

Certcode 1213-0

YEAR ENDING FEBRUARY 10, 2022

Fill out form, make and file a copy with the Town Clerk, and submit the Mileage Certificate on or before February 20, 2022 to: Vermont Agency of Transportation, Division of Policy, Planning and Intermodal Development, Mapping Section via email to: aot.mileagecertificates@vermont.gov or if necessary via mail to: VTrans PPAID - Mapping Section, 219 North Main Street, Barre VT 05641.

We, the members of the legislative body of NORTHFIELD in WASHINGTON County on an oath state that the mileage of highways, according to Vermont Statutes Annotated, Title 19, Section 305, added 1985, is as follows:

**PART I - CHANGES TOTALS - Please fill in and calculate totals.**

Town Highways	Previous Mileage	Added Mileage	Subtracted Mileage	Total	Scenic Highways
Class 1	2.188				0.000
Class 2	4.810				0.000
Class 3	67.36		0.100	67.26	0.000
State Highway	11.097				0.000
<b>Total</b>	<b>85.455</b>		<b>0.100</b>	<b>85.355</b>	<b>0.000</b>
* Class 1 Lane	0.165				
* Class 4	7.91				0.000
* Legal Trail	0.69				

\* Mileage for Class 1 Lane, Class 4, and Legal Trail classifications are NOT included in total.

DS  
PO

**PART II - INFORMATION AND DESCRIPTION OF CHANGES SHOWN ABOVE.**

- NEW HIGHWAYS:** Please attach Selectmen's "Certificate of Completion and Opening".
- DISCONTINUED:** Please attach SIGNED copy of proceedings (minutes of meeting).  
Bellemore Road (T.H. 21)
- RECLASSIFIED/REMEASURED:** Please attach SIGNED copy of proceedings (minutes of meeting).
- SCENIC HIGHWAYS:** Please attach a copy of order designating/discontinuing Scenic Highways.

IF THERE ARE NO CHANGES IN MILEAGE: Place an X in the box and sign below.

**PART III - SIGNATURES - PLEASE SIGN.**

Signatures of Selectmen/ Aldermen/ Trustees:

*[Handwritten signature]*  
*[Handwritten signature]*  
*[Handwritten signature]*

Signature of T/C/V Clerk:

*[Handwritten signature]*

Date Filed:

*2/10/2022*

Please sign ORIGINAL and return it for Transportation signature.

AGENCY OF TRANSPORTATION APPROVAL: Signed copy will be returned to T/C/V Clerk.

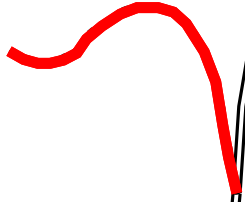
APPROVED:

*[Handwritten signature]*  
Johnathan Croft  
8B1F350F309C4C9...  
Representative, Agency of Transportation

DATE: 2/23/2022

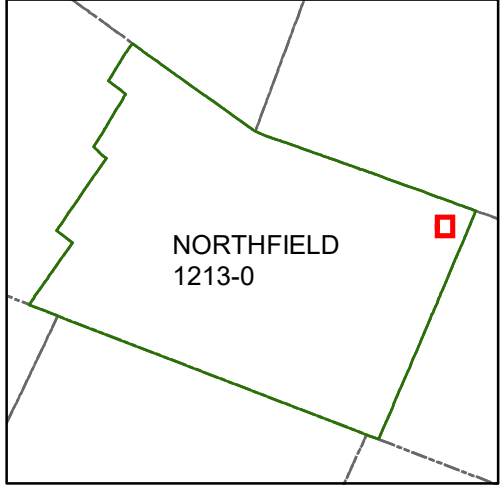
-0.10 mi CL3 TH-21 (Bellemore Rd)  
discontinued now private

(CL3 TH-21 from 0.10 mi to 0 mi)



ONION RIVER RD

TH-20



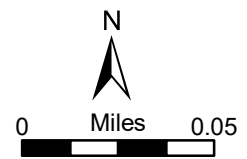
NORTHFIELD  
1213-0

Locus Map

**Mileage Certificate Changes  
NORTHFIELD**

(CTUA:1213-0)  
(CERTCODE:1213-0)

Mapping Section  
Division of Policy and Planning  
Vermont Agency of Transportation -- February 15, 2022



**Anne Sternberg**

64 Bellemore Rd  
Northfield, VT 05663  
971-336-3911  
anne.strnbrg@gmail.com

September 13, 2021

**Jeff Shulz**

Town Manager  
51 South Main St  
Northfield, VT 05663

Dear Mr Shulz,

My husband and I live at 64 Bellemore Rd with our two young boys. When we bought the home last winter, we were aware that our driveway (Bellemore Rd) was cleared by the town plow, and understood it a rare luxury. Although very appreciative of snow management during winter and road repairs throughout the year, we are now requesting to discontinue town maintenance of our road.

Bellemore Rd, our driveway entrance, is located to the left, where Onion River Rd ends and the class 4 road begins. It may be approximately 150-200 feet in length. It is surrounded on all sides by our own property and has no connection to or use by any neighbors or traffic, as it terminates at our garage and house.

The reasons for this decision are as follows:

- (1.) Our children, our dog, our poultry and fowl: Speeding and unsuspecting traffic (cars and ATVs) who believe they are driving down the class 4 road, regularly end up on our driveway, not knowing where they are going. The town plow is very large and it's nearly impossible to see a child or animal behind the snowbank when you are coming around the bend into our parking area. We would like to be able to have our kids play, ride bikes, etc, without worrying that a car is going to come tearing up here at any moment.
- (2.) Vehicles getting stuck during the winter. In February and March, before the melt, we saw at least 4 vehicles get stuck when they accidentally came to our driveway, whereas map applications told them they could drive the class 4 road to reach the Berlin Pond area. Twice it was an emergency utility truck out on a call.
- (3.) Being a nuisance on our own property. We do not have a modern sized garage. Our "garage" was converted from the original barn and cannot fit a modern vehicle, so we must park in the driveway. This has made it both

precarious and damaging to our property for the plow truck to turn around in such a tight area. It also makes it impossible to have a firewood dump if we need to supplement our supply mid-winter because we have then closed off an even tighter area for the plow to move through.

(4.) Property damage. The plow is too large for our road and property. The landscaping and plants are damaged, boulders displaced, lawn is scraped up from the plow blade. This is unavoidable because of the size of the plow, but it's also left on our effort and money to repair the damage. Additionally, because of so many vehicles traveling up our driveway (Bellemore Rd) that are unintentional, it puts additional wear and tear on the road that has led to washout and large cracking areas of erosion. This was repaired at the town's expense this year.

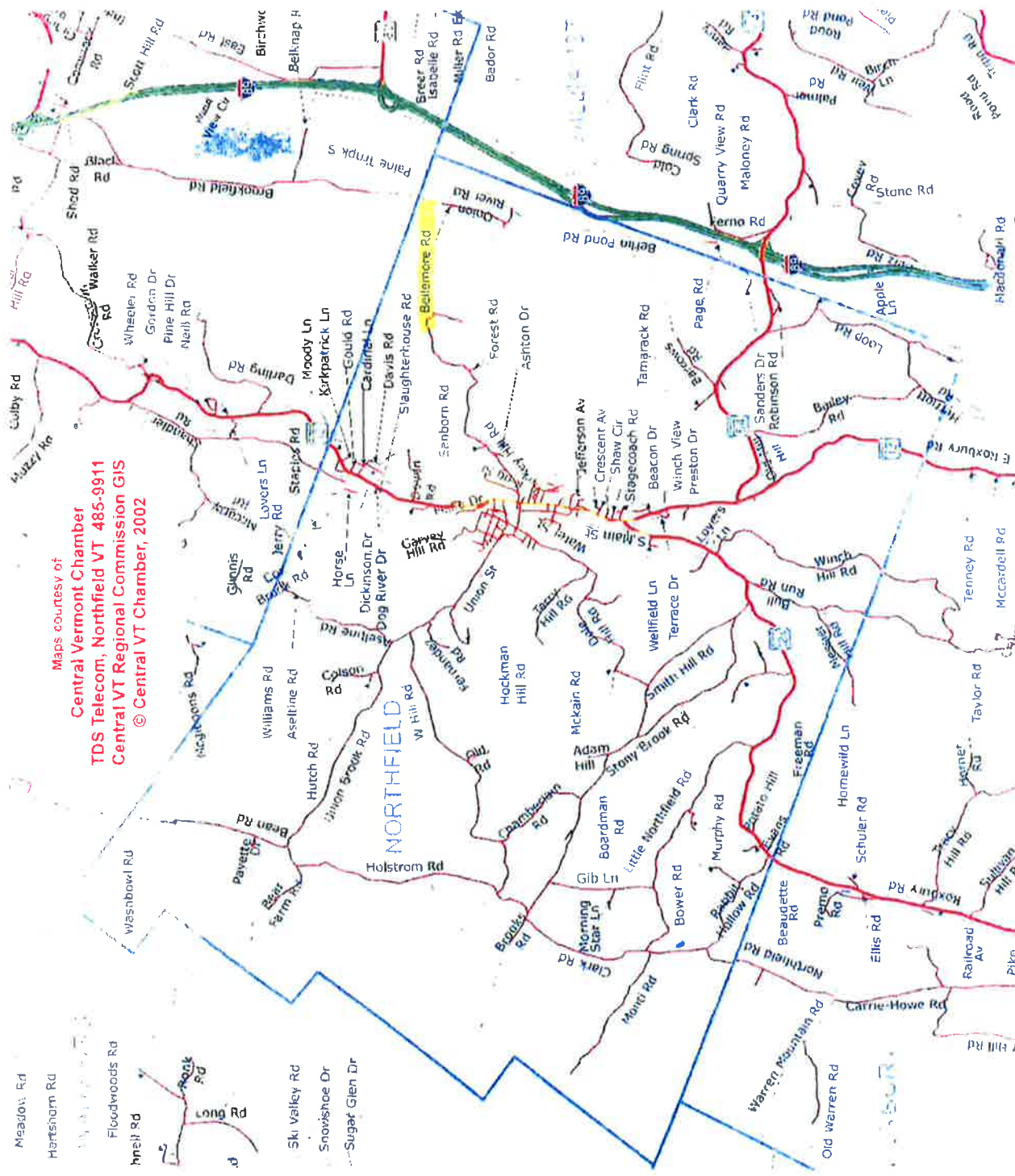
(5.) Privacy and security. We appreciate greatly that the home we bought is at the end of a road, up on the hillside, away from traffic and amenities. We have had people come up here out of curiosity, on cars, ATVs, bikes and on foot. This is sometimes worrisome when a car drives up to our house in the middle of the night. We want to be able to close our driveway off to traffic at night or when we are away, so that we are not worried about theft, vandalism or burglary.

