

**MINUTES OF THE 2010 TOWN MEETING  
NORTHFIELD, NEW HAMPSHIRE**

**Polls were opened at the Pines Community Center, Dearborn Road, at 10:00 a.m., on the 9<sup>th</sup> day of March, 2010 by Moderator Scott McGuffin. Polls were closed at 7:00 p.m. with 582 ballots cast.**

**ARTICLE 1: To choose all necessary Town Officers, Tilton-Northfield Fire District Officers and Winnisquam Regional School District Officers for the ensuing year.**

**Results of voting for Town offices:**

<b>For Selectman:</b>	<b>Debra Shepard</b>	<b>238</b>
	<b>Geoffrey Ziminsky</b>	<b>286</b>
<b>For Library Trustee:</b>	<b>Thomas Fulweiler</b>	<b>454</b>
<b>For Moderator:</b>	<b>Scott McGuffin</b>	<b>462</b>
<b>For Supervisor of the Checklist:</b>	<b>Elaine Lamanuzzi</b>	<b>482</b>
<b>For Trustee of Trust Funds:</b>	<b>To be appointed</b>	

**ARTICLE 2: To see if the town will vote in favor of amending Article 9.1 of the Northfield Zoning Ordinance to bring the criteria for a variance into accordance with NH RSA 674:33.**

**Yes 415                      No 96**

**ARTICLE 3: To see if the Town will vote to re-adopt the Town's Growth Management Ordinance (Article 5 of the Northfield Zoning Ordinance) and extending until the March 2013 Annual Town Meeting.**

**Yes 386                      No 113**

**ARTICLE 4: To see if the Town will vote to amend the Groundwater Protection Ordinance (Article 6.2 of the Northfield Zoning Ordinance) to comply with RSA 674:16 and 674:21 and adopt the "Groundwater Protection Overlay Map for the Town of Northfield, NH" LRPC map dated 07-20-2009**

**Yes 409                      No 103**

**The Annual Town Meeting was called to order at the Pines Community Center, Dearborn Road, Northfield at 9:15 a.m. by Assistant Moderator Kent Finemore, appointed by Town Moderator Scott McGuffin to conduct the meeting. Moderator opened the meeting with a moment of silence for our troops, followed by the reading of the Warrant and election results being Articles 1-4 of the 2010 Warrant.**

Moderator accepted a motion by Geoffrey Ziminsky, seconded by Glen Brown, to reorder the Warrant to put Article 9 in the position of Article 5 to allow discussion on this Article before the rest of the Warrant. Show of hands: Yes 140      No 22.      **Motion passed.**

**ARTICLE 5 (formerly Article 9):** To see if the Town will vote to establish a fire department which shall be governed by a fire chief, who shall be appointed by the Board of Selectmen for a term not to exceed 2 years, and appoint firefighters upon recommendation of the chief, and raise and appropriate \$150,000 for that purpose. This article shall take effect only if the Tilton/Northfield Fire District votes to dissolve.

Article moved by Steve Bluhm, seconded by Greg Hill.

Kevin Waldron read a prepared statement. As Fire Commissioner he had stated recently that his preference was to keep the fire district intact. This included following the Facility Review Committee's eight-year plan outlining limited expansion. He had assumed he would be re-elected as Fire Commissioner and would have the ability to see that plan carried out, and there would not have been adequate savings to Northfield to pursue dissolution. The eight-year plan calls for a new fire station in Tilton in 2017. It does not call for a life safety complex or additional personnel, and he does not support either. Circumstances have changed and he now supports dissolution. He is afraid of where the Fire District is going and does not feel there is anything to fear in going it on our own, as we will be in control of our own destiny. He listed the following reasons for leaving the District: the district has no debt; the voters of Northfield would be in control of all expenses; the Chief's employment contract renews in 2011 and in the next few years, an ambulance, an engine and ladder truck are all scheduled to be replaced adding to Northfield's tax burden; as the District expands and personnel are added there will be enough employees to form a collective bargaining unit. Finally, the formation of our own Fire Department is a business decision that makes sense for our town. He asked the voters to join him in support of the Article.

