

[NORTHFIELD SELECTBOARD MEETING MINUTES]

March 8, 2022

Northfield Town Hall
69 Main St

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

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

Others Present: Tom Walker, Highway Superintendent; Frederick Anthony, North Lane; Dan Campbell, Town Clerk

- Meeting called to order at 6:00 pm
- **Scheduled Appointments**
 - Tom Walker, Highway Superintendent: Alexander Hill Rd & North Lane; School Street storm damage
 - Alexander Hill
 - 1986 record shows mileage at 1.7 from Gulf Rd but actual is 1.9 to the power lines. Town maintains to the 1.7 miles
 - Walker has identified 13 discrepancies on town roads
 - 1992 notes from former road boss also contains discrepancies
 - Walker gave additional examples of discrepancies and suggested an investigation be conducted to verify before scheduling road work improvements
 - Cummings suggested a roads database to keep track of changes.
 - Plan to do one road a year. Some roads not bonded or centered. Funding in budget to hire a surveyor. Time consuming to all estimated 82 town roads.
 - 1986 art. 23 Town Meeting vote appears to be discontinued public rights, except for those listed. The list from 1992 origin needs to be clarified. Jacque suggested Investigating GIS software possibly through the Franklin Regional Council of Government (FRCOG). Corrections could be brought before town meeting. Once accepted as official through town meeting vote, a priority list could be developed for all roads.
 - Meisner suggested after updating the roads, other past decisions may need to be re-visited and updated to current standards
 - North Lane
 - Area is a low point and has drainage issues. Road is in bad condition. Excessive water events flood into residents’ basements. Some investigation was done last year. One option is to create a ditch to the corner. Would need to raise lawns and driveways for 100ft to keep water toward the road. Ledge in the area makes it hard to determine what can be done. Will investigate this spring. Intersection project is out to bid for improvements.
 - Bowen: enough staff?
 - No. training current staff
 - Prices of black top high. Cost will determine how much can be done
 - Frederick Anthony, 41 North Lane
 - Inquired about intersection improvements on North Lane and Moody St.
 - Cummings: rating portion has been done. There are delays on all projects. Town Administrator Llamas on top of the project. No schematic yet. Moody Center and Thomas Aquinas are also inquiring about the project. Location of sidewalk was from Moody St. to the auditorium clarified. Thomas Aquinas would be responsible for snow removal.
 - Anthony concerned town tax dollars being used if the status of the sidewalk is private
 - School Street Storm Damage

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- Walker gave an update on the ongoing condition and repairs from a tree falling and lines down to be made by the utility companies from wind-storm damage. School St. currently closed from Strowbridge Rd. Road closed signs posted.
- Town Clerk Dan Campbell: Town Caucus; running for an elected position and elected vs. appointed
 - Three elections this year, annual town election in May; state primary in September; state election in November
 - Three ways to be elected:
 - Non-partisan caucus nomination
 - need at least 25 registered voters to attend and set the ballot
 - Nomination papers with at least 20 signatures of registered voters
 - Write-ins
 - Prior to elections
 - 20 days before the election, residents that are not registered to vote in town can register allowing them to participate in Town Meeting and the election
 - New digital poll - pads will be used this year for voter check-in. Device is not connected to a network. Does not keep track of who the individual voted for, just that they checked in to vote. A check out table is no longer necessary
 - Description of how the ballot box and the handicap voting machine works
 - New residents can update their voter registration at the Registry of Motor Vehicles when they update the address on their license
 - Provisional vote- person not on the registered list can vote but Town Clerk must research if status is valid
 - If nominated at the caucus on 3/15 at 7pm in Town Hall auditorium, they get on the ballot and don't need to pull papers. Non-nominated individuals can get on the ballot to run against the nominated person by pulling papers. If 2 positions open, greatest number of votes is put on the ballot first, second most votes get on next. If an incumbent is running their name goes to the top of the list. If someone pulls papers, they also get on the ballot. Blanks on the ballot equal the same number of listed candidates for write-ins. An individual running for a position does not have to attend the caucus if they have someone at the caucus nominate them. The absent nominee will be contacted by the Town Clerk and must sign a form within 72 hours to be included on the ballot.
 - Absentee ballots must be requested yearly. Parameters for absentee ballots reviewed.
 - Local elections are from noon 8:00 pm. National elections are from 7am- 8pm.
 - The town has approximately 2250 registered votes
- Elected vs. Appointed
 - Elected Officials must be residents of the town. Appointed can be from outside the town.
 - Elected officials do not answer to the Selectboard
 - Appointed personnel are accountable to the Selectboard
 - Campbell gave an example of the Assistant Town Clerk position. He would like to train someone so when he retires the person could run, if the position remains elected, or be appointed.
 - Campbell has been Town Clerk since July of 2014. Term is 3 years.
 - Campbell to look into a member of the Selectboard running for Town Clerk if there are any special rules