I hope that you can appreciate our concerns. We know that it is burdensome for the town to have to perform maintenance on single-service roads, such as ours. My husband and I feel very strongly about our decision and fully understand our responsibilities if the road is released from the town of Northfield. We have a tractor equipped with a full-sized snow blower, and intend to maintain the grade, gravel and stability either ourselves or with professional assistance, at our own expense.

If you, or the town select board has any questions, I would be glad to discuss with further detail.

Sincerely,

Anne Sternberg



Maps courtesy of  
**Central Vermont Chamber**  
**TDS Telecom, Northfield VT 485-9911**  
**Central VT Regional Commission GIS**  
 © Central VT Chamber, 2002

Meadow Rd  
 Hartshorn Rd  
 Floodwoods Rd  
 Inlet Rd  
 Long Rd  
 Ski Valley Rd  
 Snowshoe Dr  
 Sugar Glen Dr

**TOWN OF NORTHFIELD, VERMONT  
SELECT BOARD REGULAR MEETING  
Minutes of October 12, 2021**

- I. ROLL CALL.** Select Board Chair K. David Maxwell, Board members Julie H. Goodrich, Nathaniel Miller, Charles Morse (absent), and John Stevens. Also present were Town Manager Jeff Schulz, Acting Clerk Kenneth McCann, Laura Hill-Eubanks (Chair, Planning Commission), Deborah Zuaro (Chair, Conservation Commission), Lydia Petty (Northfield Ridge + River Routes Steering Committee), Kahwa Douoguih (NCDN), Kaitlyn Keating (NCDN), Anne Sternberg, Carolyn Stevens, and Elroy Hill.

Chair Maxwell called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Participants had the option of attending the meeting either in person or remotely through Go-to-Meeting.

- II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIENCE.** Those persons present were asked to rise and recite the Pledge of Allegiance. The remote contingent also participated as much as possible.

- III. SET/ADJUST AGENDA.** There were no changes to the posted agenda.

**IV. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (SCHEDULED):**

- a. Laura Hill-Eubanks, Planning Commission (PC) Chair: Planning Grant Application.** Ms. Hill-Eubanks informed the Select Board members that the PC intends to submit a grant application in order to obtain the funding to hire a planning consultant. That person would assist the PC members in revising the local zoning regulations to better conform with state law and the recently revised Northfield Town Plan. The maximum grant amount is \$22,000 and the municipality would be expected to provide a ten percent (10%) local match. The revision process is expected to last between one (1) and two (2) years. Given the local match amount, the Select Board members need to authorize and sign the grant application resolution before it can be submitted to the Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community Development. There is a November 1, 2021 grant application deadline. As this is an action item, this matter is also listed later on the meeting agenda under "Select Board."
- b. Lydia Petty, Northfield Ridge + River Routes (NRRR) Steering Committee: Vermont Outdoor Recreation Economic Collaborative (VOREC) Community Grant Letter of Interest.** Manager Schulz received an email late Friday afternoon (10/08/21) from the VOREC Program Manager indicating that the preliminary grant application submitted by NRRR was selected from the 104 original applicants to reach the next round. The remaining thirty-seven (37) applicants will be asked to submit a full grant application. Deborah Zuaro is the Chair of the Northfield Conservation Commission (NCC) and she has worked with Manager Schulz, other NCC members, the Town Forest Stewardship Committee, and the NRRR Steering Committee on the initial application. She added that up to twenty-five (25) grants will be awarded and the minimum request amount is \$50,000 with no local match amount. The application deadline is November 22, 2021 and if there are no objections, Ms. Zuaro and Ms. Petty will continue to work with Manager Schulz on the final grant application submission. Ms. Petty said the grant application was based on goals contained in the Town Forest Stewardship Plan and the NRRR Master Plan. Should the grant application prove successful, the funds would be spent on Town Forest trail improvements, new signage, improved access, etc. Another possibility would be a pilot program through which novice hikers would be able to borrow equipment, such as snowshoes, from a repository at the Brown Public Library. Although there is no local match, Ms. Petty felt an offer of in-kind services from the municipality might improve the application's chance of success.



Board member Miller is supportive of this grant application and asked when the grant awards would be announced. Ms. Petty said the awards would be announced in January 2022 and the funds distributed in April 2022. Chair Maxwell then thanked Ms. Zuaro, Ms. Petty, and all others involved in this effort for their work on this. He asked if a project budget has been developed. Ms. Petty said there has been some preliminary number-crunching in order to determine the grant amount to be requested. This is now set at \$158,000 but that might change when a firmer budget is put together. There also will be a need to prioritize project goals in case the full grant request is not awarded. Chair Maxwell said it appears a lot of planning for this grant application has already taken place. In addition, assistance from the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission (CVRPC) resulted in the Northfield Town Forest Access Feasibility Study, which included three (3) Community Site Visits, a Community Forum, and public feedback through an online survey. Ms. Petty asked if she and Ms. Zuaro should provide the Select Board members with an in-person update before the final application is submitted. Chair Maxwell said that was not necessary as they will be working with Manager Schulz and he himself can provide reports to the Select Board members.

#### **V. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

- a. **September 28, 2021 (Regular Meeting).** Motion by Board member Goodrich, seconded by Board member Stevens, to approve the minutes. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**

#### **VI. APPROVAL OF BILLS**

- a. **Approval of Warrant #07-22.** Motion by Board member Goodrich, seconded by Board member Stevens, to approve Warrant #07-22 in the amount of \$680,894.39. Board member Stevens is pleased not to see any repair bills related to the 2014 police cruiser. Manager Schulz confirmed it is running well at this time. Chair Maxwell noted this warrant contained a number of bond payments as well as payments associated with various infrastructure projects. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**
- b. **Approval of Biweekly Payroll through October 3, 2021.** Motion by Board member Goodrich, seconded by Board member Stevens, to approve the biweekly payroll in the amount of \$110,084.74. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**

#### **VII. SELECT BOARD**

- a. **Northfield Transfer Station Agreement.** As Board member Morse is not present tonight and he previously submitted by email a number of proposed amendments to this agreement, Chair Maxwell suggested tabling discussion of this matter until the next regular meeting (10/26/21). There was no objection.
- b. **Discontinuance of Class 3 Town Highway – Bellemore Road.** Anne Sternberg and her husband Paul purchased their house on Bellemore Road earlier this year. This is a one-house Class 3 road located off Onion River Road just south of where Onion River turns into a Class 4 road as it crosses over into the Town of Berlin. Ms. Sternberg recently sent a letter to the municipality asking that Bellemore Road be discontinued for several reasons, most especially the safety of their children, pets, and farm animals. Ms. Sternberg said several motorists have been deceived by satnav and GPS instructions into thinking the class 4 section of Onion River Road can be used in wintertime to access the Berlin Pond area. Some have gotten stuck in their driveway when they assumed that was a continuation of the road. In summertime, motorists sometimes drive too fast into their driveway, which also is a significant danger to the family. In addition, Ms. Sternberg believes Bellemore Road is too narrow for the municipal highway's plowing trucks, which has resulted in property damage in the past. Another reason for privatizing the road would be to allow for more privacy for the family since buying a home on the backroads was meant to provide this. However, lost and/or curious drivers currently enter their driveway at all hours of the day and they would like this stopped by designating this as a private road.

