

**Rustic Ridge Association
Annual Meeting Minutes**

Saturday, August 3, 2019, 9:30 A.M. – 11:30 A.M.
Trinitarian Congregational Church

Call to Order – Bob Ziegenhagen, Clerk, called the meeting to order at 9:40 AM. There were approximately 45 people in attendance

Invocation – Kurt Nelson opened with prayer, expressing gratitude for the blessings of our creation and of the family traditions that bring us here to Rustic Ridge.

Minutes of the 2018 Annual Meeting were approved without amendment.

President's Report – Margie Conner, President, cited the Association's \$450 charitable giving in 2018 to the Northfield Elementary School to help finish their playground and an equal amount to the Northfield Food Pantry. She noted that a number of significant issues were current in Northfield – water price hikes, the need for water conservation, trash and recycling rules, town zoning, the profusion of courses and lectures from Thomas Aquinas and the Moody center, the arrival of new faculty families on Winchester Road and, of course, the arrival of students at Thomas Aquinas College. She concluded with particular thanks to Anne Yarnell for beautifying the garden at the flagpole, and to the Activities Committee for a full and popular calendar.

Treasurer's Report – Doug Denise, Treasurer showed that our cash position is strong, with an expected \$27,388 on hand at the end of 2019-2020. Revenue throughout the 2017-2020 period remains fairly consistent at \$12,000 to \$13,000 a year. Expenses vary from \$6000 - \$13,000 depending primarily on required road repairs. This last year we were unable to complete all road repair tasks but we rescheduled them and pay for them next year. Special thanks were extended to Carolee Ziegenhagen for a smooth transfer of Treasurer responsibilities. Suggestions came from the floor that we consider increasing annual charitable donations. It was also suggested that we should increase compensation to the Security and Trash Removal individuals. Margie said the board will discuss these issues at this afternoon's board meeting.

Roads Report – Lucy Livingston, Roads Doctor, reported several scheduled projects were completed and more are planned for later this season. Several projects focus on managing the flow of water close to our roads. This includes cleaning and repairing culverts and clearing clogged swales. Next year, West Lane and Pine Road will be repaired and potholes throughout the community will be filled. There will also be tree trimming and road clearance, as well.

Activities Report – Jean Bubriski reported we had a great variety of activities with all ages participating. She thanked Catherine Broadhead and Barbara Walker their assistance and leadership on the committee. Jean welcomed others to suggest ideas for social events next year, and to help initiate them, as well.

Memorials - Leesa Campbell reported that two of our Ridge folk passed away, Chuck Barker in October and Tim Powell in November of last year. She reminded people that books are donated to the Library in the names of our deceased and that the Library currently has a display showing the history of these donations.

Town Report - Heather Tower, Town-Ridge Liaison reported:

- Northfield has a new Town Administrator, Andrea Llamas as of January first. She has considerable experience and is being well received.
- Thomas Aquinas received approval to open and will start with freshman and sophomore classes this fall.
- C.S. Lewis offered excellent programming this year for the community.
- Several excellent businesses and associations continue to enrich the Town: Cameron's Winery, the Northfield Mart, Mims, the Northfield Trails Association, the Thursday Road races, the Thursday's Farmers Market and the Senior Center.
- The Great River Challenge triathlon will return September 28.
- There will soon be expanded rail service to New York from the Greenfield station.
- The Senior Center has a rich selection of activities coming up - at the pavilion has concerts and programs and a picnic coming up.
- The Schell Bridge replacement is going forward. A final design has been selected and bids are going out for demolition and building. Park and Rec is planning a park around the end of the bridge. The bridge should be completed by 2021 or 2022.
- The 5 Acre Farm was bought by Norse Nurseries to supply plants for their mail order business.
- There was a question from the floor seeking more frequent paving of public roads, North Lane and Woodruff.
- In terms of communication, Town meetings are on-line and can be viewed from www.NorthfieldMA.gov. The Senior Center monthly bulletin is also available on this site. NextDoor serves as an unofficial community bulletin board

Fire department Report – Northfield Fire Chief Floyd M. (“Skip”) Dunnell, discussed Open Burn regulations. The State only permits open burning from Jan 15 through May 15, weather permitting and only with a permit. Burning is only for brush; no leaves, no building materials or trash. Campfires are permitted throughout the year but large bon fires are not allowed. Skip warned that Rustic Ridge's pine habitat is a potential nightmare because highly dangerous fires can spread quickly. The situation is more dangerous, there being no buffer between our trees and our cottages. There is also fairly limited access to hydrants. Skip stressed that we should remain vigilant to fire risks, keeping areas around cottages clear, removing pine needles off our roofs, deploying smoke and carbon dioxide detectors and keeping fire extinguishers accessible. Also, the 911 system can be used with mobile phones, though more specific information may be necessary when talking to the dispatcher.

