

**Town of Plainfield, Vermont  
Select Board Meeting Minutes  
September 6, 2022**

**Present:** Jim Volz, Select Board Chair; Sasha Thayer, Select Board member; Paula Emery, Administrative Assistant to the Select Board

**Present via Zoom or telephone:** Tammy Farnham, Pedestrian Bridge Project Manager; Michael Bingham, Road Foreman; Bob Atchinson, Sarah Cain; Eric Blaisdell, *The Times Argus*; Kevin Farnham; George Cushing; Baylen Skye, Town Health Officer; Alice Merrill, Town Grant Writer; Kristie Farnham

**Agenda:**

- **Commencement of Regular Select Board Meeting**
- **Changes to Agenda**
- **Announcements**
- **Public Comment**
- **Town Clerk/Town Treasurer Report**
  - Approval of Warrants**
- **Old Home Days Update, Jamie Spector**
- **Mack Truck Purchase**
- **Update on Main Street Bridge Repair and Pedestrian Bridge Project Schedule**
  - Petition from townspeople re project**
- **Appointment of Sara Cain to fill-in for the balance of Lauren Cleary's term on the Twinfield School Board**
- **Brook Road Replacement Bridge Hazard Mitigation Grant Program Application, Alice Merrill**
  - Application time frame/status**
  - Further consideration of fiscal implications re reduced match**
  - Consideration of ARPA funds for town match**
- **Other business**
- **Agenda items for upcoming meetings - September 22, 2022**
- **Adjourn**

Chairman Jim Volz called the meeting to order at 7:08PM.

**Changes to Agenda:** A request from the Town Health Officer was added to the agenda.

**Announcements:** Volz announced that the Water and Wastewater Commission will meet in Executive Session with the Select Board to discuss a potential contract and agreement for purchase of real estate on Thursday at 5:30.

**Announcements, cont.:** Plainfield Old Home Day will take place this Saturday, September 10.

**Public Comment:** There was no public comment.

**Town Clerk/Town Treasurer Report**

Linda Wells is on vacation, so there was no Town Clerk/Town Treasurer report.

- Approval of Warrants – **Thayer moved to approve payroll warrants from September 2 and 9, and accounts payable warrants dated August 30 and 31. The motion carried.**
- Approval of Minutes – **Thayer moved to approve meeting minutes for August 2, 11, and 16, and the motion carried.**

**Old Home Days Update - Jamie Spector**

**September 10, parade at 11, line-up at 10:00 at the Park and Ride**

Spector was not available to report, so Thayer provided a list of events, which includes, but is not limited to: the annual duck race, face painting, dunk tank, food trucks, the Fire Department’s annual Chicken Bar-B-Q, bake sale, and a smoothie bike.

**Mack Truck Purchase – Mike Bingham, Road Foreman**

Bingham requested that the Select Board authorize the purchase of the Mack Truck as discussed in the previous Select Board meeting so that it can be ordered now and so that payment plans can be organized. Bingham noted that it will take roughly a year for the new truck to be delivered.

Volz read from an email sent by Linda Wells on September 4, 2022 at 2:34PM.

|                                 |                      |
|---------------------------------|----------------------|
| Total truck cost:               | \$234,967.22         |
| Highway Equipment Reserve Fund: | <u>-\$107,625.00</u> |
| Need to borrow:                 | \$127,342.00         |

Wells requested a decision to purchase the truck now to avoid further costs. Thayer suggested using ARPA funds to pay for the truck.

Volz moved to approve the purchase of the Mack Truck and the motion carried.

Volz asked about the pile concrete and stone in the Town Hall Opera House parking lot. Farnham stated that that area is the work area for the Daniels construction crew. She offered to ask what their plan is for the stones at the next project meeting.

**Town Health Officer Request**

Town Health Officer Baylen Skye has received a request from a landlord for inspection of an apartment and is seeking a deputy or assistant due to a conflict of interest. He would like someone from the Select Board to take his place. **Volz offered to perform the inspection.**

### **Appointment of Sara Cain to fill the balance of Lauren Cleary's term on the Twinfield School Board**

Thayer nominated Sara Cain to take Lauren Cleary's place on the Twinfield School Board and the motion carried.

### **Brook Road Replacement Bridge Hazard Mitigation Grant Program Application**

Town Grant Writer, Alice Merrill, noted that the \$1,500,000.00 price given at the last meeting as the cost of the project was simply for construction. Additional costs are for a resident engineer, budgeted at \$150,000; a design engineer, budgeted at \$30,000; and a local project manager budgeted at \$120,000. Merrill provided definitions of the positions listed above and Thayer spoke about the issues of unexpected costs that arise during bridge projects.