Manager Schulz said he and Highway Foreman Trent Tucker have reviewed the situation and see no reason for not granting the Sternbergs' request. If the Select Board members agree, the process for road discontinuance can start, which would include notices to abutting property owners as well as scheduling a site visit and public hearing. Should the Select Board members approve the discontinuance, there would be a forty-five (45) day appeal period before the road is privatized. The Vermont Agency of Transportation (VTTrans) would be informed that the amount of Class 3 road in Northfield has been lessened by the length of Bellemore Road, which is about one-tenth of a mile. Board member Miller has no objections as the homeowners have made a very compelling case for this road discontinuance. Board member Stevens asked where the plow trucks on Onion River Road would turn around. Manager Schulz said Mr. Tucker indicated this would not be a problem as there is sufficient room in the municipality's right-of-way. Board member Goodrich believes the request is well-founded and noted this particular road was one of fifteen (15) considered for discontinuance three (3) years ago. Board member Goodrich believes the Select Board should allow the process to move forward. Chair Maxwell asked about the timeline for the process. Manager Schulz said it should take several months as there are various notification periods before it goes into effect. Motion by Board member Goodrich, seconded by Board member Stevens, to authorize Manager Schulz to move forward with the process of discontinuing Bellemore Road. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**

- c. **Planning Grant Resolution - Zoning Bylaw Update Planning Grant.** As indicated earlier tonight, the Planning Commission would like Select Board authorization to apply for a planning grant in order to hire a consultant to assist with the revision of Northfield's zoning regulations. Motion by Board member Goodrich, seconded by Board member Miller, to approve and sign the FY22 Municipal Resolution for Municipal Planning Grant. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**

#### **VIII. TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT**

- a. **Vermont Agency of Natural Resources (ANR) Project Funding.** Manager Schulz recently attended an ANR webinar in which there was discussion of the amount of federal and state funds available for local water, sewer, and stormwater infrastructure projects. The ANR is focusing on projects that would: eliminate any remaining CSOs (Combined Sewer Overflows); control phosphorus pollution; improve water/sewer infrastructure in mobile home parks; enable economic development with up-to-date wastewater treatment facilities; help homeowners with installing new or replacing failing private septic systems; and improving water and wastewater systems in Vermont's designated villages. In the case of Northfield, these priorities dovetail with the proposed project that focuses on improving stormwater treatment along South Main Street (and side streets) in conjunction with the elimination of the community's last remaining CSO. The indication is that ANR will provide one hundred percent (100%) funding for this project, which has been budgeted at \$950,000. The engineering plans are at the ninety percent (90%) completion level so this project can be considered "shovel ready." Manager Schulz has submitted the required documentation to ANR, which will announce early next year which projects will be funded in the next fiscal year. He believes the funding for this project will be coming to Northfield but it is uncertain what the timing will be (FY22, FY23, FY24, or FY25?). Manager Schulz now will look for other possible outside funding for updating the Northfield Wastewater Treatment Facility as well as other local infrastructure projects. He feels this could be a very exciting time as federal and state money now is available for several projects that were previously delayed due to lack of local resources



- b. **Northfield Common Fountain.** Manager Schulz met today with Northfield resident Bonnie Chouinard and she indicated her willingness to totally fund the rebuilding/replacement of the public fountain on the Common. She also provided some examples of public fountains in other communities to show what options exist. Manager Schulz will provide more information to the Select Board members as this possibility develops.

**IX. BOARD MEMBERS' COMMENTS, CONCERNS, QUESTIONS**

- a. **Community Banners.** Board member Stevens noted the banners designed and painted by local students have been installed on the Common and on the Main Street Bridge. He wanted to thank all those responsible for their creation as well as the municipal employees who installed them. Board member Stevens asked how long they would stay in place. Manager Schulz said they probably would be removed in early December in order to prevent winter damage. The other Select Board members also expressed their gratitude for the banners. (NOTE: An article in the October 14, 2021 edition of the *Times Argus* listed the individuals responsible as Eric Howard, the Northfield tenth-grade art class, Jon Ignatowski, Jeff Schulz, Andrea Melville, Carolyn Stevens, Bonnie Kirn Donahue, Lydia Petty, Merry Shernock, Ada Eberle, Tim Swartz, Jeanne Bright, Colin, Warren, and Ryan Bright.)
- b. **Northfield Farmers Market.** Board member Stevens noted the final outside market of the summer season was held this afternoon. Board member Goodrich thanked Cassie Morse for her excellent job managing the market. Chair Maxwell also expressed his appreciation to Ms. Morse and the Northfield Farmers Market vendors for another successful year of operation and service to the community.
- c. **Special Select Board Meeting.** Chair Maxwell said the Select Board would be holding a special meeting next Tuesday night (10/19/21) at 7:00 p.m. in the Community Room. The sole topic will be the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021, which will provide \$1,900,000 in federal COVID-19 local recovery funds to the Town of Northfield. Chair Maxwell would like to start a public conversation regarding how these funds should be spent as well as inform the public of the type of local projects that would (or would not) be eligible for usage of these funds.

**X. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (UNSCHEDULED)**

- a. **Kahwa Douoguih, Northfield Community Development Network (NCDN).** The NCDN was instrumental in helping create the Economic Development Director (EDD) position and also assisted with the search that hired Jon Ignatowski as the first Northfield EDD. Unfortunately, Mr. Ignatowski had to resign due to health problems. Ms. Douoguih said the NCDN members were supportive of the search for his permanent replacement. In the interim, NCDN members will be drafting a local business handbook that will assist potential entrepreneurs with such issues as local zoning regulations, etc. Chair Maxwell said the Economic Development Subcommittee has warned a meeting for this Thursday night (10/14/21) at 6:00 p.m. in order to further discuss the EDD position and other matters. Ms. Douoguih said NCDN members would be willing to provide assistance to the municipality while the EDD position is vacant. The influx of the aforementioned local recovery funds (and decisions regarding their distribution) makes it important that local economic growth remains a significant consideration in the coming months.

**XI. ADJOURNMENT.** Motion by Board member Goodrich, seconded by Board member Stevens, to adjourn. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**

The Board adjourned at 7:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Kenneth L. McCann, Acting Clerk

An audio recording of this meeting is available in the Town Manager's Office.

These minutes were approved at the Select Board regular meeting of October 26, 2021.

**TOWN OF NORTHFIELD, VERMONT  
SELECT BOARD REGULAR MEETING  
Minutes of November 9, 2021**

- I. ROLL CALL.** Select Board Chair K. David Maxwell, Board members Julie H. Goodrich, Nathaniel Miller (absent), Charles Morse, and John Stevens. Also present were Town Manager Jeff Schulz, Acting Clerk Kenneth McCann, Laurie Baroffio (Finance Director), Andrew Bachand CPA (Kittell Branagan & Sargent), Kristen Gadbois (Vermont Department of Economic Development/NCDN), Kaitlyn Keating (NCDN), Jean Kerner (NCDN), Kahwa C. Douoguih (NCDN), Erin Hicks-Tibbles (NCDN), Carolyn Stevens (NCDN), David Packie, Merry Shernock, Lydia Petty, Linda Brodasky, Deborah Zuaro, and Elroy Hill.

Chair Maxwell called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Participants had the option of attending the meeting either in person or remotely through Go-to-Meeting.

- II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIENCE.** Those persons present were asked to rise and recite the Pledge of Allegiance. The remote contingent also participated as much as possible.

- III. SET/ADJUST AGENDA.** There were no changes to the posted agenda.

**IV. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (SCHEDULED):**

- a. Andrew Bachand CPA, Kittell Branagan & Sargent: FY 2020/2021 Financial Audit Reports.** Mr. Bachand is a co-managing partner in accounting firm Kittell Branagan & Sargent for which he has worked for thirty-five (35) years. He added that this accounting firm has performed the outside audit for Northfield for the past eight (8) years or so. As in the past, the process went very well this year. Mr. Bachand said the firm's accountants sent to Northfield in order to perform the audit actually enjoyed doing it because Finance Director Baroffio and her staff were very helpful and prepared for any questions they might have. He added that Ms. Baroffio has a good handle on the municipality's financial situation and keeps in contact with Kittell Branagan & Sargent throughout the year to keep them informed of any new developments, etc. Mr. Bachand said the resulting audit was an unmodified opinion that was free from any material misstatements. He then provided a brief overview of the financial audit and mentioned some special conditions during the 2020/2021 fiscal year that affected both revenue and expenditures. Mr. Bachand noted the municipality ended the fiscal year with a favorable revenue balance of \$337,243. The expense budget had a favorable balance of \$274,227. The special conditions to which Mr. Bachand referenced included payments to the Northfield Ambulance Service (NAS) for conducting COVID-19 testing, personnel cost reductions in the Northfield Police Department (NPD), unanticipated state funds provided the Highway Department, the municipal pool not opening in summer 2020 due to the pandemic, etc. The total budget had a favorable balance of \$550,362 and Mr. Bachand thought that was very good. He then asked if there were any questions.

Board member Goodrich did not have any questions but thanked Mr. Bachand and Ms. Baroffio for the favorable audit report. Board member Morse asked why prepaid property taxes were indicated in the report as "unavailable revenue." Mr. Bachand said the collected tax funds were for the following fiscal year (2021/2022) so they couldn't be disbursed until after current fiscal year ended. Board member Stevens did not have any questions but also was grateful for the favorable report. Chair Maxwell asked why a long-time liability table showed a big jump in future debt amounts after a few years. Mr. Bachand said that after five (5) years, the table switched to multi-year totals rather than single years. Chair Maxwell then thanked Mr. Bachand for the good report on the municipality's finances.

