

**MINUTES OF THE
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING
VILLAGE OF NORTHFIELD
TUESDAY, August 16, 2022**

The Committee of the Whole meeting was called to order by Village President Greg Lungmus on Tuesday, August 16, 2022, at 5:30 PM. Village Clerk Stacy Sigman called the roll as follows:

Committee Members Present:

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

Absent:

Trustee Barnaby Dinges

President Greg Lungmus

Others Present:

Village Attorney Buzz Hill

Approval of the July 19, 2022 Report of Proceedings

Trustee Orth made a motion, seconded by Trustee Whittaker to approve the July 19, 2022 Report of Proceedings. Approval was unanimous.

Review and discussion of the Council Chambers renovations

Village Manager Sigman noted that during the FY 2022/23 budget process, one of the Board projects added to the budget was the renovation of the council chambers. The Northfield based design firm, Blakedale Interiors, was retained to assess the room, develop a design approach, and coordinate with the various trades needed for the update. When the project was initially contemplated, it was limited to just the council chambers with a focus on new paint, carpeting, and furniture, and if funding permitted, upgrades to the lighting and acoustics. While assessing the project, the design team felt that ideally, the Village should also consider replacing the carpet, paint, and chairs in the executive session room; replacing the carpet and painting the small conference room; replacing the furniture in the front lobby; and adding screens and more microphones to improve the function of the Board space. Their rationale was that all of these spaces read/function together and none of them have had updates since they were built in 1996. The design team priced out all recommended elements to determine what could be done within the budget.

The design team members: Patti Morrell, Melinda Blake, and Reggie Kerr presented the project's transitional concept and reviewed material samples. Village Manager Sigman noted that with the rounded, simple dais, staff would no longer have their backs to the audience. The center portion of the dais will have a raised area in front of the board members to distinguish them from staff members. Each seat will have an electrical plate to plug in devices and permanent screens will alternately be placed and hard-wired into the A/V system to project

PowerPoint presentations or other data being presented on the big screen. All cords would be hidden within the dais. The floor will need to be opened to bring electrical to the new podium and the number of microphones will be increased.

Trustee Galin asked if with changes in technology whether the permanent screens could be swapped out in the future. Village Manager Sigman replied that the dais is being designed to be flexible and accommodate the never-ending technology upgrades.

Trustee Whittaker thanked the entire design team for all the work and energy that went into the plans for the community.

Trustee Orth asked if the chair width was the same as the current chairs. Mike Slattery, from Arthur P O'Hara, Inc., noted that the new chairs were similar and would fit approximately 95% of the population and had comfort adjustments. The new chairs also have arms for both comfort and stability.

Trustee Whittaker inquired about the timeframe to complete the project. Patti Morrell stated that it was dependent on the Board's decision which could impact the availability of the various trades, as well as products. Reggie Kerr replied that the dais would probably take the longest at 9-10 weeks.

Trustee Mendrek inquired about the budget. Village Manager Sigman replied that the total cost to complete all of the project elements, including the extra areas is \$237,697.64. The FY 2022/23 budget has \$250,000 allocated for this project. There are a few areas where there may be field changes (floor repair under carpeting, electrical, AV, and cabling) so staff recommended the Board approve a 5% contingency (\$11,884). The contingency would provide for field adjustments but still, keep the project total of \$249,582.52 within the \$250,000 budget allocation.

Trustee Galin asked if the existing blue wall pads did anything for echo control or acoustics. Melinda Blake replied that they did not help the sound issues within the room at all. She noted that acoustic studies were incredibly expensive and not feasible at this time. Village Manager Sigman stated that they researched the acoustical panels that are placed in golf simulators but most are bright bold colors not designed for rooms where they will be seen and also noted that due to COVID, these panels were in short supply. Patty Morrell stated that there would need to be a lot of research done to resolve the sound issues in the room and this would be quite expensive.

Village Manager Sigman stressed that the room space was never designed to be a public meeting space. The proposed design will solve 95% of the current issues such as worn-out carpet, dated furniture, and trip hazards from numerous electrical cords, however, the acoustics will be improved with the softer fabrics and increased microphones, but it likely will not be perfect. There is an existing system in the room that ties into hearing aids for the hearing impaired.

An electrician, Dan Adams, was present and asked about the current lighting. President Lungmus thought the current lighting was unacceptable. Trustee Mendrek disagreed stating that the lighting where she sat was too dark. It was then determined that the lighting was

inconsistent in the room. Adams stated that the new lighting would be adjustable and would be tested and reviewed by the design team for brightness throughout the room.

Trustee Mendrek asked if interchangeable nameplates were being considered in the schematic of the dais. She suggested a switchable nameplate that could bend based on the curvature of the dais. Trustee Fowler suggested that a flat wooden plate could be used even on a curve where nameplates could be inserted. Village Manager Sigman noted that more investigation needed to be done and that the nameplates were important.

Trustee Fowler stated that it seemed that the lighting improvements could be done fairly easily. He questioned if the renovation would be a staged project. Patti Morrell replied that it would be more of a beginning-to-end project that lasts until approximately January 1, 2023. Village Manager Sigman noted that there were options for where the board could meet while the room was under construction, such as the multi-purpose room upstairs, the Fire Department's 2nd-floor meeting room, and the Northshore Senior Center.

Village Manager Sigman stressed that the issues with the project are the rapidly changing market and vendors' inability to provide valid quotes beyond 30 days. Given the monthly Board meetings, it is not possible to secure quotes that could be presented at a Committee of the Whole meeting and then formally approved at a Board meeting. Unfortunately, the current quotes expire on September 15, before the next Board meeting on September 20.

