

Town of Plainfield Special Select Board Meeting
August 29, 2023
Via Zoom
Minutes - Approved

Agenda:

- Changes to Agenda
- Public Comment
- Request for Proposals for External Audit
- Adjourn

Present: Select Board members Riley Carlson (Chair) and Jim Volz. Also present were Pam and Cam Kelly, Liz Bicknell, Mo Lynch, Ryan Christiansen, and Eric Blaisdell of the Times Argus.

Chair Carlson called the meeting to order at 5:00 pm.

Changes to Agenda:

Carlson suggested the addition of a discussion about the resignation of Select Board member Bram Towbin. Volz and Carlson agreed to this addition before the Request for Proposals for External Audit discussion.

Public Comment:

Carlson opened the floor to public comment. There was no public comment at this time.

Discussion of Resignation of Select Board Member Bram Towbin:

Carlson shared that Bram Towbin had resigned his position on the Plainfield Select Board, Hazard Mitigation Committee, and his position as Town Road Commissioner the previous day via social media posts on Facebook and Front Porch Forum. Carlson and Volz thanked Towbin for his service to the Town and expressed surprise at his resignation which was given without warning to other Select Board members. Select Board members addressed concerns raised by Towbin in his resignation statement regarding the process of request for proposals (RFP) for external audit, stating that they plan to move forward with the RFP as required by state law to conduct an external audit which is an action originally suggested by Towbin.

Carlson noted that the Select Board welcomes interested parties to apply for the open seat on the Select Board, the Hazard Mitigation Committee, and for Road Commissioner. He stated that interested parties should contact himself, Volz, or the Town Clerk's office for more information.

Request for Proposals for External Audit:

Carlson shared that, prior to his resignation, Towbin had provided a draft RFP which was incomplete. He stated that the expectation was that the completed draft would have been available for review at this meeting had Towbin been in attendance. Carlson stated that he will work with the Town Clerk's office to complete the draft RFP for review at the next regular Select Board meeting on September 5, 2023.

Chair Carlson opened the floor to public comment at Volz's suggestion.

Liz Bicknell, citing Towbin's resignation statement, questioned whether the Select Board has any managerial oversight of the Town Clerk. Carlson and Volz clarified for Bicknell that the Select Board doesn't have any oversight of the Town Clerk's Office or any of the Town's elected officials per State law. Volz stated that Chair Carlson had met with the Town Clerk on behalf of the Select Board to share the Select Board's concerns but notes that the Select Board has no authority to enforce suggested changes.

Mo Lynch, having joined the meeting late, asked for a recap of tonight's business. Carlson and Volz shared that the Request for Proposals for External Audit will be discussed at the September 5, 2023 Select Board meeting.

Ryan Christiansen asked Carlson and Volz if they shared the same concerns that Towbin cited as his reason for resignation. Volz stated that he and Carlson agreed that the Select Board should look into concerns about how the Town Clerk's office is being run and stated that the Select Board will move forward with a putting out an RFP for an external audit. Volz stated that he's not aware of the same concerns that Towbin had cited because the specifics hadn't been shared with him by Towbin nor had he heard directly from concerned residents. He stated that concerns may be brought to himself or Carlson. Carlson stated that concerned residents had contacted him and their concerns are being addressed in an ongoing process. Christiansen inquired about the nature of the concerns. Carlson clarified that the concerns are not involving any legal matters, rather management style.

Mo Lynch inquired whether the Town Clerk will have the opportunity to respond to the concerns that have been raised. Select Board members stated they would offer her the opportunity to respond at the Select Board meeting on September 5, 2023. Volz suggested that she may also choose to respond via social media.

Adjourn: **Volz moved to adjourn at 5:19 pm. The motion carried unanimously.**

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