Mr. Bachand said this audit was the first under GASB 84 and this required a slight change in that agency funds had to be treated as custodial funds. The next audit will have another change with GASB 87, which will require different reporting on municipal leases on equipment, vehicles, etc. Such agreements would be treated as both assets and liabilities. Mr. Bachand did not feel this would be a major issue for Northfield and he will work with Ms. Baroffio on this. Mr. Bachand then discussed the impact of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds on future audits. He said if more than \$750,000 in federal funds are spent in one fiscal year, it would require a separate "single audit" for the municipality in addition to the usual audit. The additional auditing cost probably would be between \$4,000 and \$5,000. Manager Schulz noted the municipality is expected to receive \$1,900,000 in ARPA funds over the next two years. Mr. Bachand said depending on how these funds are dispersed, there might be the need for only one "single audit" or this might be required for a few years. Kristen Gadbois was pleased with the favorable audit and asked what was happening with the ARPA funds the municipality already has received. Manager Schulz said they were being tracked in a separate account until it is determined what can be done with them prior to the December 31, 2026 deadline for expending the total amount. Chair Maxwell again thanked Mr. Bachand for tonight's favorable report and valuable information. Mr. Bachand said that the Northfield municipality was one of their favorite clients due to the quality of work done in preparation of their arrival and the easy encounters the auditors always have with the municipal staff. Chair Maxwell said that was a testament to Ms. Baroffio and her staff.

#### **V. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

- a. **October 26, 2021 (Regular Meeting).** Motion by Board member Morse, seconded by Board member Stevens, to approve the minutes. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**

#### **VI. APPROVAL OF BILLS**

- a. **Approval of Warrant #09-22.** Motion by Board member Morse, seconded by Board member Stevens, to approve Warrant #09-22 in the amount of \$340,415.02. It was noted that of the total warrant amount, \$207,471 represented power purchased for the Northfield Electric Department (NED) for future resale. Board member Stevens noted a repair bill for 2021 Fire Department tanker truck. He asked if this vehicle was not still under warranty. Manager Schulz said he had the same question and he will check into this. Board member Stevens noted the Highway Department's 2014 Western Star has seen many repairs in recent months. The Select Board members might need to discuss its possible replacement during the upcoming budget meetings. Chair Maxwell noted a payment to DT Investigators for professional services. Manager Schulz said that was related to an ongoing NPD arbitration case. Chair Maxwell also noted a payment to upgrade the surveillance cameras at the Police Station. The funds will come out of the NPD Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) budget account. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**
- b. **Approval of Warrant #09-22A.** Motion by Board member Morse, seconded by Board member Stevens, to approve Warrant #09-22A in the amount of \$22,558.18. This is a payment on the Depot Square Improvement bond note. Board member Stevens asked if this was the last payment on this. Manager Schulz said the final payment won't be until FY 2034/2035. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**
- c. **Approval of Biweekly Payroll through October 31, 2021.** Motion by Board member Morse, seconded by Board member Stevens, to approve the biweekly payroll in the amount of \$98,701.23. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**

#### **VII. SELECT BOARD**

- a. **Northfield Business Handbook.** Chair Maxwell said this matter was discussed at a recent meeting (10/28/21) of the Economic Development Subcommittee, on which he and Board member Morse serve. Board member Morse said the subcommittee discussed the proposal to create a Northfield Business Handbook with the members of the Northfield Economic Development Network (NCDN) present.

The subcommittee decided to support the proposal that would have NCDN members draft the handbook and afterwards create a web platform for a cost of no more than \$10,000. Board member Morse said there is no single place where potential entrepreneurs seeking to do business in Northfield can go to navigate the various state and/or local regulations affecting their particular businesses. Board member Morse felt this project could be done quickly and will be a great assistance to existing businesses looking to expand or to new businesses looking to establish themselves in Northfield. The business handbook will be available in printed copies and also have an online version with links to various forms, agencies, etc.

Board member Goodrich had understood that the NCDN members would be drafting this document at no cost to the municipality. We are now looking at a \$10,000 price tag. Board member Morse said there had been hopes that the former Economic Development Director (Jon Ignatowski) would have been able to develop this document in-house. However, the project was still in the planning stages when he had to leave the municipality's employ due to health issues. Board member Morse felt it was now important that NCDN members be authorized to create the handbook as soon as possible. Board member Goodrich asked if the \$10,000 request was for the next fiscal year budget. Chair Maxwell said that was his understanding. Board member Morse believes there are available funds in the current fiscal year budget so there would be no need to wait until the start of the next fiscal year in July 2022. He would like this project started and the new handbook completed and distributed long before then. Board member Goodrich believes that anyone starting a new business should be able to hire an attorney, engineer, and/or developer to help with all the legal and regulatory requirements. In addition, since state regulations seem to change every few months, there is a chance that the handbook would be out-of-date before too long. Board member Morse felt that municipal staff should be able to update the document whenever necessary. He also did not believe that someone looking to start a small business should have to spend a lot of capital on professional services before even knowing if the business proposal was feasible. Putting all the needed information in one document would be very helpful to someone at the initial planning stages. This would be a living document that would be continuously updated. Board member Morse felt such a document would not have been possible pre-merger as there had been different rules in place then for the Town and Village.

Board member Stevens believes the needed expense could be taken out of existing economic development funds. He would like the municipality to get moving on this. Chair Maxwell said NCDN did provide a detailed project proposal including a timeline for the various phases. His only concern is the cost and he asked if this would be an appropriate use of economic development funds. Manager Schulz said that would be the logical source of funding if this project is to be undertaken in the current fiscal year. There might be other surplus funds in the current budget and he would have to look into this. Board member Morse asked if ARPA funds could be used for this purpose. Manager Schulz said the project does fit certain ARPA criteria including helping businesses recover from the pandemic as well as general local economic development. Board member Morse asked if this would answer some of Board member Goodrich's concerns. Board member Goodrich said whatever the source it still would be taxpayer money and she doesn't see this as a justifiable expense.

Ms. Gadbois believes the business handbook would create opportunities for new or expanding local businesses. The NCDN members who would work on this do have the training and expertise to do a good job. The finished product would be a great asset to budding entrepreneurs and have the potential to result in significant local economic development. Kaitlyn Keating (NCDN) understands the concern about using taxpayer money but believes the potential benefits outweigh the cost. She also doesn't feel someone thinking of starting a business should have to hire an attorney, etc. when the municipality could provide the information for free.



Motion by Board member Morse, seconded by Board member Stevens, to approve the NCDN proposal for a Northfield Business Handbook with immediate implementation and authorize up to \$10,000 for this purpose. Board member Morse felt this was a smart way to invest in Northfield's economic future. He also believes previous Town Select Boards took various actions that had the effect of driving certain businesses out of town. This is a good way to rectify that situation and prevent a recurrence. **Motion passed 3-1-0, with Board member Goodrich voting in opposition.**

- b. Economic Development Director Position.** Chair Maxwell said Northfield hired its first Economic Development Director last year after voter authorized establishing the part-time position at the March 2020 Town Meeting. Mr. Ignatowski served in this role with distinction until he had to resign. The municipality advertised for his replacement but it was felt none of the applicants were sufficiently qualified to hold the position. After some discussion of the possible reasons for this, Chair Maxwell feels it is now necessary to enhance this position by making it full-time. This would allow the municipality to recruit and retain a suitable candidate.

Motion by Board member Morse, seconded by Board member Stevens, to make the Economic Development Director position in Northfield full-time with up to thirty-five (35) hours per week. Board member Goodrich believes the last conversation she took part in regarding the Economic Development Director position was over a failed proposal to combine this part-time position with another one (Zoning Administrator). She doesn't feel a full-time Economic Development Director would have the ability to increase the local Grand List sufficiently to justify the additional expense. With benefits, the full-time position would cost \$82,000 annually as compared to \$29,000 for the part-time position. Board member Goodrich also noted when NAS Chief Lawton Rutter requested a second full-time employee in his department, he was told this was a budget decision and would have to be made when the next fiscal year's budget was being developed. She feels creating this new full-time position in this manner would break this precedent and not enough time has passed to be able to determine whether the expense of even a part-time Economic Development Director can be fiscally justified. Chair Maxwell doesn't believe this action would violate any board policy. Manager Schulz agreed that there is no written policy that would prevent this action. There has been a reluctance in the past to create new positions due to budgetary concerns. Chair Maxwell believes this Select Board has done due diligence in the past to help keep tax rates as low as possible. He believes there are funds in the current fiscal year budget to finance this new full-time position. Chair Maxwell felt Jon Ignatowski in his brief time here was very successful as a part-time employee and provided the proper person is found to fill the position, he believes a full-time Economic Development Director could do much more to assist local economic development. Chair Maxwell believes this is a warranted expense and a solid investment in Northfield's future.

Board member Morse noted a job description for the full-time position will need to be developed so it could include some new duties such as grant writing, etc. Board member Stevens said Mr. Ignatowski did some grant applications while he was here and the total amount of grant funds awarded was more than four (4) times his compensation. He believes Northfield is losing money every day there is not an Economic Development Director in place. Chair Maxwell thinks there are sufficient funds in the current fiscal year budget to cover this expense. Manager Schulz confirmed that about three-fourths of the Economic Development Director personnel budget has not been expended and this could fund a full-time employee from January 2022 through the end of the current fiscal year on June 30, 2022.