East Northfield Water Report – Margie summarized the problems of the East Northfield Water Company. Details are attached. Floor questions included a request for metering to charge cottage owners more equitably. The Board was asked to investigate the potential cost of adding meters. It was also suggested that we should inquire with Thomas Aquinas College as to their legal responsibility. After much discussion, the water issue was referred to the Executive Board for further investigation

Board Officers

- Retiring Board Members – Leesa Campbell and Lillian Young were thanked for their years of service and hoped they could continue to contribute in other ways.
- Election of Officers & Directors - Charlotte Martin representing the Nominating Committee proposed the following slate which was approved by the Association.

President	Margaret Conner
1 st Vice President	Jeannie Bubriski
2 nd Vice President	Leesa Campbell
Immediate Past President	Martha Schoonover
Treasurer	Doug Denise
Clerk	Bob Ziegenhagen
Assistant Clerk	Barbara Walker
Directors, (Class of 2020)	Anne Yarnall and Bill Young
Directors, (Class of 2021)	Doug Southard and Lisa White
Directors, (Class of 2022)	Linda Glover and Lindsey Lack

Diversity Statement – Doug Southard presented a proposed Diversity Statement. It was unanimously approved. It reads as follows:

The Rustic Ridge Association strives to be a community open to all people. We recognize that our future strength rests on our commitment to value, respect, and embrace the richness of a diverse and inclusive neighborhood.

Announcements

- Executive Board Meeting, today at 4 PM, 4 West Lane
- Annual Picnic tonight at 6:30 PM, at the Golf Club.
- Ridge Sunday, tomorrow, 10 AM, Trinitarian Congregational Church. Heather Tower will be leading the choir and Jon Heydenreich will be speaking.
- Suggestions that we check to make sure our cottages are being taxed at the lower level of seasonal homes instead of year-round homes.
- Brush pickup Saturday morning, August 10th.
- Non-perishable foods are needed for donation at Ridge Sunday.
- At the end of the season, remaining non-perishable foods can be left at the church, or, if that is closed, at Margie's cottage.
- A table with items produced by the Maum people of Guatemala will be at the events after Sunday service.
- Warren Snyder announced with great flourish that he has audited the financial records for the fiscal year and found them to be complete and accurate.

Adjourn – We adjourned at 11:32 am.

East Northfield Water Co. Update

The following is a brief summary of the most recent East Northfield Water Company (ENWC) meeting held on June 25th at Town Hall. Approximately 60 people attended, including several Ridge members. As of this meeting today, there has been no action on the part of the DPU regarding the proposed rate increases.

The issue: In order to break even and remain solvent for a “couple of years”, the ENWC is applying through the DPU for a 70% rate hike in 2020 and a 40% rate hike on top of that in 2021. This will not ameliorate their \$900,000 debt which has accumulated over the years since NMH left the Northfield campus and the ENWC was awaiting a buyer who would restore the number of users. The Moody Center and Thomas Aquinas will not replace those numbers of users. Currently there are about 300 users, down from over a thousand in 2004. It also does not address the potential expense for a new water filtration system to deal with water quality issues.

Important: The Ridge pays a higher seasonal rate than the year-round residents as the ENWC needs to turn on and off the two meters through which our water comes to us, drain the pipes in the fall, and make any repairs to the pipes. It is not possible to meter each cottage individually. John Alden, the president of the ENWC, had very few answers to the many questions raised. He asked us to contact any government agencies or representatives who might help with the debt and the increases but provided us with no specifics. Attendees were very disappointed, and some are starting their own local action groups. Also, there seems to be a widespread disdain for NMH for having left the water company in this condition. Apparently, there are no prospective buyers at this point, including the Northfield Water Company and there are many other local water companies that are facing the same situation.

The Good News

If the ENWC goes bankrupt, the water will still keep running because it is a public utility. Here are some things we can do: repair any leaky pipes, dripping faucets and running toilets. Six cottages on West Lane experienced one or more of these issues as we opened up this year. If you water your lawn/garden, reduce your usage. Conserve water in general. Keep an eye out for leaking pipes around your cottage and as you walk the Ridge. Report them to **Bill Pachalis, Chief Engineer at NMH who has responsibility for the ENWC at 413-498-3455.**
Remember: the volume of water used by the entire Ridge is divided equally among all users and we are charged accordingly.

On the back of this update, please find a list of contacts and resources that you can use to voice your opinion, lobby for reduced price hikes and find out more information. Thanks to Jeannie Bubriski for pulling together these resources and to Martha Schoonover who initially checked in to the then looming water problems that would impact the Ridge.

