



NORTHFIELD BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING

Minutes of the meeting of October 17th, 2023

Present: Selectman Jason Durgin, Selectman Mark Hubbell, and Selectman Ross Cunningham

Town Staff Present: Town Administrator Ken Robichaud, Police Chief Mike Hutchinson, Police Lt. Jesse Colby.

Others Present: Helen Hardenbergh, Scott Haskins.

Selectmen Durgin opened the Selectmen's meeting at 4:00 pm.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by everyone present.

The Selectmen started the 2024 budget review with the Administrator explaining some of the changes made since the last meeting. The T/A met with Department Heads and reduced some of the budget lines so that the budget increase would be close to a 3% increase. Some of the lines have been affected by outside increases for example, solid waste costs are up an estimated 8%, and this is dependent on going to automated curbside service. Also, increases to property and liability insurance have risen 17.8% due to claims related to truck fires, wind damaged buildings, and accident claims. The Selectmen reviewed the New Hampshire Municipal Association line, Lakes Region Planning Commission as well as LRPC Circuit Rider. Selectmen Hubbell questioned the new Administrative Assistant position in the T/A budget. The Administrator answered that this position will provide support to the T/A as well as Finance Director. The duties are great on the Finance Director as she is performing more than finance duties, and it continues to mount more and more work onto the Finance Director. Also, there is no depth in the office as payroll and account payables need to be done even when the director is out. The Selectmen asked if this position could be hired on July 1st and have it Parttime.

The Town Clerk answered the Selectboards question on her salary increase from \$65,239.00 to \$70,458.00 which is a 7% increase. She stated that it is the position not the person you are paying. This office did not get an increased last year, so I am just bringing it up to where the other Departments Heads received increases. The Selectboard asked for a salary survey with the surrounding towns to see if this salary is comparable. The Selectboard reviewed the Police Dept. budget which only had an overall increase of 0.88% which the Selectmen were happy about. They also discussed the large increase to fire dispatch services of \$9,914.00. Also, they discussed how to leave LRFMA, Lakes Region Fire Mutual Aid. Northfield would have to give 6 months' notice, pay the entire yearly dues and find a new dispatch agency like Concord Regional Fire Dispatch in Concord.

They reviewed outside agencies and suggested the following, level fund VNA at 2023 budget, fund CAP at 2023 budget \$3,500. Eliminate 2 new requests from Twin Rivers Food Pantry, and Lakes Region VNA, and level fund YAP at last years approved budget \$45,552. With these changes the budget increase for 2024 is 3.0% or \$116,305.00 over 2023 budget. The Selectboard will pick this up again at the next meeting on November 7th at 4pm.

Public Input

Helen Hardenbergh- would like to receive the updated budget changes prior to the next meeting.

Administration

T/A Robichaud presented a RFP for Curbside Trash Removal and would like to send it out to area companies. It will be due and opened on November 30th at 2pm. The Selectmen gave it their blessing.

Robichaud informed the Selectmen that Stephanie Giovannucci was awarded the 2023 Franklin Savings Bank “Richard W. Dubois” Award for Northfield Economic Development Corp. This award is presented annually honoring a grant recipient which has significant impact in Franklin and/or the surrounding Community. Ms. Giovannucci also received a \$5,000.00 grant for NEDC. The Selectmen congratulated Stephanie.

The Administrator updated the Selectmen on Community Power will be willing to help the Town conduct two public hearings that must be done in order to move the Electric Purchase Power Agreement forward. The Selectmen were okay with this.

Police Department

Police Chief Mike Hutchinson gave the Selectmen an update on the new cruiser as it should be ready by the end of the month. It has been held up due to a backorder on the radio.

He also asked the Selectmen permission to try out a “ghost” police decal on the new vehicle. This is a new thing in NH, where departments are putting on vehicle decals that are more visible at night and less visible during the day, giving more stealth visibility during the day, and once the emergency lights are activated at night the decals are highly more visible, creating more visibility at night. The Selectmen stated that they will try it out on the new cruiser. **Sel. Cunningham/Hubbell motioned to allow “Ghost” decal trial on the new cruiser, all in favor motion passed.**

Department of Public Works

Director Bernier was not in attendance, but the Administrator updated the Selectmen on the grading of all the dirt roads that have been completed and are ready for winter.

New Business

T/A Robichaud informed the board that they will need to hold an Annual Board of Health meeting before the end of the year, as required by RSA as they are the Board of Health.

Trick or Treat in Northfield will be held on Tuesday October 31st from 5-8 pm.

Unfinished Business

Hodgdon Road Cemetery remains on the list.

Other Business

None

Review Minutes

Selectmen Cunningham/Hubbell motioned to approve the minutes from October 3rd as presented, all in favor motion passed.

Public Input

Scott Haskins- Haskins is here on behalf of the Parks Commission, as Sel. Hubbell has donated 6 tons of gravel hardpack for the Pines Park Parking Lot and if the DPW could level it out with the loader and any other equipment they think is needed. The Selectmen agreed to have the DPW do the work.

Chairman Durgin recessed the meeting at 5:15 pm

Chairman Durgin called the meeting back in session at 5:21pm

Non-Public Session

Sel. Durgin made a motion at 5:21 pm to go into nonpublic session under NH RSA 91a; 3-II, (A)(C) seconded by Sel. Hubbell. Roll call vote–Selectman Cunningham–Yes, Selectman Hubbell- Yes. Selectman Durgin – Yes. Motion passed by a 3-0 vote.

Sel. Durgin reconvene the public session at 6:24 pm.

Sel. Durgin/Hubbell moved to seal the minutes of the non-public session because divulgence of the information likely would affect adversely the reputation of any person other than a member of the board or render the proposed action of the board ineffective.

Roll call vote, Selectman Cunningham–Yes, Selectman Durgin – Yes, and Selectman Hubbell -Yes. Motion passed by a 3-0 roll call vote and the minutes are hereby sealed.

Other Business

Town Administrator Ken Robichaud announced that he was resigning from his position as Town Administrator effective October 27th, 2023. I have accepted a position as a Town Manager closer to my home.

It has been an absolute honor working with this current board of selectmen. I appreciate what you have done for me, as well as to the hard-working employees of the Town. I appreciate the pay scale that was implemented this year, as well as the support given to all employees. Northfield was my first Town experience, and it will always have special place with me. Again, I appreciate the Selectmen working together to get things done, we have accomplished so much in a short amount of time, and there is more to do. I will be available to you as needs arise, so please just reach out to me at any time, I am available to help in any way that I can. Again, I thank you for all the kindness shown to me over the last 3 plus years that I have been the Town Administrator.

Chairman Durgin adjourned the meeting at 6:25 pm.

Minutes recorded by Town Administrator Ken Robichaud

Minutes approved November 7, 2023