

Town of Plainfield Select Board Meeting
October 2, 2023
149 Main St. Plainfield, VT 2nd Floor and via Zoom
Minutes - Approved

Agenda:

- Changes to Agenda
- Announcements
- Public Comment
- Town Clerk/Treasurer Report (Robin Miller):
 - Clarify role of Town Constable
 - Sidewalk Snow Removal Bid
 - Recommendation for Plow Truck replacement
 - Town Report
- Interview Select Board candidate Tim Davis
- Plainfield Historical Society space in municipal building (Bob Fancher)
- Revolving Loan Fund for Town Hall/Opera House Arts Council grant (Karl Bissex)
- FEMA/State home buy-outs (Michael Billingsley)
- Hazard Mitigation Committee request to use Zoom account
- Discuss issue of empty houses in Plainfield (George Cushing)
- Allocation of ARPA Funds (George Cushing)
- 79 Bean Road - Update on Animal Control response to neighbor complaints
- Appoint Alice Merrill as Town liaison for US 2/Main St project
- Approval of warrants:
 - Accounts Payable:
 - Payroll: 9/14/23, 9/21/23
- Approval of Fleet Permit: Duranleau Construction, Washington, VT
- Approval of draft minutes: 1/25/22 and 9/18/23
- Adjourn

Present: Select Board members Riley Carlson (Chair) and Jim Volz. Also present were Animal Control Officer Peter Yasus, Select Board candidate Tim Davis, Delinquent Tax Collector George Cushing, Vice President of the Plainfield Historical Society Melinda Vieux, Bob and Kathy Fancher of the Board of Trustees for the Plainfield Historical Society, Karl Bissex of the Revolving Loan Committee, Keith Swann of Plainfield Arts at the Town Hall Opera House, and Eric Blaisdell of the Times Argus.

Chair Carlson called the meeting to order at 6:03 pm.

Changes to Agenda:

Carlson suggested the addition of a discussion regarding the basketball court at the Recreation Field, Volz agreed to this addition during the Town Clerk/Treasurer Report. Carlson also stated that Michael Billingsley would be unable to attend tonight's meeting, therefore the agenda item "FEMA/State home buy-outs" would be postponed until the next regular Select Board meeting.

Announcements:

There were no announcements.

Public Comment:

Carlson recognized Melinda Vieux. Vieux stated she was following up on the issue of the Town owned spotlight on the Plainfield Co-op building. Carlson stated he had brought the issue to the attention of the Town Clerk and will follow up regarding steps taken.

Carlson recognized George Cushing. Cushing suggested the Town look into the Vermont Council on Rural Development (VCRD) community visit program which he stated is available to help towns raise money for needed projects. Volz stated he will look into the program.

Town Clerk/Treasurer Report (Robin Miller):

Miller was unable to attend the meeting this evening.

Clarify role of Town Constable – Carlson shared that his issue had been resolved prior to the meeting.

Sidewalk Snow Removal Bid – this agenda item will be moved to the October 16, 2023 Select Board meeting.

Recommendation for Plow Truck replacement – this agenda item will be moved to the October 16, 2023 Select Board meeting.

Town Report – this agenda item will be moved to the October 16, 2023 Select Board meeting.

Discussion regarding the basketball court at the Recreation Field - this agenda item will be moved to the October 16, 2023 Select Board meeting.

Interview Select Board candidate Tim Davis:

Carlson thanked Davis for his interest in serving the community. Davis shared that he was born and raised in Massachusetts, moved to VT in 2015 after graduation from nursing school, and

moved to Plainfield in 2017 when he and his wife bought their first home on East Hill Rd. He shared that he works as a school nurse for Woodbury and Wolcott Elementary Schools, has two children aged 3 years and 4 months, and that his older child attends Twinfield Pre-K. He shared he has been looking for ways to be more involved and be of service to the community so he decided to apply when he saw the recent advertisement for the open Select Board seat. Volz informed Davis that the open Select Board position will be appointed through Town Meeting 2024 and, if Davis wishes, he may run for election then. Davis expressed his understanding of this. Carlson described the expected time commitment involved in serving on the Select Board; Davis expressed his understanding and willingness to make the time commitment.

Carlson moved to appoint Tim Davis to the Plainfield Select Board for a term that runs through the next Town Meeting day. The motion carried unanimously. Carlson instructed Davis of next steps, sharing that he will need to coordinate with the Town Clerk to take the oath of office prior to the next Select Board meeting. Davis stated he will do so. Carlson and Volz welcomed Davis to the Select Board.

Plainfield Historical Society space in municipal building (Bob Fancher):

Fancher informed the Select Board that the Plainfield Historical Society has occupied two rooms on the second floor of the Municipal Building since 2019, one of which is an exhibit room, the other a storage room for documents. He stated that the non-paper items owned by the Historical Society are kept in a storage unit near Montpelier. He stated that the intended use of the requested third room in the Municipal Building would be for meetings, educational outreach, and a place for residents to come to have historical documents scanned. He shared the Historical Society's intention to recruit more volunteers and work with students to complete scanning and cataloging of the historical documents and items. He shared that there are over 12,000 paper documents that have already been scanned to the cloud with many more to process. He encouraged the Select Board to approve the Historical Society's request to use a third room on the 2nd floor of the Municipal Building at no cost. He informed Select Board members that the Historical Society is now a 501c3 non-profit organization.