**Information Resources for the East Northfield Water Company (ENWC)
And the Massachusetts Department of Public Utilities (MDPU)**

1. Petition by the East Northfield Water Company For Approval of a General Rate Increase as set forth in MDPU No. 13, Docket #19-57 , Hearing Officer Kevin Crane, Docket Opened 05/17/2019
2. Suspension of this Petition above on May 30, 2019 for further investigation until April 1, 2020, and a copy of this suspension be filed with the Rates and Revenue Department of the MDPU, signed by Matthew Fraser, Chairman; Robert Hayden, Commissioner; and Cecile Fraser, Commissioner.

NOTE: Jean Bubriski has copies of these documents, thanks to Doug Denise. You could get a copy from Jean by emailing her at jbubriski33@gmail.com or by requesting them from MDPU.

3. <https://www.mass.gov/orgs/departement-of-public-utilities>. This is the website of the MDPU with contact information. The phone number of the Rates and Revenue Department of the MDPU (mentioned above in #2) is 617-305-3565. Consumer Complaints' phone is 617-737-2836 and email: DPUCustomer.Complaints@state.ma.us.
4. <https://www.mass.gov/how-to/file-a-complaint-involving-a-gas-electric-or-water-company>. This is a site of the Massachusetts Government where consumers can file complaints, specifically here involving water companies.
5. <https://www.masslegalhelp.org/housing/lt1-chapter-6-dept-public-utilities>. This site may provide legal help with problems or complaints if the ENWC rates go up as high as the Water Company wants them to.
6. https://ballotpedia.org/Massachusetts_Public_Utilities_Commission. This site gives the names and information about the Commissioners of the MDPU.

7. State Representative Paul Mark
Paul.Mark@mahouse.gov
State House
24 Beacon St.
Room 160
Boston, MA, 02133 **Phone:**(617) 722-2304
P.O. Box 114
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State Senator Joanne Comerford
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**August 3, 2019, Rustic Ridge Association Annual Meeting
Rustic Ridge Road Committee Report**

The Road Committee is happy to report that several projects are completed, and others are scheduled for this early August. Seth Wiggin is now managing Wiggin Hydroseed and he has done an excellent job on the Ridge projects.

Completed 2018- 2019, expenditures \$2,500

1. Culverts cleaned, fall 2018, invoice pending
2. The overgrown swale/ditch along Spring Lane was excavated for several feet at the junction with North Lane to decrease washout, \$350
3. The swale on Wood Way by Hanrahan was paved and water path rerouted into culvert. The culvert was cleaned and the receiving ditch across Wood Way was widened. \$850.
4. Broken culvert pipe on the Willows was replaced with larger one, will be repaved in August, \$1300

Proposed Budget 2019-2020

Roads

- | | |
|--|---------|
| 1. August, West Lane macadam repair of root heaves | \$1700 |
| 2. August, Pine Road macadam to redirect water from Sherburnes | \$1200 |
| 3. Culvert cleaning, late fall and early spring | \$1200 |
| 4. Fill potholes Oak Terrace, Wood Way, Willows, other | \$900 |
| 5. Winter repairs | \$1,000 |

Total **\$6,000**

Cleaning/Trimming

Roads were cleaned over Memorial Day weekend, invoice pending. Trimming scheduled for August and both expenses have been rolled over to the 2019-2010 budget of \$700

