

Town of Plainfield, Vermont
Select Board Meeting
June 22, 2020
Remote-Only Meeting Via Zoom
Approved Minutes

Electronic Participants:

Tammy Farnham (Select Board Member), Jim Volz (Select Board Member), Sasha Thayer (Select Board Chair), Baylen Slote (Zoom meeting coordinator/assistant), Linda Wells (Town Clerk & Treasurer), Sarah Albert (Community Member), Bob Fancher (Community Member), & Eric Blaisdell (Times Argus reporter)

Sasha Thayer called the meeting to order at 7:00PM

Review Agenda:

Agenda approved, no changes.

Announcements:

Sasha announced that it looks as though many of the current COVID-19 patients are young and recovering rapidly. She urges community members to continue to wear masks and practice social distancing.

Sasha also reflected upon the recent Times Argus article on the rec-field basketball court, and how well it was written. The court looks wonderful! The refinishing of the court was made possible by community contributions – thank you!

Public Comment:

Sarah Albert mentioned the class 4 road access to the town forest. Last meeting it was approved by the Select Board to have a contractor come in to brush hog the town forest trails next week; the trails have been flagged. Last week Sarah met two cars on the road in which she advised them not to drive the road with their vehicle, as the road is in poor condition. Sarah stated that there is water erosion and the rocks are significant. Sarah requested for the road crew to repair the class 4 road to the point where an ordinary vehicle can access the town forest parking lot, as it is not feasible right now. Sasha emphasized that things are too dry right now to do any work. Tammy stated that there will need to be further discussion, as the access to the town forest is a class 4 road and Mike should be involved in the discussion, as all class 4 roads should be addressed in the same manor. The road crew was working on a survey of the Plainfield class 4 roads and the maintenance needed for each, as there has been previous requests for maintaining a class 4 road, and they need to be maintained equally. Sasha emphasized that this maintenance is not to benefit a single person, this is to access a town resource. Jim wanted to hear the opinion from the town road crew as they have a better sense of time, cost and class 4 priority. Sarah added that the town got a recreational trail grant from the state with the implicit agreement that the town would remain access to the trail head.

Tammy requested a copy of the grant, as “access” is a loose term, and pictures of the road. Jim said that there are some rocks sticking up, and that it’s very feasible for a truck or SUV to drive up the class 4 road to access the town forest.

Town Clerk/Treasurers Report:

Linda stated the reopening of the municipal building continues to go well. There has been an increase of appointments for research, but it has been feasible to maintain the requests. Researchers are continuing to wear masks and gloves for research.

Warrants:

- June 2 – accounts payable
- June 11 – accounts payable
- June 15 – accounts payable
- June 17 – accounts payable
- June 12 – payroll
- June 15 – payroll

Jim moved to approve the above warrants, with a unanimous approval of all Select Board members.

Fleet Permits:

Amerigas / Blue Flame Gas – Morrisville.

Jim requested to move Fleet permit approval, with a unanimous approval of all Select Board.

Application for Access Permit:

Muriel & Stephanie Morris (1550 Upper Rd) have requested access for 40 feet of road. Mike has approved and signed the permit, but Select Board approval is needed.

Tammy moved to approve the access permit for 40’ road access on Upper Rd., with a unanimous approval of all Select Board.

Progress on Signs:

Linda stated that the signs have been installed. There has been no jumping of the bridge seen since the installation. Littering signs have been installed at the rec field. Sasha claims the rec-field looks good and free of garbage. Tammy noticed that there are wood chips by the rec-field, Baylen confirmed the pile is for mulching around the trees.

Meeting Minute approval:

- May 27
- May 28
- June 2
- June 8 – Amendment for adjournment time is 9:05pm

Jim moved to approve minutes with the amendment Sasha suggested, with a unanimous approval of all Select Board.

Financial Planning Obligations:

4 outstanding loans (*5, including the planned loader payment).

Fire dept. truck \$154,000 outstanding (annual payments of \$20,000) 7 years left

Highway dept. 2018 Mack \$60,000 outstanding (annual payments of \$20,000) 3 years left

Town hall elevator repair loan \$16,789.34 outstanding (annual payments of \$5,600) 4 years left

Solar array at park & ride \$17,390.38 outstanding (annual payment of \$3,000) 5 years left

*Loader of \$60,000 outstanding (annual payment of \$12,000) 5 years left

No delivery date yet for the loader, it will be mid-July before the purchase is finalized.

