

**Town of Plainfield Select Board Meeting and Public Hearing on Zoning
Ordinance Amendments,
In-Person at the Town Hall Opera House and by Zoom
April 3, 2023
Minutes - Approved**

Agenda:

Changes to Agenda

Announcements

Public Comment

Town Clerk/Town Treasurer Report, Robin Miller

- **Planning for Adjourned Town Meeting on April 15, 2023 at 9am**
- **Approval of Warrants**
- **Fleet Permits**
- **Liquor License renewal for Plainfield Coop**
- **Queer Arts Festival**
- **Development of policy for acquisition, use, and monitoring of Town credit card**
- **Update on payments made for Pedestrian Bridge/Main Street Bridge repair project, anticipated reimbursements, expected future costs, source of funds and Town match (including from \$350,000 VTrans grant)**
- **Approval of draft minutes**

Upgrading Internet Service at Town Hall Opera House - Keith Swann

Zoning Ordinance Amendment Public Hearing

Webpage update - Sasha Thayer & Bob Fancher

- **Transition to ".gov"**
- **Approval of Requirements for Posting to Plainfield Website and of Contributor Guide**

Emergency Management update - Sasha Thayer EMD and Carla Straight EMC

Update on vacancies and upcoming appointments

Executive session per 3 VSA 313(3) to consider the appointment or employment or evaluation of a public officer or employee

Appoint Road Commissioner

Other Business

Upcoming Select Board Meeting Agenda Items

Adjourn

Present: Select Board members Jim Volz (Select Board Chair), Riley Carlson, and Sasha Thayer. Also present were Lily Baker, Michael Billingsly, Eric Blaisdell (Times Argus), Kristin Brosky (Town Administrative Assistant), Will Colgan (Planning Commission Chair), Bob Fancher (Website Administrator), Tammy Farnham, Marten, Frank Mitchell, Karen Storey (Zoning Administrator), and Keith Swann (Friends of the Town Hall Opera House).

Jim Volz called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm.

Changes to Agenda:

There were no changes to the agenda.

Announcements:

Thayer announced that Town Meeting was adjourned to Saturday, April 15, 2023 at 9 am at the Town Hall Opera House. Volz shared that the adjournment date was voted on by attendees of Town Meeting on March 7, 2023. Thayer shared that the Select Board is working on coordinating with Keith Swann of the Friends of the Town Hall Opera House to try to provide video access to Town Meeting with comment by chat but no option to vote. Thayer offered thanks to Swann, Michael Morlan, and Michael Billingsly for their help toward the possibility of video access for Town Meeting. Thayer noted that federal and state income tax returns are due on April 18, 2023, rather than April 15, 2023, and if an extension were filed this would allow until October 16, 2023.

Public Comment:

There was no public comment.

Town Clerk/Town Treasurer Report, Robin Miller:

Robin Miller was unable to attend this meeting.

Planning for Adjourned Town Meeting on April 15, 2023 at 9am –

Thayer noted that volunteers are still needed on April 15, 2023 at Town Meeting. She stated that interested parties should contact Robin Miller at (802) 454-8461 or email at plainfieldtc@gmail.com

Approval of Warrants -

Carlson moved for approval of payroll warrants for February 22 and 28, 2023 and the motion passed unanimously. Carlson moved for approval of accounts payable warrants for February 22, 2023 and March 2 and 21, 2023 and the motion passed unanimously. Carlson moved for approval of fleet permits for Agri-Mark/Cabot of Waitsfield, VT, Camp Precast of Milton, VT, Curtis Lumber of Williston, VT, Fred Vance Trucking of Hardwick, VT,

Harrison Redi Mix Corp. of Fairfax, VT, Huntington Homes Inc. of East Montpelier, VT, Irving Energy of Barre, VT, S.D. Ireland of S. Burlington, VT, Suburban Propane of Morrisville, VT, Trono Oil of Barre, VT, Vermont Renewable Fuels of Manchester Center, VT, and Vermont Well & Pump of Hinesburg, VT and the motion passed unanimously.

