

**Northport Village Corporation  
Draft Minutes of the Board of Overseers Meeting  
Sunday, January 12, 2025**

Overseers, Officers and Staff present: Celine Bewsher; Fred Lincoln (via Zoom); Vicky Matthews; Kris Mix (via Zoom); Elaine Moss (via Zoom); Michael Tirrell (via Zoom); Jeffrey Wilt (via Zoom); President, Janae Novotny; Treasurer, Wendy Huntoon (Via Zoom); Village Agent, Bill Paige; Office Manager, Trish Parker; Clerk, Maureen (Beanie) Einstein (via Zoom)

**Public Comments:** There were no comments by members of the public.

**The meeting was called to order at 9:00 a.m.**

**Approval of the minutes of the December 8, 2024 Overseers Meeting.**

Janae N. asked if there were any questions/comments regarding the December 8, 2024 Minutes distributed prior to the meeting.

**Vicky M. made a motion, seconded by Jeffrey W., to approve the minutes of the December 8, 2024 Overseers' meeting, distributed prior to the meeting, as written. Voted: Unanimous.**

**President's Report – Janae Novotny**

The Board's Financial Planning Workshop is scheduled for January 25<sup>th</sup> from 9:00 – 10:30 a.m. The Board will be looking at future "big picture items" at the workshop. Please send comments/ideas for your Committee's thoughts to Janae by January 17<sup>th</sup>. Celine B., Infrastructure Chair, has compiled a detailed list of their "big picture items".

Reminder: Maine Freedom of Access Act training requirement is mandatory for elected officials. Please forward your completed Certificate to Office Manager, Trish Parker.

**Treasurer's Report – Wendy Huntoon**

Wendy H. referred the Overseers to her written report circulated prior to the meeting. The 2023 Audit is on schedule and without issues going forward. We will close out the 2024 books and then schedule the 2024 audit.

The increased bookkeeping and audit fees, over what was budgeted in the past few years, was discussed. Wendy H. explained that audit problems started in 2019. Clean-up from multiple audits in a single year increased the costs over budgeted costs. We are back on track and expect 2025 to go smoothly.

**Village Agent Report – Bill Paige**

Bill P. referred the Overseers to his written report circulated prior to the meeting.

**Office Manager's Report – Trish Parker**

Trish P. referred the Overseers to her written report circulated prior to the meeting. In addition, the Historical Society (BHPS) has framed the list of Overseers' names and their years of service since the inception of the Northport Village Corporation. This is currently hanging in the Community Hall.

**Personnel Committee – Janae Novotny**

Recommendation to approve a one-time bonus payment of \$573.44 to Fernie Barton, a 34-year licensed Plant Operator employee, for his unpaid vacation pay.

**Jeffrey W. made a motion, seconded by Fred L., to approve the recommendation to approve a one-time bonus payment of \$573.44, for unpaid vacation pay, to Fernie Barton. Voted: Unanimous.**

Jeffrey W. reminded everyone that Fernie Barton is an “invisible” 34-year employee whose work is crucial to the sewer system. His work is done 365 days a year at 4:00 a.m.

#### **Utilities Committee – Jeffrey Wilt**

Recommendation to approve the proposed 2025 Sewer Department Budget.

Jeffrey W. explained the increases in the Budget. The trimester amount will be increased from \$377.00 (3 times a year) to \$430.00 (3 times a year), an increase of \$159.00 per year. Major drivers for this increase are: sludge removal, increased cost of living and bookkeeping and audit expenses regarding multiple audits.

**Jeffrey W. made a motion, seconded by Fred L., to approve the proposed Sewer Department Budget. Voted – Unanimous.**

Recommendation to approve the proposed 2025 Water Department Budget.

Jeffrey W. explained the increases in the Water Department Budget.

There is a 26.5% increase over the 2024 Budget. Any rate increase has to be approved by the PUC. This year the Department asked the PUC for a total increase of 26.5% which was approved by the PUC. The Water Department has not asked for a rate increase for over 18 years. The Belfast Water Department raised their rate to us by 30%. The rate increase is as follows: The trimester amount will be increased from \$159.00 (3 times a year) to \$180.16 (3 times a year); Usage will be 3.49 per cubic foot/per trimester (3 times a year).

A public hearing, required by the PUC, was held in 2024 to inform residents of potential increases.

**Jeffrey W. made a motion, seconded by Elaine M. to approve the proposed Water Department Budget. Voted – Unanimous.**

Discussion ensued regarding the above increases and alerting village residents prior to receiving their 2025 bills. It was agreed that notice regarding the increases will be mailed to residents and posted on NVC’s website with the new water and sewer rates.

Other Utility Department Business – The current moratorium for any new sewer hook-ups is in place until April 2025. We currently have 245 users on our sewer system. Our license maximum for our system is 252 users. The Department had been under the assumption the potential additional 7 customers were included in the 245 users; the assumption was incorrect, so we are now at our maximum of 252 users for our license. Allowing additional hook-ups would require a secondary treatment plant with a cost of approximately 20 million dollars. Any future landowner would have to resort to a septic system with a minimum requirement of land determined by the State, coupled with our NVC Zoning Ordinance. The seven property owners that are eligible for future sewer hook-ups currently do not receive any sewer bills. The Utility Trustees intend to change this policy to include those owners into our invoicing system.

#### **Infrastructure – Celine Bewsher**

Celine B. referred the Overseers to her written report and “Community Resilience Partnership Community Action Grant” submitted by the Town of Northport prior to the meeting. The grant application was submitted December 16, 2024. We should hear results of our application in March, 2025.

**Town Liaison – Janae Novotny**

The town is still seeking local office space to be used when construction is underway for the new Town Office and Community Center. The DOT’s plan for future road work will be on Route 1 in Lincolville into some Route 1 sections in Northport.

**Public Comments:**

Rachel Rosa (7 Auditorium Park) requested clarification of the \$45,000 engineering fees in the Utilities Budget. Jeffrey W. explained the monies to cover the fees are offset by a grant.

**Adjournment**

A motion to adjourn was approved, and the meeting was adjourned at 9:47 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Maureen (Beanie) Einstein, Clerk

Janae Novotny, President

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