Board member Morse asked if Manager Schulz supported this proposal. Manager Schulz said based on the municipality's current financial situation and the advocacy of local economic development groups, he does feel this would be a good idea at this time. He does have concerns about the long-term fiscal implications but the influx of federal and state funding in the next couple years makes it feasible in the short-term. Board member Morse doesn't want other Vermont communities getting ahead of Northfield while the Economic Development Director remains vacant. Chair Maxwell also would like to move forward on this as soon as possible.

Ms. Keating said the NCDN did envision a full-time Economic Development Director originally but later decided to put only the part-time position up for voter authorization as a fallback position after the Select Board members at that time expressed their opposition. Ms. Gadbois believes there is a great opportunity now for local economic growth given the large amounts of federal and state funds coming to the community. She felt the municipality should not remain committed to "business as usual" but rather take this action to move forward rather than stay stagnant. Carolyn Stevens (NCDN) believes there are many activities that could occupy the full-time Economic Development Director's time in addition to grant writing. This could include working directly with existing businesses, associating to a greater extent with regional economic development organizations (such as the Central Vermont Economic Development Corporation), taking steps to encourage the development of additional affordable housing in Northfield, etc. The full-time Economic Development Director could be very transformative figure as this community moves into the future. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**

- c. **Northfield Snowmobilers Incorporated (NSI) Trail Requests (Well Field, Fairground Road, & South View Road).** Manager Schulz said NSI has made its annual request for the municipality's permission to connect its trail system by permitting snowmobile use through the Well Field and along short sections of Fairground Road and South View Road. Utility Superintendent Patrick DeMasi has put together a list of conditions for allowing the trail to go through the Well Field. These conditions have been followed in the past with no problems. Motion by Board member Morse, seconded by Board member Stevens, to permit snowmobile use through the Well Field, Fairground Road, and South View Road. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**

#### VIII. TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

- a. **Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act.** Manager Schulz said now that the federal infrastructure bill has been approved, it is estimated that about \$2,200,000,000 will be coming to Vermont for repairs to bridges and roads; improve high-speed broadband internet access; municipal water and sewer improvement projects; etc. As with the ARPA funds, there still are questions regarding the type of local projects that would be eligible for these funds. Given the current low interest rates, this would be a good time to invest in new water and sewer lines and other infrastructure projects. Using these new funds also would free up the previously awarded ARPA funds for other purposes.
- b. **FY 2021/2022 Municipal Budget.** Manager Schulz said the initial draft budget has nearly been completed. He plans to present it to the Budget & Financial Review Subcommittee members (Board members Goodrich and Morse) when they meet next Tuesday (11/16/21). Once the subcommittee members have provided their views on the initial draft, it will be presented to the other Select Board members for review. Board member Morse asked if recent increases in the cost of fuel, materials, etc. has been incorporated in the proposed budget. Manager Schulz said they have been taken into consideration.
- c. **Well and Pump Inspection Report.** Manager Schulz said an engineering firm conducted an inspection of the Northfield Water Department's wells and pumps and their findings were very positive. The municipal water system is running well and this is a credit to Utility Superintendent Patrick DeMasi and his crew.

- d. **Northfield Wastewater Treatment Facility (WWTF) Permit.** Manager Schulz said the State of Vermont has renewed the WWTF permit after a full inspection. The Vermont Agency of Natural Resources (ANR) in recent years has put great emphasis on reducing the amount of phosphorus being released back into waterways by treatment plants. The Northfield WWTF was able to meet this higher standard since local stormwater diversion projects have greatly reduced the amount of untreated stormwater reaching the WWTF.
- e. **Cross Brothers Dam Removal Project.** Manager Schulz said he continues to work with the Vermont Natural Resources Council (VNRC) on trying to obtain outside funding in order to finance this project. The dam removal would have many local benefits including flood mitigation, riverbed restoration, and improved fish migration.
- f. **Household Hazardous Waste Collection.** Manager Schulz said Mountain Alliance and Casella Waste Management will be holding the second of two (2) collection events this year behind the Northfield Fire Department (128 Wall Street) on Saturday, November 13, 2021, from 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. This event is open only for residents of Randolph, Braintree, Brookfield, Roxbury, and Northfield. The full list of materials that will and will not be accepted is on the municipal website and has been posted on Front Porch Forum.
- g. **Winter Parking Ban.** As stipulated in the Northfield Traffic Ordinance, the winter parking ban will start on November 15, 2021 and end on April 15, 2022. Vehicles cannot be parked on town streets between the hours of midnight and 6:00 a.m. Board member Stevens asked if this included trailers parked on the street. Manager Schulz confirmed it did.
- h. **Bellemore Road Discontinuance.** As authorized by the Select Board members, the municipality is moving forward with the process of privatizing this one-house road. This action was requested by the property owners. The required site visit will be held at 4:00 p.m. on Tuesday, December 14, 2021 and a public hearing held later that day at 7:00 p.m. in the Community Room as part of a Select Board regular meeting. All the required notifications to abutting property owners and relevant agencies will be made beforehand.

#### IX. BOARD MEMBERS' COMMENTS, CONCERNS, QUESTIONS

- a. **Labor Day Observances Committee.** Chair Maxwell noted that tomorrow night (11/10/21) the group that organizes the annual Labor Day Weekend Festivities will be meeting in the Community Room at 5:30 p.m. to discuss the future of the annual celebration. The lack of sufficient numbers of volunteers has made this problematic in recent years.
- b. **Halloween Truck or Treat.** Chair Maxwell wanted to thank the organizers and participants in this year's event on the Common. He has heard that between three and four hundred (300-400) youngsters took part in the candy distribution.
- c. **Upcoming Commemorations.** Board member Morse noted tomorrow will be the anniversary of the founding of the Marine Corps in 1775. Thursday (11/11/21) will be Veterans Day and Board member Morse wished well to all Northfield residents who served their country in uniform. The local American Legion will be holding a short commemoration on the Common starting at 11:00 a.m.

X. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (UNSCHEDULED).** There was none.

XI. **ADJOURNMENT.** Motion by Board member Morse, seconded by Board member Stevens, to adjourn. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**

The Board adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Kenneth L. McCann, Acting Clerk

An audio recording of this meeting is available in the Town Manager's Office.

These minutes were approved at the Select Board regular meeting of November 23, 2021.

## MUNICIPAL OFFICES



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51 SOUTH MAIN STREET  
NORTHFIELD, VERMONT 05663

# **TOWN OF NORTHFIELD, VERMONT TOWN SELECT BOARD SITE VISIT: BELLEMORE ROAD**

The Northfield Town Select Board will be holding a Site Visit on Bellemore Road, located off Onion River Road, on Tuesday, December 14, 2021, at 4:00 p.m.

This Site Visit is in response to the request from the sole Bellemore Road property owner to privatize ("throw up") this Class 3 Road.

A Public Hearing on this matter will be held on Tuesday, December 14, 2021, at 7:00 p.m. in the Community Room located in the Brown Public Library (93 South Main Street.)

For more information, please contact Town Manager Jeff Schulz at 802-485-9822 or at [jschulz@northfield.vt.us](mailto:jschulz@northfield.vt.us)



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### **TOWN OF NORTHFIELD, VERMONT NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING DISCONTINUANCE OF BELLEMORE ROAD**

The Northfield Town Select Board will hold a Public Hearing on Tuesday, December 14, 2021, at 7:00 p.m. in the Community Room located in the Brown Public Library (93 South Main Street) for the purpose of allowing members of the public to comment on the proposed discontinuance of Bellemore Road. This hearing may be attended in person or remotely from your computer, tablet or smartphone. The meeting link is <https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/182864885>. You also can participate by telephone by dialing (224) 501-3412 and using Access Code 182-864-885. This public hearing is in response to the request from the sole Bellemore Road property owner to privatize ("throw up") this Class 3 Road, which is located off Onion River Road. Interested members of the public are encouraged to attend. A separately warned Site Visit will be held prior to this Public Hearing.

Should you have any questions prior to this Public Hearing, please contact Town Manager Jeff Schulz at 802-485-9822 or at [jschulz@northfield.vt.us](mailto:jschulz@northfield.vt.us)

**TOWN OF NORTHFIELD, VERMONT  
SELECT BOARD REGULAR MEETING  
Minutes of December 14, 2021**

- I. ROLL CALL.** Select Board Chair K. David Maxwell, Board members Julie H. Goodrich, Nathaniel Miller, Charles Morse, and John Stevens. Also present were Town Manager Jeff Schulz, Acting Clerk Kenneth McCann, John Helfant (Police Chief), Anne Sternberg, Morgan Pierce, Lydia Petty, Bonnie Donahue, Merry Kay Shernock, Sara Lique, Paul R. Vallerand, Mike Harrigan, Kaylan Sweet, Annie Lepsky, Naomi Herring, Kierney Gaboriault, Dan Sivori, Paul Abare, Linden Polito, Kathi Tarrant, Deanna Russell, Forrest Earl Gray, Lindsay Guillette, Karen Trombly, Randy Peace, Kathleen Morrow, Cathy Terrance, Cassie Morse, Tim Swartz, Josh Sanders, Shannon Doney, Mark Fournier, Nate Poe, Britta Eberle, Amanda Zoecklein, Bianca Distano, Domenick Distano, Carolyn Stevens, and Elroy Hill.

Chair Maxwell called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Participants had the option of attending the meeting either in person or remotely through Go-to-Meeting.

- II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIENCE.** Those persons present were asked to rise and recite the Pledge of Allegiance. The remote contingent also participated as much as possible.

