

[NORTHFIELD SELECT BOARD MEETING MINUTES]

April 16, 2024

Northfield Town Hall
69 Main St

Select Board Present: Alexander Meisner, Chair; Bernard Boudreau, Vice Chair; Sarah Kerns(6:05pm), Clerk; Barbara “Bee” Jacque; Heath Cummings

Also Present: Andrea Llamas, Town Administrator; Sandra L. Wood, Town Secretary; Otis Wheeler & Bella Levavi, BNCTV

Others Present: Grant Development Director Leslie Roberts; Robert Perlman and Joanne McGee, Open Space Committee; Nick Fleck, Northfield Bird Club; Dan Stoodley; Karen Boudreau, Sewer Commission

- Meeting was called to order at 6:00pm
- **Scheduled Appointments**
 - 6:00 pm Appointment of Part Time Sewer Operator Dan Stoodley
 - 20 years’ experience in Erving and Orange
 - Enjoys helping the environment
 - Motion by Jacque, seconded by Cummings the Select Board voted to appoint Dan Stoodley as part-time Sewer Operator at grade 7 step 6; \$26.72/hour; up to 16 hours/week; start date 4/18/24
 - Open Space Citizen Stewardship Award
 - Bob Perlman, Chair and Joanne McGee of the Open Space Committee presented the Northfield Bird Club the Citizen Stewardship Award for 2023.
 - The Northfield Bird Club provides guided bird and nature walks; works with other organizations including the Dickinson Library, Massachusetts Audubon, Mount Grace Conservation and the Franklin Land Trust
 - Research grants for nature programs
 - Sponsors naturalist David Brown for guided walks and talks
 - Has an email to answer flora and fauna questions
 - This season’s programs included bluebird nest boxes with volunteers with First Light; Lyme disease prevention and safety; meadow birds with the Dickinson Library; falconry sponsored by the Cultural Council
 - Their float won first prize in the 350th Anniversary parade in 2023
 - Supports natural resources, promotes responsible habitat management and helps to provide for conservation of Northfield’s natural and cultural resources and community building
 - Nick Fleck accepted the award and read his poem “The Brown Creeper and the Snake”. All programs and meetings are begun with a poem
 - Leslie Roberts – Economic Development Survey Results Presentation
 - Roberts gave an overview of the purpose of the survey to collect data on economic development for the town on future goals and projects to improve quality of life and support innovation
 - 152 people participated via online and paper submission
 - Groups under-represented were age groups of 18-29 and 80+; individuals in the work force; other languages
 - Majority of respondents cited outdoor recreation be highlighted to attract visitors
 - Increase in commercial development, tourism in designated areas away from respondents homes
 - Renovate and redevelop existing buildings to accommodate new businesses
 - Qualitative data analysis software was used to code the open-source responses of imagining Northfield five years from now
 - Improving conditions: restaurants, shops/businesses, outdoor recreation
 - Improving social conditions/quality of life: housing, infrastructure, lower taxes
 - Broader feelings on Economic Development: quiet/small town feel, concerns about livelihood, being receptive to change. A small percent did not want change

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- Analysis revealed residents want more commercial activity, tourism and events, a vibrant Main Street. New development should preserve the small town feel with an interest in cozy gathering places
 - Next steps: placemaking workshop series. Could include topic of parking
 - 5% of the population responded to the survey
 - Discussion on amount of food related requests, restaurants, farms, farm stands, grocery stores; continuing events created by the 350th Anniversary; music/performance venues
 - Grants in process include a type of business park concentrating on recreation. A public meeting with business park consultants to be held on a date to be determined and a placemaking grant for where to put benches, gathering areas, help support business start ups
 - Temporary dwellings were not on the survey but came up in other questions regarding bringing in visitors and not having anywhere to stay
 - Discussion on disconnect of activities and places to eat or gather after an event
 - Digital presence plays a part in bringing visitors who use the internet to check out an area before traveling
 - To support existing local businesses, Roberts mentioned a business survey could be conducted. An updated website is being researched
- **Review and Approval of Warrants**
 - Motion by Jacque, seconded by Boudreau the Select Board voted to approve the 4/17/24 Payroll warrant of \$81,261.28
 - Motion by Jacque, seconded by Boudreau the Select Board voted to approve the 4/17/24 Vendor warrant of \$109,357.17 Vote: 4/yes 1/abstain
- **Review and Approval of Minutes**
 - Motion by Jacque, seconded by Boudreau the Select Board voted to approve the minutes of 03/06/24. Vote: 4/yes 1/ abstain
 - Motion by Jacque, seconded by Boudreau the Select Board voted to approve the minutes of 04/02/24. Vote 4/yes 1/ abstain
- **Meetings/Events attended by Select Board members**
 - Kerns: PVRs Eclipse event; Economic Development Advisory; met with several residents
 - Boudreau: Board of Health; Sewer Commission
 - Meisner: PVRs Eclipse event; soccer sign up with his son; performance on saxophone and piano at the Trinitarian Church
 - Jacque: Historical Commission
- **Town Administrator's update**
 - Rural Roadways Funding
 - To the annual \$279,723 Chapter 90 funding this year, the Town to receive from the state, an additional \$116,370
 - The legislature included this funding in next year's budget request
 - FERC (Federal Energy Regulatory Commission) Filing – Motion to Intervene and Certification
 - Motion to intervene and Certification was submitted and verified as received
 - FERC granted an extension on the filing of Motions to Intervene and Comments until May 22
 - Solar Bylaws – Public Hearing
 - Planning Board public hearing for solar bylaws, including the petition large scale solar, and battery storage moratorium articles to be held Thursday, May 2nd in a hybrid meeting at Town Hall and on-line
- **Business**
 - Annual Town Meeting Warrant and Election Warrant
 - Review/vote recommendation