Linda advised that things look well for the fiscal year. With the planned purchase of the loader, there will be \$308,000 in outstanding loans, Linda suggested to start to pay things off before purchasing more. With the loader, the town will be paying a total of \$60,600 annually toward loans. Tammy indicated that these outstanding loan values are something to consider when planning for the pedestrian bridge.

Fire department does not anticipate any additional purchases aside from repair to the back of the building (they are working on obtaining an estimate(s) to see where they stand).

Highway department is in good standing, however Linda indicated that the road crew has been struggling with the '07 Mack, hopefully can wait to upgrade after the '18 Mack is payed off. The equipment budget has been increased which will hopefully reduce the need for loans in the future.

The budget will be tight for the next 3 years, as all the above loans will all still be active.

The line painting in the village will be done on Wednesday (unless it rains). Half the payment for the line painting will be this fiscal year, and the second half will be next fiscal year.

The Brook Road Bridge Project Update:

Culverts will be installed on Wednesday. The Brook Road will be closed from the intersection of Gray Road to the intersection of East Hill Road (except for local traffic). Linda will announce the intended construction and alternative route on Front Porch Forum.

There is a catch basin drain pipe under Main Street at the corner of Creamery Street that goes under the road toward fire department, Mike believes the pipe might be broken resulting in leakage. The water department line is in the same area, so Mike is concerned about digging to repair the catch basin drain pipe and disturbing the waterlines. Mike is going to get estimates to see how much it would cost to repair. There have been minor repairs to keep it from leaking extensively.

Special Meeting 6/24:

A special meeting will be held on Wednesday 6/24 at 5:30 for opening the opera house and developing protocols for COVID-19. Jeremy is wondering about the viability of the internet, as such he wants access to the building. Sasha inquired with Tammy and Jim about if an in-person meeting would make sense for the Town Hall (a total of 7/6 people), with the use of a Zoom meeting format for other community members. Tammy & Jim said that they don't see any advantage of being in attendance at the opera house. Baylen suggested for one person (Jeremy?) to make sure the internet connection and speed is viable enough for a Zoom meeting. The meeting on Wednesday will be held via Zoom, not at the opera building.

Update on the agenda meeting expectations and procedure and practice:

A hard copy of meeting agenda/notice must be made in 3 locations. Select Board meeting times can be found on the website. By law, notice of the meeting is required within 24 hours. Sasha indicated that she doesn't mind to continue to provide documents as a courtesy.

Publishing the date of all public Select Board meetings covers the statutory requirements, agenda is unrelated. Special meetings are planned in addition to the regular Select Board meetings, holiday changes also may affect meetings. As soon as the addenda is solidified to post it to the website to ensure clarity. Meetings are held as a practice on 2nd and 4th Monday of each month. Request for Kathy to post on the calendar going forward, Tammy will follow up.

Rt. 2 Main Street intersection project:

Tammy updated that she has been in contact with the Vermont Regional Planning Commission to determine an approach to try to get community feedback on how to proceed with a design. Once feedback is received on the design we can proceed with negotiations. Due to meeting limitations, this project has been halted, small meetings were discussed to control the number of people (outside, opera house, zoom) a survey could also be used to determine what community members want, as this will help to move forward with the intersection. The time frame for the small meetings is intended to be end of July, in order to get the design finalized for the fall. Sasha mentioned that there are various things asked to be addressed including the closure of Main Street. The ultimate goal is to determine how to effectively hear from the public to decide to respond to the posed questions. Tammy emphasized that she wants all of the Select Board members to be involved in this project. There are many design elements to consider that demand the opinion from a broader group of people. Tammy requested to split up the Select Board team to conduct the meetings and "divide and conquer". Jim and Sasha agreed to this approach. A special meeting will be held to discuss the logistics. Date is TBD.

Pedestrian bridge extension was completed by Sasha.

Appointments:

Town Constable – job description (completed by Sasha & sent to other SB members, approval of Town Constable job description will be via email.)

Road Forman - need Job description

Minute Taker – need Job description

Jobs will be posted once description is created and approved. The jobs will be posted within: Newspaper advertisements (Times Argus), social media (Plainfield people, front porch forum).

Charge for Times Argus for Producing Public Records Response:

Research was provided to Times Argus; Tammy spent nearly 2.5hrs digging through emails and documents. Jim will look in the statute to see what the requirements for charging are. Sasha will contact the league and report back.

Agenda Items for 7/13:

Job description approval

Appointments (if candidates arise)

Road Crew – plan for Mikes absence

Class 4 Road Survey

Charge for Times Argus for Producing Public Records Response

Jim moved to adjourn at 8:47pm, all in favor – unanimous.