**III. PUBLIC HEARING**

- a. Bellemore Road Proposed Discontinuance.** Manager Schulz said the sole property owners on Bellemore Road (Anne and Paul Sternberg) have requested the road be privatized for safety reasons and other considerations. The Select Board members authorized starting the process with certified letters to abutting property owners, published notices in the newspaper, a warned site visit held earlier today, and this public hearing. Manager Schulz noted the site visit was held at 4:00 p.m. and was attended by himself, Highway Foreman Trent Tucker, and Select Board members Miller, Morse, and Stevens. Chair Maxwell and Board member Goodrich were not at today's site visit but had attended one at this location over three (3) years ago (08/28/18) when Bellemore Road was under consideration for discontinuance along with a number of other one-house roads. No action was taken at that time. Manager Schulz said this public hearing is the opportunity for members of the public to weigh in on this matter. Ms. Sternberg had nothing to add to the letter she submitted earlier this year requesting this road discontinuance. There being no other comments, the public hearing closed at 7:05 p.m. This matter also is on the agenda later as an action item.

- IV. SET/ADJUST AGENDA.** There were no changes to the posted agenda.

**V. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (SCHEDULED):**

- a. Bonnie Donahue and Lydia Petty: AARP Community Challenge Grant Project.** Ms. Donahue said she and Ms. Petty wanted to discuss the Walk Audit held earlier this summer as well as possible alternate pedestrian routes during the Main Street Bridge replacement project now scheduled for 2025. Ms. Donahue said she started working for the Vermont Agency of Transportation (VTrans) this past August but is speaking tonight as a community member only. She said the municipality was awarded a \$18,000 AARP Community Challenge Grant that was used this past summer to create a temporary pedestrian lane along Wall Street using paint and delineators to separate walking and vehicular traffic. The paint has mostly faded after several months and the delineators have been removed for the winter. There also was outreach to the businesses and residents along this route and this feedback led to the purchase of three (3) benches as well as directional and road signs (i.e. pedestrian crossing) that will be installed next spring. The pedestrian route also will be repainted and the delineators reinstalled for one additional year of use at that time. Ms. Donahue said there would be \$5,000 in remaining grant funds after these purchases and the plan is to donate this amount to the Northfield Senior Center to be used to buy exercise equipment, etc. Board member Morse was very pleased with this suggestion as well as the other good work done with the grant funds.

Ms. Petty said a Walk Audit was held on June 28, 2021 as part of the AARP grant project. There was another component to this walk related to the planned three-month closure of the Main Street Bridge in 2025. Pedestrian and vehicular traffic will have detoured as the current bridge is removed and a new one installed. The best pedestrian route has to found that will be marked with new signage, etc. The original proposal from VTrans had people walking along Wall Street to Water Street and then up the paved sidewalks on Pearl Street and then back to North Main Street by way of Vine Street. VTrans thought this route was preferable to the shorter route along the north end of Water Street to its intersection with North Main Street due to the lack of sidewalk on stretches of the road. Ms. Petty and Ms. Donahue are proposing that the shorter route be chosen provided that existing sidewalks along the road are improved and new sidewalk installed where none exist. There also is the possibility of shortening this route even more should the existing footbridge near the intersection of Water Street and Union Street be employed. However, this would require installing a safer pedestrian railroad crossing near Fernandez Hardware or perhaps creating a temporary pedestrian path near the Police Station that would connect to the footpath leading to the footbridge. This would allow pedestrians to use the gated railroad crossing on Wall Street. Board member Morse believes the railroad was contacted about improving the Fernandez Hardware crossing several years ago but nothing was done. Now that ownership of the railroad has changed hands, perhaps new outreach should be attempted. Chair Maxwell said another suggestion from community members was the installation of a temporary pedestrian bridge parallel to the Main Street Bridge. He asked if there has been any research into this possibility. Ms. Petty said they had not looked into this but it might be worth investigating. Many people living south of Main Street Bridge use it regularly as a walking route to Kenyon's Hardware Store, the Dollar General, etc. Chair Maxwell said it might be possible to have VTrans provide a temporary bridge at a reduced price. He would like Manager Schulz to look into this. Ms. Petty said that might be a good short-term solution but improving the sidewalks, etc. along the proposed pedestrian detour would yield long-term benefits. Mark Fournier asked if there ever had been any consideration of creating a pedestrian underpass near the Common that would allow people to pass under the railroad tracks. Chair Maxwell has never heard that suggestion before but asked Mr. Fournier to develop a proposal that the Select Board members could investigate further. Chair Maxwell and the other Board members then thanked Ms. Donahue and Ms. Petty for the valuable information provided tonight and for all the good work they have done with the AARP grant funds.

## VI. LIQUOR CONTROL COMMISSION

- a. **Liquor License Renewal: The Woods at Wihakowi.** Motion by Board member Morse, seconded by Board member Stevens, to approve the liquor license renewal. Manager Schulz said this application for next year has been presented earlier than normal but he has spoken with Police Chief John Helfant and there are no concerns about this establishment's application. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

## VII. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- a. **November 23, 2021 (Regular Meeting).** Motion by Board member Morse, seconded by Board member Stevens, to approve the minutes. **Motion passed 4-0-1, with Board member Goodrich abstaining.**
- b. **November 30, 2021 (Special Meeting).** Motion by Board member Morse, seconded by Board member Stevens, to approve the minutes. **Motion passed 3-0-2, with Board members Morse and Stevens abstaining.**
- c. **December 7, 2021 (Special Meeting).** Motion by Board member Morse, seconded by Board member Stevens, to approve the minutes. **Motion passed 4-0-1, with Chair Maxwell abstaining.**



**VIII. APPROVAL OF BILLS**

- a. **Approval of Warrant #11-22.** Motion by Board member Morse, seconded by Board member Stevens, to approve Warrant #11-12 in the amount of \$1,929,081.62. Board member Goodrich noted a \$3,992 charge for repairing the 2020 Western Star truck. She thought this was a lot of money to spend on a relatively new vehicle. Manager Schulz agreed and said he would check to see if any of this work (new shuttle valve, adjusted pump pressure, etc.) was covered under warranty. Board member Goodrich saw a \$4,137 payment for work on the South Main Street Sidewalk Project. She asked if this was the final payment for this project. Manager Schulz confirmed it was and said he had forwarded copies of all project invoices to VTrans in order to complete the reimbursement process. Chair Maxwell noted that of the total warrant amount, \$1,163,800 represented property taxes collected by the municipality and then forwarded to Paine Mountain School District. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
- b. **Approval of Biweekly Payroll through November 28, 2021.** Motion by Board member Morse, seconded by Board member Stevens, to approve the biweekly payroll in the amount of \$110,293.68. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

**IX. SELECT BOARD**

- a. **Bellemore Road Proposed Discontinuance.** Manager Schulz said should the Select Board members decide to privatize Bellemore Road tonight, there would be a thirty (30) day appeal period. After that, the road would be discontinued, the right-of-way revert to the property owner, and VTrans would be notified that the road would be privatized. This would result in the municipality's total amount of Class 3 Highway being reduced by Bellemore Road's length, which is one-tenth of a mile. Chair Maxwell said on his previous visit to the road, he had been concerned about possible municipal liability should our snow plows cause any roadside damage along this narrow road. Privatizing this road, as the property owners have requested, would eliminate this possibility. Motion by Board member Morse, seconded by Board member Stevens, to discontinue Bellemore Road. Board member Stevens asked if this process could be reversed should the current or future property owners reconsider this decision. Chair Maxwell said there is a process for this that would include the property owner obtaining a survey proving that the road meets our road standards. Craig Pierce is an abutting property owner who was notified of the possible road discontinuance as required by state law. He does not oppose the privatization of this road but has concerns about access to his property, which is just north of Bellemore Road along Onion River Road. He is concerned that the municipal plows will leave large snow deposits in the road that will make his property inaccessible. As this section of Onion River Road is Class 4 Highway, Mr. Pierce has maintained it himself in the past but doesn't want the situation made worse and become something he can't handle himself. Manager Schulz said he and Road Foreman Tucker would be glad to meet with Mr. Pierce on site to discuss this and make sure the status quo is maintained. Mr. Pierce thought this was a good idea. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
- b. **Stony Brook Bridge Repair Project Bids.** Manager Schulz said the bids for this project were discussed at the last regular meeting (11/23/21). Daniels Construction was the apparent low bidder at \$364,685 but the bid award was delayed due to questions about how long the bridge would be out of commission while being repaired, when the project would begin and be completed, whether there would be acceptable detours for school buses, etc. Manager Schulz reached out to Daniels Construction and they confirmed the information contained in the bid documents, i.e. the project would start in early May 2022 and be completed by mid-June 2022, the bridge would be closed to traffic for about thirty (30) days, etc. Manager Schulz also discussed the matter with the school bus company and they had no real concerns about possible route detours. Motion by Board member Miller, seconded by Board member Stevens, to award the Stony Brook Bridge Repair Project to Daniels Construction for their bid amount of \$364,685. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**



