

**Town of Plainfield, Vermont  
Select Board Meeting Minutes  
January 18, 2022**

**APPROVED**

**Present in Person:** Jim Volz, Select Board Chair; Sasha Thayer, Select Board member; Eric Blaisdell, *The Times Argus*; Paula Emery, Administrative Assistant to the Select Board

**Present via Zoom or telephone:** Tammy Farnham, Select Board member; Linda Wells, Town Clerk and Treasurer; Alice Merrill, Town Grant Writer; Mike Nolan, Road Foreman; Liz Bicknell, Plainfield Co-op board member; Jesse Cooper, Planning Commission

**Agenda:**

- Changes to Agenda
- Announcements
- Public Comment
- Town Clerk/Town Treasurer Report - Linda Wells
  - Approval of warrants
  - Approval of minutes
- Preparation for Town Meeting
  - Designation of day for Select Board hearing on Town Meeting Warning - February 22, 2022 at 6:30 PM recommended
  - Articles for Town Meeting warning re change of Town Clerk and Town Treasurer to appointed positions
- Article for Town Meeting warning re borrowing up to \$400,000 over a term of \_\_\_ years for repair of Main Street bridge
- Other articles for Town Meeting warning
- Positive Pie, Inc. Liquor License Renewals
  - Third Class Restaurant/Bar License to Sell Spiritous Liquors
  - Outside Consumption permit
  - First Class Restaurant/Bar License to Sell Beer and Vinous Beverages
- Update from Road Foreman including
  - possible costs for Main Street bridge repair
  - possible hiring decision
- Approval of Old Fire House Letter of Intent for Jay Southgate
- American Rescue Plan Act funds advisory committee charge and application form approval
- Approval of advisory sign re COVID-19 prevention for outside locations in Plainfield
- Other Business

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**Jim Volz called the meeting to order at 7:09**

**Changes to Agenda**

- Add updates on Main Street bridge and Route 2 intersection
- Move Road Foreman update to top of agenda

## **Announcements**

Thayer announced that there is currently a bill in the state legislature that will allow for public meetings to be held remotely.

## **Public Comment**

There was no public comment.

## **Update from Road Foreman, Mike Nolan**

Mike Nolan was present via speaker phone. Volz stated that the person to whom the Road Crew job was offered turned it down and suggested that the Select Board go into executive session to discuss the matter at the at the end of the meeting.

Nolan reported that one of the trucks is undergoing repairs, which is slowing down snow removal. He noted that he called a towing company to remove cars left on the street during the snow storm on Monday but that they weren't able to come. The Select Board expressed gratitude to Nolan and the Road Crew for their hard work under the current conditions.

Farnham reported on her meeting with VHB Engineering about options for repairs to the Main Street bridge. There was discussion about whether Nolan should seek estimates for the repairs or the town should continue to work with the Daniels Company. Farnham recommended continuing to work with Daniels Co., citing the challenges of getting estimates at this time of year. She also reported on her meeting with the new VTrans project manager for the Route 2 Intersection, stating that VTrans is aware of the issues with the bridge and that they have offered to help the town to locate funding for the repairs.

Thayer spoke in favor of getting estimates for the bridge repairs.

Alice Merrill spoke in support of the idea of having the Select Board meet with VHB Engineering to review the project and suggested that the Select Board rely on the relationship the town has developed with VHB.

There was discussion about the cost of meeting with VHB. **Farnham will ask VHB Engineering to meet with the Select Board.**

## **Town Clerk/Town Treasurer Report - Linda Wells**

- Approval of Warrants – Farnham moved to approve payroll warrants from January 7 and 14, and an accounts payable warrant for January 6. The motion carried unanimously.
- Approval of Minutes – Thayer moved to approve the January 4 Select Board minutes as amended, and the November 19 Special Meeting minutes. The motion carried unanimously. There was discussion about the level of detail in the meeting minutes.
- **Preparation for Town Meeting**  
Wells requested information about the items to be included in the Warning for the Town Meeting. **Thayer moved that the Select Board hold a hearing on the Town Meeting Warning on February 22, 2022 at 6:30 PM.** There was discussion about whether the meeting will be held at the Town Hall and Opera House or whether it will be held via Zoom. This will be determined prior to the meeting. **The motion carried unanimously.**

Wells gave an overview of the content of the Warning, requesting that the Select Board provide her with any items not included in the standard Warning prior to January 30.

