

**MINUTES OF THE  
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING  
VILLAGE OF NORTHFIELD  
TUESDAY, June 21, 2022**

The Committee of the Whole meeting was called to order by Village President Greg Lungmus on Tuesday, June 21, 2022, at 5:30 PM. Village Clerk Stacy Sigman called the roll as follows:

Committee Members Present:

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

Absent:

Trustee Matt Galin

President Greg Lungmus

Others Present:

Village Attorney Buzz Hill

**Approval of the May 17, 2022 Report of Proceedings**

Trustee Whittaker made a motion, seconded by Trustee Orth to approve the May 17, 2022 Report of Proceedings. Approval was unanimous.

**Review and discussion on the Waste Management contract**

Village Manager Sigman stated that Waste Management has been the exclusive waste hauler in the Village of Northfield for residential and commercial waste for over 35 years. Periodically that work has been put out to bid, and each time, Waste Management has successfully been the lowest bidder. Through those bidding processes it has been apparent that Northfield is a difficult community to service because of the small size; numerous narrow private streets that cannot accommodate standard waste hauling equipment; and the numerous a la carte options that the community has come to enjoy. Their knowledge of these unique characteristics seems to have given Waste Management a competitive advantage which has worked in the Village's favor. However, over the past two years, market pressures have continued to rise, and waste hauling contractors have started to change how they do business. They are working to simplify operations to reduce costs. Items like twice-a-week pick-ups, back door pick-ups, unlimited garbage, and recycling volumes, owning vs rental of bins, and free municipal services are being either phased out or the costs associated with them have dramatically increased. Even keeping the current collection days may cause some vendors not to respond to a bid. The waste management business is increasingly becoming more automated.

In 2015, when the Village last went to bid (the bid before that was 14 years earlier) only three companies responded: Waste Management, Groot, and Lakeshore. Those three companies remain the only ones likely to consider servicing Northfield. Other companies exist, but because

Northfield does not have its own disposal site, they would probably not be able to service us.

Village Manager Sigman noted that residential and commercial waste business has always been a highly specialized and rapidly changing area. COVID and associated supply chain issues have exacerbated the situation. Since COVID, Waste Management has approached the Village five times requesting financial enhancements to the existing contract that Village Attorney Hill and his team have had to fight. Northfield's existing contract with Waste Management is one of the most a la carte out there. The current cost for once-a-week garbage pickup, which is the most common in Northfield, is \$18.14/month and the average cost of new contracts in the area for this service is \$25.01/month. In addition, residents receive free Christmas tree collection, unlimited garbage, unlimited yard waste, 1 bulk item per week, "at your door" service for home-generated special hazardous materials (paint cans, motor oil, batteries, light bulbs, chemicals, needles, and electronics), and free back door pick up for handicapped individuals. The Village also receives free collection at all municipal facilities (Village Hall, Library/Post Office, and Public Works); port-o-lets, sinks, recycling carts for the 4th of July, annual booklets, dead animal carcass removal, and the ability for our teams to use their landfill and transfer sites at their same rate.

As in the past, if/when Northfield goes out to bid, a waste specialist will need to be retained to assist in the process. In assessing Northfield's current contract, Village Manager Sigman spoke to Walter Willis, the executive director of the Solid Waste Agency of Lake County, who has assisted Northfield in the past. Willis evaluated the current contract terms and compared them to numerous bids and negotiated contracts that he has handled over the past few years. Based on the very favorable terms Northfield has in their contract and the very poor and very volatile market conditions, he strongly discouraged going out to bid this year. In addition, Willis mentioned that Waste Management has not been competitive in a single bid he has seen, so Northfield likely would end up with a different vendor. The lead time necessary to change vendors has also escalated; going from a transition time frame of 2-3 months to 6-9 months, depending on whether additional rolling stock is needed.

The typical length of a waste hauling contract is seven (7) years with options to extend. Northfield's current contract is for seven (7) years with up to an additional five (5) one-year extensions. The initial term of this 2016 contract expires on April 30, 2023, but the contract contains a provision that states, "At the Municipalities sole discretion, this Solid Waste Service Agreement can be extended for one year periods up to five (5) additional calendar years."

Trustee Whittaker inquired if Lakeshore had been purchased by Waste Management.

Village Manager Sigman replied that she believed that Lakeshore had won several bids in the area and had not been purchased.

Village Manager Sigman remarked that if Northfield went out to bid, residents would likely have to change their days of the week for garbage pickup.

President Lungmus noted that Waste Management provides great services to the residents at a very competitive rate and sees no reason to change and bid this out. He noted that in 2028 when the extensions of the current Waste Management contract end, it could be challenging for the Board

at that time because the costs will go up and the services will decline.

Trustee Whittaker stated that a new waste hauler would provide fewer services and eliminate things such as twice-a-week pickup.

Trustee Dinges inquired if there is anything that can be done between now and 2028 when the extensions of the current Waste Management contract end to better position the Village. He asked if there was a good time to renegotiate.

Village Manager Sigman replied that it is very difficult to switch waste vendors and Waste Management has not been open to any type of negotiation in the past. She stated that Trustee Dinges was correct that the Village should keep a close watch on this contract. She noted that Waste Management wants out of this contract and will not be happy about any extensions. Because of this, she will be working closely with the Village Attorney and be vigilant with these contract extensions.

