

[NORTHFIELD SELECT BOARD MEETING MINUTES]

April 5, 2022

Northfield Town Hall
69 Main St

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

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

Others Present: Julia Blyth, Open Space Committee Chair, Jerry Wagener, Open Space member & Citizen Stewardship Honoree

- Meeting called to order at 6:00 pm
 - **Scheduled Appointments**
 - Julia Blyth, Open Space Committee Annual Citizen Stewardship Award Presentation
 - Annual Citizen Stewardship Award for 2021 presented to Jerry Wagener
 - Wagener served on the Open Space Committee since its inception in 2006 and was Chair until 2019.
 - Worked on three Open Space & Recreation plans
 - Developed Cost of Community model for net financial benefit to the town as well as conservation benefit
 - Built strong relationship with partner organizations
 - Shepherded projects including town forest, Brush Mountain Conservation, Northfield State Forest, conservation restrictions, trail development along with kiosks, brochures, and trail website
 - Served on Agricultural Commission, Mt. Grace Conservation Trust, Friends of Schell Bridge and Greater Northfield Watershed Association
 - Blyth presented the certificate to Wagener and displayed the plaque that resides in Town Hall
 - Wagener added he is a member of the Stewardship Advisory Committee which focuses on trails. Wagener displayed a trail sign he created
 - The Select Board thanked Wagener for his service
- **Review and Approval of Warrants**
 - Motion by Jacque, seconded by Boudreau the Select Board voted to approve the 04/07/22 Payroll warrant of \$63,815.83
 - Motion by Meisner, seconded by Boudreau the Select Board voted to approve the 04/07/22 Vendor warrant of \$982,790.37 (PVRs assessment)
- **Review and Approval of Minutes**
 - Motion by Jacque, seconded by Boudreau the Select Board voted to approve the minutes of 03/21/22 w/ Finance Committee as written
 - Motion by Jacque, seconded by Boudreau the Select Board voted to approve the minutes of 03/22/22 as written
- **Meetings/Events attended by Select Board members**
 - Jacque: ZBA hearing; Finance Committee; EMS training
 - Cummings: Pioneer Valley Regional Superintendent search
 - Bowen: Franklin Regional Transportation Advisory; First Parish Church Events
 - Boudreau: Franklin Council of Government Planning Board; Tighe & Bond evaluation at the wastewater facility; FRCOG Regional Emergency Preparedness
- **Business**
 - Review draft FY23 budget and Annual Town Meeting warrant
 - First viewing of draft warrant with omnibus for Select Board to review for meeting with Finance Committee on 4/11/22 and final approval at the next Select Board meeting scheduled for 4/19/22
 - Llamas to send out budget spreadsheet prior to joint meeting
 - Select Board Stipends

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- Cummings stated he attended a Finance Committee meeting and was concerned the Finance Committee supported the request from the Planning Board for stipends but did not support an increase in stipends for the Select Board. Llamas clarified the Planning Board currently does not receive a stipend.
- Members Opinions
 - Meisner: with a five-member board, meetings are longer with hefty agendas; decisions are more complicated; thinks number is fair; volunteers should be compensated
 - Bowen: 400 years of Select Board history playing significant roles; in it for the community and to represent the community; grateful for the stipend but respectfully request the increase
 - Boudreau: against the increase; a lot of things in town costing a lot of money and rather the money go there; let the people vote, give them numbers, let them decide
 - Jacque: doing a lot but should follow a process as with any position, job description, justify what the increase should be; would like to see a proposal; willing to look at for next year but with proposed COLA not seeing the justification without data and proposal; Finance Committee within their role to ask for information
- Cummings didn't feel the Finance Committee was looking for a proposal and they took a vote before Cummings was called upon to speak on the topic. Gave an example of time spent beyond the three-hour meeting working on town business
- Llamas clarified the Finance Committee did not fully fund the request from the Planning Board
- Cummings was concerned about the school budget numbers versus the stipend increase was an imbalance, but the Finance Committee recommended the school budget and would not discuss the stipend increase
- Meisner felt an elected official is dependent on the voters and an elected official's job can't be measured because each elected official has their own definition
- Bowen asked if the Planning Board supplied data from other towns with their request. Llamas replied they did not
- Cummings reviewed the FRCOG survey of area Select Board stipends
- The current proposed stipend with COLA for FY23: \$2,499 for the Chair, members, \$2,428
- Cummings would like to present a unified proposal
- Jacque summarized items for a proposal including the number of hours put in, relevant stipends from area towns on average, difference between the stipend of the chair versus members, number of assignments, and a list of projects done citing it would be helpful to the voters
- Cummings to bring a draft proposal for the next meeting
- Boudreau supported bringing data to the voters
- Discussion on scheduling a joint meeting with Finance Committee, meeting beforehand to give direction in case budget needs to be adjusted which would change the warrant
- Vote to close the Annual Town Meeting warrant
 - Motion by Meisner, seconded by Boudreau the Select Board voted to close the Annual Town Meeting warrant for the Town of Northfield for Monday, May 2, 2022, at 7:00 pm
- Assistant Town Clerk Finalist Interview volunteers
 - Meisner and Jacque volunteered for finalist interviews
- Award Complete Street Bid
 - Budget for the project: \$372,620.
 - Motion by Meisner, seconded by Boudreau the Select Board voted to award the Complete Streets bid to Mass West Construction Inc. based on the bid of \$343,742 to be completed by July 1, 2022.
 - Motion by Jacque, seconded by Boudreau the Select Board voted to sign the contract for Mass West Construction
- Declare/Dispose of surplus equipment:

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- Llamas told the Select Board Highway Superintendent Tom Walker would like to trade the sweeper in for equipment to plow sidewalks and other equipment
 - Motion by Meisner, seconded by Cummings the Select Board voted the Viking 12 ft snowplow, 2012 International Dump truck with plows & sander, 1998 Johnson sweeper, 10 ft. snow pusher, 9ft Sweepster sweeper, 4 front tires & rims for 2000 International, Haulmark trailer as surplus equipment for the Highway Department.
- Request to hold a Northfield Neighbors Block Party on May 28, 2022/rain date May 29, 2022; 4-7pm; located on the field between Winchester, Birnam, Bolton streets and North Lane
 - Llamas concerned the timing will interfere with construction
 - Cummings to reach out to applicant Robin McKeon to explain delaying the event
- Board emails
 - Cummings concerned town board/committee members using personal emails should be using a town email
 - Llamas recommended a policy change, if using personal email, copy to the town email to keep it on record. More town assigned emails are being added gradually. Goal is to have one email address for each board/committee.
 - Additional policy change included departments, boards and committees do not purchase their own equipment but request through Llamas and the town contractor, NorthEast IT, to ensure compatibility with the network
- Bereavement Policy
 - Cummings requested the policy cover 5 days for bereavement as defined.
 - Motion by Meisner that the Select Board level in quantity the bereavement policy for the Town of Northfield to five days effective immediately. No second. Cummings clarified making changes to the actual policy. Motion failed.
 - Motion by Meisner, seconded by Jacque the Select Board voted to update the Bereavement leave as: “regular employees will be granted up to 5 days leave with pay upon the death of the employee’s spouse, parent, child, step-child, grandchild, grandparent, step-parent, parent-in-law, brother, sister, step-brother or step-sister. Employees may request additional leave for extenuating circumstance, if in the opinion of the Town Administrator such leave is justified.”
- **Town Administrator’s update**
 - Working on technology issues
 - Budget
 - Additional state funding for roads “Winter Recovery Assistance Program”. Town receiving \$218,135 on top of Chapter 90 funding of \$281.654
 - July Storm funding approximately \$260,000. Tom Walker has been apprised
- **Correspondence:** East Northfield Water Co. letter to customers
- **Proposed Agenda Items**
 - Update Computer, Electronic Mail, and Internet Use Policy
 - Emergency Services Facility update
- **Announcements**
 - April 6, 2022, 6pm Proposed Water District Public Forum; PVRs auditorium
- **Recognition for Service:** Congratulations to Jerry & Jean Wagener

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- Motion by Meisner, seconded by Jacque the Select Board voted to go into executive session at 8:10 pm for Real Estate negotiation under reason M.G.L. c.30A, Sec. 21(a) 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 adjourn. On a roll call vote Boudreau said yes, Bowen said yes, Cummings said yes, Meisner said yes, and Jacque said yes.
- Meeting adjourned at 8:23pm

Recorded by Sandra L. Wood, Secretary

Select Board Clerk

4/19/22
Date Approved