

**Plainfield Select Board Meeting
May 5, 2021
Minutes - Approved**

Electronic Participants: Select Board members Tammy Farnham, Sasha Thayer, and Jim Volz (chair), Linda Wells (Town Clerk & Treasurer), Greg Chamberlin (Water/Wastewater operator), Jesse Cooper (community member), George Cushing (community member), Bob Fancher (community member), Steven Farnham (community member), Susan Grimaldi (Historical Society board member and community member), Mary Lane, (Water/Wastewater Commission chair and community member), Greg Light (Fire Chief and community member), Tristan Macgregor Stuart (Water/Wastewater operator), Serena Matt (community member), Alice Merrill (community member and town grant writer), Josh Pitts (Water/Wastewater Commission member and community member), Ruben Ramirez (community member), Jamie Spector (Recreation Committee and community member), Alice Sky (community member), Baylen Sky (Town Health Officer and community member), Melina Vieux (community member), Betsy Ziegler (Central Vermont Solid Waste Management District representative and community member), and Eric Blaisdell (Times Argus reporter).

The meeting commenced at 7 PM.

Approval of/changes to agenda

Jim Volz moved that the following changes to the agenda be added to the Town Clerk's portion of the agenda. Tammy moved and the motion was approved unanimously:

Select Board administrative assistant

Access Permit: Shaun Flaskamper (contractor)/Estate of Anthony Spector (landowner)

Permission for the Emergency Management Director to have access to the Town Hall/Opera House accompanied by assistant(s)

Announcements

Jim Volz read the Public Participation portion of the [Plainfield Select Board Rules of Procedure](#).

Town Clerk/Town Treasurer Report – Linda Wells

- Re-roofing municipal building – There is still only one bid – from Randall Construction, who can do it in June. Sasha proposed that they go with the Randall Const. bid. Tammy suggests waiting for another bid. Greg Light said that the project will take six weeks and suggests that the town move on the existing bid so as to get the contractor committed. Sasha moved that they approve the Randall Construction bid, which is for \$33,446.00 for a steel roof. This is for the main roof, but not the small porch roofs, which would be an additional fee, plus more for shingles. Jim and Sasha approved the motion. Tammy withheld, asking for additional bids. Jim suggests that Linda move forward with the bid while continuing to seek other bids. If haven't heard from someone else within one week they will go with this bid. Tammy requests that they wait on the bids that were promised. Sasha moved to revoke her previous approval and **approve the Randall Construction bid effective one week from May 5 unless Linda gets additional**

bids. If she does, she will notify SB members, who will have a special meeting to approve one of them. If Linda doesn't hear from other contractors, or if the other bids are higher, she will go with the Randall Construction bid. A special meeting will be held if Linda gets a lower bid. The movement was unanimously approved.

- **Personnel Issues:** Employees are accruing leave time and reaching the annual maximum of 45 days (total). Due to workload with COVID they haven't had time off and are at risk for losing leave time. Request SB to consider raising accrual to 55 from 45 days so that they don't continue to lose time. This will keep the budget level. They seldom use all of them. Tammy: time to recharge is important. Her workplace is dealing with the same issue because it becomes a cost issue for the town to have so much paid time off. Linda: as we near the end of COVID and the office re-opens, office staff will have more time to do their work. She's sure that once we're beyond the pandemic things will return to normal. **Sasha moved that they raise the limit for accrued time to 55 days from the current time until June 30, 2022. The motion was approved unanimously.**
- **Part Time Assistance for Town Office:** Linda asked that the SB consider this for the future. Not prepared to discuss it now, but requests that SB consider it for the future. Tammy suggests working with Twinfield to find a high school student intern, as it is a great way to get work experience. Linda will let SB know when she's ready to revisit this issue.
- **Enforcement of Noise Ordinance** – Regarding fireworks. The Fire Department Chief has to issue a permit for fireworks displays. Use, possession, sale and distribution of fireworks (**20 V.S.A. § 3132**) is legal only after a permit is granted. Greg Light: you can buy them without a permit. At this time, some fire chiefs are pressuring the legislature to change the law. He's only issued 2 permits in the past two years although there have been many more displays than that. Jim: we don't have the means to enforce it. **Call the State Police and complain. Sasha will remind North Star that they need to attach a permit to each sale.**
- **Charter Communications Expansion of Service:** Members were unclear about this item.
- **Access permit** for Shaun Flaskamper (contractor)/Anthony Spector Estate (landowner). The landowner has paid for a culvert and the culvert has been delivered. In the past, the town has installed culverts for landowners so that they conform to the town's needs. Can we bill the landowner for the culvert? Tammy: the landowner is responsible for the culvert and the town has to inspect it. Sasha: Mike would prefer that the town do it so that it's done correctly. **Jim moved that the SB approve the access permit to install a culvert on the condition that Mike comes up with an estimate for what it will cost and the landowner agrees in writing to pay that amount in advance. The motion was approved unanimously.**

