

Town of Plainfield, Vermont
Select Board Meeting
July 6, 2021
Minutes - Approved

Present: Select Board members Jim Volz (chair), Tammy Farnham, and Sasha Thayer, Town Clerk Treasurer Linda Wells, Paula Emery (select board administrative assistant), and community members Karl Bissex, George Cushing, Chris Ditmeyer, Kathy Fancher, Susan Grimaldi, Yoko Kishisitu, Alice Merrill, George Springston, Mary Trerice, and Betsy Zeigler.

Agenda:

Approval of/changes to agenda

Announcements

Public Comment

Town Clerk/Town Treasurer Report (Linda Wells)

- Re-roofing municipal building update
- Approval of application for “.gov” domain name
- Approval of warrants
- Approval of minutes inc. January 5, June 2, 8, 15 and July 6 AM

Planning for reopening buildings/meeting arrangements for boards, ctees & commissions

- American Rescue Plan Act/Coronavirus Local Fiscal Recovery update & authorizations
- Decision to apply for and accept American Rescue Plan Act/Coronavirus Local Fiscal Recovery (ARPA/CLFRF) funds allocated for Plainfield and to accept required Award Terms and Conditions and Assurances of Compliance with Civil Rights Requirements
- Designation of ARPA/CLFRF Authorized Representative for Plainfield and authorize Authorized Representative to sign the Acceptance of Award terms document(s)
- Designation of Contact Person for the Town of Plainfield to perform administrative tasks associated with the ARPA/CLFRF funding, such as tracking and managing the terms and conditions, compliance, reporting, etc. on behalf of the municipality

Trash at Rec Field and Mill St. park

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 inc. project not yet started
- Implications of not going forward
- Discussion re whether there should be Town approval of the project

Update on Old Firehouse alternatives inc. potential sale/lease

Pedestrian Bridge update including construction traffic control plan

Rte 2 intersection update including review of agreement between Town and State
Flood Road complaint from John Klimenok re road grading
Demolition or rebuilding of the home on Creamery Street
Other business

Chairperson Jim Volz called the meeting to order at 7:00PM.

Approval of and Changes to Agenda

Thayer proposed two changes to the agenda: 1) move the Creamery Street Building Demolition item to the Town Clerk's Report section of the agenda, and 2) to add the Bean Road issue to the regular agenda. **Motion approved unanimously.**

Announcements

Thayer announced that Greg Light invited the SB to come and see the work on the fire station. Discussion about whether to coordinate the tour of the Fire Station with the meeting with Jay Southgate. **Volz offered to contact Light.**

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Town Clerk/Town Treasurer Report

- ♦ Re-Roofing Municipal Building – Update
Wells hasn't heard from Randall Contracting. Expects to hear from them within the next two weeks. The roofing should begin in July.
- ♦ Approval of Warrants
Wells requested approval to pay two accounts payable warrants for June 21 and June 30, 2021, and two payroll warrants for June 18 and June 25, 2021. **Farnham moved to approve the warrants. The motion was approved unanimously.**
- ♦ Revolving Loan Fund Applications
Wells referred to an email from Karl Bissex of the Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) of June 23, 2021. The Revolving Loan Fund has approved applications for two projects, and recommends that the SB support both projects. The two projects are: the Fire Station's foundation repairs for the amount of \$19,000.00 and the Pedestrian Bridge project for \$35,000.00. The Revolving Loan Fund has offered to award a grant to the town so that the entire amount of each loan doesn't have to be repaid. They will provide a \$35,000.00 ten-year loan and a grant of \$35,000.00 for the Pedestrian Bridge Project. They will provide \$9,500.00 as a ten-year loan for the Fire Station foundation and a grant of \$9,500.00. **Wells recommended that the Fire Station be repaid in five years, rather than ten.** Wells requested that the SB approve the loans, stating that the town is borrowing from itself so there is no need to get voter approval. Thayer requested clarification about loan amounts. **Thayer moved to follow the advice of the RLF and approve a grant of \$9,500.00 for the Fire House [Station] repairs in a 5 year loan to complete the payments needed for the Fire House [Station] repairs. The motion was approved unanimously.**

Wells estimated that there will be \$84,000.00 in the fund after these loans are taken.

