

**Town of Plainfield Special Select Board Meeting
September 5, 2023
149 Main St. Plainfield 2nd Floor and Via Zoom
Minutes - Approved**

Agenda:

- Changes to Agenda
- Announcements
- Public Comment
- Town Clerk/Treasurer Report (Robin Miller)
- Open Positions in Town Government
- Town Hall/Opera House Vermont Arts Council Matching Grant (Keith Swann)
- Emergency Management Budget/Delegation of Authority (Michael Billingsley)
- Approval of Request for Proposal for External Audit
- Update on 79 Bean Road
- Friends of the Winooski Flood Debris Clean-up (Paula Emery)
- Approval of Warrants:
 - Accounts Payable:
 - Payroll: 8/24/23, 8/31/23
- Approval of Draft Minutes: 1/26/22, 11/15/22 1 pm, 8/21/23, 8/29/23
- Adjourn

Present: Select Board members Riley Carlson (Chair) and Jim Volz. Also present were Town Clerk Robin Miller, Emergency Management Director Michael Billingsley, Louis Scott, Kim Nolan, Ryan Christiansen, Paula Emery, Alana Norway, Heather Murphy of Friends of the Winooski, and Eric Blaisdell of the Times Argus.

Chair Carlson called the meeting to order at 6:01 pm.

Changes to Agenda:

At the request of Michael Billingsley, Carlson suggested deferment of the “Emergency Management Budget/Delegation of Authority” agenda item to a future meeting.

Announcements:

There were no announcements.

Public Comment:

Carlson opened the floor to public comment.

Louis Scott, resident of Brook Rd., shared his displeasure with the state of neighboring properties on the Brook Rd. and his impression that the Select Board has not taken strong enough action to address the zoning infractions of his neighbors. Select Board members suggested that Scott contact Zoning Administrator Karen Storey and explained the process for addressing complaints. Scott stated that he will contact Storey. Scott shared a second issue that he's concerned about is a large dam of woody debris which was deposited in the Great Brook across from his home during the recent flood and he inquired about the Town's plan to address this. Carlson shared that the Town has submitted a request for assistance from the Emergency Watershed Protection Program and that he will request that this area of the Great Brook be included in site visits for determination of eligibility for the program.

Kim Nolan shared that the dog residing at 79 Bean Rd. has come onto her property in a threatening manner for a second time. She stated that she will call the Sheriff and will shoot the dog if it should do so again. She inquired about Select Board action to communicate with the owners of 79 Bean Rd. and to levy fines.

Ryan Christiansen expressed his frustration with the Select Board's past inaction in addressing the issues at 79 Bean Rd and his hope that progress is being made to address the current issues.

Town Clerk/Treasurer Report (Robin Miller):

Miller shared that she had spoken with Road Foreman Michael Bingham regarding the proposed purchase of a new plow truck to replace one which is not able to be repaired. She shared that the budget will not support the purchase and Bingham had instead received a much lower quote for a plow and sander to be installed on the Highway Department's existing pick-up truck. She stated that the quoted \$18,000 could be drawn from the Highway Department reserve fund. Miller stated that she will confirm with the dealer of the new plow truck that the agreement with the dealership made by former Select Board member Bram Towbin could be broken and share that information with the Select Board. Carlson stated they will then ask Bingham to bring the lower quote to the Select Board. Miller stated that the cost of a replacement truck could be considered in next year's budget.

Miller shared that Animal Control Officer Peter Yasus had requested that the Town lawyer draft a formal letter that can be used as a template for responding to animal complaints. Carlson suggested that the Vermont League of Cities and Towns (VLCT) be consulted. Miller stated that

Yasus had reported to her that at an animal control officer training he had attended he had received guidance stating that the Town lawyer should be consulted in the drafting of a letter. Miller stated she'll reach out to the VLCT Municipal Assistance Center prior to contacting the Town lawyer. Carlson and Volz agreed to this course of action.

Miller stated that she had been approached by Town employees about the shoe allowance included in the Personnel Policy which was set 12 years ago and allows \$150 per year for the purchase of work shoes. She requested that that figure be updated to reflect the increased cost of shoes. She requested the Select Board approve an increase to \$225. **Volz moved to increase the shoe allowance in the personnel policy from \$150 to \$225. The motion carried unanimously.**

Miller reported she will meet with FEMA at the end of the week and she plans to pay the remaining invoices tomorrow that need to be submitted to FEMA. She shared that she has completed the spreadsheet required by FEMA to provide GPS coordinates for each of the damaged areas of Town property.

Open Positions in Town Government:

Carlson shared that there is an open position on the Select Board as well as the Road Commissioner position. He stressed the importance of having a full Select Board and described the rigors and rewards involved in serving on the Select Board. He encouraged Town residents interested in serving to reach out for more information and stated that the position will also be advertised on Front Porch Forum and the Plainfield People Facebook page. Volz added his support for adding a new person to the Select Board.

