

[NORTHFIELD SELECTBOARD MEETING MINUTES]

November 16, 2021

Northfield Town Hall
69 Main St

Selectboard Present: Heath Cummings, Chair; Barbara "Bee" Jacque, Vice Chair; Alexander Meisner; Bernard Boudreau, Clerk; Mary Sullivan-Bowen
Finance Committee Present: Lois Stearns, Chair; Bernhard Porada; Dan Campbell

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

Others Present: Bob Henry; Julie Burke, School Committee Chair, Patricia Kinsella, Interim Superintendent; Joel Harrington, TMS/PVRS Budget Manager (remotely); Deb Potee, Six Town Regionalization Planning Board

- Meeting was called to order at 6:03 pm
- **Scheduled Appointments**
 - Julie Burke, School Committee Chair; Patricia Kinsella, Interim Superintendent- Pioneer Valley Regional School District
 - Kinsella and Burke introduced Joel Harrington, PVRS Budget Manager to discuss the process for building the budget.
 - Harrington gave a presentation on budget development reviewing four methods: Incremental, value/needs based, zero-based and hybrid. Harrington suggested hybrid would be the common approach.
 - Hybrid combines needs based and incremental
 - FY23 initial thoughts include transparency and integrity, sustainability, long-term planning, operational excellence and the student and staff well-being
 - Funding available through COVID for ESSR, a relief fund
 - Explanation of why zero -based funding not better
 - Process would have to be started earlier
 - To sell to the taxpayers, Kinsella suggested getting out into the community and commented that feelings trump logic. Persons not involved in the school system will be hard to convince
 - Burke added that education is the economic state of the town.
 - On topic of regionalization, Kinsella noted it would be up to the town and district. There is a lot of administration maintenance to do
 - Student/Staff well-being
 - Kinsella acknowledged this area needs addressing
 - Human Resources to be audited
 - There is no evidence of a long-term plan. Architectural firm needed to assess the building
 - The subject of moving the 6th grade will be addressed at the next School Committee meeting
 - Audit of the school budget will take a few months
 - October student admissions was up with pre-K and 1st grade. There will be 24 seniors this year
 - Bob Henry spoke about being a critic of the budget and requested open checkbook format. Cited seeing student numbers go down but staff numbers go up
 - Finance Chair Lois Stearns commented the town does not have line- item veto and Northfield pays about 50% of the budget. Concerned about the regionalization plan and the report from the HEART Committee may be interpreted differently by other towns.
 - Deb Potee – Six Town Regionalization Planning Board
 - The STRPB has been meeting for the past 2 years looking into regionalizing the Gill/Montague and Pioneer Regional districts.
 - Facilitator Mary Broderick has been hired to do presentations to the six towns and gather feedback
 - Support has come from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to regionalize
 - Northfield's presentation is scheduled for December 1, 2021 at PVRS for the public at 5pm
 - The study and formation of the committee were approved at town meeting
 - Potee supported finding a way to strengthen the school and offer more to students. Regionalization would not be a money saver but better to maintain and stabilize
 - A survey will be available on the website prior to the presentation at PVRS
- **Review and Approval of Warrants**
 - Motion by Jacque, seconded by Boudreau the board voted to approve the 11/4/21 Payroll warrant of \$48,393.37