Farnham moved to accept the grant from RLF of \$35,000.00 and made a second motion to accept a ten-year loan for \$35,000.00 from the RLF to do the Pedestrian Bridge. Both motions were approved unanimously.

Wells read from the letter from Bissex of the RLF and offered to send it to the SB so that it can be discussed at the next meeting or a future meeting.

The Fire Department would like to make the building available for meetings in the future. Wells mentioned that the Fire Station is currently not in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Trash Receptacles at Recreation Field and Mill Street Park

Wells mentioned that people in the village have volunteered to keep an eye on the trash. Volunteers told Wells that Rec Field has been pretty good but the Mill Street trash has been bad and the sign was torn down. Wells' recommendation was that she put up another carry-in/carry-out sign. Thayer suggested putting up a no littering sign with penalties listed. **Wells will contact Work Safe about purchasing "state law -- no littering" signs.**

Betsy Zeigler requested information about having a paid person to collect the trash. Farnham said that that position is posted but no one has applied.

- ♦ Approval of Application for ".gov" Domain Name
Thayer offered to work with Wells to obtain the .gov website.
- ♦ Approval of January 5, June 2, June 8, June 15 minutes
Thayer noted that there were two changes to be made to the June 15 minutes, which were to add Ryan Christiansen to the list of people present and to add Tammy's suggestion about Montpelier. **Thayer moved to accept June 2, 8, 15 minutes and offered to make the changes above. The motion was approved unanimously.**

Planning for Reopening Buildings: Meeting Arrangements for Boards, Committees and Commissions

Wells reported that she has begun contacting committee chairs about meeting in person. The room upstairs in the Town Office building is available for meetings. Wells provided information about the meeting protocols and will provide this information as each committee contacts her. Some committees are meeting outdoors. Wells stated that she is willing to allow **meetings to take place inside the Municipal Building as long as people follow the health guidelines, which include: contact tracing, wearing masks, and sanitizing surfaces.**

American Rescue Plan Act/Coronavirus Local Fiscal Recovery Update and Authorizations

Sasha Thayer presented three motions relating to the American Rescue Plan Act/Coronavirus Local Fiscal Recovery Update and Authorizations. They are as follows:

1. Accept Plainfield funding along with required Award Terms and Conditions and Civil Rights Requirements.

Thayer moved that that the Town of Plainfield accept its allocation of Coronavirus Local Fiscal Recovery Funding (CLFRF) from the US Treasury, along with the Award Terms & Conditions and Assurances of Compliance with the Civil Rights Requirements that are requirements of accepting these funds. The motion was approved unanimously.

2. Appoint “Authorized Representative” Thayer explained that the Authorized Representative is an individual with legal authority to bind the government entity. An Authorized Representative must sign the Acceptance of Award terms for it to be valid.

Thayer moved that the SB appoint Jim Volz to serve as the Town’s “Authorized Representative” as required by the Coronavirus Local Fiscal Recovery Funding (CLFRF) from the US Treasury, to sign the Award Terms & Conditions and Assurances of Compliance with the Civil Rights Requirements by July 14,2021. The motion was approved unanimously.

3. Appoint Contact Person

Thayer explained that the Contact Person" should be the person who will perform the administrative tasks associated with the ARPA/CLFRF funding, such as tracking and managing the terms and conditions, compliance, reporting, etc. on behalf of the municipality. **Thayer moved Linda Wells to be the “Contact Person” for the Town’s CLFRF Award from U.S. Treasury.” The motion was approved unanimously and Wells accepted the task.**

Demolition or Rebuilding of the Home on Creamery Street

Wells received an email from a concerned citizen about the ongoing demolition or gutting of the house on Creamery Street. Citizen was concerned that there is no signage or barrier. Wells noted that everything was in order on that property and that the owners appear to be doing a good job of keeping it cleaned up. **SB determined that they do not need to take action on this item.**

Brook Road Bridge Replacement Project

Alice Merrill was asked to provide an overview of the project with emphasis on the most urgent matters and matters that need to be moved on during this meeting.

Merrill stated that these grants have time limits and that Timing is crucial. She stated that the town should indicate that it would like to apply for funding soon and begin the application process in August. It will be a lengthy federal grant, so she recommends that the town get started early. The goal is to time the process so that it can be discussed at Town Meeting in March. Merrill’s hours are the only expense incurred. If we are successful in getting the grant Merrill’s pay will be covered by the grant.

