid Recovery Plan
 - Boudreau: LRRP; intros to Franklin Regional Council of Gov. Planning Board & Regional Emergency Planning Committee
 - Jacque: American Recovery Plan training; LRRP
- **Scheduled Appointments**
 - Pole Hearing: Eversource for 165 Orange Rd
 - Motion by Cummings, seconded by Meisner the board voted to open the hearing at 6:05 pm. Cummings read the notice:
 - Under the provisions of Chapter 166 of General Laws and any additions thereto, or amendments thereof, the Selectboard will hold a Public Hearing on June 15, 2021 at 6:05 pm on the petition of Eversource to install (6) six new fully owned Eversource poles extending southeast down the road from existing pole 71/16. The purpose of these proposed new poles is to provide electrical service to 165 Orange Rd. The hearing will be held at the Northfield Town Hall, 69 Main Street, Northfield, MA 01360
 - Eversource rep Jesse Martin explained the changes to the mapping due to tree work. Highway Superintendent Walker approved the placement
 - Martin explained due to frost, buried cable becomes problematic
 - No closure to the road is foreseen but may require police officer on site. Eversource will contact Northfield police.
 - Petition read: Wherefore it prays that after due notice and hearing as provided by law, let it be granted a location for and permission to construct and maintain a line of poles, wires and cables, together with such sustain and protecting fixtures as they may find necessary, said poles to be erected substantially in accordance with the plan filed herewith and made a part hereof marked-5173956. Also, for permission to lay and maintain underground laterals, cables and wires in the above or intersecting public ways for the purpose of making connections with such poles and buildings as it may desire for distributing purposes. The petitioner agrees to reserve space for one crossarm at a suitable point on each of said poles for the fire, police, telephone, and telegraph signal wires belonging to the municipality and used by it exclusively for municipal purposes.
 - Motion by Cummings, seconded by Boudreau the board voted to accept the petition and plans discussed.
 - Motion by Cummings seconded by Meisner the board voted to close the hearing at 6:22 pm

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- **Business**

- Treasurer/Collector Resignation and Hiring
 - Resignation letter read
 - Position has been posted
 - Michele Turner, Tax Collector for the Town of Erving has offered to serve as Interim Tax Collector
 - Motion by Cummings, seconded by Jacque the board voted to accept the resignation from Melissa Murphy
- Vote to affirm Appointment of Erin Degnan as Assistant Treasurer/Assistant Collector
 - Motion by Jacque, seconded by Meisner the board voted to affirm the appointment of Erin Degnan as Assistant Treasurer/Assistant Collector for the Town of Northfield
 - Appointment letter to Michele Turner read
 - Motion by Meisner, seconded by Jacque the board voted to appoint Michele Turner as Interim Tax Collector for the Town of Northfield, at \$32/hour, 10 hours per week starting June 21 through August 31, 2021 or at the hiring of the new Treasurer/Collector whichever comes first.
 - Meisner expressed his appreciation for Murphy's experience and thanked Murphy for her service to the town
- Police Chief Retirement
 - The board thanked Chief Leighton for his 34 years of service
 - Discussion on hiring from within or outside
 - Llamas to obtain quotes for hiring a consultant to help with laws and vetting
 - Further discussion on hiring from within the department or outside. Jacque questioned if there was a time limit on interim or acting chief.
 - Meisner not in favor of hiring within.
 - Cummings in favor of hiring consultant and considering hiring from within for larger pool to select from
 - Meisner suggested hiring committee to include members of Selectboard, 1st responders and residents. Meisner would like to be on committee.
 - Jacque suggested choose an acting chief from within for immediate coverage
 - Cummings talked with Chief Leighton about working as a mentor for the department and also offer his services as a sexual assault investigator. Former Chief Len Crossman is also available for consulting support
 - Boudreau in favor of hiring acting chief from within with assistance of Chief Leighton and Crossman. Gives internal personnel chance to find out if they are interested in the chief position
 - Jacque agreed with Boudreau on hiring acting from within for continuity
 - Meisner not in favor of hiring the "local deserving person"
 - Motion by Jacque, seconded by Boudreau the board voted to hire the acting chief from within.
 - Discussion: Llamas to draft posting for the police department. Meisner concerned there is not enough experience within the department
 - VOTE: 3 yes, 1 no. Passed
 - Hiring Committee/screening Committee discussion
 - Hiring Committee- Full Selectboard with two additional
 - Screening Committee- two Selectboard, two Emergency Services personnel, two residents and one resident with police experience, if no experienced resident applies, one additional resident
 - Citizen Interest form submission deadline June 28
 - Llamas to work with Chief Leighton on sexual assault investigator consulting services

