

**MINUTES OF THE
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING
VILLAGE OF NORTHFIELD
TUESDAY, June 20, 2023**

The Committee of the Whole meeting was called to order by Village President Greg Lungmus on Tuesday, June 20, 2023, at 5:30 p.m. Village Clerk Stacy Sigman called the roll as follows:

Committee Members Present:

Trustee Todd Fowler
Trustee Barnaby Dinges
Trustee Tom Whittaker
Trustee Matt Galin
Trustee Tracey Mendrek
Trustee Charles Orth

Absent:

President Greg Lungmus

Others Present:

Village Manager Stacy Sigman, Director of Administrative Services Melissa Jewett, and Village Attorney Buzz Hill.

Approval of May 16, 2023 Report of Proceedings

Trustee Fowler made a motion, seconded by Trustee Dinges to approve the May 16, 2023 Report of Proceedings. Approval was unanimous.

Discussion on proposed wayfinding signage locations

Trustee Dinges and Trustee Mendrek identified the following potential sites for Phase 1 of the wayfinding sign project:

- 1) A “Welcome to Downtown Northfield” sign could be placed after crossing the bridge going west over the Edens Expressway on Willow Road on the north side located between the existing stoplight sign and the no-left turn sign or be placed approximately 30 feet down on the same side before the brick sidewalk leading into the public parking lot. Both of these locations would require a new pole or some sort of fixture. A Northfield banner could also be placed along the black iron fence on the south side of the public parking lot facing Willow Road.
- 2) A “Welcome to Downtown Northfield” sign could be placed on an existing Village post on the west side of Central at Cherry Street.
- 3) A “Welcome to Downtown Northfield” sign could be placed on an existing Village post on the south side of Willow directly before the entrance to Duncan and North Shore Kitchen & Bath or on the existing Village post just after this entrance.
- 4) A “Welcome to Downtown Northfield” sign could be placed on an existing Village post on the east side of Happ Road across from Shred 415 or on an existing Village post on the east side of Happ Road across from Northfield Square. However, these would need to be taken down temporarily during the Happ Road construction project.

Trustee Mendrek stated that these proposed locations would advertise that one was actually in Northfield's business center. This signage would be somewhat different than what was previously reviewed at earlier Committee of the Whole meetings. To gain approval from Cook County or IDOT, updated sign designs would need to be created.

Trustee Dinges remarked that installation of the proposed sign going west over the Edens Expressway on Willow Road on the north side after the bridge could be the most complex since there are numerous other signs presently there. The other three proposed locations have existing Village posts so they would be more cost-efficient. He noted that if the signs would be vertical in direction, it could limit the verbiage to Northfield Downtown versus Welcome to Downtown Northfield. He noted that a big Northfield sign could also possibly be placed on the black iron fence on the south side of the public parking lot facing Willow Road. He stated that the goal was to start with signs directing people to the downtown and in the future create additional wayfinding signs for details such as parking.

President Lungmus stated that he did not recall Welcome to Downtown Northfield signs being contemplated at earlier meetings, but rather signs with arrows directing to Village Hall and parking. Trustee Mendrek replied that he was correct. She stated that with the upcoming activity on Happ Road and the roundabout, it was premature to create those types of wayfinding signs, such as one with a direction towards a parking lot. Trustee Mendrek stressed that nothing was written in stone regarding the language on the four proposed signs and they were seeking the Board's direction. She remarked that there was no monument sign from the east into Northfield but this could be hard to position due to the forest preserve land. She stated that the four proposed signs seemed like a good start to the signage project.

President Lungmus inquired about what type of signage would possibly be placed on the black iron fence on the south side of the public parking lot facing Willow Road. Trustee Mendrek replied that this had not been previously contemplated but as they walked around, they believed it could be a place for an identity banner or something specific since she understood this lot to be the Village's property. President Lungmus noted that the two signs on Willow Road would need approval from IDOT and two would need approval from Cook County. Village Manager Sigman stressed that the parking lot was owned by Cook County and the Village leased from them, so approval would be needed by the County to place any signage on the fence.

Trustee Fowler stated that going eastbound on Willow Road in Winnetka, subtle directional signs were present pointing to the downtown. He believed that directional signage was also being contemplated on Winnetka Avenue and asked if this was being pulled due to costs. Trustee Dinges replied this would still be in the plans and none would be excluded, but due to costs, only four signs were being proposed at this time.

Village Manager Sigman stressed that a package with the exact location, sign design, and sizes would need to be submitted to IDOT and Cook County before a permit would be issued.

