

**REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS
OF THE
REGULAR BOARD MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES
OF THE VILLAGE OF NORTHFIELD
TUESDAY, July 18, 2023**

As provided by public notice, the Village Board of the Village of Northfield met in the Council Chambers of the Village Hall immediately following the Public Hearing on Tuesday, July 18, 2023, for the Regular Board meeting. The meeting was called to order by President Greg Lungmus at 7:10 PM. The Village Clerk took the roll call.

PRESENT: President Greg Lungmus

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

ABSENT:

ALSO PRESENT: Attorney Buzz Hill

CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS

Village President asked the Clerk to read the Consent Agenda items into the record. Those were reported as follows:

1. Approve the Report of Proceedings from the June 20, 2023, June 26, 2023, and July 10, 2023 Village Board meetings
2. Bills and Disbursements from June 1, 2023 to June 30, 2023, in the amount of \$ 662,837.89
3. Consideration of an updated Intergovernmental Agreement to provide for the Village's continued participation in the Mutual Aid Box Alarm System (MABAS)
4. Appointments:
 - A. Approval of a resolution appointing Holly Fabbri as Village Clerk for the remainder of 2023.
 - B. Approval of a resolution appointing Kathleen Morley as Deputy Village Clerk for the remainder of 2023.
 - C. Approval of a resolution appointing Steve Noble as Acting Village Manager

Trustee Orth made a motion, seconded by Trustee Fowler to approve Consent Agenda items 1 through 4.

President Lungmus asked if there were any Board members who wanted to comment on this matter.

President Lungmus asked if any member of the public wanted to comment on this matter. There was none.

President Lungmus requested a roll call vote to approve the consent agenda.

AYES: Fowler	NAYS:	ABSTAIN:	ABSENT:
Dinges			
Whittaker			
Galín			
Mendrek			
Orth			

CONSIDERATION OF A RESOLUTION APPROVING THE AGREEMENTS WITH STACY SIGMAN TO SERVE AS THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF SPECIAL PROJECTS THROUGH MAY 1, 2025

President Lungmus noted that this Resolution approves a settlement agreement and a new employment agreement for Stacy Sigman. Adoption of the resolution will resolve all issues, for all time and all persons, litigation-related and otherwise, with respect to Ms. Sigman’s employment with the Village of Northfield. The agreement replaces her previous employment agreement but retains Ms. Sigman as the Executive Director of Special Projects for the same length of time and the same compensation as her existing agreement.

Trustee Whittaker made a motion, seconded by Trustee Mendrek, to adopt a resolution approving the agreements with Stacy Sigman to resolve all disputes between or among the parties and for Ms. Sigman to serve as the Executive Director of Special Projects through May 1, 2025.

Village Attorney Hill stated that the proposed resolution approves an employment agreement with Stacy Sigman. The resolution requires and allows her to serve out the remainder of her existing employment term, keeping her current compensation package intact but under a new title as Executive Director of Special Projects. The new employment agreement also includes a supplement fully executed by Ms. Sigman that the resolution of each and all issues involving Ms. Sigman’s employment by the Village are completely and for all time resolved. The essential terms of this resolution were stated by Trustee Mendrek at a Special Meeting held on July 10, 2023. He noted that he was not privy to the drafting of this resolution or the documents included with it. He was made aware that the final version was not delivered to the Board until that afternoon. He stated that he trusted the work of the Board’s Special Counsel and

that the documents do not deviate from the terms that were iterated by Trustee Mendrek in Open Session last week. He reminded the Board and the public that under the Illinois Freedom of Information Act, any agreement contemplated by this resolution can be examined by the public. He reminded the Board that upon passage, this resolution becomes a final document.

President Lungmus stated that this was a sad day for the Village of Northfield because they were losing an important leader in Stacy Sigman. He noted that Ms. Sigman had given 25 years of her life to the betterment of the Village and he was fortunate to work with her because she had the highest level of professionalism of anyone he had ever worked with in his career. He said that her devotion to the Village and her work ethic are remarkable. He stated that Ms. Sigman's reputation in the region and among her peers was second to none and stressed that it had been an honor to work with Stacy Sigman. He said that in her new role, she can help the Village with some complex projects such as the Happ Road reconstruction, the potential sale of the Winnetka-Northfield Public Library, and numerous other projects.

President Lungmus pledged to work with the Board going forward for the betterment of the Village. He noted the Board had been divided over the last six months but he was going to work to remedy that so they could put the past behind them.