Thayer raised the possibility of adding an item about whether the town will change the Town Clerk and Town Treasurer positions from elected to appointed. She has requested information on this matter from the Vermont League of Cities and Towns but has not received a response as of this meeting.

Thayer also asked about whether the town needs to add an item about borrowing funds for repairs to the Main Street bridge. Wells recommended, per a conversation with VTrans, that she be authorized to apply for a \$200,000 grant and requested authorization from the Select Board to do so, noting that if the town is awarded the grant the loan for the Main Street bridge repairs will be \$220,000.00.

There was discussion about whether the Select Board should warn the item as a request to borrow up to \$400,000.00 for the total cost of the repairs, or \$220,000.00 for the cost of repairs, assuming approval of the VTrans grant. There was discussion about the condition of the bridge and whether the need for repairs is urgent in relation to funding and costs.

Farnham noted that, while there is no engineering report on the Main Street bridge, the Daniels Company, VHB Engineering, Dufresne Group, and a structural engineer have all seen the underside of the bridge and are working together. She noted that the bridge repairs are a concern, but has not heard from any of the engineers that they are urgent.

Wells clarified that the grant funds need to be used within three years and that the town will have ten years to repay a loan.

**Wells was asked to write the item for the Town Meeting Warning seeking authorization from the town to borrow \$220,000.00, assuming receipt of a VTrans grant of \$200,000.00 for repairs to the Main Street Bridge, payable over ten years.**

**The Select Board opted to meet on January 25 to review the Town Meeting Warning.**

Alice Merrill noted that interpretation of the State of Vermont's bridge engineering reports requires both due diligence on the town's part and accurate reporting by VTrans. She recommended that the Select Board meet with VHB Engineering, as the condition of the bridge is a safety concern.

**Farnham will ask VHB Engineering to attend the January 25 meeting via Zoom. The time of the meeting will depend upon the availability of VHB Engineering. Farnham will notify the Select Board of the meeting time.**

### **Positive Pie, Inc. Liquor License Renewals**

Thayer presented a request for renewal of three routine, annual liquor licenses from Positive Pie (Plainfield). **Thayer moved to approve Positive Pie's Third Class Restaurant/Bar License to Sell Spiritous Liquors; Outside Consumption permit; and First Class Restaurant/Bar License to Sell Beer and Vinous Beverages. The motion carried unanimously.**

### **Approval of Old Fire House Letter of Intent for Jay Southgate**

Thayer presented a letter of intent from the Select Board to Jay Southgate laying out the conditions of the sale of the Old Fire House to Southgate. The Select Board made minor corrections to the letter and **Tammy Farnham offered to send the letter to Southgate for his approval. This item was added to the January 25<sup>th</sup> meeting agenda.**

### **American Rescue Plan Act Funds Advisory Committee Application Form Approval**

Thayer's draft of the application form was reviewed. **Volz moved to approve the American Rescue Plan Act Funds Advisory Committee Application Form and the motion carried unanimously.** The form will be posted on the town website and published in Front Porch Forum and Plainfield People. Thayer will post it and will send press releases to *The Times Argus* and *The Washington World*.

### **Approval of advisory sign re COVID-19 prevention for outside locations in Plainfield**

This item will be taken up at a future meeting.

### **Other Business**

Farnham reported that she met last week with VTrans about the Route 2 Intersection project. VTrans has made changes to the Maintenance Agreement for the Select Board to review within a couple of weeks. She noted that the Select Board's agreement to and signing of the Maintenance Agreement is a commitment to the project. The Maintenance Agreement will lay-out the town's obligations and what the town will owe if the project is terminated.

Thayer urged the Select Board to keep looking at federal funding for the Water and Wastewater Department.

**Farnham moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:48PM. The motion carried unanimously.**

*Respectfully submitted by Paula Emery.*

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### **Agenda items for February 4, 2022 Select Board Meeting**

- Discussion of Continuity of Operations planning, including broad municipal planning and planning for upcoming retirements, with assistance of Grace Vinson of Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission and Bruce Johnson, East Montpelier Town Administrator
- Approve Letter of Intent to Jay Southgate