

Town of Plainfield, Vermont
Select Board Meeting
December 14, 2020
Remote-Only Meeting Via Zoom
Approved Minutes

Electronic Participants: Tammy Farnham (select board member), Jim Volz (select board member), Sasha Thayer (select board member - chair), Linda Wells (town clerk/treasurer), Eric Blaisdell (Times Argus reporter), Greg Light (fire chief), Mike Nolan (road foreman), Alice Merrill (community member and town grant writer), Grace Vinson (Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission), Susan Grimaldi (Plainfield Historical Society member), Gail Falk (Social Concerns Committee member), Marcie Hall (Social Concerns Committee member), Judy Cyprian (Social Concerns Committee member)

Approval of/changes to agenda:

No changes.

Announcements:

No announcements.

Public Comment:

No public comment.

Town Clerk/Town Treasurer Report:

Linda mentioned that there are two legislative changes that the select board needs consider, including moving 2021 Town Meeting voting to Australian ballot. Sasha iterated that this would only affect 2021, it would not carry forward to proceeding Town Meetings. Jim moved to conduct Town Meeting by Australian ballot for the upcoming March 2021 meeting, with a unanimous approval of the select board. Tammy added that the town would host informational meetings prior to the Town Meeting. Eric enquired about if the upcoming projects would be ballot items, the select board responded yes, that various projects would be voted upon. Linda stated that the second change would be to add any article on the ballot without a petition. Sasha expressed concern about anyone adding anything to the ballot, Jim shared this concern. Tammy iterated that there must be relevance and interest in an issue, which is what a petition typically represents, as people are united in an issue. Jim expressed interest in deciding on ballot items on a case-by-case basis and whether a petition is needed. Linda stated that there is typically a deadline for adding ballots items, a deadline for requesting the select board to waive petitions will be discussed during the December 16th special select board meeting.

Linda reminded that the Twinfield ballots are co-mingled with Marshfield, and the tabulator will need to be pre-programmed for counting. There will be two different ballots which raises as concern for counting both ballots. Linda has reached out to the tabulator company in hopes of resolving. Linda said the town can't have very many hand counters due to COVID. The town of Marshfield has not yet established where their polling place will be yet, more planning will be forthcoming. Mailing ballots will need to be taken back up with the legislature before decisions

are made. Linda said that up to the current time school ballots have been counted, this is the first year that Plainfield has used a tabulator. Linda will keep the select board updated.

Warrants for Approval:

Payroll Warrants – 11/6, 11/13, 11/20, 11/27, 12/4, 12/11

Jim moved to approve the payroll warrants, with a unanimous approval of the select board.

Accounts Payable Warrants - 11/16, 12/4, 12/9

Tammy moved to approve the accounts payable warrants, with a unanimous approval of the select board.

Meeting Minute Approval:

11/12, 11/17, 11/23

Jim moved to approve the meeting minutes, with a unanimous approval of the select board.

Fire & Rescue Budget:

Linda sent the budget for 2019-2020 and 2020-2021, which shows the current spending from 7/1 to 12/6. The EMT stipend was \$2,450 last year, this year it was more because there are more members, so they were over by \$736. Greg said that they could use some of the money from the Marshfield stipend. Greg indicated that he believes the EMT stipend could remain at \$3,000. Greg believes the electricity, telephone, & fuel (for furnace) can remain the same There is \$45,843 in the reserve fund, and Greg informed the select board that the bottom-half of the back of the building has rotted out due to the road being heightened. The bottom of the fire department frequently floods (2-3”) during the spring/summer and has a lot of black mold. The estimate that the fire department received is \$80,000 (with contingencies). Greg believes that within a 10-20-year time frame that the town will need to look into building a new fire department. Greg indicated that there is no great way to deal with the drainage/run off because of the cemetery. The building itself has not been a big cost/liability to the towns people. Greg recognized that with all of the projects going on in Plainfield it does not seem feasible to replace the building. Greg believes that the corners could be cut to lessen the cost of the project, but the project would include cement work, fixing the back exit, replacing the clapboard, and getting rid of some of the mold to prevent advancing rot. Jim and Tammy suggested to finance the repairs and fix the back and side of the building and use a portion of what is in the account. Tammy suggested to increase the maintenance/repair budget to \$9,000. Greg proposed to discuss the repair of the building further at another meeting. Greg mentioned that dispatch is one area of the budget that he would like to increase by \$1,000. Sasha requested a draft proposal and bring it to the next budget meeting. \$2,800 was budgeted for truck repair & fuel, and this year \$4,695, the overage was due to fully servicing the engine and tanker to make sure the trucks are running good. This funding was taken out of the truck fund. Tammy mentioned the overall budget looked pretty close to actual costs.

Sasha suggested to schedule two budget meetings in early January (5th & 7th, times TBD) to discuss the budget further and finalize.