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- Motion by Meisner, seconded by Jacque the board voted to approve the 11/4/21 Vendor warrant of \$94,318.04
- Motion by Meisner, seconded by Jacque the board voted to approve the 11/18/21 Payroll warrant of \$58,322.80
- Motion by Boudreau, seconded by Jacque the board voted to approve the 11/18/21 Vendor warrant \$207,454.66
- **Review and Approval of Minutes**
 - Motion by Jacque, seconded by Bowen the board voted to approve the minutes of 10/19/21 as amended
 - Motion by Jacque, seconded by Bowen the board voted to approve the minutes of 10/26/21 as amended
- **Interim Selectboard Meetings**
 - 10/26/21 Police Chief Interview
- **Meetings/Events attended by Selectboard members**
 - Jacque: Historical Commission; First Light, Finance Committee; Highway Building Maintenance position job classification meeting; Emergency Services Facility site visit
 - Meisner: Highway Dept. Four Mile Brook Rd. project with Eversource
 - Cummings: Police Chief Contract; Emergency Services Facility Committee; ESFC site visit
 - Bowen: Building Maintenance position job classification meeting; upcoming meetings-Planning Board on 11/17; Franklin Reg. Transit Authority
 - Boudreau: Friends of Northfield Seniors; Highway Dept. Four Mile Brook Rd. project
- **Business**
 - Sign Owner Project Manager Contract
 - Contract with Colliers International for the Emergency Services Facility project
 - Motion by Jacque, seconded by Meisner the board voted to sign the Owner Project Manager contract with Colliers International
 - Upper Pioneer Valley Veterans' Services 3-year membership renewal
 - Review of the services provided by UPVVS
 - Motion by Jacque, seconded by Boudreau the board voted to sign the Upper Pioneer Valley Veteran's Service three-year renewal
 - Motion by Jacque, seconded by Meisner the board voted to close the town cemeteries effective December 1, 2021 to April 15, 2022 weather permitting
 - Review Special Town Meeting Warrant
 - Brief review of the articles for the Selectboard to review and address at their next meeting
 - Community Compact
 - Discussion of the items available in the grant included financial, cyber security, revitalization for downtown and a management entity
 - Majority of the Selectboard expressed interest in cyber security and revitalization. Other interests were a financial item to continue with the current grant project.
- **Main Street Parking**
 - Bob Henry brought a concern on the congestion and safety issue of vehicles parking on the sides of Main St. in front of businesses. He suggested additional parking spaces on the land in front of and on the side of the Creamie business from the sidewalk forward.
 - Ownership of the property to be investigated.
- **Town Administrator's update**
 - FY 2021 closeout / Free Cash certification – The Town's balance sheet submitted, and the DOR's questions being addressed to reconcile Free Cash.
 - Notification from Senator Comerford's office she worked with Senator Hinds to get \$7.5 million through the Senate for reimbursements for Western Mass towns impacted by the July storms (FEMA failed to qualify us for aid).
 - Town's Aggregation opportunity for electric pricing. Details posted on the town website
 - Met with Tom Walker, Highway Superintendent:
 - Hiring of Maintenance Position –4 or 5 applications being ranked for interviewing

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- Town Hall Parking Lot – dissatisfied with current engineer proposal to spend additional funds to engineer (after all the hydrology work). Checking on a plan with an engineer Tom has worked with to consider an alternative what would involve new drainage (removing the unworking pumps) and installing a different drainage system, swale, etc.
 - Discussed the idea of spending Chapter 90 funds for engineering analysis on Four Mile Brook Rd if it might be eligible for a Hazard Mitigation grant. Tom to follow up with an engineer to get a price quote for the scope of work.
- Our Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (done regionally with Warwick) approved by FEMA
- Some of the Current Funded projects:
 - The Preston Memorial work is to start the week of December 14th and take about 3 days.
 - The Town Clock in the First Parish Church – Work has been done on the motor and work is almost complete on the cleaning and lubricating of the moving parts and gears
 - Complete Streets project – meeting with the engineer Monday or Tuesday on the design so we can bid the work.
- **Topics not reasonably anticipated by the chair 48 hours in advance of the meeting**
 - Motion by Meisner, seconded by Boudreau the board voted to appoint David Brasseur as temporary plow driver; \$20 per hour as needed
 - Roadwork on Four Mile Brook Rd starts Monday, Nov. 22. Work expected to last 2 weeks weather permitting.
 - Motion by Jacque, seconded by Meisner the board voted to approve the request from Christine Harris to change status from member of the 350th Anniversary Committee to volunteer
- **Correspondence**
 - William McGee resignation from the 350th Anniversary Committee
 - Motion by Jacque, seconded by Meisner the board voted to accept the resignation of William McGee from the 350th Anniversary Committee with regret
 - Howard & Mary Perrea re: Flooding on Four Mile Brook Rd
 - Letter read. Selectboard members to visit individually before next meeting to address.
- **Committee/Board Appointments**
 - Motion by Meisner, seconded by Jacque the board voted to appoint Tom King to the Trust Fund Committee; term expires 6/30/2022
- **Proposed Agenda Items**
 - Four Mile Brook response to the Perrea's letter of concern
 - Mosquito Control
 - Sidewalk clearing
- **Announcements**
 - Winter Parking Ban reminder- regulations and bylaw read
- **Executive Session & Adjourn**

Motion by Meisner, seconded by Jacque the board voted to go into executive session at 9:00 pm to discuss Real Estate negotiation under reason under 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 to adjourn. On a roll call vote Boudreau yes, Bowen yes, Cummings yes, Meisner yes and Jacque yes.

Meeting adjourned at 9:10 pm

Recorded by Sandra L. Wood, Secretary

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Selectboard Clerk

11/30/21
Date Approved