- c. Discussion of Possible Local Mask Mandate.** Chair Maxwell said Board member Miller had asked for this matter to be put on tonight's agenda due to the recent upsurge of positive COVID-19 tests in Vermont over the past few months and the increasing risk of infection due to the new omicron variant. Board member Miller confirmed his concerns and noted a recent state law (S.1) signed by Governor Phil Scott allows municipalities to approve their own face mask rules as an alternative to the previous statewide mandate. He noted the Select Board did approve a face covering resolution a year ago (11/24/20) that encouraged local businesses to request that their employees and customers wear face coverings indoors whenever practical. The resolution also imposed a mask mandate on municipal employees and also required members of the public entering municipal facilities to be masked. This resolution expired when Governor Scott lifted his State of Emergency declaration on June 15, 2021. Board member Miller now believes due to the recent upsurge, it might be a good idea to approve new local rules regarding face coverings when indoors. According to the new state law, any local rules would be in effect for forty-five (45) days and then subject to renewal for thirty (30) day periods. Board member Miller favors the wording in the COVID-19 Emergency Order approved earlier this month by the Montpelier City Council and believes this should be the model for any new mask covering resolution to be approved by the Northfield Select Board. He then read Montpelier's emergency order in its entirety, which is as follows:

**COVID-19 EMERGENCY ORDER:  
WEARING FACE COVERINGS REQUIRED INDOORS**

WHEREAS, the State of Vermont Legislature has passed S.1. giving Cities and Towns the authority to set mask-mandates for their own Communities, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) continues to recommends the use of simple cloth face coverings to slow the spread of the COVID-19 novel coronavirus and its variants, and to help prevent people who may unknowingly have the virus from transmitting it to others; and

WHEREAS, COVID-19 and its variants remain a present and continuously changing and growing health threat to residents of, and visitors to, Montpelier and a significant threat to vulnerable populations; and

WHEREAS, wearing a face covering is an important act of safety and empathy that those in Montpelier can do in an effort to protect others from an infection that may be unknowingly carried.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that this Montpelier City Council hereby issues the following COVID-19 Emergency Order pursuant to the authority granted in S.1.:

**WEARING FACE COVERINGS REQUIRED INDOORS  
INSIDE ANY BUILDING THAT IS OPEN TO THE PUBLIC  
WITHIN MONTPELIER CITY LIMITS:**

**Requirement to Wear Face Covering:**

Effective immediately, any person, whether an employee, a customer, or a visitor who enters a public or privately owned building that is open to the public must wear face coverings over their nose and mouth while inside the building- regardless of their vaccination status.

**Exceptions:**

In accordance with the past issued Vermont State Guidance, found in State of Vermont Executive Department Addendum 14 to Executive Order 01-20, masks are not recommended for strenuous outdoor activity, anyone under the age of 2, anyone with a medical condition that is complicated or irritated by a facial covering, or anyone with difficulty breathing. If anyone has a medical condition that is complicated by facial coverings like a cloth mask a face shield is an appropriate alternative and this should be worn instead of a mask. Masks may also be removed if they frustrate the essential purpose of the business.

**Posting of Requirement:**

Each building that is open to the public shall post signage at the entrance and at other appropriate locations stating that visitors are required to wear face coverings by order of the Montpelier City Council.

**Effective Period:**

As per statutes, this Order shall remain in effect for 45 days unless the Montpelier City Council amends, rescinds, or suspends this Order. The City Council will revisit this order within the 45 days to determine whether it shall be extended for an additional 30 days.

**Enforcement:**

A public list will be made available by the City of any business, company, or public facility that has been confirmed to be noncompliant with requiring masks indoors and have been notified of such noncompliance at least three (3) times. Reports of non-compliance can be directed to the City by anyone and will be investigated by the City Manager or their designees. The City will publish the list online on the City's website and printed for viewing in person at City Hall.

Motion by Board member Miller, seconded by Board member Stevens, to approve a face Coverings Resolution for the Town of Northfield based on the language contained in the City of Montpelier Emergency Order. Board member Goodrich said there was a prolonged discussion of this matter over a year ago when the local resolution was approved. She now believes a local mandate based on the Montpelier model would not be effective as there would be no way to enforce it and it would only create dissension and hostility within the community. Board member Goodrich believes mask wearing is a good way to limit the spread of COVID-19 but does not support mandating usage. Board member Morse believes the Montpelier model would have to adapted to Northfield conditions, which would include simplified language and additional exceptions for required indoors mask usage. Board member Morse offered an amendment to the motion to make the Montpelier model fit Northfield. He received an email today from a mask mandate opponent who stated mask wearing doesn't prevent the user from contracting COVID-19. Board member Morse agreed but added that proper mask usage does help limit the spread of the disease. He noted doctors and dentists wore masks in the pre-pandemic period in order to limit their exposure to possible infecting agents. Board member Morse said in some Northfield businesses you see almost no employees or customers wearing masks, which he felt was wrong given the risk of indoors contamination. He would, however, exempt restaurants, auto repair facilities, and other businesses with particular circumstances from any mandate. Board member Stevens agreed with much of what Board member Morse has said. Chair Maxwell noted that a year ago when the Select Board was debating whether to compel indoors mask wearing, he felt that a mandate made no sense if it could not be enforced. However, he did support the approved resolution that encouraged indoor mask usage. Chair Maxwell asked recently about the COVID-19 situation at Norwich University (NU). According to its online COVID-19 Dashboard, over ninety-five (95%) of its employees have been vaccinated and over ninety percent (90%) of NU students. Out of 9,557 COVID-19 tests taken during the current Fall 2021 semester, there have been seventy-five (75) positive tests, which is a positivity rate of 0.78%. According to the Vermont Department of Health, on average three (3) Northfield residents test positive for COVID-19 each week. In light of these numbers, Chair Maxwell still believes a resolution encouraging indoors mask usage makes more sense than any mandate. He then opened the floor to public comment.

Kaylan Sweet is a longtime Northfield resident who has owned and operated O'Maddi's Deli & Café on Depot Square for the past eleven (11) years. She said the COVID-19 pandemic hit her business very hard and she had to change her normal operations in order to keep going. There was much confusion in the beginning regarding how restaurants would be allowed to operate but Ms. Sweet followed the rules and only allowed take-out orders for several months. When inside dining was again permitted, she installed the mandatory signage regarding mask wearing, maintained proper social distancing, etc. However, Ms. Sweet noted the inconsistency in such requirements for restaurants as there were different rules in different states with varying levels of enforcement while some states and countries never imposed any mask wearing requirements. Ms. Sweet felt some local businesses would refuse to comply with any new mask wearing requirement. She also felt the Northfield Police Department would not be able to enforce any new mandates and, in fact, would better occupy their time on actual law enforcement activities. Ms. Sweet noted that some people now refuse to shop in a business with a mask requirement and she doesn't want Northfield businesses to lose patronage as a result. She feels very strongly that the government should not compel individuals to wear face masks against their will.

Amanda Zoecklein has lived in Northfield for four (4) years and has two (2) small children. She strongly supports a local mask mandate since Northfield has seen a surge in positive COVID-19 tests. Ms. Zoecklein noted that just over half of Northfield residents have been vaccinated, which is a lower percentage than the state overall. She understands people would like to make their own decisions regarding mask wearing but did not feel the practice was that onerous a burden given the benefits. Ms. Zoecklein said the Montpelier model has exceptions and is unenforceable but at the very least it provides individuals with the option of deciding whether or not to shop in a business where mask wearing is either required or strongly encouraged.

Annie Lepsky is a part-time Northfield resident and she feels strongly that the government should not tell people what to do with their own bodies. She also feels a mask mandate would create a slippery slope that might lead to vaccination mandates for the general public. Ms. Lepsky said in the past similar public health mandates have been used by the government to target minorities and other disadvantaged groups. She would not like to see non-compliance with mask wearing and other COVID-19 mandates become criminalized. If people want to shop only in businesses with mask mandates, they already have several options to do so. Ms. Lepsky believes a mandate would be a bad precedent and mask wearing should be encouraged but not compelled. She added Vermont is the state with the highest percentage of vaccinated residents and ending the previous statewide mask mandate was the proper reward to residents for achieving this status.

Mark Fournier feels mask mandates have had the effect of dividing communities, which often results in hostile interactions between those with differing viewpoints. He also believes the Montpelier model with its "naughty list" of non-compliant businesses was governmental overkill. Mr. Fournier said with the various variants emerging, it now appears COVID-19 will be around for some time and the decision on whether or not to wear a mask in public should be left to the individual.

Randy Peace owns and operates the Northfield Barber Shop located on Depot Square. He has spent a lot a time researching the current pandemic as well as historical ones. He agrees with Mr. Fournier that COVID-19 will be with us for some time. When customers have come into his shop in recent months, he has noted that many of those choosing to wear masks don't use them correctly (i.e. leaving the mouth and/or nose exposed) or don't wash them properly, allowing them to become unhygienic. Given this situation, Mr. Peace has decided to let his customers make their own decisions on whether or not to mask while in his establishment. He has no problem putting up a sign saying mask use is encouraged but feels a mandate would be wrong as well as unpopular in this community.

Josh Sanders served in the US Army for sixteen (16) years and now sees another form of terrorism in this community with people trying to tell others how to live and attempting to compel certain types of behavior. He felt imposing such mandates should not be a Select Board responsibility and that the Select Board members should focus instead on maintaining our roads and public utilities.