Trustee Dinges stated that it is important to communicate to residents what a good deal they currently have with Waste Management and their services.

Village Manager Sigman noted that the recycling arena could impact waste vendor costs in the future. In the past, waste haulers made a lot of money from recycling by selling it to China but then China stopped taking it, resulting in recycling becoming a huge cost. Recycling is changing again as different mandates are being placed on manufacturers regarding the percentage of recycling materials specified to comprise products. This could result in pricing changes that could benefit markets but anything labor-based will continue to be a challenge.

Currently, the Waste Management contract has a minimum of 2% and a maximum of a 3.5% increase based on CPI-U. In new contracts, this is increasing to 4% and even up to 5%.

The Board supported extending the current Waste Management contract for one year. Village Manager Sigman stated that this contract extension would be brought back to the Board in July or August. She also received confirmation from the Village Attorney that this should be brought to the Board for review annually for the next five years.

### **Review and discussion of the Dorina Drive right of way vacation**

Village Attorney Hill remarked that he and Village Manager Sigman met on March 10, 2022, with Mr. John Metropoulos, the Treasurer of the Dorina Drive Homeowner's Association. Mr. Metropoulos inquired about the process of having the Village of Northfield take over the ownership and maintenance of the entire Dorina Drive roadway. He also asked for the rationale behind the northern half of that portion of Dorina Drive that passes in front of 2301 Dorina Drive and 2311 Dorina Drive being a "dedicated Village street", while the entire rest of Dorina Drive is a private roadway. The Dorina Drive Homeowner's Association believed the Village should pay for part of the street maintenance of Dorina Drive.

Village Attorney Hill explained that the Village Board has an established policy for transforming private infrastructure improvements into public improvements. He explained that the policy states that the Village will accept the dedication of infrastructure improvements only if the improvements in question are brought up to Village Code standards prior to dedication. He noted that this can be a very expensive process for those seeking to have the Village take over infrastructure improvements and all such expenses would be borne by the homeowners.

Village Attorney Hill explained that the portion of the Dorina Drive roadway at 2301 and 2311 Dorina Drive that was paved over the Village right of way had never been dedicated to the Village and therefore it is NOT a public street. The Village does not have ownership of the street pavement but rather the property underneath. He and staff recommended that the dedicated right of way adjacent to 2301 Dorina Drive and 2311 Dorina Drive be vacated, so the ownership would then pass to the owners of those properties.

Village Manager Sigman stated that this would end the confusion as to the ownership of the roadway improvement, especially for these two homeowners at 2301 and 2311 Dorina Drive.

Trustee Mendrek inquired about the opinion of those in the Dorina Drive Homeowner's Association.

Village Attorney Hill replied that the Dorina Drive Homeowner's Association understood that the Village was not going to provide any help with the maintenance of Dorina Drive.

The Board supported the vacation. A legal plat of vacation will be prepared. It was explained that the Village's ability to vacate right of way is absolute under Illinois law. The homeowners will be notified in near future about the Dorina Drive right of way vacation. Village Attorney Hill anticipated that this would be brought back to the Village Board for final consideration at the August meeting.

### **Other Business**

Trustee Mendrek asked if there were any updates on the board room renovation project. Village Manager Sigman said the Village had retained a local company that does interior design work that has brought in lighting, carpet, acoustic, furniture, and resale furniture consultants, as well as carpenters. There will be a meeting this Thursday to show their preliminary plans. The goals are to: a. get rid of the visual noise, b. improve the acoustics and lighting, c. re-purpose and improve the existing IT, d. update the furniture, e. add a dais and a wider podium, and; f. give the room an overall refreshed look; all at a minimal cost. Once a completed plan is in place, it will be brought back to the Board at a Committee of the Whole meeting for review.

President Lungmus asked if the Board had an opinion on whether the room should be more contemporary or traditional in design. Trustee Mendrek responded that it should be contemporary. Trustee Fowler replied that due to the ceiling and lighting that the room should be more contemporary. Trustee Dinges inquired about how the walls would be changed. Village Manager Sigman said the plan was to simplify the walls, deleting the blue sound panels and the orange and wooden slats. Trustee Mendrek noted that a brighter room will be key. Village

Manager Sigman said there were limitations because of budget constraints and the fact that the room was not originally built to be a boardroom. It was built to house fire trucks.

Trustee Mendrek asked if the technology contemplated a person participating in a meeting remotely and whether any municipalities were doing this today. Village Manager Sigman responded that this was a possibility in the future but it was not the focus of the renovation. She stressed that any enhanced technology comes at an expense.

Trustee Dinges inquired if there were any updates on the downtown sign study. Village Manager Sigman said that there were none but she had a consultant in mind to get a proposal. President Lungmus noted that Trustee Dinges had championed more directional signs and he thought the Happ Road Project provided a good opportunity to enhance signage through the business district but it should have a consistent look. Trustee Orth believed that Willow Road is also a good place for these directional signs and recommended coming up with a sign design sooner rather than later and that it be carried over to Happ Road.

**Public Comment**

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

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

The meeting adjourned at 6:26 PM.