Merrill recommended that the town decide whether to apply for construction funding tonight. Thayer noted that she is not convinced that citizens will accept the financial obligations. Volz clarified that the citizens will have an opportunity to vote the project down at Town Meeting. This will put the town in the position to move forward if the town approves the project. Farnham requested that the town seek approval from citizens before beginning the application project, possibly deferring the application to next year. Volz added that of all of the projects underway at this point, this is the only one that is a safety issue that is putting peoples’ property at risk.

Yoko Kishisitu lives on the Brook Road near the bridge. She attended the meeting to update the SB that the project affects the greater community. She urged the SB not wait until the next big storm.

George Springsten spoke, referring to a memo he sent to the SB. He encouraged the SB to go forward with the grant application because the process will take years. He stated that, while he understands that there are financial challenges, it is important to move forward now because that bridge is susceptible to major and minor floods and puts people who live nearby at

substantial risk. He suggested that there could be a great discussion about this at Town Meeting.

Thayer asked how he suggests paying for it and noted that the SB needs to be in a situation where they have information to present to the voters when there is town discussion about it. Farnham noted that the cost will go up over time.

Merrill stated that, if the application is successful, the earliest FEMA will act on it is in three years, at which point the town has three more years to act; but the longer we wait the more expensive the project will be. She noted that FEMA may be persuaded to change their deadline because of the Route 2 project. She reminded the SB that the town has already spent money on this project. She stated that the SB needs to get more community input about it and urged the SB to invite Grace Vinson of Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission and Stephanie Smith to come to a meeting.

Volz agreed with Merrill and recommended that the SB authorize her to start the application process in August. He said that it can wait until the next meeting, but it needs to be acted on soon. Volz puts this high on the list of what SB needs to do and recommended putting this on the next meeting's agenda.

Farnham noted that if community input is required then the community needs to be informed about the issue through a special meeting.

Volz reminded SB that the town has already spent \$32,000.00 on this.

Merrill was asked to estimate the cost of writing the grant and suggested that it will be a few thousand dollars but that she has the help of Stephanie Smith and has done similar grants in the past, so has a lot of the information that will make completing the application go more quickly.

Springsten noted that the 2016 study ran through ten alternatives at community forums and a design was chosen.

Susan Grimaldi suggested that the SB agree to proceed with the grant application and then allow the town to have the option to approve or reject the project, noting that a vote by the SB to end discussion of this matter would disenfranchise members of the community.

Thayer expressed concern for those who are not aware of this discussion. Noted that the timeline is not pressing at this point. The costs of this project plus the Route 2 project are over \$600,000.00.

Farnham stated that the grant can be applied for every year.

Merrill suggested that this project be added to the town website and asked that the Malone and McBroom Study and the VHB design plans and benefit cost analysis be put on the website. She noted that these studies indicated that the benefit outweighs the cost.

Thayer requested that this item be put on the next meeting's agenda. Volz asked that it be put on the website. Thayer offered to put it on the town's homepage.

George Cushing requested that the SB not make another move until the town agrees to spend the money on it, noting the cost of other projects underway.

Update on Old Firehouse Alternatives Including Potential Sale or Lease

Farnham reported on a conversation she had with Jay Southgate, who expressed interest in buying the building. He stated that he intends to remove the building, rebuild it in his shop, and then replace it. Southgate does historic reconstruction professionally. He expressed concern about the condition of the building and suggested that he would make it taller. Farnham related the details of the discussion with Southgate, who is interested in making the building into a living space. Southgate is open to retaining the design of the front of the building. His question is whether the town wants to use the same materials or look historically accurate.

Farnham learned that the building doesn't have water or sewer. Farnham requested a special meeting in late July so that SB can begin the conversation with Southgate and offered to set it up with Southgate.

Volz noted that the building might lose its historic designation if Southgate changes it and reminded that there is a thirty-day notice requirement for selling town property. Volz also requested that we get quotes for stabilizing the building and then bring it up at Town Meeting for discussion.

This item will be added to the August 3 SB meeting agenda.

Betsy Zeigler stated that she spoke with Southgate about his idea and requested that there be community discussion of the future of the building. The loss of historic designation for this building would be a loss to the town.

