

**Final Draft Minutes Northport Village Corporation
Sunday, December 11, 2022**

Overseers, Officers and Staff present: Celine Bewsher; Brady Brim-DeForest; Fred Lincoln; Vicky Matthews; Judy Metcalf (via Zoom); Michael Tirrell (via Zoom); and Jeffrey Wilt; President, Janae Novotny; Treasurer, Wendy Huntoon (via Zoom); Clerk, Maureen (Beanie) Einstein (via Zoom); Village Agent, Bill Paige; Office Manager, James Mays.

Visitor's Comments:

Dan Webster (670 Shore Road) expressed concerns regarding the unavailability of draft minutes of the November meeting prior to today's meeting; the lack of notice of the Utility increase on the agenda for this meeting. He also noted that no meeting minutes have been posted on the NVC Website for months.

Business Meeting called to order at 9:05 a.m.

Minutes

President Janae Novotny recommended that the Board approve the Minutes of the November 13, 2022 Overseers' Meeting.

Jeffrey Wilt moved, seconded by Vicky Matthews, to approve the Minutes of the November 13, 2022 meeting. Voted: Unanimous.

Village Agent Report

The Village Agent, Bill Paige, referred the Overseers to his written report circulated prior to the meeting. Fred L. stated that a prioritized list of needed projects would help the 2024 budget planning process. Bill P. responded that he would work with the Infrastructure Committee regarding priorities. There were no further questions/input from the Overseers.

Treasurer's Report

Treasurer, Wendy Huntoon, referred the Overseers' to her written report, circulated before the meeting, and to the warrant folders and approval cover pages that were being circulated to the Overseers during the meeting for signature. There were no questions from the Overseers. Wendy's report included an update on the 2020 audit, which is nearing completion. The NVC office and volunteers have begun to focus on preparations for the 2021 audit. With the addition of new staff, this process should go much faster.

President's Report – Janae Novotny

The Personnel Committee recommended approval of the temporary employment of James Mays in the role of Office Manager as of December 5, 2022.

Jeffrey Wilt, moved, seconded by Fred Lincoln, to approve the Personnel Committee's recommendation for the temporary employment of James Mays in the role of Office Manager, effective Monday December 5, 2022. Voted: Unanimous.

Janae N. introduced James M. who was attending the meeting.

Finance – Fred Lincoln

Fred Lincoln moved, seconded by Vicky Matthews, to more fairly and equitably share estimated year-to-date 2022 payroll expenses among the General Government, Water and Sewer Departments, and with consideration to the approved 2022 budgeted expenses of all three departments, the NVC Finance Committee recommends that payments in the amount of \$29,894.41 by the Sewer Department and \$31,355.73 by the Water Department be made to the General Government Department. Upon completion of the 2022 payroll analysis currently in progress with Wilke and Associates, a true-up of final 2022 Payroll expenses will be documented and reflected in QuickBooks Online. Discussion ensued. Wendy H. reported that payroll accruals through week 39 are accurate and weeks 40 through 48 are estimated. **Voted: Unanimous.**

Governance – Judy Metcalf

Judy M. reached out to Mr. Bandy, 34 Main Street, regarding the Overseers' decision not to reimburse him for the damage reported to his vehicle by a village tree limb. Mr. Bandy has asked for reconsideration. He was informed that his request would be on the Overseers' agenda at their January meeting.

Owners of the Dyer Cottage (Driftwood) consulted with the Overseers this past summer about a potential boundary line dispute that they thought the Village might be involved with. A survey commissioned by the owners of the Dyer Cottage has been complete, and it does not appear that the Village owns any land that is at issue. Judy M. will talk directly with the surveyor and homeowner next week. The property is on Broadway, the space between "Driftwood" Cottage (owned by the Dyers) and the "Hillcrest Cottage" (owned by Linda Elliot).

Utilities – Jeffrey Wilt

The Utilities Trustees met on Friday December 9, 2022. The Wastewater/Sewer Department is not solvent and does not have enough financial resources to cover the Department's expenses. Most notably, it has been determined that approximately \$64,000.00 is due to General Government from budget year 2020. They do not have the funds to take care of what is currently due to General in 2020 and 2022 (2021 is not affected). The genesis of the problem was the decision in 2020 by the Utilities

Trustees and Overseers to fund the new wastewater treatment plant out of reserves. The actual cost of the newly constructed wastewater treatment plant exceeded the reserves and required some spending out of operating funds.

The Utilities Trustees recommend a payment plan, whereby the Sewer Department will reimburse the amount owed to General over a period of four years. The plan will allow the Department to work down the obligation without further raising user fees to pay the total amount owed in one year. The proposed 2023 Sewer Budget adopted by the Trustees on Friday and recommended to the Overseers includes the first payment of \$15,000.

Dick McElhaney, our long time Utility Superintendent, announced his retirement effective January 15, 2023. He may work until February 1, 2023, when his license expires. His retirement will complicate things from many levels, certainly from a financial standpoint. His retirement will impact the 2023 budget just adopted by the Trustees. Brady B. will reach out to Maine Rural Water Association to determine how they might be able to assist with the transition. Trustees discussed the probability of engaging an engineering firm to manage Utilities, as Belfast does. The Trustees have reached out to the firm that Belfast uses.