- **Excess weight permit for Walker Construction**, Stowe, Vermont **Sasha moved the approval of the excess weight permit application from Walker Construction of Stowe, Vermont with all our regular conditions. The motion passed unanimously.**
- **Mowing contract:** Linda has two bids, one from Abare for \$355 and the other from Jason Cushing Lawncare for \$350. Cushing has been doing it for ten years. Linda recommends that they continue to use Jason Cushing. **Tammy moved to approve a two-year contract with Jason Cushing and Cushing Lawn Care for mowing.** Linda requests that they do a multi-year contract. Tammy says that these services should be limited to a two-year contract so that others have the opportunity to bid. **The motion was approved unanimously.**
- **Approval of warrants:** Accounts Payable May 3 for \$46,004 and \$52,466.08. **Tammy moved to approve two payable warrants dated May 3, 2021 and a payroll warrant dated May 7. The motion passed unanimously.**
- Linda: **Bears are out** – make sure you seal your trash containers.
- **SB Administrative assistant position** **Sasha moved to approve Paula Emery to be the Select Board Administrative Assistant**, paid as a town employee to be paid at the same rate Erika Farnham has been paid. **The motion passed unanimously.**
- **Access to Town Hall:** **Sasha requests access to Town Hall and Opera House for Emergency Management purposes. Approved unanimously.**
- **Seeking Maintenance Manager for municipal buildings/facilities and grounds**
- It was announced that the **Town is still seeking a maintenance manager for municipal buildings, facilities, and grounds.** It is posted on the website and Sasha will post this again on social media.

New Climbing Structure for Rec Field – Jamie Spector

Jamie requested that the select board ask the town's grant writer to look into grant monies for a new climbing structure for the Rec Field, geared toward kids between 5 – 11. Discussion centered around whether the town would need to contribute matching funds and whether the town can afford to do so, given other projects that are underway. The Rec Committee doesn't have leads on grants. This is potentially something to use state COVID funds for. **Jim moved that SB authorize Alice Merrill to spend a few hours at town expense (to be written into grant application) to do the research on funding. Passed unanimously.**

Old Fire House

The building, located on High Street, is in a state of disrepair. Several people spoke to the fact that the building is in bad shape and may not make it through another winter. Ruben Ramirez is interested in purchasing the building for as little as possible due to the expense

of repairing it. Their goal is to keep it as a historic building for Plainfield and potentially offer it as rental space. They would like to have the ability to decline the offer if the town is asking too much for it.

There will be a special select board meeting on this topic on Monday, May 10 starting with a site visit at the Old Fire House at 5:30 PM, then moving to the Rec Field at 6:15 AM. Ruben will need to put a proposal together for the SB to consider in their May 19 meeting.

Main St-Route 2 Intersection Remediation Project

This is a standing item on the SB agenda.

Water and Wastewater

Greg and Tristan from Water/Wastewater plant and members of the Water/Wastewater Commission spoke to this issue. The town is trying determine what the financial considerations of the entire project are, and what that means to the town. No final numbers at this point; WW sent a letter to SB with their position on this.

Greg Chamberlain: The original estimate for the replacement of water and sewer lines is for \$250,000, which the WW commission doesn't have.

Mary Lane: WW used to have a reserve fund; there is no longer a reserve fund, let alone the additional \$250,000 to meet the financial obligations of this project. WW needs funding to continue operations. Asking roughly 300 people (village residents) to pay for the majority of the project would probably double their rates for at least one year. Anything else done to improve the system will also increase rates, which is not equitable.

Tammy: The town needs to pay for the utilities part of this job. It is a savings to people on the project because we're doing it before we *have* to do it.

Josh Pitts: The problem is that the Water and Wastewater Commission has a responsibility, which is in conflict with moving this intersection project forward. They represent the interests of the WW system and everyone on it. There is no way they will service an already hobbled system to replace water lines that don't need to be replaced for another 45 years. WW has a tenuous system that they are slowly and methodically trying to bring to a state of functioning so that it will last for many years to come. But they are relying on rate hikes to do this work. They need to spend ratepayers' money on improving the system, not fixing a problem that doesn't need to be fixed. Request for cooperation between WW and Fire Department on fire hydrants and maintenance of pressure during the bridge closure period.

Jim: To be clear, the entire town should have to pay for this – not just the rate payers, because the intersection project is a town project.