Town Hall/Opera House Vermont Arts Council Matching Grant (Keith Swann):

Swann stated that the Town Hall/Opera House had applied for the grant in April 2023. He shared that the grant is a matching grant in the amount of \$8,480. He shared that the Friends of the Town Hall/Opera House intend to use the grant funds for a video projector and an assisted listening system among other needed items. He shared that the grant stipulates that items be purchased and installed by the end of November 2023. He clarified that the grant will pay for half of what is spent up to \$8,480 so it's possible that less could be spent. Select Board members discussed the option of approving the signing of the grant and then asking for further clarification on how the Town match can be funded at the next Select Board meeting. Swann stated the possibility of exploring requesting money from the Town Revolving Loan Fund or using the Town Hall reserve fund. Swann will provide the Select Board with a copy of the grant document. **Carlson moved to approve signing the document for the Vermont Arts Council matching grant for the Town Hall/Opera House audio and video equipment. The motion carried unanimously.**

Emergency Management Budget/Delegation of Authority (Michael Billingsley):

This agenda item will be discussed at a future Select Board meeting.

Approval of Request for Proposal for External Audit:

Carlson stated that he had passed the Request for Proposal (RFP) document to the Town Administrative Assistant who had not yet completed the document with the Town Clerk. **Volz moved to approve mailing the RFP to accounting firms once it is complete. The motion carried unanimously.**

Update on 79 Bean Road:

Carlson provided historical context for the Select Board and Zoning Administrator's approach to handling the ongoing issues at 79 Bean Rd. **Carlson moved to approve mailing a letter to the residents of 79 Bean Rd. detailing the zoning violations as well as to approve additional action to notify residents of fines if it is learned through consultation with VLCT that fines can be applied. The motion carried unanimously.**

Christiansen inquired whether notification of existing liability has been sent to the estate of deceased property owner Melanie Sargent, which is currently in probate. Carlson thanked Christiansen for his question and stated that he will contact the Town lawyer this week to check on the probate process and learn next steps for enforcing the DRB decision. Christiansen pointed out that the structure of the current Select Board of only two seems to be hindering progress on the issue and recommended the Select Board engage with the Zoning Administrator for a team approach. Carlson agreed with Christiansen regarding the challenges posed by the Select Board structure and stated his intention to continue to work closely with the Zoning Administrator to address the issues at 79 Bean Rd.

Friends of the Winooski Flood Debris Clean-up (Paula Emery):

Emery was joined by Alana Norway who shared that, following the recent flood, eight acres of her riverside property has been left covered in mixed woody and trash debris. She shared that Friends of the Winooski has organized with Dealer.com a clean-up day on Tuesday, September 26, 2023 focused on where the river turns, across from the Plainfield Sewer plant, on Norway's property. Emery described the scope and characteristics of the flood debris on Norway's property as well as along other properties on both banks of the Recreation Field Road river corridor. Norway clarified that the Dealer.com staff will be available for clean-up but not for removal of the gathered trash debris. Emergency Management Director Michael Billingsley shared that he had met this morning with Steve Young of Ceres, state contracted trash removal company, as well as representatives from the State Department of Transportation and Department of Public Safety at a statewide trash meeting. He shared that on September 30, 2023 contractors from the State would arrive in Plainfield and would aid volunteers in the removal and disposal of riverbank flood debris. Emery asked for permission for use of the Recreation Field for removal

of debris from the opposite riverbank and noted that she will also inquire of private residents along Recreation Field Rd. for access where the river banks are less steep. Select Board members agreed to use of the Recreation Field for removal of debris from the riverbank. Heather Murphy added that land owners would need to approve debris being piled on their land with the understanding that it would be picked up on September 30, 2023. Emery suggested use of a winch and flat bottom boat to move debris across the river for pick-up at the Recreation Field. Norway shared that the majority of the debris deposited on her land was from the Montkush storage facility and that the company had been responsive and has offered assistance with clean-up. Billingsley encouraged Murphy to contact the State to coordinate waste removal; Murphy stated she will do so. Billingsley also shared that he had spoken with Central Vermont Regional Planning and there will be a tire collection in a few weeks.

Approval of Warrants:

Accounts Payable – There were no accounts payable warrants presented for approval.

Payroll: 8/24/23, 8/31/23 – Carlson presented payroll warrants for August 24 and 31, 2023 for approval. **Volz moved to approve the presented warrants. The motion carried unanimously.**

Approval of Draft Minutes: 1/26/22, 11/15/22 1 pm, 8/21/23, 8/29/23:

Carlson presented for approval the draft minutes for Select Board meetings held January 26, 2022, November 15, 2022 at 1 pm, and August 21 and 29, 2023. **Volz moved to approve the presented draft minutes. The motion carried unanimously.**

Adjourn: **Carlson moved to adjourn at 7:12 pm. The motion carried unanimously.**

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