

**Town of Plainfield, Vermont
Select Board Meeting
September 7, 2021**

Minutes - Approved

Present:

Jim Volz – Select Board Chair
Sasha Thayer – Select Board Member
Tammy Farnham – Select Board Member
Chris Ditmeyer
Ryan Christiansen
Melinda Vieux
Alice Merrill
Bob Fancher
Susan Grimaldi
Adam Hochschild
Paula Emery – Select Board Administrative Assistant

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

Agenda:

Changes to Agenda
Announcements
Public Comment
Town Clerk/Town Treasurer Report - Linda Wells (NOTE: report will be in writing as Linda Wells will not be present at the meeting)
- Review of additional/revised invoice for municipal building roofing
- Action on Special Event catering permit for Barre Country Club for October
- Action relating to catch basin repair
- Approval of payroll warrants for August 27 and September 3 and accounts payable warrants for August 27, two for September 1
- Approval of minutes inc. July 27 7:30 PM Update on Pedestrian Bridge construction
Update on 79 Bean Road request for legal consultation re possible zoning violation
Sale of Old Fire House to Jay Southgate/Southgate Steeples
- water and sewer
- zoning
- any issues relating to demolition of historic building
- status of building design
American Rescue Plan Act funds - Sasha
- amount received to date
- review of regulations re what towns can use American Rescue Plan Act funds for
- discussion of possible uses of American Rescue Plan Act funds for Plainfield
- regulations re time frame/deadlines for use of funds and reporting
- planning for further input from town departments and citizens re use of funds
Other Business
Agenda Items for upcoming meetings

Changes to Agenda

- Add meeting minutes for August 5 and 30 to Approval of Minutes
- Add the appointment of Gary Smith as a Lister for the town to Other Business

Announcements

There were no announcements.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Town Clerk/Town Treasurer Report - Linda Wells (*NOTE: Linda's report was in writing as Linda Wells was not present at the meeting.*)

- ♦ Action relating to catch basin repair
The quote from Baril Properties for repairing the Mill Street/Recreation Road catch basin is \$4,650.00 and \$9,826.00 for replacement.
Farnham moved to hire Baril Properties of Woodbury to do the catch basin repair for \$4,650.00 or the replacement for \$9,826.00. The motion was approved unanimously.
- ♦ Action on Special Event catering permit for Barre Country Club for October 1
Thayer moved to approve the Special Event Catering Permit for the Barre Country Club for October 1. The motion was approved unanimously.
- ♦ Review of additional/revised invoice for municipal building roofing
The removal of old and rotted shingles that was not included in the bid for the roofing job added \$8,962.00 to the roofing job. **Volz will contact Ken Randall on behalf of the SB to tell him that the SB did not approve the payment of additional expenses.**
- ♦ Approval of payroll warrants for August 27 and September 3 and accounts payable warrants for August 27, two for September 1
There was an additional payroll warrant for September 10. **Thayer moved to approve the payroll warrants for August 27 and September 3 and 10, and the accounts payable warrants for August 27 and two for September 1. The motion was approved unanimously.**
- ♦ Approval of minutes for July 27, August 5 and August 30
Thayer moved to approve the minutes for August 5 and 30. The minutes for July 27 are not finished yet. **The motion was approved unanimously.**

Update on Pedestrian Bridge Construction

Thayer reported on a conversation she had with the Washington County Sheriff's Department, who said that they've been focused on Middle Road speeding. They said that they will use stops for running the Pedestrian Bridge traffic lights as an opportunity for education. The sheriff also said that he thinks that the blinking light should be turned off during the construction.

Farnham stated that she spoke with Jason Keener, of VHB about turning the blinking light off and he said that that's up to VTrans. Jason will check with them about it. She also reported that Ross from VTrans came to check-in with the contractor and she hasn't had a report about that yet. The contractor thinks that there are two slabs and that there are boulders and voids under the second (deeper) slab. The structural engineer has been on vacation and when he returns they will meet with him. Keener's rough estimate for the wall and voids is \$30,000.00 over budget. However, on the Mill Street side, they have found ways to save money. Farnham will report out when she knows more. Finally, the

contractor noted that the engineer's vacation is causing delays that may delay the end date of the project.

Update on 79 Bean Road Request for Legal Consultation on Possible Zoning Violation

Volz reported that he's been exchanging emails with the neighbors of the property in question.

Farnham reported that she's been trying to contact the landowner, but has not been successful in phone, email or in person attempts. She stated that she believes that the best solution will be to send the landowner a certified letter requesting that the landowner contact the Select Board. She also reported that her attempts at finding financial assistance for septic construction were unsuccessful. She said that she spoke with Karen Storey, Plainfield Zoning Administrator, who said that she was unable to do a building permit for that property because of the flood zone.

Volz referred to the lengthy email exchange with neighbors and said that the town has enough information now to contact a lawyer for an opinion on what can be done next.

Thayer objected to spending money on a lawyer, reviewing points made previously about the need for evidence that would support a contention that the property is occupied.