Cushing requested that the Select Board consider replacement of the Mill Street Bridge, noting that the Mill Street bridge will get even more debris in a flood once the bridge above it is enlarged. He also stated that the Select Board has to put the project to a town vote. Merrill reminded all that the grant has a deadline and the town can choose not to use a grant after it's been awarded, but can't request a grant after the deadline has passed. She also warned that the grant may require a special vote.

Merrill noted that the Select Board will have to discuss the amount the town will request for rights-of-way acquisition attorney fees from neighbors and requested that that Select Board come up with a dollar amount for this. There was discussion about whether the town would need to pay for the rights-of-way, given that the project benefits the impacted neighbors.

Merrill reiterated that the grant deadline is the end of September and that she will need Select Board signatures on various documents in order to submit the grant. She also needs a number to put into the budget for attorney and right-of-way fees. Merrill will send the names of the property owners that will be affected by the project to the Select Board.

This item will be revisited at the next meeting.

Thayer noted that the town's attorney, Jim Jamele, Esq., retired and the town does not have a town attorney at this time.

### **Update on Main Street Bridge Repair and Pedestrian Bridge Project**

Tammy Farnham reported that the detour has been approved and now they are trying to determine if traffic can be sent onto the sidewalk on the Hardware Store side of the bridge. If that sidewalk can't sustain the stress of traffic the bridge may need to be closed. There is a possibility of putting a steel plate on the bridge to build strength and to help transfer weight to the structure, which has an estimated cost \$150,000.

George Cushing, Kevin Farnham, Betsy Ziegler, and Bob Atchinson spoke in favor of closing the bridge for one month to finish the job, if necessary.

Farnham noted that Daniels and the VTrans engineers have to open the surface of the bridge and the membrane in order to really know what they need to do – they can only estimate the scope of the project until then.

Farnham stated that the town has already given Daniels and VTrans permission to put the project off until spring. She also spoke to the complexity of the issues with this project and noted that replacing the concrete without replacing the membrane is an option. She assured everyone that the professionals involved are doing the best they can and reminded that every change and request from the town requires time from the construction and engineering firms and increases the costs of the project.

### **Petition from Townspeople about Pedestrian Bridge Project**

Cushing read a petition to: “Stop construction work on the Main Street bridge in the village of Plainfield until Spring of 2023.” He stated that it is too late in the year to begin the project and that the extra time could be used to plan for bridge closure. Farnham restated that the condition of the bridge may require that it be closed completely for the construction.

Farnham clarified that because of the structural issues the bridge may need to be closed for repairs. Cushing clarified that closure of the bridge puts people living in the village in peril. Farnham stated that the town can decide to pave the surface of the bridge at any point because surface repairs are a town expense. She reiterated that the bridge repair funding is piggybacking on the pedestrian bridge funding as a change order and is not a new grant or loan. If it is determined that it should wait until spring they'll do that. She restated that the town has already signed the change order and that any changes will increase the overall project costs.

Farnham noted that previous State reports on the bridge do indicate that the bridge needs repairs. She recommend that the Select Board and townspeople begin to focus on the bi-annual State reports on bridges in order to plan ahead and budget for repairs and address regular maintenance issues.

Volz read an email from Ross Gowen (sp?): “I believe the resident engineer, VHB, is writing up a status/summary for the town to consider regarding the schedule, undersize lane widths, and load capacity of the northern, old, sidewalk.... In short, after we see the summary it may be the recommendation of your resident engineer to once again close the bridge to traffic for a short duration to make repairs that the town desires.” Volz concluded residents who participated tonight’s meeting all spoke in favor of closing the bridge.

Thayer asked Farnham to request an accurate time frame. Farnham stated if they take the membrane off and determine that the bridge is a lot worse than anticipated they may

decide to put the membrane back on and pave it and the town will have to move toward replacing the bridge.

Cushing asked about changing contractors, and Farnham reiterated that this repair is funded as a change order within the funding of the Pedestrian Bridge project. She urged the town to stay with the contractor and engineer to avoid additional costs and to trust the contractor and VTrans' professional integrity, noting that VTrans has more money on the line than the town does.

Volz stated that a special meeting should be scheduled to discuss the status/summary from VHB Engineering when it comes.

Farnham requested that all communication to VTrans, VHB, and Daniels Co. go through the Project Manager – Tammy Farnham. Direct communication with the above will increase the project costs.

## **Other Business**

### **Agenda Items for Upcoming Meetings**

#### September 22, 2022

- Brook Road Bridge Grant
- Rights-of-way for Brook Road Bridge
- Pedestrian Bridge Update

### **Adjourn**

At 8:49 PM, Thayer moved to adjourn and the motion carried.

*Respectfully submitted by Paula Emery.*