Trustee Fowler stressed that he felt encouraged after last Monday's meeting on what the Board was able to accomplish. The Board recognized that they need to respect everyone's views and voice and work collectively, not individually, to move forward. He noted that the loss of Stacy Sigman on a permanent basis would have been most unfortunate. He emphasized that he wanted the public to know that so that there was no misunderstanding.

Trustee Orth stated that this was the Board's plan and he believes that the Board is committed to coming together. He stated that he feels it is time has come to stop the negativity and move forward. He emphasized that it is time to "knock it off" with regard to the petitions, comments, and negativity. He said that they had agreed as a Board not to talk to the press but to work together and move forward. He thought the public needs to understand that they do not know all of the other issues the Board has been working on and the depth of work involved as a trustee. He emphasized that the Board does not get paid for any of their work. He said the negative people know who they are, need to understand that the Board is pledging to move forward. He was hopeful the Board could work together to pick the next Village Manager.

President Lungmus asked if there were any Board members who wanted to comment on this matter.

President Lungmus asked if any member of the public wanted to comment on this matter. There was none.

President Lungmus requested a roll call vote to approve a resolution approving the agreements with Stacy Sigman to serve as the Executive Director of Special Projects through May 1, 2025.

AYES: Fowler NAYS: 0 ABSTAIN: ABSENT:

Dinges
Whittaker
Galín
Mendrek
Orth
Lungmus

CONSIDERATION OF A CHANGE OF ROOFING MATERIAL FROM THE PRIOR CEDAR SHAKE TO A SYNTHETIC SHAKE MATERIAL FOR THE COMMERCIAL CENTER AT 300-310 HAPP ROAD

Trustee Orth made a motion, seconded by Trustee Fowler, to consider a change in roofing material from the prior requirement of a cedar shake to a synthetic shake material for the commercial center at 300-310 Happ Road

Community Development Director Gutierrez noted that staff sent a property maintenance violation notice to the owners of the shopping center at 300-310 Happ Road for various items including the poor condition of the building's roof. In response, the owners indicated that they wished to replace the original cedar shake roofing material with a synthetic shake material. The owners will also be replacing or repairing the trim and rusted vents on the roof. This is the same type of synthetic shingle approved by the Village for the other buildings in the Village Center including the Northview Bank and Trust (Wintrust) building at 1852 Willow Road and the Walgreens building at 1825 Willow Road. The original cedar shakes were specified in the original 1987 PUD ordinance, so the requested change requires Village Board approval.

President Lungmus asked if there were any Board members who wanted to comment on this matter.

President Lungmus asked if any member of the public wanted to comment on this matter.

Resident Ariel Hofer, noted she was a tenant at the property and asked if there was a representative of the building's owner in attendance. Gutierrez replied that their contractor was at the meeting but no owner representative. Ariel Hofer said they had experienced a lot of infrastructure issues at the property and noted there were many issues with this building. She said as tenants, they did not know they were addressing the roof issue and had been in constant communication asking what they could do to improve all of the infrastructure issues. She said before addressing the roof issue, they should address the space between the drop ceilings of all the business tenants and the roof which houses the HVAC access point. She noted that it was extremely dangerous. She emphasized the dire circumstances of the entire property and the need for an in-depth building inspection.

President Lungmus requested a roll call vote to approve a change in roofing material from the prior cedar shake to a synthetic shake material for the commercial center at 300-310 Happ Road

AYES: Fowler
Dinges

NAYS: 0

ABSTAIN:

ABSENT:

Whittaker
Galín
Mendrek
Orth

PUBLIC COMMENT

Resident Beverly Smith noted that she was chair of the Village's caucus. She asked that the following be respectfully submitted on the record.

"We are addressing you on behalf of the Northfield Village Caucus. The Caucus appreciates that Board has brought some closure to the events over the last months. Last week the Caucus held a special meeting for the purpose of preparing some recommendations to the Board based on the recent events. While the main responsibility of the Caucus is to select candidates for the Village Board, the Caucus does have other responsibilities to the community pursuant to our bylaws. As you may know, the Caucus is currently working on a survey to solicit the views of the community and the Caucus also has a duty to take a position on serious issues impacting the community.

Based on the foregoing and feedback the Caucus members have received, the Caucus has several items that we are recommending the Board seriously consider.