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- **Review and Approval of Warrants**
 - Motion by Jacque, seconded by Meisner the Selectboard voted to approve the 3/10/22 Payroll warrant of \$60,310.60
 - Motion by Meisner, seconded by Boudreau the Selectboard voted to approve the 3/10/22 Vendor warrant of \$215,262.15
- **Review and Approval of Minutes**
 - Motion by Meisner, seconded by Jacque the Selectboard voted to approve the 01/24/22 executive session minutes as amended
 - Motion by Meisner, seconded by Boudreau the Selectboard voted to approve the minutes of 02/22/22 as amended
- **Meetings/Events attended by Selectboard members**
 - Boudreau: Friends of Northfield Seniors
 - Bowen: Asst. Town Clerk job classification; Campus Center Community Collaboration Committee
 - Cummings: Emergency Services Facility Committee; Campus Center Community Collaboration Committee; met with concerned citizens with Chief Dunnell
 - Meisner: Town Administrator contract; Recreation Commission Program Director Amy Neil; Student Resource Officer Hiring Committee
 - Jacque: Emergency Services Facility architect interviews; Student Resource Officer Hiring Committee; Authors & Artists Festival; 2 Finance Committee meetings; American Rescue Plan Act Committee; Regional Animal control Advisory Committee
- **Business**
 - Library Substitute Position Job Description and Request for Circulation Assistant Pay
 - Letter from the Library Trustees requesting an increase in Circulation Assistant Julie Rosier's pay read
 - Bowen and Cummings supported the request. Meisner concerned if funding was in the library budget. Jacque supported but felt it was important to follow procedures as part of the financial responsibilities of the Selectboard. Cummings and Meisner reinforced the importance of all departments following the procedure of hiring personnel and communicating with the Town Administrator and Selectboard.
 - Motion by Bowen, seconded by Cummings the Selectboard voted to approve the pay increase for Julie Rosier, Circulation Assistant to move from grade 1 step 1 to grade 1 step 2 at a salary rate of \$14.30 per hour effective immediately. 3 yesses, 2 abstains. Vote passed
 - Job description tabled to next agenda
 - Asst. Town Clerk classification
 - Bowen reviewed the classification process. Members of the group also included the Town Clerk, a member of the Finance Committee and the Town Administrator.
 - Recommendation from the group was grade 6
 - Motion by Meisner, seconded by Boudreau the Selectboard voted to approve the Assistant Town Clerk position to a grade level 6 with an efficacy date of March 8, 2022
 - ARPA (American Recovery Plan Act) Committee Update
 - Jacque updated the topics and status of project
 - There are two sets of federal regulations with changes made in the fall.
 - Northfield awarded \$860,000
 - Spending comes from the Selectboard with the Finance Committee kept in the loop
 - Categories
 - Sewer/ water infrastructure
 - Premium pay for employees during COVID
 - Equipment unmarked pd car

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- Broadband build-out. In discussions with Comcast
 - Business grant program
 - Aiming for the biggest effect across town
 - Funds coming from federal government not the state
 - Working out ideas and researching with input from Treasurer. Ballparking cost and how many people would be affected
 - Will have a future presentation to the public and Selectboard for input
 - Time frame: Jacque not sure on exact timeframe but believes a 2-year window, possibly calendar year. Appropriations to be assigned a year before program expires, then spent before final deadline. Federal government simplified the project based on feedback.
- Community Compact Emergency Services Report
 - Boudreau asked if the Collins Center had other data from other towns to compare the results
 - Topic tabled for future agenda, possibly have Sarah Concannon come back.
 - Take a look at results to engage with the community
- COVID Update
 - Board of health to meet 3/10 to review what Selectboard decides and make their decision on the town-wide mandate
 - Boudreau talked with employees. Employees were agreeable to rescinding the town building mandate if they had the right to wear masks and keep the barriers at their discretion and the Senior Center wished to keep the mandate in place in their area to protect the more vulnerable population. Supported removal but subject to individual departments within town buildings.
 - Town data reports positivity rate down to approximately 4.3 from two weeks ago.
 - Motion by Meisner, seconded by Boudreau remove the Town of Northfield mask mandate for town owned buildings with mask discretion up to town employees with an efficacy date of March 8, 2022. Four yesses and 1 abstain. Vote passed
 - Jacque requested topic be included on next agenda to review any issues
- **Proposed Agenda Items**
 - Request from 350th Anniversary Committee to come in for an update
 - Library Substitute Position Job Description
 - Community Compact Emergency Services report
 - COVID update
 - Elected vs. appointed Town Clerk-how to get there
 - Selectboard stipend increase
 - Recreation Commission Chair/Program Director-summer program
- **Announcements**
 - Class III transfer of license hearing scheduled for 3/22: Dan Browning applicant
- **TABLED-EXECUTIVE SESSION – 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.
- **Motion by Meisner, seconded by Jacque the Selectboard voted to adjourn at 8:20 pm**

Recorded by Sandra L. Wood, Secretary

Selectboard Clerk

03/22/22_
Date Approved