

Northfield Village Caucus
July 18, 2019
Community Room, Northfield Library, Northfield, Illinois

Minutes

Members attending

David Woodyatt	Cricket Trutter Hauff
Mark Gantner	Kathy Estabrooke
Jonathan Don	Jeannie Scully
Dennis Smith	John Howard
Ericka Foster	Genie Cooper

Guests

David Miller	Tom Mints	Charles Orth
Bev Smith	Tom Whittaker	Shelley Cohen

Meeting was called to order at 7:05 p.m. by Chair David Woodyatt.

1. Presentation - Steve Noble, Village Finance Director

Steve Noble has served as Northfield's Finance Director for fourteen years. He felt this was a good moment for a Caucus presentation since a new fiscal year has now commenced. He summarized the budget process, which starts in December. He first compiles a tabulation of each department's capital projects and prepares a five year financial forecast. In January the budget details are filled in (holiday lights, for example). By the end of February he issues a draft budget to the Board for review and refinement. In March a public hearing is conducted. The final budget is adopted in April. Over the course of the fiscal year the Board does a monthly progress review of revenue and expense. Steve's goal is to assure that there are no surprises. An independent audit is performed each year and an "award winning" comprehensive annual report is issued. The report is available to the public on the Village website and in hard copy at the Library.

- **Positive Trends**

The 2018-19 fiscal year ended with a surplus. The Village is maintaining its AAA bond rating. The business environment continues to be strong with no empty storefronts. All essential services are being provided. Most of the referendum initiatives are now complete – with a remaining \$1.5 million authority left for fall. Our property tax rate is lower than our peer communities. The police pension is 60% funded with a target of attaining 100% by 2040.

- **Future Trends**

In view of the fact that many staff members are of retirement age, funding is being increased and succession planning underway. Funding is also being added to prepare to pay down the 0% Willow Road loan (which has not yet been billed) and for any equipment needs (such as a fire truck) that might arise in the future. Since the state is attempting to

shift more financial burden to local governments, the Village is trying its best to respond. Increased sales tax may come to the Village through Internet transactions. We may see some additional revenue through medical equipment sales tax changes in the future.

- **Water/Sewer Rates, Operating Budget, Property Tax Distribution, Sales Tax**
As permitted under our agreement, Winnetka raised Northfield's wholesale water rate by 62% last year. Going forward, any future increase is capped by the CPI. Operating budget revenue comes mostly from property tax (30.7%), water/sewer charges (21.7%), and sales tax (15.2%). Car sales provide about half of the sales tax revenue. The schools receive most of the property tax distribution – around 65%. The Village of Northfield receives 11%, and the Park District and Library each receive around 3%.
- **Capital Projects, Fund Balances**
Steve Noble reviewed the ongoing capital projects. The water main replacement on Thackeray is budgeted at \$390,000. The Bosworth storm sewer is \$1,400,000. There is around \$1,000,000 provided for the Northfield Road reconstruction, Jeffery resurfacing, and various patching and resurfacing. The General Fund balance is \$6.5 million, complying with the six month policy. The equipment replacement fund has \$1.7 million.

Steve pointed out uncertainties that impact revenue, such as weather (water sales) and the timing of permit fees for major projects (delay of the bank project on Willow). In response to a question, he stated that he has felt no pressure from the Board for development.

2. Approval of April 18, 2019 Meeting Minutes

Motion: Dennis Smith; Second: Mark Gantner

Vote: Approved by voice, no dissents

3. Treasurer's Report

The Treasurer's Report was presented by Treasurer Mark Gantner who stated that the current balance is \$1,121.86. This has not changed since the last meeting, since there have been no deposits or withdrawals from the account.

4. Membership Report

David Woodyatt, Caucus Chair, stated that John Howard and Ericka Foster would be assisting Marsha Balsamo on the Membership Committee. David mentioned that he would like to see a focus on obtaining more members from the 23rd and 37th precincts.

David presented David Miller, Bev Smith, Tom Mints, and Shelley Cohen for membership. David Miller and Bev Smith were previously introduced to the Caucus. Shelley Cohen has been a resident for 33 years. She was a psychology professor at Oakton Community College with experience in corporate training. She would like to be more involved in the community. Tom Mints has lived in Northfield since 1988. He is a residential building contractor. He would like to learn more about the Caucus before proceeding with membership. The practice of attending two Caucus meetings prior to a vote for membership was discussed and there was general agreement that it was a reasonable expectation under most circumstances. Barnaby Dinges and Kim Orth

were introduced at the meeting in April and were not present at this session. They will be considered for membership if they attend a future Caucus session. David Miller and Bev Smith were approved by the Caucus for membership.