- Training - The Caucus recommends training for all Board Members. It is our understanding that the Board may already be planning to complete training. The Caucus recommends that part of such training should include team and relationship building as well as technical training to more closely understand the scope of duties and responsibilities of the Board and its members
- Board Meeting Notice - Legislative Management. As a result of the recent additional Board meetings and community interest in such Board meetings, the public has expressed challenges regarding notice of Board meetings. To ensure that residents with a desire to participate in meetings have notice of upcoming meetings as soon as possible, the Caucus recommends the implementation of a Legislative Management System for meeting notices, agendas, and minutes. This system should include an automatic notification system and/or list serve for meeting notices. The process of simply posting meetings on the website is insufficient given current technology.
- Meeting Video and Audio - At several meetings, there was concern that the sound system in the new Board room was unsatisfactory rendering it difficult to hear the speakers. We are confident this can be corrected since the equipment is new.

In addition, the Caucus requests that all Board meetings be live-streamed. While audio recordings are now available on the website, it can be difficult to determine who is speaking and evaluate body language and non-verbal reactions. Live-streaming is the standard for meetings in this and other communities. As you may know, the District 29 School Board currently live-streams its meetings.

- Board Committee Structure - The Caucus recommends that the Board consider a change to the committee structure of the Board. Most village boards have standing committees with each trustee appointed as chair of one of them. Two board members serve on each committee along with the Chair. These standing committees are typically Land use, Judiciary, Municipal Services, Public Safety, Administration and Finance. After each election, the assignments are rotated. Staff prepares materials that are presented by the Chair of reporting committee at Board meetings. If an issue arises, it can quickly be assigned to the appropriate committee.
- Succession Planning and Staffing Level Evaluation - We advise the Board to quickly start engaging in succession planning for key Village staff roles. In addition, recent events have demonstrated the difficulties of understaffing and operating with a "lean" staff and the Caucus therefore recommends evaluation of the staffing levels for current and future needs.
- Recall - As a home rule community the Village could amend its code to include referendum and recall procedures as has been suggested at some Board meetings. The Caucus now recommends that the Board evaluate whether such an amendment is necessary.
- Selection of New Village Manager - The Caucus recommends that the Board convene a committee consisting of at least three Trustees and several members of the public in the search for a new Village Manager. The inclusion of members of the public in government roles also has precedent in our Village. District 29 has utilized it when searching for candidates for the principal role.
- Village Board Vacancy - In the event that there is a vacancy on the Village Board, in advance of an election, the Caucus expects that the Village Board will refer the selection to the Caucus for a recommendation of the most qualified person.”

President Lungmus replied that the Board is working on videotaping meetings. He noted that the Boardroom was the old firehouse. The design does not make for ideal acoustics, but there will be continued efforts to improve them. He said that he asked the Village Attorney to look into the process of having recall procedures. He noted that it might require referendums and be a lengthy process. He noted the Board was going to engage with someone through the Illinois Municipal League to mentor them.

Stacy Sigman noted that Melissa Jewett would start the research on video recording when she returned from maternity leave in late August and then bring options to a Committee of the Whole meeting and finish the update on the Village website.

Resident Anne Peterson noted that Trustee Orth’s chastisement of Village residents was shocking to her and felt that the training he will be receiving would remind him that he was not a volunteer but an elected official whom the public holds accountable. She noted that the public will fill out as many petitions as they like as well as letters, emails, and comments; and they will not be told to “knock it off”. She thought that Trustee Orth needed to rethink how he

communicates with people. She said that we as residents were reacting to the Board's behavior because they thought it had become an emergency and they will continue to act in any way they please regarding the Board's activities.

Trustee Orth replied that the "knock-it-off" part was in reply to what had happened in the last day or two when they had worked very hard to bring closure and move forward. He apologized and noted those people know who they are, whether they are present or not. He said they could write petitions or do whatever because they have the right but it needs to be civilized and not attack people, but issues.

Resident Anne Peterson replied that an elected official has a responsibility to listen no matter what anybody is saying. She thought Charlie Orth might need to pause a beat before telling people to "knock it off" and understand the Board's role. She said the public was simply responding to the Board's behavior and it is now the Board's responsibility to help the public heal. She said the public needs to see improved behavior from every one of the trustees in order to do that and that should be their goal right now.

Administration

Village Manager Sigman had no comments.

Community Development Department & Building Department

Community Development Director Gutierrez said The Zoning Board of Appeals on July 12th approved a rear yard variation for 77 Brandon Rd. On August 2nd, they are scheduled to review a side yard variation for 36 Hibbard Rd. The Plan and Zoning Commission was scheduled to hold a hearing on a proposed subdivision at 118 Dickens. That hearing was canceled and staff is awaiting additional information on the engineering before this is rescheduled.