Steve Bluhm recognized the members of the Northfield Fire Services committee, formed at the behest of the Selectmen to study fire services in the town of Northfield. They were Geoffrey Ziminsky, Stephen Bluhm (chair), Dina Waldron, Charles Harris, Gretchen Wilder, Ronald Huckins, and George Flanders.

Geoff Ziminsky spoke on behalf of the Fire Services Committee. He stated that Northfield needs to recognize the massive spending being proposed by the Town of Tilton relative to the joint department. He offered a visual presentation explaining the work the Committee had done, how they evaluated data acquired from many sources: the Fire District budget and call records, reports of other Committees formed to evaluate service and department needs, and plans being discussed for expansion of the department. This Committee recommends dissolution of the Tilton-Northfield Fire District, with a division of the current assets. The proposed new department would include a full-time chief, full-time career firefighter and EMT coverage from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. seven days a week, with call firefighter and EMT coverage from 6 p.m. to 6 a.m. They believe now would be an opportune time to make the split as the TNFD is debt free. They propose staff training at levels currently provided by the District, and have numerous individuals that have expressed interest in joining a call department. Expenses were reviewed and a transition plan developed. Northfield would receive approximately \$300,000 from District funds and a portion of existing assets and equipment. Ambulance revenue would aid in offsetting operating expenses. The Department would become operational on January 1, 2011.

Joe DeMello stated he had been to all the meetings and is against the split. He believes we have a great Fire Department. He said we should leave the department as-is. Northfield needs to go to the District meetings in the future and vote against large expenditures that we don't want. Mr. DeMello made Motion to Table, seconded by Roland Seymour. (2/3 vote required) **Motion to Table failed.**

Stacy Keeler spoke to the service level and coverage concerns. She stated she feels this is a control issue for certain officials. She questioned the training of call personnel, was concerned about the certification levels of EMT's that might respond to medical emergencies, and the debt we would be taking on due to a split of the department.

Charles Beckley asked what the transition plan would be and voiced concerns over safety and coverage during that time. Stephen Bluhm responded and referred to the Fire District Warrant that specified an effective date of a split would be January 1, 2011.

Catherine Ferreira stated she thought call firefighters would be professional and still provide the same high level of service that they now provide. She also wanted confirmation that we can always vote in 24/7 coverage at a later date.

Steve Bluhm referred to the committee report, which recommended coverage 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. but also included a cost sheet regarding projected cost for 24/7 coverage for a Northfield Fire Department.

Joe Keeler, identified himself as a current call Firefighter/EMT with the TNFD. He questioned the validity of the numbers in the report and stated he thinks this is a control issue. As a part-time member he feels total support by the full time staff and is treated as an equal. He feels that response times will be affected if we separate the current department.

Dick Maher said he wanted to make a motion for an Amendment to the Article to state the Department would be governed by a commission elected by the voters. Motion was not in form acceptable to the Moderator and was withdrawn.

Lisa Swancott called the question, seconded by Dave Liberatore.

Point of order called by Valerie Kehr: asked if everyone who had previously indicated they wanted to speak had to be allowed to speak before the vote? Moderator responded no. Vote to end debate passed, yes 152 No 32.

Moderator accepted a petition signed by at least five voters requesting that votes taken on this Article be by secret written ballot as per RSA 40:4-a. Moderator designated assistants Greg Hill and Stephanie Giovannucci to count votes, supervised by Town Clerk Cindy Caveney.

Vote results: **Yes 107, No 89, Abstain 1.** **Article passed.**

Motion to restrict reconsideration was made by Kevin Waldron, seconded by Mike Murphy. **Motion passed.**

Brian Watson reminded everyone to attend the Fire District Meeting on Monday, where the vote would be taken regarding dissolution of the TN Fire District.