Liquor License Renewal for Plainfield Co-op (Winooski Valley Co-op) -

Thayer moved to approve the renewal of the liquor license for the Plainfield Co-op and the motion passed unanimously.

Queer Arts Festival -

Lily Baker proposed a Queer Arts Festival to be held at the Plainfield Recreation Field on August 26, 2023. They shared that one had been held December 2022 in Barre that was successful in supporting the queer arts community. They shared their hope to use the Plainfield Recreation Field (Rec field) for this outdoor summer festival. Thayer shared that there is a form to complete for rental of the Rec field and noted that there is a Town ordinance which states that no alcohol is allowed at the Rec field. Thayer also suggested that it would be important to have signage at the event for parking. Carlson encouraged Baker to contact the Recreation Committee. Baker shared that they're working with others in town to make this a community-wide event. Volz clarified that Select Board approval is not needed for this event. All Select Board members voiced their support of the event. Thayer suggested Baker also coordinate with the Plainfield Co-op, Positive Pie, and The Country Bookshop regarding the festival. Marten stated it would be marketed as an alcohol-free event. Baker inquired about Town sound ordinances and stated they plan to have music at the event. Thayer instructed Baker to check the Town website to read the ordinances.

Development of policy for acquisition, use, and monitoring of Town credit card -

Thayer stated that the credit card policy on the Vermont League of Cities and Towns (VLCT) website seemed to apply better to bigger towns. She stated she'll research further.

Update on payments made for Pedestrian Bridge/Main Street Bridge repair project, anticipated reimbursements, expected future costs, source of funds and Town match (including from \$350,000 VTrans grant) -

Thayer made Tammy Farnham a co-host on Zoom so that Farnham could share her screen to show the last invoice from contractor Daniels that went to the State March 1, 2023. Farnham showed the total of the bill and how much the State will reimburse the Town. Farnham explained that the Town would pay the full bill then submit for reimbursement from the State the amount of \$292,205.20. She showed information regarding the project's progress and shared that the total for the bill is \$927,096.18 with the change orders. She shared that Daniels had shared that the only remaining tasks for the bridge are to re-seed at the edges of the bridge and paint the

lines. Thayer explained that the Town had been authorized to take out a \$200,000 loan, that Farnham had secured a grant in the sum of \$375,000 of which the Town would have to pay a 20% match. Thayer expressed her concern about how the bill will be paid. Farnham shared that the bill that was being presented at this meeting, that is outstanding for the Town, is in the amount of \$73,051.30. Farnham explained that the project should come in under budget, and based on monies set aside for the project the Town may not need to borrow the full amount of the loan. Farnham explained that the Town's original amount was \$649,790 and at this point the Town has only paid \$534,649. Thayer asked if any prior year's allocations had been used to pay for this project. Farnham explained that past Town Clerk Linda Wells and current Town Clerk Robin Miller had been paying the 10% and 20% match amounts due by the Town and expressed her belief that that had come from previously budgeted monies. Volz requested that Farnham email the Select Board the figures as shown on her screen. Farnham inquired if the \$365,000 bill had been paid to Daniels. Volz explained that Miller was not in attendance at this meeting to answer that question. Farnham stated she can send the Select Board information regarding the costs and what's been paid out. She stated that the Town needs to identify how much was set aside in the budget for the project. Volz stated that the Select Board will go over the figures with Miller and get back to Farnham. Farnham encouraged the Select Board to respond in a timely manner.

Farnham asked if the Select Board would make a decision about white or yellow lines for the bridge. Thayer stated that lines down the middle of the road are necessary and asked if the lines would be painted or tape. Select Board members agreed to approve yellow painted lines down the center of the bridge. **Volz moved to authorize Tammy Farnham to direct the contractor to put yellow lines down the middle of the road over the bridge and the motion passed unanimously.**

Approval of draft minutes – **Thayer moved to approve draft minutes for the January 3 and 31, 2023 and March 13, 16, and 20, 2023 Select Board meetings and the motion passed unanimously.**

Upgrading Internet Service at Town Hall Opera House - Keith Swann:

Swann discussed offering a video option for Town Meeting. He shared that he had been able to test run a single camera with the camera's audio into a laptop into Zoom and to export it to a monitor. Thayer clarified that attendees on Zoom will be unable to vote. Volz shared that Zoom attendees may comment but only thru Zoom chat. Swann stated that someone would need to be the Zoom attendant throughout the meeting for this option to run smoothly. He offered the option of doing a one-way YouTube instead of Zoom, which would be non-participatory. The Select Board members expressed their support for this option. Thayer explained that it will be important for attendees who participate in-person to speak into a microphone. Carlson stated that if

YouTube is used that remote participants could still comment through YouTube chat, but that there would need to be a person who is attending to the chat. Thayer clarified that Swann has the liberty to make a decision about what platform is used to offer a video option for Town Meeting, hopefully with chat commenting. Swann stated that Town resident Michael Morlan has offered to lend his sound equipment for Town Meeting. Thayer thanked Swann for his work as a volunteer to help make a video option available for Town Meeting and requested that as soon as he has information regarding how participants may join Town Meeting online that it should be shared with the Select Board so that it may be posted.

Zoning Ordinance Amendment Public Hearing:

Karen Story summarized the proposed changes to the Zoning ordinance, stating that the biggest addition is the river corridor, the addition of new conditional uses related to logging yards and wood processing, and a slight change in forest and agriculture to allow an accessory use building to be 25 feet from the side and rear prop lines as opposed to the current 50 feet. She shared that exemptions apply for buildings of less than 100 sq. feet although setbacks would still have to be met. She shared that there has been a complaint about cannabis growth operations. She shared that legally the Town can't regulate cannabis any differently than any other business. She explained that there is some confusion about zoning because the definition of Home Occupation and Cottage Industry only allows for the business to be in a building yet with cannabis there might also be an outdoor component. She pointed out that cannabis is not considered an agricultural product per State regulation. Volz clarified that cannabis Home Occupations cannot be treated the same way as agriculture. Storey explained more intricacies of laws regarding cannabis and noted hemp has different laws. Storey requested that the Select Board withhold approval of the Zoning Ordinance Amendment until further research can be done regarding laws on cannabis grow operations as there are four licensed cannabis operations currently operating in town and theoretically three of them would be considered in violation of the Town's Home Occupation or Cottage Industry ordinances for growing outdoors. Storey further shared that, per State law, Towns cannot prevent cannabis grow operations from operating within the Town. Storey stated she will discuss this further with the Planning Commission.

Will Colgan, Planning Commission Chair, commented that if the Zoning regulations would require just a minor change regarding cannabis operations then the hearing may not need to be rescheduled. He stated that the Planning Commission could further discuss the draft zoning and bring it back to the Select Board for a vote. Thayer asked an unrelated question about multi-use structures, whether it's specifically allowed in the village, and how this is dealt with in the zoning ordinances. Colgan stated that his memory of the ordinance is that multiuse structures are not specified in the Zoning regulations as written but they are not prohibited.

Thayer moved to adjourn the public hearing to June 5, 2023 at 7 pm and the motion passed unanimously. The public hearing was adjourned to the June 5, 2023.

Web page update - Sasha Thayer & Bob Fancher:

Transition to ".gov" –

Bob Fancher shared that the Town was approved for a .gov web address. He shared that the Town will also continue to have the current web address. Thayer asked Fancher about the benefits of a .gov web address. Fancher explained that it gives people confidence that they've found the official website for the Town in addition to the .gov address being more secure. Thayer expressed her appreciation to Fancher for pursuing the .gov web address.

Approval of Requirements for Posting to Plainfield Website and of Contributor Guide –

Thayer and Fancher discussed minor changes to the Requirements for Posting to the Town Website document. Fancher stated the importance of moving the online calendar from the website homepage to a separate page so that contributors could have access to update it. **Thayer moved for approval of the Requirements for Posting to Plainfield Website document and the motion passed unanimously.** Fancher agreed to make needed changes to the Contributor Guide and submit a final copy to the Select Board at a future meeting for approval.