Paul R. Vallerand is a former Northfield resident as well as a past and future independent candidate for the Vermont State Senate. He is the father of a special needs child and is concerned about the long-term effects of compelled mask wearing on American youth. He cited a Brown University study that indicated a lowering of IQ scores for babies born since the pandemic began. This reasons for this are unclear but possible explanations include lack of direct non-verbal facial interaction with masked caregivers, lack of engagement with other infants, etc. Mr. Vallerand is a strong opponent of mask mandates since he feels they do much more damage than any possible benefits they might provide.

Carolyn Stevens is a longtime Northfield resident and she understands the concerns many people have about the government telling you what to do with your own body. However, she noted that it has been proven that mask wearing and social distancing have been effective in curbing the spread of COVID-19. Ms. Stevens will not shop in any store where masks are not worn by employees and customers. She also noted that we do not eliminate speed limits on our roads as unenforceable just because not all speeders are caught and punished. Ms. Stevens agreed that the fatality rate for COVID-19 is relatively low compared to other diseases but many survivors suffer long-term effects, which can include fatigue, shortness of breath, difficulty concentrating, sleep disorders, loss of taste and smell, etc. Ms. Stevens felt Northfield residents need to think more about what is good for the community as a whole rather than just focus on their own individual preferences.

Dan Sivori doesn't like the idea of maintaining and publicizing lists of non-compliant businesses as in the Montpelier model. He felt after two (2) years of the pandemic, people generally have made up their minds regarding mask wearing and no new mandates are going to change that. Mr. Sivori doesn't feel Northfield should have a mask mandate as residents already have the choice to patronize specific businesses based on whether mask wearing is compelled, encouraged, etc. on the premises.

Kathleen Morrow is a former Northfield resident and an organic farmer. She believes there is strong evidence that use of alternate medicines is much more effective than mask wearing in combatting the effects of the pandemic. Linden Polito has seen several studies regarding wearing of protective masks that indicate they are ineffective in preventing infection, etc. even when worn correctly. In fact, some medical facilities stopped using them altogether and have seen lower infection rates. Ms. Polito feels mask wearing actually causes more problems than it solves. This includes psychological damage, breathing difficulties, etc. Mask wearing should be an individual choice. Many people have medical conditions that are made worse by wearing masks and Ms. Polito doesn't feel they should be forced to explain their personal health issues whenever someone wants them to wear a mask in a public space. She further felt personal autonomy should be paramount in such matters and would like society to return to some sense of normalcy without division or coercion.

Ms. Zoecklein believes the Brown University study to which Mr. Vallerand referred has been disparaged by other researchers who felt the study's method for determining infant IQ was flawed. She also believes masks have been shown to be very effective in reducing the spread of COVID-19 when worn correctly and consistently. Ms. Zoecklein believes the number of new positive tests in Northfield each week shows the need for some local action in response.

Paul Abare said millions of Americans have served in our armed forces and many have perished in order to protect the rights of individuals. He felt mask mandates are a violation of the freedoms for which they fought. Mike Harrigan doesn't believe the Select Board members have a proper motion to approve since there is no final document on the table but just a model document from another community. Cathy Terrance's daughter is a nurse who has been vaccinated but still tested positive for COVID-19. Her daughter has to wear a mask all day, which is a twelve (12) hour shift, which she feels is very unhealthy. Her daughter-in-law also tested positive despite her vaccinations and mask wearing.

Ms. Sweet has done a lot of personal research on COVID-19 as there is much information available for those who look for it. She thinks it is unfortunate so many people are overly fearful due to what is presented by mainstream media. Ms. Sweet feels most people are done with complying and she will not put up any more COVID-19 related signs in her restaurant. She noted that schools are compensated for expenses associated with mask mandates but most businesses are not. Ms. Sweet asked if the Northfield Police department has been asked about their ability to enforce a mandate. Manager Schulz has spoken to Police Chief John Helfant and he has his own concerns about possible enforcement.

Naomi Herring asked why there isn't a medical person on hand at the local schools throughout the school day. Chair Maxwell said that was a question for the school board as the Select Board doesn't have any authority over the schools. He then called the question. Chair Maxwell then confirmed the amendment offered by Board member Morse was not adopted. Board member Morse confirmed it died for a lack of a second.  
**Motion failed 1-3-1, with Board member Miller voting in the affirmative; Board members Goodrich, Maxwell, and Morse in the negative; and Board member Stevens abstaining.**

*The meeting then went into a five (5) minute recess.*



- d. **Grand List 2021 Errors & Omissions.** Manager Schulz said the Board of Listers is asking to have a parcel revalued before the end of the calendar year deadline. The parcel is located at 429 Central Street and is owned by Norwich University. A dwelling and garage on the property was razed in February 2021 but the Listers were never formally informed of this action. The property's value has been reduced from \$225,100 to \$31,000, which will result in a \$4,000 loss of property tax revenue. Motion by Board member Morse, seconded by Board member Stephens, to approve the requested 2021 Grand List adjustment. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
- e. **Turkey Hill Farm Lease Agreement.** Manager Schulz said a revised lease agreement has been prepared for Select Board approval. As this matter involves contract negotiations, it will be discussed later in the meeting in executive session.
- f. **Authorize Select Board Chair to Review and Approve Future Payroll and Operating Expenses through December 2021 [24 V.S.A. §961(b)].** As the Select Board will be cancelling their next regular meeting (12/28/21) due to the holiday season, they need to take action that will allow Chair Maxwell to approve the next warrant, biweekly payroll, etc. Motion by Board member Goodrich, seconded by Board member Morse, to authorize Chair Maxwell to review and approve future payroll and operating expenses through December 2021. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

#### X. TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

- a. **Zoning Regulations Update.** Manager Schulz announced that the Planning Commission applied for and received a \$21,000 grant. The funds will be used to hire a consultant to assist with the updating of local zoning regulations to better conform with state law and the Northfield Town Plan that was adopted two (2) years ago. The Planning Commission Chair was very pleased with this development as it will greatly expedite the revision process.
- b. **Proposed FY 2022/2023 Town Budget.** Manager Schulz noted the next budget meeting will be held this coming Thursday (12/16/21) at 6:00 p.m. in the Community Room. A discussion of the Ambulance Service budget has been added to the original agenda as the Ambulance Chief was unable to attend an earlier meeting.
- c. **Water Main Replacement Project.** Manager Schulz said at the most recent Joint Meeting of the Utility Commissions (12/06/21), there was a discussion of using state grant funds to replace the one hundred (100) plus year water mains located along Main Street. The Vermont Agency of Natural Resources (ANR) is very willing to provide funds for such projects so it would be best to develop engineering plans as soon as possible so that the project is "shovel ready" when funding becomes available. An engineering agreement with the Dufresne Group needs to be drafted so that the municipality can apply for a state grant that would cover half of the project's engineering costs.
- d. **Vermont Council on Rural Development (VCRD) Community Visit.** At a previous meeting, there was the suggestion that Manager Schulz should contact VCRD to schedule another Community Visit to Northfield. The last one held here was twenty (20) years ago. Manager Schulz has made this outreach and a VCRD representative will attend a January 2022 Select Board meeting to discuss the process. Due to the pandemic, VCRD's schedule is rather full at the moment but they might be able to provide a truncated community visit in the near future.

#### XI. BOARD MEMBERS' COMMENTS, CONCERNS, QUESTIONS

- a. **American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Funds.** Board member Stevens noted at the last regular meeting (11/23/21) Merry Kay Shernock offered to spearhead the process of holding a number of community gatherings in order to obtain public feedback on how the ARPA funds Northfield will be receiving should be spent. He asked if there has been any further progress on this. Chair Maxwell said he has been preoccupied with other matters recently but will reach out to Ms. Shernock regarding the next steps to be taken.
- b. **Christmas on the Common.** Chair Maxwell wanted to thank the members of the Northfield Activity Group for last Friday night's holiday celebration on the Common. There was carol singing along with a visit from Santa Claus and his elf. The tree was donated by Paul Abare and Chair Maxwell wanted to thank him for his generosity.

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**XII. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (UNSCHEDULED)**

- a. **Elroy Hill: Mask Mandate Discussion and ARPA Funds.** Mr. Hill wanted to thank the Select Board members for the good job done in allowing tonight's discussion regarding a possible local mask mandate. He was pleased that everyone who wanted to speak was allowed the opportunity. Mr. Hill also believes that a good use of ARPA funds would be to extend municipal sewerlines southward along Vermont Route 12A in order to protect the Well Field from possible contamination. Chair Maxwell said quite a few people also have suggested this would be a prudent use of these funds.

**XIII. EXECUTIVE SESSION.** Motion by Board member Morse, seconded by Board member Stevens, to go into executive session, in accordance with 1 VSA 313 (a)(1), in order to discuss two (2) separate contract negotiations with Manager Schulz present. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

The Board went into executive session at 9:35 p.m.

Motion by Board member Morse, seconded by Board member Stevens, to come out of executive session. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

The Board came out of executive session at 10:15 p.m.

Motion by Board member Morse, seconded by Board member Stevens, to authorize Manager Schulz to sign the lease agreement with Turkey Hill Maple. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

**XIV. ADJOURNMENT.** Motion by Board member Morse, seconded by Board member Stevens, to adjourn. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

The Board adjourned at 10:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Kenneth L. McCann, Acting Clerk

An audio recording of this meeting is available in the Town Manager's Office.

These minutes were revised and approved at the Select Board regular meeting of January 11, 2022.