**ARTICLE 6 (formerly ARTICLE 5):** To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$80,000 to be deposited in the SAR (State Aid Highway Reconstruction Fund) Capital Reserve Fund for the purpose of making improvements to Bean Hill Road. The Budget Committee and the Selectmen recommend approval of this article. (Majority vote is required for adoption).

Moved by Glen Brown, seconded by Dave Liberatore.

Steve Bluhm asked Lisa Martin, resident and representative of Quantum Engineering, firm employed by the Town of Northfield, to explain the Bean Hill Road project. This is for work from Route 132 to the culvert before the Fife farm (Williams brook crossing). The Fund is intended to cover the Town's one-third share of the project. Construction may be in 2012. Glenn Smith, Town Administrator advised the schedule is for engineering to be completed this year, construction would be in 2011 or 2012 based on when NH DOT is ready. The exact schedule is not determined at this time.

Steve Randall called the question, seconded by Dave Liberatore. **Article passed.**

**ARTICLE 7 (formerly Article 6) :** To see if the town will vote to appoint the Selectmen as agents to expend funds from State Aid Highway Reconstruction Fund previously established in 2001. (Majority vote required)

Moved by Dave Liberatore, seconded by Dick Maher.

Steve Bluhm spoke to the Article. Once the state allows us to split the project into phases, this Article would give the Selectboard the authority to spend money as needed to save the road from further deterioration.

Steve Randall asked for clarification if this has to be a non-lapsing question. Steve Bluhm responded this article is non-lapsing and will not have a specific end date.

Catherine Ferreira requested confirmation that the price for this has increased from \$800,000 to \$900,000?

Steve Bluhm responded that is correct and the increase is due to drainage issues at the site. Catherine asked if there is a time frame on when the work will be done as we have put money aside for this project for several years.

Lisa Martin explained the money is put into the Capital Reserve fund over time so the tax rate doesn't spike all at once for large projects.

Kevin Waldron asked if the figure of \$900,000 is our portion or the total for the project.

Steve Bluhm responded that is the total, we would be responsible for one-third. The formula for State/Town contribution has changed since the project began. It used to be 80/20, now it is 2/3 to 1/3.

Donna Bouchard asked if there is any way to get money from the recent Federal Stimulus funds. Steve Bluhm responded that this project was submitted with others but we have received none at this time.

Mike Murphy called the question, seconded by Dave Liberatore. **Article passed.**

**ARTICLE 8 (formerly Article 7):** To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Selectmen to enter into a two (2) year lease/purchase agreement for the replacement of a Ford F350 Truck in the Highway Department with a Ford F 550 and to raise and appropriate the sum of \$30,000 as the first year's payment. The total cost of this equipment is \$81,000. This lease/purchase agreement contains a non-appropriation clause. (Majority vote required for adoption)

Moved by Glen Brown, seconded by Geoff Ziminsky

Mike Summersett reviewed the specifications of the truck, advising the F550 is needed to carry the weight we require, they chose diesel for better fuel economy and diesel fuel is not expected to go up in price. The current F350 with plow wing and sander is overweight.

Lisa Swancott made Motion, seconded by Dave Liberatore, to amend the Article to pay for the truck in its entirety, rather than financing it. Amended Article to read:

**“To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Selectmen to purchase for the replacement of a Ford F350 Truck in the Highway Department with a Ford F 550 and to raise and appropriate the sum of \$81,000. (Majority vote required for adoption).”**

Lisa advised the winter salt budget is down \$30,000 and she will make a motion in a later Article to reduce the budget by that amount.

Charles Beckley asked if this was to replace Truck #1. Mike Summersett confirmed yes it was. Charles further spoke to problems he has experienced with Truck 1, numerous breakdowns, etc. Kevin Waldron spoke to support the amendment. **Amendment passed.**

Further discussion on Article 8 as amended:

Wes De Sousa asked what will happen to the F350 that this truck would replace.

Mike Summersett responded that the F350 will be put out to bid and sold.

