

Town of Plainfield, Vermont
Select Board Meeting
April 13, 2020
Remote-Only Meeting Via Zoom
Approved Minutes

Present electronically: Select Board members Tammy Farnham, Sasha Thayer, Jim Volz.

Other Electronic Participants include: Baylen Slote, Bram Towbin, Mary Niebling, Linda Wells (Town Clerk/Treasurer), Amos Meacham (resident), Will and Eric

Sasha Thayer called the meeting to order at 7:05pm

Review Agenda:

No changes were made to the agenda.

Update regarding the Vermont Agency of Human Services Wellness & Recovery Campus at Goddard College:

Sasha relayed the update relating to the Goddard project as the state had decided not to go forward the proposed use of the COVID-19 site, as such the proposition has been halted for recovering COVID-19 patients.

Treasurer Update:

Linda indicated that things are going well despite the decreased hours. She signified that they would continue to have the municipal building closed until at least May 15th, as such it seemed appropriate to extend the deadline for dog licenses to May 15th.

Jim Volz moved to extend dog license to May 15th, which was confirmed by unanimous vote of the Select Board.

Linda stated there would be a further exploration of electronic payment for taxes and water/wastewater payments, there will be an update in coming weeks.

Warrants for Approval:

- Payroll April 3 & April 10
- Accounts payable: Cemetery Commission (April 3)
- \$12,360 Dufrane contract, details requested prior to payment (Tammy volunteered to follow-up)

Jim Volz moved to approve payroll for 4/3, 4/10, which was confirmed by unanimous vote of the Select Board.

Tammy Farnham moved to approve the cemetery commission, which was confirmed by unanimous vote of the Select Board.

Jim Volz indicated that the warrant for the Dufrane payment would be held until an itemized bill is received with more details.

After reviewing the March 3 Town Meeting minutes, Jim Volz moved to approve the minutes, which was confirmed by unanimous vote of the Select Board.

Fleet Permits Pending Approval Include:

- Agri-Mark
- Boarderline Trucking
- Conneticut valley Trucking
- Fred Vance Trucking
- G.W. Tetreault Construction
- Curtis Lumber
- Gills Construction
- Newton Dubois Construction
- Mikilian Crushing
- Hutch Crane
- Pike Industries
- S.D Iserald

Tammy Farnham moved to approve the fleet permits during this meeting, which was confirmed by unanimous vote of the Select Board. Due to the inaccessibility to the Town Clerks Office at this time, Jim Volz moved to authorize Linda to sign fleet permits, which was confirmed by unanimous vote of the Select Board.

Road Report:

Bram Towbin indicated there is one major culvert project on East Hill, that has been slowed due to a determination was made to get a hydraulic study done.

Line painting is intended to cost \$8,500, however, they have been unresponsive due to COVID-19. The payment for the line painting will be split into two separate payments.

Evaluation of the differences and recommendations for the bucket loader purchase have not yet been received, Bram Towbin suggested that he will have them ready for the next meeting. Bids were received by Linda Wells for each loader, however, the proposal needs to include commentary from the road crew regarding preference and pros and cons of each machine. All information will be gathered before next meeting for further discussion. This topic has been added to the agenda for 4/27.

Agency of Transportation Projects:

No additional information.

The lowest bid for the Pedestrian Bridge Project was about double what was budgeted for, and the next closest bid was nearly triple. There is possibility to spend more money on a second

opinion from an engineer, with the intent to scale things down. This topic permits for further discussion. This topic has been added to the agenda for 4/27, with the intent to discuss if more information has been gathered.

Board Committees and Commission Meetings:

Sasha Thayer indicated that at this point board committee and commission meetings have been suspended until further notice. The only feasible way for committees to meet at this point is electronically, which requires structure and security. The discussion included whether there would be one method for holding meetings for the sake of consistency or at the discretion of each committee. Sasha Thayer expressed that public meetings need to be held within a modality that community members can access. If a committee wants to meet virtually, a committee member will need to assume the role of “host” and understand the responsibility of running a public meeting. The platform will need to be included within the agenda to ensure easy accessibility and clarity. It’s critical not to marginalize people, and ensure accessibility. Jim Baylen Slote expressed accessibility features of Zoom and the use of the dial-in phone number. With industry standards and increased privacy standards, Zoom has drastically improved. Jim Volz suggested that committees go forward with Zoom and publicize meetings appropriately and if Zoom is not suitable to have an alternative.