Trustee Mendrek stated that she and Trustee Dinges would look at the sign designs that were contemplated at earlier Committee of the Whole meetings to see if the graphics could be slightly revised to include "Northfield" and "Downtown", while simultaneously keeping it at the

budgeted cost for their suggested locations. She stressed that they would compile a package to present to the Board before submitting anything to IDOT and Cook County.

Discussion on the water system resident portal

Finance Director Morley noted that in the FY2023/24 budget, funding was included to implement a new customer water portal. The amount budgeted was based on the estimate provided in March by Core & Main. After the Village's budget was passed, their representative informed the Village that the company had decided to move to a different customer portal that is now more expensive. The representative from Core & Main has offered the Village the following two options:

- Option 1. Since the Village was previously provided a quote for the Sensus Analytics product, Core & Main will honor that quote and allow the Village to move to that system under the original five-year contract proposed, which is \$56,826. They will support the product during that term but will not do any system improvements. After the five-year term, the Village would have to move over to the newer platform and pay for the second integration, portal setup, and training.
- Option 2. The Village would start with the new system at an additional \$9,440/fiscal year. That would also be a five-year contract and would have a total cost of \$88,810. This is an increase of \$31,984 or 56% over what was anticipated. The company will fully support this new product and will also be investing resources into making product improvements.

Finance Director Morley stated that at this point, the Village was under budget for the AMI project by approximately \$180,000.

President Lungmus asked how often the Finance Department fields calls from residents inquiring about a water bill that seems higher than normal. Finance Director Morley replied that they get calls like this fairly regularly. President Lungmus said that he had heard in Glencoe that only 3% of their residents use their water portal system. Village Manager Sigman noted that communities in the area have said that very few residents register with their water portal systems. She noted that it would be important to educate Northfield residents regarding the benefits of signing up for the system so they can access this data to be aware of leaks or unusual water usage.

Trustee Mendrek stated that the water portal system is a great asset to offer to the community and an educational tool for the Village. She noted there is a subset of residents that are interested in Green initiatives and this can be a water conservation tool for people. She believed the Village should go forward with the system.

Trustee Dinges noted that he would be a user of the system. He asked if the community should be polled about this because he did not know what people think about it. He thought if the Village went ahead with it, there should be a lot of marketing surrounding it so residents understand how useful it is. President Lungmus noted that the newsletter would be a great opportunity to communicate and educate the residents about the water portal system. President Lungmus was concerned that a simple poll might not be the best way to convey residents' views since there might not be a full understanding.

Trustee Mendrek inquired if it would be beneficial for interested residents to come in and watch a demonstration of the system to better understand its capabilities and benefits.

Trustee Orth was in favor of the system stating it was a valuable tool for residents to monitor their water usage, whether they are home or away.

Trustee Galin supported the system and was in favor of going with the newer, upgraded system that would be supported by Core & Main.

President Lungmus stated that he was in favor of the cheaper system which is \$22,000 less and then look at analytics to see if residents are using it. He noted that he wanted to move forward with the system but could go either way with Option 1 or 2.

Finance Director Morley stressed that Option 1 would only be available for 5 years and there would be conversion costs at that time to move over to Option 2.

Trustee Fowler remarked that there could be training videos for the water portal system that could be placed on the Village's website to show its functionality and usefulness.

Resident Gavin Blunt asked why spend a dime. He believed that the Village could view through their software if a large water issue occurred. He noted that he did not want another app on his phone. He inquired with the new meters if the Village could remotely shut off the water.

Finance Director Morley replied that some of the meters allow this capability. Village Manager Sigman noted that the vast majority of the meters do not have this capability because it would have been a substantial cost increase to the Village.

Trustee Mendrek asked if there was any cancellation term on the contract. She questioned if the Village had this for 2 years and only 5 people signed up, could it be canceled?

Resident Gavin Blunt asked if the software company charged a flat fee or charged per resident. President Lungmus replied that the Village had inquired about a discount and the reply had been no.

President Lungmus noted that staff was asked to investigate if a two-year contract was available with Option 2 and/or what the penalty would be for the early termination of a 5-year contract. If the contract is not cancelable, the discussion will be brought back to the Board for discussion at an upcoming Committee of the Whole meeting.

Other Business

Trustee Orth made a motion, seconded by Trustee Galin to adjourn the meeting.

AYES: Fowler NAYS: 0 ABSTAIN: 0 ABSENT:
 Dinges
 Whittaker
 Galin

Mendrek
Orth

The meeting adjourned at 6:42 PM.