Pedestrian Bridge Update Including Construction Traffic Control Plan

Farnham stated that the contractor is still working on traffic control. They were supposed to start July 1, but there was a holdup on traffic control. Will reach out to them tomorrow. The road signs are up and Thayer will update the town website.

George Cushing asked if there is a possibility to keep Mill Street open to through traffic because closing it cuts off two more businesses in town. Farnham said that they can't have traffic moving through the intersection at Mill.

Farnham noted that the plan for this project is on the town website and requested that questions about it be directed to her.

Route 2 Intersection Update Including Review of Agreement Between Town and State

VTRANS updated Farnham on the cost, which went up to \$311,000.00 because the town's share of the sewer and water pipes went from 50% to 56%. The town will be responsible for repaying the engineering costs from the time the town signed the agreement. **Farnham will forward the breakdown of costs and the agreement to the SB and requested a special meeting to go over the information.**

Farnham suggested that the SB needs to consider the Brook Road Bridge alongside this project.

A Special Meeting to discuss the Route 2 project was set for July 27 at 6:00PM.

Flood Road Complaint from John Klimenok

Farnham has met with Mr. Klimenok twice. Klimenok thinks that the town is widening Flood Road. Farnham detailed her recent meeting with Klimenok, who sent a letter to the town after the meeting. She noted that this issue has come up in the past with others, including former Road Commissioner, Bram Towbin.

Volz offered to contact Klimenok. Thayer suggested that he be contacted by writing and that he be asked to document the issue with survey maps, property deed and photographs. Farnham has gone twice and agrees with Thayer that further communication should be in writing.

Thayer was asked to draft a letter to Klimenok and send it to SB for their approval.

Bean Road Update

Farnham met with neighbors of the property in question and also with Karen Storey, Plainfield Zoning Administrator. Storey provided an overview of what's been done by ZA to date. Farnham also reached out to Janice Walrafen of the Development Review Board (DRB) for her perspective. She will now reach out to Jim Jamele, the landowner and Craig Chase (an engineer – for information about the septic system). Finally, she will contact Downstreet to try to assist the homeowner.

Volz indicated that he hasn't heard from the Town Health Officer yet.

Farnham stated that the chickens were in good health.

Chris Ditmeyer asked clarifying questions and noted that she understands that the goal is compliance – especially with fines. She did calculations of the fines, and determined that, depending on when you calculate from, there are three violations and each violation accumulates fines. One violation alone totals \$11,000.00. Calculated from the date of the violation through the end of May, 2021, the total for the other two violations would be \$35,000.00 or \$70,000.00, depending on how it is calculated. Ditmeyer stated that she wants the landowner to know how the fines are building up.

Thayer stated that the town would have to go to Environmental Court, with a lawyer and witnesses in order to levy the fines.

Volz spoke about the cost in relation to other matters of concern to the town and urged patience with the process while Farnham tries to address the issue.

Farnham added that we need to address the matter as a community and move toward compliance and resolution, stating that she's not sure the town would ever levy a fine of that enormity, especially if the landowner can be brought into compliance. Farnham stated that her biggest concern is the septic and noted that the trailer is not in use at this time, so the septic is currently not an issue. She will provide updates.

Ditmeyer requested that the matter be brought up at the next SB meeting for an update from Farnham on her progress.

Other Business

There was no other business.

Farnham moved to adjourn at 9:03PM. The motion was approved unanimously.

Agendas for Upcoming Meetings

Agenda items for July 20, 2021 Select Board Meeting

- report from Road Foreman Mike Nolan
- Further discussion re items of focus for coming year
- American Rescue Plan Act funds to Town (\$120,000) update
- possible use of/priorities for funds
- update re application for, receipt of, and amount of ARPA funds
- Update on Pedestrian Bridge construction
- Brook Road Bridge replacement
 - replacement approach chosen
 - reasons to proceed
 - financial obligations for town including \$310,000 town share
 - what approach should be taken re getting town approval for going forward
 - timing of any application for FEMA funds for replacing the bridge
 - input from townspeople re other factors/concerns/information
- Update on Rte 2-Main Street Intersection Remediation project
- Approval of minutes
- Update on Rte 2-Main Street Intersection Remediation project
- Approval of minutes

Agenda items for August 17 Select Board Meeting

- report from Road Foreman Mike Nolan
- Continuity of Operations Planning, Grace Vinson, CV Regional Planning Commission