

Town of Plainfield Special Select Board Meeting
January 25, 2022
Via Zoom
Minutes - Approved

Agenda:

- Changes to Agenda
- Announcements
- Main Street Bridge - receive information from VHB engineering re bridge condition, scope of repairs, time frame for repairs, range of cost estimate for repairs
- Town Meeting warning budget and /decisions:
 - Changes to budget, if any, needed for Town Meeting re Main Street bridge
 - Consideration of Town Meeting warning article re authorization to borrow \$_____ for Main Street bridge repair for up to ____ years
 - Consideration of Town Meeting warning article to authorize future appointment of Town Clerk: Shall the voters authorize the Select Board to appoint a town clerk as provided in 17 V.S.A. § 2651e? Consideration of Town Meeting warning article to authorize future appointment of Town Treasurer: Shall the voters authorize the Select Board to appoint a town treasurer as provided in 17 V.S.A. § 2651f?
 - Other Town Meeting warning articles?
- Authorization of Letter of Intent re Old Fire House
- Public Comment
- Executive session for consideration of employment of Highway Dept. employee, 3 VSA 313(a)(3)
- Return from executive session/decision, if any, in public session
- Adjourn

Present: Select Board members Jim Volz (Chair), Tammy Farnham, and Sasha Thayer. Also present were Town Clerk and Treasurer Linda Wells, Jason Keener of VHB, Charles Cogbill, Alice Merrill, and Eric Blaisdell of the Times Argus.

Chair Volz called the meeting to order at 11:04 am.

Changes to Agenda:

There were no changes to the agenda.

Announcements:

There were no announcements.

Main Street Bridge - receive information from VHB engineering re bridge condition, scope of repairs, time frame for repairs, range of cost estimate for repairs:

In response to Select Board questions, Jason Keener of VHB provided an update on the condition of the bridge and projected timeframe for repairs. He shared that it would likely be possible for the repairs to be completed without shutting down both lanes of the bridge but if it did need to be fully shut down that would likely be for about a month and a half.

Volz recognized Alice Merrill. Merrill expressed her appreciation for VHB and spoke in support of going forward with the bridge project.

Farnham stated that she has been in communication with VTrans regarding the Rt.2 project and will share information with VHB regarding an upcoming meeting.

Town Meeting warning budget and /decisions:

Changes to budget, if any, needed for Town Meeting re Main Street bridge –

Wells stated there were no changes needed to the budget.

Consideration of Town Meeting warning article re authorization to borrow \$_____ for Main Street bridge repair for up to ____ years –

Farnham and Thayer recommended asking for \$220,000 for Main Street Bridge repair to be financed over a period of 10 years if the Town is unable to secure sufficient grant funding to repair the bridge, as recommended by Wells, as well as applying for a structures grant in the same amount. **Thayer moved to approve the article to read “Shall the Town voters authorize the Select Board to borrow funds to repair the Main Street Bridge in an amount not to exceed \$220,000 to be financed over a period of not to exceed 10 years if the Town is unable to secure sufficient grant funding to repair the bridge”. The motion carried unanimously.**

Consideration of Town Meeting warning article to authorize future appointment of Town Clerk: Shall the voters authorize the Select Board to appoint a town clerk as provided in 17 V.S.A. § 2651e? Consideration of Town Meeting warning article to authorize future appointment of Town Treasurer: Shall the voters authorize the Select Board to appoint a town treasurer as provided in 17 V.S.A. § 2651f? –

Thayer stated that the Town Charter does not specify that the Town Clerk must be elected, although it does reference Elected Officials statute 17 VSA 2651e (d), which appears to indicate that the voters may decide whether the Town Clerk can be appointed.

Volz recognized Charles Cogbill. Cogbill expressed his understanding of the statutes and disagreement with Thayer's interpretation. He pointed out that the Town Charter states that all officers must be elected by Australian ballot. He asked what the justification is for this issue appearing on the warning and has the Select Board vetted these articles with the Vermont League of Cities and Towns (VLCT), the Secretary of State, the Town Attorney or other legal advice, or the Town Clerk. Volz replied that Wells had initially brought the issue to the attention of the Select Board. Thayer stated that the proposed language was vetted by VLCT. Volz and Farnham expressed reluctance to approve the article as worded without further input from VLCT and VT Secretary of State's Office. The suggestion was made by Volz to change the article to include advisory language. Wells stated she didn't agree with the idea of using advisory language on the ballot, she advised keeping the article on the ballot as is. Farnham proposed holding another special Select Board meeting to address this topic once advisement is received from VLCT and VT Secretary of State's Office. Select Board members and Wells agreed to a Select Board Special Meeting the following day. Thayer agreed to email and call the above mentioned entities, reporting back to Farnham and Volz.

Other Town Meeting warning articles? –

This agenda item was not discussed.

Authorization of Letter of Intent re Old Fire House:

Volz agreed to review the edits to the letter of intent. This item will be included on the agenda for a Special Select Board Meeting the following day at 6 pm.

Public Comment:

This item will be included on the agenda for a Special Select Board Meeting the following day at 6 pm.

Executive session for consideration of employment of Highway Dept. employee, 3 VSA 313(a)(3):

This item will be included on the agenda for a Special Select Board Meeting the following day at 6 pm.

Return from executive session/decision, if any, in public session:

This item will be included on the agenda for a Special Select Board Meeting the following day at 6 pm.

Adjourn: **Farnham moved to adjourn at 12:04 pm. The motion carried unanimously.**

Minutes respectfully submitted by Kristin Brosky, Plainfield Town Administrative Assistant.