**Respectfully submitted,
The Road Doctors,
Lucy and Phil Livingston**

Rustic Ridge 2019

July 2019

August 2019

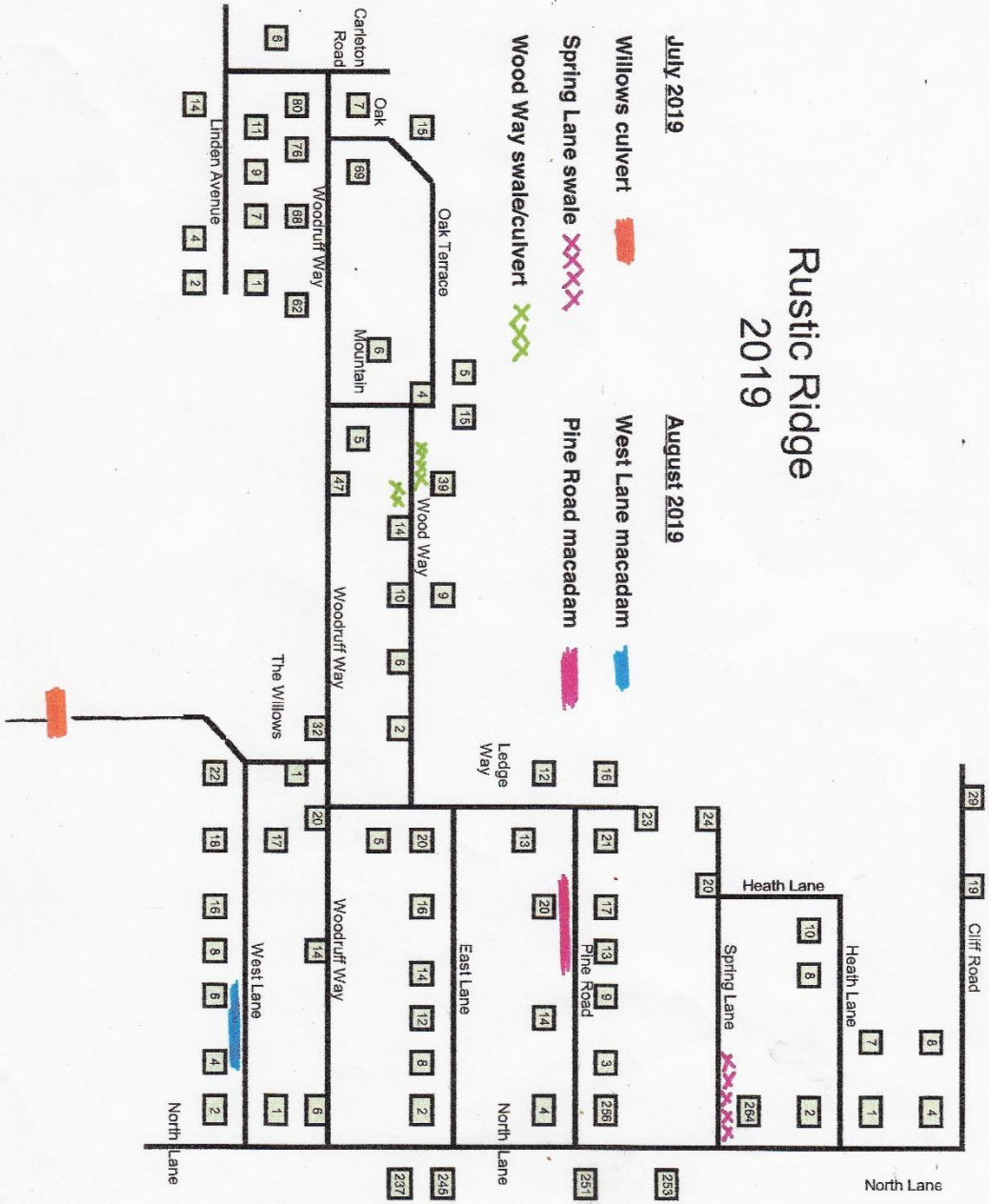
Willows culvert

West Lane macadam

Spring Lane swale

Pine Road macadam

Wood Way swale/culvert



**Rustic Ridge Association
2019-20 Budget**

Date 7/31/2019	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020
	Actual	Actual	Budget
Starting Cash - August 1	\$18,463	\$21,582	\$27,428
Revenues	\$12,491	\$12,843	\$12,608
Dues - Members	\$9,150	\$9,000	\$9,000
Dues - Associates	\$1,400	\$1,520	\$1,600
Interest	\$6	\$8	\$8
Donations	\$1,935	\$2,315	\$2,000
Expenses	\$9,372	\$6,997	\$12,648
Brush Removal	\$0	\$0	\$400
Community Contribution	\$900	\$900	\$900
Five Acre Property	\$1,038	\$73	\$400
Flower Garden	\$0	\$286	\$250
Insurance	\$943	\$943	\$943
Meetings	\$0	\$125	\$200
Misc - Memorium Books	\$0	\$65	\$100
Postage & Printing	\$0	\$0	\$35
Road (Maintenance)	\$4,140	\$2,500	\$6,000
Road (Trimming & Cleaning)	\$90	\$0	\$700
Security	\$200	\$200	\$200
Signs	\$0	\$0	\$50
Social Events	\$361	\$190	\$450
State Corporation Tax	\$0	\$15	\$20
Trash	\$1,600	\$1,600	\$1,600
Town-Ridge Liaison	\$100	\$100	\$100
Youth Activities	\$0	\$0	\$200
Web Site	\$0	\$0	\$100
Ending Cash - July 31	\$21,582	\$27,428	\$27,388
Beginning Bal + Rev - Exp	21,582	27,428	27,388

Note: Ending cash equals beginnng balance + revenues - expenses (any difference due to rounding).