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- Motion by Boudreau, seconded by Jacques the Select Board voted to recommend Article 1. To be read by Boudreau
- Motion by Jacques, seconded by Boudreau the Select Board voted to recommend Article 2. To be read by Boudreau
- Motion by Jacques, seconded by Kerns the Select Board voted to recommend Article 3. To be read by Boudreau
- Motion by Jacques, seconded by Boudreau the Select Board voted to recommend Article 4. To be read by Finance Committee
- Motion by Cummings, seconded by Kerns the Select Board voted to recommend Article 5. To be read by Finance Committee
- Motion by Jacques, seconded by Boudreau the Select Board voted to recommend Article 6. To be read by Cummings
- Motion by Jacques, seconded by Kerns the Select Board voted to recommend Article 7. To be read by Jacques
- Motion by Jacques, seconded by Kerns the Select Board voted to recommend Article 8. To be read by Boudreau
- Motion by Jacques, seconded by Kerns the Select Board voted to recommend Article 9. To be read by Boudreau
- Motion by Kerns, seconded by Cummings the Select Board voted to recommend Article 10. To be read by Meisner
- Motion by Jacques, seconded by Kerns the Select Board voted to recommend Article 11. To be read by Jacques
- Motion by Cummings, seconded by Jacques the Select Board voted to recommend Article 12. To be read by Energy Committee
- Motion by Boudreau, seconded by Cummings the Select Board voted to recommend Article 13. To be read by Boudreau
- Motion by Cummings, seconded by Kerns the Select Board voted to recommend Article 14. To be read by Kerns. Vote: 4 yes/1 abstain. Fire Department using trust fund to supplement
- Motion by Boudreau, seconded by Kerns the Select Board voted to recommend Article 15. To be read by Meisner
- Motion by Boudreau, seconded by Jacques the Select Board voted to recommend Article 16. To be read by Jacques
- Motion by Kerns, seconded by Jacques the Select Board voted to recommend Article 17. To be read by Cummings
- Motion by Jacques, seconded by Cummings the Select Board voted to recommend Article 18. To be read by Jacques. \$500,000 to be added to the Emergency Services Facility Account
- Motion by Jacques, seconded by Boudreau the Select Board voted to recommend Article 19. To be read by Meisner
- Motion by Jacques, seconded by Cummings the Select Board voted to recommend Article 20. To be read by Community Preservation Committee
- Motion by Jacques, seconded by Boudreau the Select Board voted to recommend Article 21. To be read by Community Preservation Committee
- Motion by Jacques, seconded by Kerns the Select Board voted to recommend Article 22. To be read by Community Preservation Committee
- Motion by Boudreau, seconded by Cummings the Select Board voted to recommend Article 23. To be read by Community Preservation Committee

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- Motion by Jacque, seconded by Kerns the Select Board voted to recommend Article 24. To be read by Community Preservation Committee
- Motion by Kerns, seconded by Jacque the Select Board voted not to recommend Article 25. To be read by Kerns. Vote: 3 no/ 1 yes/ 1 abstain. Discussion: Town insurance does not cover heart issues after age of 70 leaving the burden on the town and previous legislation recommendations for succession
- Motion by Jacque, seconded by Kerns the Select Board voted to recommend Article 26. To be read by Planning Board
- Motion by Kerns, seconded by Boudreau the Select Board voted to recommend Article 27. To be read by Petitioner. Vote: 4 yes/1 abstain
- Motion by Boudreau, seconded by Jacque the Select Board voted to recommend Article 28. To be read by Meisner
- Warrant signed by the Select Board
- Review/Adopt – Policy and Notice of Non-Discrimination
 - These policies are for hiring and included in the personnel policy. They need to be added to the general public notice, including the town website
 - Adopting these policies is mandatory for compliance and may aid in receiving Federal grant funds
 - Motion by Jacque, seconded by Cummings the Select Board voted to adopt the policy and Notice of Non-Discrimination
- **Proposed Agenda Items**
 - Update from the Economic Development Advisory
 - Funding for consultant to work with the Fire Department policies
 - Correspondence on school spending with Finance Director Jordan Burns
- **Announcements**
 - Finance Committee: Town Meeting Budget Question and Answer session, Saturday April 20th at 1:00, Town Hall
 - Planning Board Public Hearing for Blue Wave/Shearer Solar Project has been canceled. To be rescheduled.
 - Planning Board Public Hearing for Bylaw and citizen petition bylaw changes is on May 2nd at 4:00
 - FERC extension on the filing of Motions to Intervene and Comments until May 22
 - Tick discussion/Bird Club has been rescheduled to April 25, 6pm and Dickinson Library
- **Recognition for Service**
 - To Thomas Aquinas College for their award on their curriculum
 - To the State Police, and police departments of Northfield, Gill and Bernardston for a recent mutual aid event on Main Street
 - To Superintendent Patricia Kinsella for hosting the Eclipse event at Pioneer Valley Regional School
- **Motion by Jacque, seconded by Cummings the Select Board voted to adjourn at 8:15 pm**

Recorded by Sandra L. Wood, Secretary

Select Board Clerk

4/30/24
Date Approved