

**Town of Plainfield, Vermont  
Select Board Meeting Minutes  
May 3, 2022**

**Minutes-Approved**

**Present in person:** Jim Volz, Select Board Chair; Sasha Thayer, Select Board member; Tammy Farnham, Select Board member

**Present via Zoom or telephone:** Linda Wells, Town Clerk and Treasurer; Jessica Louisos, SLR Consulting; Karen Bates, Department of Environmental Conservation; Christian Meyer, Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission; Charles Cogbill; Betsy Ziegler; Mike Nolan, Road Foreman; Alice Merrill, Town Grant Writer; Melinda Vieux; Andy Robinson; Ki Walker; Paula Emery, Administrative Assistant to the Select Board

**Agenda:**

- ♦ Changes to Agenda
- ♦ Announcements
- ♦ Public comment
- ♦ Town Clerk/Town Treasurer Report - Linda Wells
  - Update on filling current and upcoming open positions
  - Update on grants inc. Structures grant
  - Update on ARPA funds filing
  - Approval of fleet permits
  - Approval of Warrants
  - Approval of minutes
- ♦ Gully Remediation project maintenance agreement approval - Sasha Thayer, Christian Meyer CVRPC, Jess Engineering, and Dept of Environmental Conservation representative
- ♦ Grant – letter of support approval – Christian Mayer, Bob Atchinson, Road Foreman Mike Nolan
- ♦ Update on Main Street bridge problems and repairs and funding options - Linda Wells and Tammy Farnham
- ♦ Update re Pedestrian Bridge construction - Tammy Farnham
- ♦ Old Fire House – Tammy Farnham, Kyle Walker
- ♦ Process for interviewing and evaluating candidates for job openings including road foreman and town clerk, town treasurer
- ♦ Appointments
  - Clarification of staggering of Conservation Commissions appointments
  - Appointment of David Spence to Cemetery Commission
  - Central Vermont State Police Advisory Committee
- ♦ Other business
- ♦ Agenda items for upcoming meetings
- ♦ Adjourn

**Chairman Volz called the meeting to order at 7:02 PM.**

### **Changes to Agenda**

The Select Board moved the conversation about ARPA Fund Committee discussion.

### **Announcements**

Thayer and Volz announced that the state's covid rates are very high at this time.

### **Public Comment**

There was no public comment.

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

#### Update On Filling Current And Upcoming Open Positions

Wells reported that the openings are posted on Indeed and that she's gotten some applications for the Assistant Town Clerk and Treasurer positions. She requested clarification about whether she can decline unqualified applicants. There was discussion about accessing the website and whether a resume should be required for the Road Foreman position. **Farnham moved to give Wells the authority to decline unqualified applicants on Indeed and the motion passed unanimously. Wells will forward qualified applicants to Select Board members.**

There was discussion about the procedure for screening Road Foreman applicants and it was determined that **Farnham will inform Wells via email when she accepts an application on Indeed and Wells will respond via Indeed with an application form.**

#### Update on Grants

Wells informed the Select Board that she has applied for two Structures Grants for the East Hill culvert and the catch basin repair at Mill Street and Recreation Road.

Wells also applied for a VTrans Grants in Aid grant with assistance from the state and Central Vermont Regional Planning (CVRPC) for highway ditching, roads, etc. She will meet with a CVRPC representative on Friday.

#### Update on Filing for ARPA Funds

Wells reported that she worked with Farnham and CVRPC to complete the filing on time. The town has filed for the standard option. She reported that the town has received \$188,622.00 so far and the remaining \$188,622.00 will come in August or September for a total of \$377,245.00.

Farnham stated that she learned that there is a requirement for the ARPA Committee to do outreach to the community about how to use the funding. She recommended meeting with them and giving them materials and webinars. She suggested that the Select Board meet with ARPA committee.

Farnham mentioned the Route 2 intersection's water and sewer overhaul being paid for with ARPA funding, but detailed information, including budget, from VTrans is not yet available. Much of the required preparation for ARPA funding has been completed for the Route 2 intersection. Other possibilities are CV Fiber and Brook Road Bridge. There was consideration of pre-allocating some of the funding for the Route 2 intersection.

This item will be revisited at length in a future meeting, with VTrans information available.