Highway Department Budget:

Mike requested to keep the highway department tools/supplies budget and loader budget the same. He indicated that the loader budget could be changed from \$1,000 to \$500 since they

purchased a new loader this year, he also cut the 2005 Mack truck from \$3,000 to \$2,500 since they aren't putting many miles on it as they only use it for chloride and as a backup. Mike requested to boost the Ford up to \$4,000 (+\$1,000 from the previous year), and tires (+\$1,000 from the previous year). Tammy inquired about the guardrail budget, as it is currently 158% over, it may make sense to increase the budget to \$5,000 (currently at \$3,500). Due to time constraints, this will be further discussed at a budget meeting in early January. Tammy will email Mike pertaining to additional questions that she has regarding the budget.

Brook Road Bridge Project:

Grace was not able to find any additional sources of money for the town funding portion/match. The match funding needs to be non-federal. Grace believes the best route would be a bond share, which would need to be voted upon by the towns people. She indicated that the town could apply in July 2021 for the bond (through the Vermont Bond Bank), and apply for the FEMA grant in January 2021. By the time the funds would be dispersed the interest rate will have changed, the current interest rate is 2%.

Tammy moved to not continue with the grant relating to the Brook Road Bridge project for 2021, with a unanimous approval of the select board.

Alice also recommended to wait to apply for the FEMA grant until 2022. Alice believes this would allow time to look at a schedule for the construction projects in progress and vote upon the project in 2022. Alice requested the select board to continue to pursue the project as the Brook Road Bridge needs to be addressed at some point.

Social Concerns Committee:

Gail, Marcie, and Judy joined on behalf of the Social Concerns Committee. Almost everyone recommended level funding, the health & wellness committee asked for a little more due to COVID-19. Washington County Mental Health did not apply, if they want to apply late they need to petition the select board. Sasha thanked the committee for being so thorough. Jim moved to accept the recommendations by the Social Concerns Committee to put that before the voters, with a unanimous approval of the select board.

Plainfield Historical Society Grant:

Susan Grimaldi spoke on behalf of Plainfield Historical Society, Susan applied for a grant through the preservation trust of Vermont for historical building deterioration restoration and they deemed the town of Plainfield eligible. Susan wanted to get the select board's approval to submit the grant on behalf of Plainfield. The smallest grant amount is \$50,000, which is what Susan requested to apply for. An endorsement/letter of support would benefit the application for the project and if the town willing to contribute any funding toward the project. Sasha inquired about the amount of money requested (\$50k) in order to make the building workable, Susan ensured the select board that the estimate that they obtained was for \$32,000. The \$50,000 would allow for some upgrades including paint, handicap accessibility, etc. Without the grant Susan does not foresee the building being repaired. Right now, the Plainfield Historical Society has a budget of \$64,000 (\$10,000 pledged from the Historical Society, \$4,000 Zolof asbestos removal, \$50,000 grant – if received). Sasha indicated that there was \$1,000 allocated last year, and the

town could allocate another \$1,000 for the next year. Susan requested a letter from the town outlining the significance of the building and the reason for allocating \$2,000. Tammy asked about further responsibilities and accountability of the town. Susan indicated that there would be maintenance going forward to ensure that the building is up kept. Susan said that she would get a draft letter to Sasha for approval on 12/16. Susan assured the select board that there are no further project contributions expected from the town of Plainfield.

Jim moved to approve the grant application process and sending a letter of support, with a unanimous approval of the select board.

Board Meeting on 12/16:

Development Review Board
Planning Commission
Conservation Commission

As of December 16th, level fund or cut the budget for the committees/departments that the select board has not heard from. The goal is to level fund the total budget.

Pedestrian Bridge Project Update:

The goal is to open the project for bid on Friday (12/18)

Route 2-Main Street Intersection Remediation Project Update:

Tammy met with Greg & Gary from Fire & Rescue to try to establish an approach. Greg & Gary are working on timeframes for detours and documentation on how to make a proposal to the state. Tammy has not yet met with the water & sewer department. She asked Alice to keep an eye out for grants relating to the water and sewer portion of the project (\$200,000-\$250,000).

Website:

Sasha put together the description/solicitation for a webmaster/web administrator, which she developed as more of a support position. The budget was initially designed to be \$3,000 for the initial website design and 1 year of maintenance, which was somehow carried on to proceeding years, therefore the budget should be closer to \$1,000 per year (5 hours/month). Once someone pursues the contract, a rate will be established. Sasha found someone to do website support in the interim for community service. Tammy requested to review the content, email Sasha and reconvene on 12/16.

Jim moved to adjourn at 9:29 pm, with a unanimous approval of the Select Board.

Upcoming Meetings:

December 16:

Finalize Ballot Items (?)
Finalized Website Description Approval

Development Review Board Budget
Planning Commission Budget
Conservation Commission Budget

December 28th:

No Select Board meeting due to Christmas

January 5th & 7th:

Fire & Rescue Budget

January 25th:

Establish date for Town Plan hearing