Tristan: Users on the system need to get the best quality water they possibly can. Greg and Tristan need to meet with the engineers and until then they don't have a lot of

information about the project. They have to keep water and sewer flowing throughout the project. They have to meet with the engineers to address their concerns.

Fire and Rescue

Greg Light: Gary Graves and Greg have met with Tammy. The Fire Department opposes closing the bridge as the state proposes, but they know that the intersection has to be fixed. They've made some proposals to make sure that residents of the lower and upper village are covered during emergencies. They've done test drives. They propose having a 24 hour, dedicated, staffed ambulance at the fire station. They've gotten prices for having a fire truck parked on High Street. The lower village will be at a disadvantage for mutual aid if something happens during the time that the bridge is closed. They are very concerned about this. They request information from Tammy about funding for these things.

Josh Pitts: Requests that FD and WW coordinate.

Greg Light: FD is working on installing a dry hydrant somewhere on School Street.

Tammy: The state is willing to help with this and they think it is a reasonable ask. They have to take the information to the feds. They felt that what we're asking for is doable. Tammy needs the costs for the East Montpelier ambulance to take to the state.

At this point, the intersection project will happen in three to five years. The quicker we make decisions the faster the project goes forward.

How to get Town Approval for this project: The big cost is the utilities, and we need to figure out how we're going to finance that as a town. But they don't have final numbers. **Tammy will update the SB as she gets the numbers, then the town will need to determine how to proceed with the discussion and decision making.** Tammy will keep updating as she gets numbers from the state.

Brook Road Bridge Replacement Project

This was moved to the agenda for the May 19 Select Board Meeting.

Town Composting Grant – Alice Sky

Alice has requested an extension of one year on the \$3,000 grant for a town composting site. She is asking for an extension until June 15, 2022 for the reasons laid out in the letter sent to the SB. The project is delayed for several reasons: the cost of materials, the educational aspect has been hampered by COVID, and there are problems getting people to get together for the training and volunteer work (also because of COVID). **Sasha moved that the town sign the agreement for the grant.** Sasha circulated a letter requesting a one year extension on the grant between Town and Solid Waste Management District.

The motion to approve the delay of the grant was approved unanimously. Tammy

moved that Jim be approved to sign the letter and the grant, which was also approved unanimously. Jim will sign the letter accepting the grant. Sasha will send the letter to Jim. Sasha will send the grant application to Jim for signing and sending to CVSWMD.

Public Comment

- **Dirt Bikes** – George Cushing. Big problem in the village lately. Melinda Vieux, Alice Merrill and Mary Lane all spoke to the issue as well. People are congregating in the evenings at the Park and Ride in trucks and dirt bikes and they are racing down the hill towards the village from the Park and Ride.

George is requesting that the town find law enforcement during the day to address the issue.

Sasha will call the Sherriff's office and request assistance.

- **COVID Relief Funds**

Jesse Cooper – Requesting information about the status of COVID relief money that is coming to the town. Sasha said it will come in late May or early June and we don't yet know what the options and range are, but there is no guidance at this time.

If you have suggestions for how to use the funds, please send to plainfieldtc@gmail.com.

- **Household Hazardous Waste Facility**

Betsy Ziegler requests information about the letter of approval for the construction of a hazardous waste facility in Barre Town using grant monies. It is not a funding request, but member towns need to send the letter. **Motion made by Jim to approve the letter unanimously approved.** The letter from Town of Plainfield needs to be sent by May 6, 2021. Sasha will send to Jim for signature.

- **Pedestrian Bridge**

Tammy met with contractor. They are scheduled to begin in early July. Planning for this needs to begin soon. There will be only one lane of traffic on the bridge. **Tammy will keep SB posted.** The contractor will fine-tune the date.

Approval of Minutes

There are no SB meeting minutes for January 5 yet. Sasha is working on them. Sasha sent requests to Jim and Tammy for changes to the April 12 and 26 minutes. **Jim Volz moved for approval of the minutes for April 12 and April 26 and the motion passed unanimously.**

Other business: There was no other business

Agenda for May 19 Select Board Meeting

Further discussion re items of focus for the coming year

Other Appointments

Friends of the Opera House contract proposal

Route 2 Project

Brook Road Bridge Replacement Project

- Review of timeline provided by Alice Merrill
- Financial implications of going forward and how to meet them
 - Review of ongoing and anticipated multi-year financial obligations including project yet started
- Implications of not going forward
- Discussion re whether there should be Town approval of the project

Also noted in discussion for future meeting:

COVID grant monies
Pedestrian Bridge

Adjournment

Tammy moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:22 PM and the motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted by Paula Emery