Finance Department

Finance Director Morley stated the report is for the first month of the new fiscal year, and revenues for the general fund started on a good footing, coming in at \$103,000 above budget, and expenses were \$97,000 below budget. Sales tax is the largest revenue source behind the property taxes for the Village. The May sales tax compared to the same time last year increased year over year by \$70,000 or a 31% increase. Over the past 3 fiscal years, sales tax has increased by \$792,000 or a 28% increase and is on a good, positive trend.

Similar to the General fund, the Water and Sanitary Sewer fund revenues were above budget by \$54,000 and expenses came in below budget by \$40,000. She noted that the Police Pension fund has been invested with the State's investment pool for just under a year. The Village is seeing the savings achieved from the pooling of interests. Previously the Police Pension fund was paying on average about \$5,000 per month for investment management fees, now, it is about \$170 per month which is a savings of about \$58,000 in annual fees.

As of June 1st, Winnetka, the water supplier to the Village, was able to make the change in the time they read the meters each day, so now the Village's AMI system and Winnetka's are reading at midnight. In addition, Public Works repaired what appeared to be a long-term leak on vacant private property, where water appeared to be seeping into the yard before it reached the meter. With those two adjustments, the water loss for June was at 1.49% or 605,000 gallons.

Finance Director Morley noted that last month the Board asked about a shorter contract for the water customer portal. She confirmed with the vendor that it is a 5-year contract and there are no standard provisions to exit the service agreement once it is executed. She stated with this service, people can set up alerts by phone, text, or email and there is also the ability to send mass alerts to customers for things such as boil orders. The company will also send out letters to help drive adoption. When residents get a message that a leak is detected, they will get a link to a video that will walk them through how to check various things, toilets, irrigation systems, hoses, etc. Snowbirds can get unplanned use notifications. If the Village has accounts where the water has been turned off, those can be flagged and the Village will get notifications if there is any water being used at those locations. She believed this system would allow the Village to harness the capability of the AMI system to take a more proactive approach to water management. She said that she could bring a contract back in September if the Board was interested in it.

Trustee Galin inquired about what was going on with the contract. Stacy Sigman replied that the Board wanted to go ahead with the water customer portal project and the newer system. However, the Board first wanted to find out if there was an “out” in the five-year contract period or the ability to do a shorter contract. The direction of the Board was if either of those were not possible to bring the contract back to the board. Sigman noted that no motion could be made on something that's not on the agenda. President Lungmus said to place the water customer portal contract on the August agenda.

Fire-Rescue & Public Works Departments

Fire Rescue Chief Mike Nystrand was absent so there was no report.

Police Department

Police Chief Lustig stated for the 4th of July in light of the Highland Park tragedy last year, the Police Department, Fire Department, and Public Works met and came up with a variety of ideas to ensure certain security changes. He commended each one of the emergency services' efforts for making Northfield's 4th of July celebration as safe as it always has been in the past. The Board of Police Commissioners met two weeks ago and approved three additional candidates. One did not meet the criteria and was eliminated so they are reviewing the other two candidates. He stressed that it is very difficult now to hire a police officer so patience will be needed in that realm.

President Lungmus stated he was very supportive of the drone legislation sponsored by Senator Morris allowing police and fire to use drones. Police Chief Lustig replied that staff was looking at a future purchase of a drone.

President Lungmus noted there were the following five special Board projects:

- 1) Centennial – Lead by Trustee Mendrek and Trustee Dinges – Trustee Mendrek stated they had a meeting scheduled for the first part of August to get restarted on the Centennial.
- 2) Wayfinding Signage – Lead by Trustee Mendrek and Trustee Dinges – Trustee Mendrek stated they were going to reengage on the Wayfinding Signage.

- 3) Sidewalk Committee – Led by Trustee Galin and Trustee Whittaker – Trustee Galin said they had a second meeting on 7/17 and that most of the fieldwork was done. Next month they are going to meet to compile all the data and get that process going. He encouraged anybody to come and noted that they publish the date of the meeting on the website and social media.
- 4) Mid-block Crossings – Led by Trustee Orth – Trustee Orth stated the engineer was still working with Cook County. Stacy Sigman thought they were still waiting on the Cook County permit.
- 5) Library Campus – Led by Trustee Fowler and President Lungmus –President Lungmus stated that there had been slight movement on the library campus. Some building appraisals had been completed and the latest direction was to let the attorneys start to hammer out a purchase proposal. He noted that Attorney Hill will be handling that from the Village’s side.

President Lungmus recognized Stacy Sigman for her fabulous run as Village Manager for the Village of Northfield.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business or issues to come before the Board, Trustee Orth made a motion, seconded by Trustee Fowler to adjourn the meeting.

Upon the following roll call vote, the motion was approved.

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

The meeting was adjourned at 8:04 PM.