5. Nominating Committee Report

David Woodyatt wants to see more involvement by Caucus Members in the important function of the Nominating Committee. He has appointed eight people to serve: Al Chircop as Chair, the four Caucus officers, Ericka Foster, Jonathan Don, and Kathy Estabrooke.

Ericka Foster presented the Nominating Committee Report of the July 9, 2019 meeting. Three Trustee positions and the office of Village President will need to be filled in the next election. The committee reviewed events in the last election for lessons learned. Key points identified were:

- A need for stronger representation in Precincts 23 & 37.
- The community places emphasis on candidates with longer term residency
- The voters notice the relative effort of candidates in soliciting their votes
- Caucus communication must integrate social media over the election cycle
- A desire was expressed to see issues discussed by the candidates
- The platform needs to be reviewed with resident input
- Potential candidates need be aware that a strong effort on their part may be exerted to secure votes
- The Caucus needs to make a stronger effort to support slated candidates.

In the discussion that followed, it was pointed out that the most serious issue in the past has been finding a sufficient number of good candidates to fill the Village Board positions. The opinion was expressed that although the Caucus's slate was contested, the Village was presented with an abundance of qualified candidates -and the community was none the worse for it. Many people don't know that the Caucus exists, or what it does. The Caucus should be prepared to communicate the merits of its slated candidates and to make clear its role in vetting qualified residents who bring diverse strengths to the Village Board. The Caucus should be cautious about promoting individuals with specific "agendas" that go beyond general conformance to the platform.

6. Discussion of Suggested Bylaw Changes

David Woodyatt initiated a discussion of six proposed changes to the Bylaws transmitted to the Caucus members prior to the meeting. Since Bylaw changes require thirty days' notice, he hoped to reach a consensus at this session and officially approved the changes at the next meeting. The membership was generally supportive of the revisions understanding that details will be addressed at the next meeting – the archiving of Caucus materials in particular.

- **Leadership During Contested Elections**

Article III, Section 2

The term of each Caucus member elected at the January Annual Meeting shall be two years commencing with the first quarterly meeting after the election and ending two years later.

Article IV, Section 1

The officers shall be members of the Caucus and shall consist of the Chair, who shall be an ex officio member of committees, a Vice Chair, a Secretary and a Treasurer. Each officer shall be elected by a majority vote of the Caucus at the Annual Meeting, shall serve a term of two years commencing with the first quarterly meeting after the election and ending two years later and shall have the duties customary to persons holding such offices. No officer should serve more than two consecutive terms in the same position.

- **Caucus Taking Position on Issues**

Article II, paragraph 2

It is the duty of the Caucus to communicate information to Village residents on matters of importance or concern to the Village and its residents. It is not the duty of the Caucus to take a position on issues facing the Village except those issues which may involve a violation of the Caucus Platform.

- **Executive Sessions**

Article V, Section 1, paragraph 3

All meetings of the Caucus shall be open to the public, except the interviews of prospective candidates, discussions of their qualifications, and voting on their candidacy may be conducted in executive session. The Chairman may also determine that a discussion needs to be held in executive session.

- **Maintaining Records at Library**

Article IV, Section 2, Secretary

Eliminate Permanent records and relevant historical materials shall be maintained at the Winnetka-Northfield public library.

Article X, Rules #5

Eliminate and deposited from time to time at the Northfield branch of the Winnetka-Northfield public library for permanent storage.

- **Rules on Page 7**

Article IV, Section 2, Secretary

Entitle this section: Article X – Rules

Greatly simplify #6 as follows:

The Caucus will periodically review population data to determine an optimum pro-rata distribution of Caucus membership among the election precincts. The Caucus will strive to achieve this distribution but it is not a requirement.

- **Removal of Date References**

Article VI, Section 6

In the first paragraph remove currently expiring in 2012 from the sixth line and currently expiring in 2011 from the seventh line.

In the second paragraph remove currently expiring 2012 from the second and third lines.

7. Reports from Members on Village Meeting

- **Village Board – Committee of the Whole/Board Meeting – July 16, 2019**

Bike Path

The proposed continuation of the bike path currently terminating at Winnetka Road and resuming in Northbrook was discussed and voted on. The Board unanimously approved the engineer's Phase I Study of "Option B" – routing the paved path between and ComEd and Union Pacific property in lieu of the existing green area (Nature Trail) owned by the Village. Additional private funding will be required for the construction of this path.

8. Adjournment

Motion: Dennis Smith; Second: Mark Gantner

Vote: Approved by voice, no dissents

Respectfully submitted by

Jonathan Don,

Acting Secretary for Keith Reed

The first part of the paper discusses the importance of the research and the objectives of the study. It then describes the methodology used, including the data sources and the statistical techniques employed. The results of the study are presented in the following section, followed by a discussion of the implications and conclusions. The paper concludes with a summary of the findings and a list of references.

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