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- Motion by Jacque, seconded by Boudreau the board voted to appoint/hire Dan Gray for temporary part-time Roadside Mowing; \$20/hour.
 - Walker verified Gray had all the licenses required for the position
- Termination of Town State of Emergency
 - Motion by Jacque, seconded by Meisner the board voted to rescind the declaration of the town's State of Emergency issued March 16, 2020
- Hiring Policy: Section 2.5 Screening/Interview
 - Section 2.5 read of section 2: Recruitment & Hiring. Request to add "a" in last sentence and change paragraph f and g to C and D
 - Motion by Meisner, seconded by Jacque the board voted to accept section 2.5 Screening/Interview in the policy with amendments
- Schell Bridge Demolition Schedule Approval
 - Request from MassDOT for 7 day work week
 - Request for BNCTV to record and develop time lapse of project
 - Motion by Boudreau, seconded by Meisner the board voted to grant MassDOT special permission to extend the working hours for the Schell Bridge Project during the Demolition phase, approximately 17 days from 6:30 am to 6:30 pm starting after Labor Day 2022.
 - MassDOT will advise of blasting in advance for public awareness
- Memorandum of Understanding by and between the Franklin Regional Council of Governments and the Town of Northfield for Regional Energy Planning Assistance
 - Yearly MOU
 - Motion by Meisner, seconded by Jacque the board voted to accept the MOU between the FRCOG and Town of Northfield for Regional Energy Planning Assistance
- **Town Administrator's update**

Schell Bridge -In reviewing the Town's request for an easement agreement, FirstLight could not find definitive evidence of having fee ownership rights under the Pauchaug-Schell Bridge Greenway multi-use pedestrian bridge and trail. They are suggesting a simpler process be followed in which the Town would record an agreed-upon version of a letter to show FirstLight consents of the use within the Project Boundaries. FERC will then just be provided with a courtesy notice of the use by First Light in January of 2022.
- LRRP Forum comments from the public can still be accepted
- June 29th meeting –last regularly scheduled SB meeting of the Fiscal Year. There will be transfer requests: 1) for Winter Road Salaries and 2) for Tax Title Expenses. Proposal to internally transfer the funds from other line items. One Reserve Fund request for the FinCom for funding to cover the interim expenses as we change over in the Treasurer/Collector Department.
- **Topics not reasonably anticipated by the chair 48 hours in advance of the meeting**
 - Noise issue in Highland Ave./Golf Course area
- **Citizens' Concerns**
 - John Schuster: Pesticide spraying and the boards' vote to not opt out
 - Heather Tower: Crosswalk at the bank location; elementary school area sidewalk/tree needs trimming
- **Proposed Agenda Items**
 - Noise issue
- **Announcements** - July 7th and 8th Route 142 will be closed. They are replacing the railroad crossing. Proper road closures will be implemented and there will be jersey barriers blocking the road. The Town will be putting up our message board to notify and remind residents of the dates. Local residents on each end will be able to access their homes. Fire, EMS and police have been notified in advanced. Proper detours and signage will be set up.
- **Recognition for Service:** Chief Leighton for years of service, current ongoing issues and services rendered

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- Motion by Cummings, seconded by Jacque the board voted to adjourn at 8:14 pm

Recorded by Sandra L. Wood, Secretary

Selectboard Clerk

6/29/21
Date Approved