President Lungmus thanked the design team, thought the numbers looked fair, and was in favor of moving the project forward, particularly in an environment where prices are changing so rapidly.

Trustee Mendrek verified if Trustee Dinges, who was absent from the meeting, had any concerns with the plans. Village Manager Sigman confirmed that Trustee Dinges had come into the Village Hall last week and liked the plans.

Trustee Galin liked the project but had concerns with the logistics surrounding the Village Manager's authority to submit deposits over \$25,000 based on contractual spending limitations. Village Attorney Hill stated that he was okay with the Board allowing Village Manager Sigman to submit deposits to the vendors ratifying the contracts at the September meeting. He noted that the vendors were more at risk, not the Village, with taking this approach. Trustee Galin questioned what would happen if the contracts were not ratified. Village Manager Sigman stated that the Village would lose its deposits. Village Attorney stressed that he was comfortable giving preliminary approval from the Village's liability standpoint.

The Board gave verbal consensus to give preliminary approval and directed the Village Manager Sigman to execute the current quotes and submit deposits, thus locking in the current prices and materials. The ratification and formal approval of the full project will be placed on the September Board agenda.

Review and discussion of the water meter installation compliance

Village Manager Sigman noted as part of the comprehensive update of the Village's water

meters, the contractor (licensed plumber) will need to access virtually every home in Northfield to change out the water meter and install the new remote read device. Based on Core and Main's (the contractor) history in other communities (most recently the Village of Glencoe), they indicated that while most water customers fully cooperate, there are always a few that, for numerous reasons, simply refuse to allow access. The contractor has indicated that municipalities need to decide ahead on how they will handle these situations and indicated that the two most common approaches are as follows:

- **Water Shut Off.** Under this approach, all customers would be given 3 written notices to arrange for the water meter change out. The last notice would indicate that if they do not make arrangements to have the work done within 15 days that their water would be shut off. If they do not respond to the 3rd notice, staff would attempt to call them to arrange the visit and warn them if they refuse to cooperate, their water will be shut off. If they still do not cooperate, a final water shut-off notice will be posted on the site/front door the day before the water shut-off. According to Core and Main, this was the most common approach used by communities where they have done meter replacements, resulting in 100% compliance. Glencoe recently used this approach and was able to get 100% compliance without ultimately having to shut off anyone's water.
- **Manual Water Reading Surcharge.** Under this approach, notices would be provided as set forth above, except that the 3rd written notice would indicate that if customers did not get their meter replaced, they would be assessed a \$50 monthly surcharge to cover the cost of manual water meter readings. If this is the preferred Board approach, a code amendment would be necessary to codify this new fee. In addition, it should be noted that the \$50 fee would cover the staff time for manual reads and input – but would not account for meters that are under-registering the customer's water usage. This method has been used in some towns but Core and Main has indicated that it does not usually result in 100% compliance.

The Village code is very clear that homeowners are responsible for the maintenance of their water connection from the water main tap through the inside of their homes. And the Village has the right, as the water operator, to have access to the premises at all reasonable hours to examine the water service pipes, plumbing fixtures, water meter, valves, shut-off boxes, and/or remove the water meter at any time to test it or replace it.

Based on the recommendation of Core and Main and Northfield's code, staff supports the water shut-off approach because they believe it will result in the most efficient and effective changeover and be the fairest to all water meter customers. The biggest issue with the surcharge approach is that a lot of water could still be used but not be accurately captured by these old meters.

Trustee Orth asked when was the last time the Village had to go into every home for water meters. Village Manager Sigman was unaware of any time this has happened in the past where there was a need to get into every customer's home.

Village Manager Sigman noted that Core and Main estimated that 75% of customers will cooperate right away, then 15%-20% will after the 2nd notice, and for the remaining customers,

the hope is that staff can call them and get full compliance.

Trustee Galin stated that he was fine with the water shut-off approach but stressed that the written notice procedures should be followed and the Village should be consistent with all customers.

Trustee Mendrek asked when the water meter installation project was starting. Village Manager Sigman replied that the first notices would be sent out the following week, requesting that residents call Core and Main to set up appointments. This information will also be communicated on social media and e-blast as a reminder to residents about this project. The water meter installation project has also been featured in the Village newsletter.

Trustee Orth inquired how long it would take for the installation of a new water meter. Village Manager Sigman responded that it would be approximately one hour.

Trustee Mendrek stated that she was in favor of the water shut-off method because it was the only way to get all customers to comply.

President Lungmus asked and received confirmation that all present members of the Board were in favor of the water shut-off approach.

Re-Review and discussion on the Village Board 2022-23 Core Objectives and Village Board Procedural Guidelines

Annually, the Board reviews the Core Objectives and Village Board Procedural Guidelines. The initial discussion on these documents took place at the July Committee of the Whole meeting. Updated versions of these documents were presented to the Board for review/discussion to ensure they adequately reflected the consensus of the Board and their major goals for the upcoming year.

Trustee Galin noted that within the Core Objectives - Communication to Residents, he did not recommend taking out, “promote Northfield is a great place to live and work.” He stated that he did not have an opinion on this either way.

Trustee Mendrek inquired if Village Manager Sigman wanted a ranking system on the Core Objectives. Village Manager Sigman stated that in the past there has not been a ranking system and asked if the Board wanted a prioritization of the objectives. Trustee Orth stated that he liked it as is and thought that many of the objectives are tied into one another and are being done simultaneously in a timely manner. Village Manager Sigman stressed that the Core Objectives should be guiding principles; noting that her performance was judged on how all of these moved forward on an annual basis. The Board agreed not to rank the Core Objectives.

There were no further changes to the Village Board Procedural Guidelines.

Other Business

Public Comment

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

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

The meeting adjourned at 6:52 PM.