If adopted, the proposed Wastewater/Sewer 2023 Budget will require \$361 per trimester (\$1,083 per year) in fees for each of Wastewater's 248 customers. This compares to a current budget of \$176,000, which is funded by customer fees of \$237 per trimester (\$711 per year).

The Utilities Trustees recommended that the Overseers adopt the Sewer/Wastewater Utility 2023 Budget as presented, knowing that this budget will need to be altered early next year, in light of Dick McElhaney's retirement, among other factors. The billing cycle that will first reflect the sewer rate increase does not go out until March 2023.

Two recommendations from the Utilities Trustees regarding the Sewer Department were presented:

Jeffrey Wilt moved, seconded by Fred Lincoln, that the Overseers accept the Sewer Department's payment plan, whereby the Sewer Department will pay the \$64,000.00 due from budget year 2020 over a four-year period. Voted: Unanimous.

Jeffrey Wilt made a motion, seconded by Brady Brim-DeForest, to adopt the Sewer/Wastewater Utility Budget for 2023, with the knowledge that it may need to be adjusted in the coming year for increased costs. Jeffrey W. stated that the Trustees acknowledge that this is part of a recent pattern of steep increases and that the increases reflect the real costs of running the wastewater operation. Brady B. commented that this is the minimum rate increase needed. **Voted: Unanimous.**

The Water Department is in good shape with healthy reserves and has the capacity to pay all their obligations without a rate increase.

Vicky Matthew made a motion, seconded by Brady Brim-DeForest, to approve the 2023 Water Department Budget (which does not include a rate increase). Voted: Unanimous

Michael T. asked Jeffrey W. if there was an update on the exceedances for August and September. Per Dick McElhaney's report for October and November there were no exceedances. Dirigo Engineering has not yet been contacted to determine the reason for recent exceedances and managing future exceedances. Dick McElhaney recommends engaging Dirigo in the spring closer to the summer season.

Infrastructure - Jeffrey Wilt - No report

Trees & Parks - Vicky Matthews

Vicky M. has reached out to the arborist regarding the tree up by the pond and the tree at George and Griffin, and, hopefully, weather permitting he will provide estimates for both and they will be taken care at the first of the year.

Safety - Michael Tirrell - No report

Waterfront - Brady Brim-DeForest - No report

Communications - Michael Tirrell - No report

Personnel - Janae Novotny & Michael Tirrell

Janae N. stated that the Village's official recognized holidays include: Christmas Eve, Christmas Day and New Year's Day. Our policy is that employees are paid holiday pay; seven hours for full time employees and four hours for part-time employees for these holidays. However, the NVC policy does not address when those holidays are observed. She is recommending, for 2022, to approve that the NVC holiday for Christmas Eve be observed on Friday, December 23, the Christmas Day holiday be observed on Monday, December 26, 2022 and the New Years Day holiday be observed on Monday, January 2, 2023. This holiday observance schedule will allow for the employees to receive a day off in addition to holiday pay, given these holidays fall on a Saturday or Sunday this season.

Jeffrey Wilt, moved the recommendation as stated, for 2022, to approve that the NVC holiday for Christmas Eve be observed on Friday, December 23, the Christmas Day holiday be observed on Monday, December 26, 2022 and the New Years Day holiday be observed on Monday, January 2, 2023. Celine Bewsher seconded the motion. Voted: Unanimous.

Technology – Brady Brim-DeForest

All office computers have been backed-up and NVC has successfully regained administrative access. Brady B. will be meeting with the new office Manager, Jim Mays, and walk him through the process. He will be putting a training manual and host training sessions for staff and Overseers.

Town Liaison – Jeffrey Wilt – No report

Nordic Aquafarm Update

Janae N. reported that she and Michael Lannan attended the Maine Board of Environmental Protection appeal meeting on November 17, 2022. The Board denied our appeal, which was expected, and there will be no further appeal.

Other Business

Vicky M. is in the process of updating the Community Hall Rental form. Brady B. recommended that she update the form using Google Docs.

Comments by Members of the Public

Rachel Rosa, 7 Auditorium Park, stated that some of the links on the NVC website are not working properly. Rachael will email Michael Tirrell and the new Office Manager with the links. She also spoke about notifying the public of the sewer rate increase.

Dan Webster (670 Shore Road) reiterated his request to have draft minutes of meetings along with attachments and items added to the agenda posted and available to residents prior to an Overseers meeting.

Executive Session

The Board adjourned to executive session at 10:00 a.m.

The Board returned to public session at approximately 10:15 a.m. Janae N. reported that she received direction from the Board in executive session.

The next regular Board of Overseer meeting will occur on January 8, 2023 at 9:00 a.m.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 10:17 a.m.

Submitted by Maureen (Beanie) Einstein, Clerk and Janae Novotny, President