Sasha Thayer indicated that it is critical to lay out the expectations and for committee chairs to be responsible for the Zoom meetings. During the meeting on 4/17 (10:30am) the Select Board members will lay out expectations and make a decision. Before the meeting, Sasha Thayer indicated that she would draft a document for committee use to fully understand how to run a meeting for the Town of Plainfield.

Bram Towbin circulated a reference on how to protect yourself from hackers on Zoom, which is a vital component to making virtual meeting a success.

Will expressed familiarity with the Zoom platform and the ease associated with the proper protocols such as a waiting room. Phone numbers can be used in addition to the video conferencing to ease accessibility. Sasha Thayer expressed that the Zoom recording will need to be accessible to community members. It was expressed that in the past meeting minutes have been sufficient and did not require video footage.

This matter will be discussed again on Friday (4/17) to make a final decision, as further research will need to be done regarding getting the Town of Plainfield a Zoom account and allowing chairs to run meetings. A standard practice document will be established for all committees, with a designated host for each committee.

Tammy Farnham motioned to move forward with the use of the Zoom platform for Select Board and committee meetings; further details to be presented on 4/17. Jim Volz added to rescind the suspension of meetings with the pledge for all committees to request permission to use Zoom with a designated “host” to ensure the responsibility. This move was confirmed by unanimous vote of the Select Board.

Review/Appointments/Reappointments:

- Animal Control Officer – Kate Hayes
- Auditor – Mary Etta Chase
- Cemetery Commission – Ed Hutchensen (1 person correctly elected), David Spence, Kenley Freeman, Rocky Edison, Alice Morgan

Jim Volz moved to approve the above appointments/reappointments, which was confirmed by unanimous vote of the Select Board.

- Central VT Internet – Michael Burnbalm, Jerry Mematt (1-year)
- Central VT State Police Advisory Board – Kate Hayes
- Central VT regional Planning commission – Bob Asterson
- 1st Constable – Kate Hayes
- Conservation – Becky Ashterson (3-year) and Rose Hall (4-year)

Jim Volz moved to approve the above appointments/reappointments, which was confirmed by unanimous vote of the Select Board.

- Development Review Board – Elaine Parker (3-year)
- Emergency Management Director – Sasha Thayer
- Energy Coordinator – Bob Atchensen
- EMT Captain – Jonathan Matthews
- 1ST Asst. Fire Chief – Jonathan Matthews
- 2nd Ass. Fire Chief – Andy Hebert
- Fire Chief – Greg Light
- Deputy Chief – Gary Graves

Jim Volz moved to approve the above appointments/reappointments, which was confirmed by unanimous vote of the Select Board.

- Highway administrator/Road Forman – Mike Nolan
- Social Concerns – TBD, waiting on all candidates
- Water and Waste Water Commissions – Josh Pitts
- Register – Linda Wells

Jim Volz moved to adopt the above appointments/reappointments, which was confirmed by unanimous vote of the Select Board.

The remainder of the reappointments/reappointments will be discussed next meeting 4/27.

Approval of Minutes:

2/10, not previously approved.

2/27, had errors, but now updated.

3/31, pending further review due to error.

4/3, minutes sent out today.

Jim Volz moved to approve the meeting minutes for 2/10, 2/27, & 4/3 which was confirmed by unanimous vote of the Select Board.

Public Comment:

Sasha indicated that we are waiting for community members to come forward for other committees for appointment/reappointment. Sasha stated that she has put information on social media to gather a full span of interest from community members. The remaining appointments will be discussed on 4/27.

The suspension of committee meetings was as an attempt to keep community members safe. There is nothing pressing enough to risk exposure to the virus within our community. The legislator has passed the use of electronic media on 3/31, to support the context to reduce exposure and limit the use of an “anchor” location such as a town hall in a public location. No meetings were urgent enough to need to meet and increase risk of exposure. The decision was made by several other municipalities.

Jim moved to adjourn at 8:37pm, which was confirmed by unanimous vote of the Select Board.