#### Approval of Fleet Permits

**Thayer moved to approve a fleet permit for Irving Energy, Barre. The motion carried unanimously.**

#### Approval of Warrants

Accounts payable: April 19, \$63,107.82 and April 25 \$23,032.34. Payroll warrants for April 22 and 29. **Thayer moved and the motion carried unanimously.**

#### Roadside Mowing

Wells reported that this position has been advertised but there was no response. Last year's contractor is offering to do it for an additional \$100.00. His contract is \$7,500.00 per year for 40 miles of class 2 and 3 roads, two passes per side. There was discussion about whether to sign a one year or two year contract. **Thayer moved to approve Donnel Dexter's two year contract at \$7,500.00 per year and the motion carried unanimously.**

#### Approval of Minutes

**This item was tabled to the next meeting.**

### **Gully Remediation Project Maintenance Agreement Approval**

There was extensive discussion that resulted in clarification of terms and minor changes to the maintenance contract. Karen Bates of Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) stated that the town is responsible for annual inspection of the gully and the settling pond, as well as inspection after major storms because the DEC wants to know if there are problems, such as erosion. If the inspection reveals an issue the town's inspector will contact the DEC's River Scientist, Gretchen Alexander.

Jessica Louisos of SLR Consulting, explained that the debris will look like what one would find in a culvert – small sticks and piles of leaves that block the flow of water. The inspector will need to move the debris out of the way of the water flow.

Louisos clarified that a "settling pond" is really not a pond. It is a settling area, lined with rocks, that slows and spreads water that is coming down the hill and out of drain pipes. She noted that the settling area will usually be dry.

She stated that sediment needs to be removed once it reaches 1 foot in depth and it needs to be moved to a dump location away from the river. Louisos stated that the sediment cannot be moved to a wetland or regulated water body and that it needs to be moved away from the footprint of the project area and put it in a legal disposal or fill area.

Louisos stated that cleanout should happen some time after a major storm – within reason and after the town has recovered. She requested that it doesn't go for months after a major storm. She further clarified that the town is only responsible for maintenance of the settling pond and culvert outlet.

Louisos offered to meet with the person/s who will do the maintenance to review the job and make sure it is understood and clear. Thayer requested that she or DEC provide photos to use as standards and Louisos agreed to do so.

The following terms were clarified:

“Engineer” was replaced by “River Scientist”

“reshape basin” means digging out sediment that has accumulated to one foot or more

“specified seed” means conservation mix

**Volz moved to approve the Operation and Maintenance Agreement and the motion carried unanimously.**

There was discussion about signatures, during which Bates clarified that when the DEC approves the funds they have effectively signed off on the agreement. The funds will go to the CVRPC, which will manage the project. **The Select Board offered to remove the signature area for the DEC and Bates offered to send a note to the Select Board when the funds are released.**

**Farnham moved to allow Thayer to sign the agreement and the motion carried unanimously.**

Meyer stated that the issue of the easement is the next step in this project. Members of the Select Board have a copy and need to accept it. This will be taken up in a future meeting.

### **Letter of Support Approval for VTrans Grant**

Meyer explained that this year VTrans's priority projects are bridges. VTrans' Project Selection and Prioritization Process is done annually in all regions of Vermont to provide better transparency about how VTrans is ranking and prioritizing projects statewide. This process allows towns to present their priority projects, and this year it is all about bridges. The Brook Road bridge near Creamery Street came up in the last CVRPC Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) meeting. Meyer will do the footwork on the intake form for the town, but needs a contact who knows the history of the project. He also requested a letter of support that includes: acknowledgement of support of the project, identified need, and acknowledgment that the project will require a finance and maintenance agreement that may require municipal funding and maintenance responsibilities.

The funding follows the standard state financial agreement of 80% federal funding, 10% state funding, and 10% town funding. The funding is for the design and construction of the bridge.

When asked about the existing engineering documents related to that bridge, Meyer said that he thinks that the existing plans may have to be reviewed.

Farnham noted that the Road Crew evaluated the town's bridges and identified four that are in bad shape. Nolan noted that four bridges on the Brook Road have cracked side walls and/or wing walls. Meyer noted that qualifying bridges have to have a 20' span and that they are ranked and rated against bridges statewide. The Brook Road bridge in the village qualifies because the channel is ranked at 5 and the bridge causes flooding, even though it is in better physical shape than the others. Meyer noted that he hasn't reviewed all of the bridges. He requested a contact, and recommended choosing the bridge with the greatest need.