Thayer expressed her understanding that every Town committee, commission, and board will designate a person to post information to the website and that that person will be in touch with Fancher. Fancher shared that he had been asked by some Town entities to post agendas and updates to the Town website. Thayer suggested that there may not be money in the budget to pay Fancher to do this. Volz questioned how long it would take for Fancher to post and stated that most committees would like to have Fancher do the posting for them. Fancher agreed he's willing to do the posting and stated it shouldn't take very long, stating that he charges 10 minutes of his time, worth \$5.00, to do a posting to the Town website. Volz stated that he supported having Fancher do the posting and if it becomes too expensive it will be revisited.

Emergency Management update - Sasha Thayer EMD and Carla Straight EMC:

Emergency Management Director Thayer explained that Carla Straight was unable to attend the meeting because she was not feeling well. Thayer shared a number of things she and Emergency Management Coordinator Straight have been considering is dividing the town into districts and in seeking volunteers to assist in gathering information about local conditions in the event of bad weather to help with local emergency operations and assist the road crew. She shared that the Local Emergency Operations Plan is due May 1, 2023 and that she and Straight are working on updating that. Thayer stated that she spoke to Jay Copping who works at The Health Center and is on the Rescue Squad regarding what is done at Twinfield School to get people trained in CPR. Copping shared that the Town could get a recertified defibrillator at lower cost than new.

Copping stated the importance of training people in CPR. Thayer spoke with Mark Mooney, principal at Twinfield School, who thinks that learning CPR is a requirement for students and that Copping would be willing to help with providing CPR training for adults. Thayer shared that Michael Billingsly had been advocating for an emergency shelter for the Town. She stated she and Straight don't feel that this is something that the Town can provide very well and that there are a lot of requirements to run an emergency shelter. Thayer noted that there is a shelter in Barre, and a better alternative would be for the Town to try to provide emergency transport to the shelter in Barre if needed.

Update on vacancies and upcoming appointments:

Thayer stated that residents can vote for Town officers up until 7pm on April 15, 2023 and can vote early by contacting the Town Clerk's office or by requesting an absentee ballot. Thayer noted that there are many vacancies on the ballot. Volz stated that interested volunteers can contact the Town Clerk's office or consult the Town website to see a list of open positions. Thayer stated a Town Maintenance person is still needed and Volz clarified this is a paid position. Volz shared that the Town is also in need of a Constable and an Animal Control Officer which are paid positions. Thayer shared that the Town Health Officer has resigned and this position is also open. She noted that health care experience is not required.

Appoint Road Commissioner:

Volz proposed proceeding with the appointment of a road commissioner prior to the Select Board going into executive session and the Board agreed. Volz shared that Bram Towbin has volunteered for Road Commissioner and that Road Foreman Michael Bingham would support Towbin's appointment. **Volz moved to approve Bram Towbin as Road Commissioner and the motion passed unanimously.** Thayer stated that Towbin has done a great job at this in the past and could be a great resource for the Town.

Other Business:

There was no other business.

Upcoming Select Board Meeting Agenda Items:

April 17, 2023 -

Organizational Meeting

-Election of Chair and possibly Vice-Chair

-Approval of Rules of Procedure

Report from Road Foreman, Michael Bingham

Policy for acquisition, use, and monitoring of Town credit card

Committee, Board, and Commission appointments

Approval of the Plainfield Website Contributor Guide, Bob Fancher

June 5, 2023 -

7 pm Zoning Ordinance Amendment Public Hearing

Executive session per 3 VSA 313(3) to consider the appointment or employment or evaluation of a public officer or employee:

Thayer moved that the Select Board enter into an executive session pursuant to 3 V.S.A. 313(3) to consider the appointment or employment or evaluation of a public officer or employee and the motion passed unanimously. The Select Board entered executive session at 7:32 pm. The Select Board returned from executive session at 7:42 pm and didn't take any action.

Adjourn: Volz moved to adjourn at 7:42 pm and the motion carried unanimously.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Kristin Brosky, Town Administrative Assistant.