Kevin Waldron stated his concerns about going with diesel based on his experience with diesel versus gas trucks. He stated the diesel motor is new in this size truck. His experience has been that both the up front cost and maintenance are higher for diesel vehicles.

Mike Summersett said he had discussion with Dennis Douville of Irwin Motors and they felt this model had the specifications that best met our needs.

Steve Bluhm added that this price is complete for the truck, wing and sander. The larger capacity means fewer trips back to fill up.

Steve Randall moved the Question, seconded by Dave Liberatore. **Article as amended passed.**

**ARTICLE 9 (formerly Article 8):** To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Selectmen to replace a police cruiser in the Police Department and to raise and appropriate \$24,645 for this purpose. (Majority vote is required for adoption).

Moved by Steve Bluhm, seconded by Bill Wilder

Chief Steve Adams spoke to the Article. The intent is to replace a 2004 police cruiser that has over 125K miles on it and that is starting to rust on two fenders. The old cruiser would be traded in.

Steve Bluhm pointed out that this price is \$932 less than last year.

Brian Watson called the question, seconded by Dave Liberatore.

**Article passed.**

**ARTICLE 10:** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the budget committee recommended sum of \$3,200,836 for general municipal operations. This article does not include special or individual articles listed above. (Majority vote required).

Moved by Dick Maher, seconded by Dave Liberatore

Roland Seymour made motion to amend the Article to add \$27,016.52 to the line item for Sewer Operations on page 18 (of Town Report), line item "SEW-WRBP Capital Charges".

Point of order called by Steve Randall. Stated we vote only on the bottom line of the budget, not by line item. It is inappropriate to ask for money for a specific line item.

Roland revised his motion to Amend the Article to read as follows:

**"To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$3,227,852.52 for general municipal operations. This article does not include special or individual articles listed above. (Majority vote required)."**

Motion was seconded by Joe DeMello.

Roland stated this is to cover a bill from NHDES for the cost to upgrade the sewer treatment plant in Franklin that Northfield ties in to as part of the Winnepesaukee River Basin Project. This is the 2009 bill that has not yet been paid. In the past Northfield has always paid the bill but chose not to pay it in 2009. When the Sewer District was formed, there was an agreement. This Capital Improvements Maintenance bill has been paid by the town since 1975. The 320 users in the District pay all other expenses for treatment and office management. He asked the Town to put this back into the budget as in the past.

The Moderator states the Amendment is increasing the bottom line of the budget for municipal operations. It does not change a specific line item.

Wes DeSousa pointed out that funds can be spent by the Selectmen any way they want, not necessarily to pay this specific bill.

Joe DeMello explained that years ago the Winnepesaukee River Basin Project was created by several towns including Northfield. The line goes from Center Harbor through several towns, then to the processing plant in Franklin. The EPA has come out with new regulations and restrictions that the State has to meet and these have been passed on to the towns. The original costs were sent to the towns and the towns paid them.

Joyce Fulweiler said that by law, municipalities have to provide a place for waste. The town voted to join and provided the capital for the Project, which has won awards nationwide. The Town has always paid these capital costs, which are spread out over the town. The Sewer District was formed by voters at a Town Meeting, stating they were going to take care of the operation and maintenance costs. This project gives us a place to take waste. This helps keep the Merrimack River designated as a scenic and wild river after much hard work went into cleaning it up. Joyce also addressed the comment that the money voted here can be spent elsewhere. She believes that our elected officials will listen to the will of the people as expressed at this Town Meeting.

Erika Cunningham stated no one helps her pay for her private water or septic system. She asked if there is any laws that make us pay this.

Glenn Smith, Town Administrator, responded there was no agreement between the Basin Project, DES, or any of the towns involved.

Steve Randall advised he was on the Budget Committee for many years, and were told there would be additional costs down the road. He does not feel this is a cost that should be borne by the taxpayers, it should be borne by the Sewer District users.