**The letter of support is due on May 24.** The regional TAC will rank and vote projects for the funding.

**Alice Merrill will act as Meyers' contact for history of the project and further information about town bridges.**

Adjoining landowners need to be contacted.

**The Select Board agreed to revisit the issue and approve the letter of support in the May 17 meeting.**

### **Old Fire House**

Ki Walker was present and reported that he'd gone inside the building, which caused him to increase the price of the job because he found that the rear wall is in such bad shape that he will need to erect a temporary wall in order to deconstruct the roof.

There was extensive discussion about equipment and dumping of materials. It was noted that Southgate expects to preserve certain parts of the building, which are marked. **Walker will arrange to meet with Southgate at the site to review.**

Walker stated that he needs to do this job soon as he has more projects coming up.

There was discussion about the budget, the item being a wash as Southgate is going to purchase the building for the cost of its demolition.

**Farnham moved to hire Ki Walker to take down the Old Fire Station building for \$6,750.00 and the motion carried unanimously.**

**Walker will pass his insurance information on to the Select Board and will send a contract to Volz and Wells. Volz is authorized to sign the contract.**

### **Process for interviewing and evaluating candidates for job openings including road foreman and town clerk, town treasurer**

This item was addressed at the end of the meeting.

### **Update On Main Street Bridge Problems And Repairs and Funding Options/ Update on Pedestrian Bridge Construction**

Farnham stated that VHB is trying to get better numbers, which are not available yet. The decking should take 60 working days, or three months (worst case scenario). At the present time the plan is to remove the top layer and then evaluate the situation, then determine what to do at that point. The town's share is up to \$75,000.00. VTrans will provide oversight of VHB and Daniels.

There was extensive discussion about expenses related to traffic control. Daniels has removed the traffic control materials because the town hadn't committed to doing the top of the bridge. There was discussion of whether the town could save money by closing the bridge during the work.

Thayer requested a detailed breakdown of costs for the project, based on the two scenarios of doing repairs to hold the bridge over until the RT 2 intersection project begins, or doing the work now, while Daniels has their materials on site. They are estimating \$150,000.00 in traffic control costs. They are trying to determine whether the town is willing to give them closed bridge time. Thayer requested that they provide a best case scenario so that the SB has a low number and a high number in the estimate.

The SB needs to decide whether to allow the bridge closure for a period of time or to move forward with traffic control. **Volz moved to move forward with traffic control. Volz and Farnham voted in favor, Thayer agreed with the caveat that the concept is to not close the bridge but not agreeing to the costs.**

There was extensive conversation about the financial details, which are not available at this time.

Thayer moved to ask for details from Daniels about cost at various levels and that it include itemization of expenses for traffic control, milling, repaving, and membrane. Farnham stated that VTrans has told them that the project is going to be determined in phases because they are unsure about how much repair the bridge will need. She referred Thayer to the materials she sent via email.

**Volz requested that Farnham ask VTrans for the information that Thayer is requesting. Farnham agreed to do so.**

## **Appointments**

### Clarification of staggering of Conservation Commissions appointments

This item was tabled to a future meeting.

### Appointment of David Spence to Cemetery Commission

**Thayer moved to approve the appointment of David Spence to the Cemetery Commission and the motion carried.**

### Central Vermont State Police Advisory Committee Appointment

This item was tabled to a future meeting.

### **Other Business**

There was discussion about how to conduct interviews for open positions and who will conduct the interviews for Road Foreman.

**The Select Board agreed to meet in executive session to discuss the hiring process on May 5 at 7:00AM via Zoom.**

**The Select Board discussed whether to change the next meeting to May 24 due to Farnham's inability to attend a May 17 meeting. There was no action taken.**

Volz suggested changing the Town Clerk advertisement language so that people know they are ultimately applying for a full-time Town Clerk position.

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### **Agenda Items For Upcoming Meetings**

- May 17, 2022 Agenda items
  - easement for gully project - CVRPC
  - ARPA funds
  - Main Street Bridge resurfacing
  
- June 7, 2022 Agenda Items 9 PM Adjourn

**Thayer moved to adjourn at 9:55PM and the motion carried.**

*Respectfully submitted by Paula Emery.*