Volz reported that the neighbors have agreed to testify in court if necessary.

Chris Ditmeyer, a neighbor, responded to Thayer, saying that the neighbors are not most concerned about collecting fines, but about compliance. She stated that the evidence Thayer is requesting is in the land owner's letter that was submitted last year, in which she says that she's hooked up the septic. They have the dates and times for those letters.

Volz noted that the Zoning Administrator's letters and the Development Review Board (DRB) decision lay out adequate facts to take to a lawyer for a review and information about the town's options. He also noted that the town Health Officer reported, via email, that the landowner is using the septic system.

Farnham said that it is time to get the landowner to comply, although impossible to determine whether the landowner's lack of compliance and communication is willful.

Thayer requested that the town be clear on what they are asking the lawyer for and reviewed her conversation with a lawyer, reported in a previous meeting.

Farnham proposed that Thayer contact an attorney to request a list of what the town will need to provide and to find out what advice can be given within a one-hour consultation. She stated that if SB sends a certified letter and the landowner does not respond, her lack of response will be considered a response.

Adam Hochschild agreed with Volz that the town should contact a lawyer, saying that it would be a good investment and that to let it go further would set a bad precedent.

Farnham moved that the SB send a certified letter asking the landowner to reach out so that they can get clarification on the zoning issues and lack of compliance with Development Review Board decision. The motion was approved unanimously.

Volz requested that Farnham draft and send the letter.

Thayer noted that the town has a \$2,000.00 annual budget for legal fees and **said that she will not block the consultation with a lawyer.**

Volz stated that the SB will determine what to do next at the September 21 SB meeting.

Ryan Christiansen and Chris Ditmeyer requested to speak and Volz stated that all agenda items are open to the public and up for public discussion, but that the SB can determine who can speak and when.

Sale of Old Fire House to Jay Southgate/Southgate Steeples

Farnham reported that she hasn't seen a design plan yet. She reached out to Karen Storey, Plainfield Zoning Administrator, who said that the flood zone is an issue and that she hasn't heard from Southgate. **Thayer offered to look into the historic preservation issues and contact the Development Review Board. Farnham said that she will check in with Jay Southgate.**

American Rescue Plan Act Funds

Thayer reported that the town has already received half of the allocation due to Plainfield: \$69,057.97 of the \$132,000.00 total. The issue with fund allocation to counties, rather than towns, has been successfully addressed by Vermont's Congressional Delegation.

Alice Merrill wrote, via Zoom chat, to clarify that the funds have to be obligated by December 31, 2024 and expended by December 31, 2026.

Thayer reviewed the possibilities for use of funds, referring to the [American Rescue Plan Act Compliance and Reporting Guidance](#) document.

Volz requested that Thayer publish the federal government information about the uses for the funding on the town's website. Thayer agreed to post the information.

Farnham requested that the SB set up a committee of 5 – 10 people to gather information about options and survey the townspeople about their ideas, stating that the members of the committee would be as capable of performing this task as the SB. The committee would report to the Select Board.

Volz requested that Thayer add this to the town website. Thayer agreed to add the notification about formation of the committee on the town website.

Other Business

Thayer reported that Alex Forbes has stepped down as a **Town Lister**, and that Gary Smith has volunteered to fill the position. This is an elected position so, if appointed, he will only serve until Town Meeting Day. Smith will need to get himself onto the ballot. Farnham clarified that two people applied, but as one of them lives in Marshfield there was only one applicant. **Thayer moved that the SB appoint Gary Smith as a Town Lister. The motion was approved unanimously.**

Farnham reported that the SB members have received emails requesting that the **Select Board agendas** go out sooner. She explained that the SB holds the agenda until shortly before the meeting so that it is as comprehensive as possible.

Alice Merrill requested to be on the October 5 Select Board meeting agenda to discuss the Brook Road Bridge replacement, as it will be time to make a decision about whether to apply for the federal grants. Thayer stated that this could be a complex agenda item, as there could be more discussion, warning that the SB needs to allocate the time. Merrill stated that the decision needs to be made some time in October. She is willing to explain how the process will work and will explain the program and the bond payment schedule.

Agenda for the September 21 Meeting

Farnham requested that the SB discuss the electric car charger at the September 21 meeting. It hasn't had a donation box for three months and she would like to discuss that. Volz suggest that Bob Atkinson be present to discuss the charger. **The SB agreed to add this to the meeting agenda.**

Tammy Farnham moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion was approved and the meeting adjourned at 8:31PM.

Respectfully Submitted by Paula Emery.

Agenda items for September 21, 2021 Select Board Meeting

- ♦ American Rescue Plan Act/Coronavirus Local Fiscal Recovery - an hour of this meeting scheduled to discuss and hear from the community re the use of these funds
 - review of total anticipated amount of funds coming to Plainfield: \$132,116
 - review of restrictions on use of funds and time frame for using funds
 - input from community members, organizations, town departments re best use of funds

- ♦ Electric Vehicle Charging Station Donation Box