Roland said they could not find a legal agreement, but as precedent the bill always came to the town, never to the Sewer District. If spread out over the town, it would cost on average \$11 per household. If passed on to just sewer users it would cost on average \$70 to \$90 for households, and more for larger commercial users.

Greg Hill stated that by that logic, the town should pay his septic pumping bill.

Steve Bluhm pointed out we are not allowed to vote or otherwise participate at Sewer District or Water District meetings. If you are not a user you cannot vote on the budget or anything else relative to the District. In Tilton, the whole town is considered within the District and can vote and participate, no so in Northfield.

Ross Cunningham called the question on the Amendment, Seconded by Dave Liberatore.

Vote on Amendment#1: Yes 33, No 90      **Motion failed.**

Lisa Swancott made motion to Amend bottom line of budget to reduce by \$30,000 for road salt not needed, and remove interest on truck being purchased, due to amendment made to earlier Article 8, proposed Amendment #2 to read:      **“To see if the Town will vote to raise and**

**appropriate the sum of \$3,169,198 for general municipal operations. This article does not include special or individual articles listed above. (Majority vote required)."**  
Seconded by Dave Liberatore

Kevin Waldron pointed out that the interest on truck being purchased would have been in the 2011 budget and should not have been deducted from this year's budget. After determining the requested amount was in error, both the second and original motion were withdrawn for correction.

Lisa Swancott made new motion to amend bottom line of budget to \$3,170,836. Proposed Amendment #3 to Article to read:

**"To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$3,170,836 for general municipal operations. This article does not include special or individual articles listed above. (Majority vote required)."**

Seconded by Dave Liberatore

Donna Bouchard questioned if this cuts the budget for salt for next winter. Mike Summersett answered the salt supply should be all set with what we currently have in stock and two more loads in the fall.

Ross Cunningham called the question, seconded by Erika Cunningham. **Amendment passed. Article as amended passed.**

**ARTICLE 11:** To transact any other business that may legally come before this meeting

Richard Cullen asked why there is no Police Motorcycle in the Budget. He felt it was valuable in catching speeders. Chief Adams responded that he had submitted it in his budget request but it was cut.

The Moderator read Certificates of Appreciation to the following individuals for service to the Town:

Debra Shepard for three years of service as a Selectman from 2007 to 2010.

Michelle Bonsteel for eight years of service as member and chair of Planning Board 2002-2010.

Patricia Sawicki for three years of service as member of Budget Committee 2006-2009.

Steve Bluhm recognized Glenn Smith, Town Administrator for his work in writing the report for the Northfield Fire Services Committee. They could not have completed the report in the time frame without him.

The Moderator thanked all those who serve on the town Boards, welcomed new selectman Geoff Ziminsky, and gave a special thanks to the Police and Highway departments.

Kevin Waldron asked everyone to please vote at the Fire District meeting on Monday. He thanked those present for their support over the last three years while he served as Fire Commissioner.

Catherine Ferreira said she is worried about the condition of the State budget. Asked if we stop receiving the 30% in State funds, are we doing anything to prepare for that possibility?

Wes DeSousa thanked Kevin Waldron for his three years of service as Fire Commissioner.

Dick Maher asked that everyone consider volunteering for town committees and boards. We are in need of alternates for Planning Board and members for the Northfield Economic Development Committee, which is looking for ways to get some industry for Northfield.

The Moderator pointed out there is a sign-up sheet available for many committees.

David Court said he has been reading about what is coming down over the next couple of years with our taxes and it will be brutal. We need to be careful about our spending. He thanked his fellow citizens for this discussion.

Laurie Hill and Lisa Swancott asked everyone to come to the School District meeting next Saturday. Lisa asked for support for the school budget committee.

Steve Randall asked for a round of applause for the Town Budget Committee, stating the amount of work they do and time they put in is phenomenal.

Cindy Caveney thanked Stephanie Giovannucci for doing a great job on the Town Report.

Motion to adjourn by Steve Randall, seconded by Mike Murphy.  
Meeting adjourned at 12:34 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Cindy L. Caveney  
Town Clerk