Carlson recognized Vieux, Vice President of the Plainfield Historical Society, who commented that this year's Old Home Days walking tour led by Susan Grimaldi was well attended. She shared that the Historical Society plans to record a video of the walking tour. She spoke in support of the Historical Society's use of a third room in the Municipal Building.

Volz moved to approve the use by the Historical Society of a third room at the Municipal Offices contingent on the approval of Town Clerk Robin Miller and Assistant Town Clerk Carol Smith. The motion carried unanimously. Carlson thanked those involved in carrying out the good work of the Plainfield Historical Society. Fancher will contact Miller and report back to Select Board members.

Revolving Loan Fund for Town Hall/Opera House Arts Council grant (Karl Bissex):

Keith Swann explained that the Arts Council grant awarded to the Town Hall Opera House requires that the audio and video equipment first be purchased following which the Town Hall Opera House would be reimbursed for half the cost. He shared that the grant is for up to \$8,460 and that the total cost of the equipment will be approximately \$16,500.

[At this point an unknown Zoom participant interrupted the meeting, broadcasting pornographic imagery and yelling obscenities. They were ejected from the meeting by Chair Carlson.]

Bissex stated that the Revolving Loan Committee supports the use of the Fund for the Town Hall Opera House procurement of audio and video equipment that will allow better access to Town Meeting.

Volz moved to authorize the Town to use the Revolving Loan Fund to purchase audio visual equipment for the Town Hall Opera House up to \$16,500, 50% of which will be repaid by the Arts Council grant. The motion carried unanimously.

Swann stated that the grant specifies that the equipment be installed before the end of November 2023 but that he may seek an extension if needed. He acknowledged the hope expressed by Carlson that the installation be completed prior to Town Meeting 2024.

FEMA/State home buy-outs (Michael Billingsley):

This agenda item was postponed until the October 16, 2023 Select Board meeting.

Hazard Mitigation Committee request to use Zoom account:

Volz moved to allow the Hazard Mitigation Committee use of the Town Zoom account with the caveat that Select Board meetings take precedence. The motion carried unanimously.

Discuss issue of empty houses in Plainfield (George Cushing):

Cushing noted that on School St. in Plainfield there are three buildings owned by the same landlord which are currently in disrepair. He suggested that the Town adopt an ordinance that states Plainfield property owners can't allow their properties to "sit and rot". He stated his belief that Barre had adopted some kind of ordinance to address a similar issue there. Volz stated he would reach out to the Vermont League of Cities and Towns to request information regarding the issue.

Allocation of ARPA Funds (George Cushing):

Cushing stated he was following up on ARPA funds which have not yet been distributed. He stated the allocated \$5,000 for the Community Trust had not yet been sent and funds allocated to

the Water/Wastewater Department had not yet been fully distributed. Carlson stated he would follow up with Town Clerk Miller, Assistant Town Clerk Carol Smith, and the Community Trust. Cushing stated the importance of determining the balance of the Town ARPA funds that remain to determine how the remainder can be allocated. Carlson stated that Town Grant Administrator Alice Merrill has been working on the issue. He stated the Town is also working with Central Vermont Regional Planning through the Municipal Technical Assistance Program for assistance in accessing State ARPA funds which are designated for specific programs that the Town would need to apply for. Cushing expressed some confusion regarding the Town ARPA funds awarded to CVFiber about which Carlson stated Cushing could contact Plainfield CVFiber delegate Jeremy Matt for clarification. Cushing referenced the \$173,000 allocated for the Brook Rd. bridge project. Carlson stated that the Town continues to work to identify alternate sources of funding for this and notes that the Town has received a FEMA grant which covers 92.5% of the cost with the \$173,000 being the Town's contribution. Cushing requested a contact for further information regarding this funding, Carlson directed Cushing to contact Merrill.

There was brief informal discussion amongst attendees of road conditions near Hope Cemetery in Barre.

79 Bean Road - Update on Animal Control response to neighbor complaints:

Volz shared that the Select Board has received emails from Michael and Kim Nolan about a dog that belongs to their neighbors residing at 79 Bean Rd. which is threatening the neighbors, including blocking people in locations where the dog has them cornered. Animal Control Officer Peter Yasus stated he had discussed the issue with neighbors and had observed to dog to be tied to a tow line at the property. He stated he was told the dog was able to slip out of his collar, roam free, and chase neighbors on their own properties. Yasus stated he had also discussed the issue with Washington County Sherriff Brett Myers. He stated he had requested the Town Clerk provide him with an official letter that he may use to notify the owners of the complaint against their dog and has not yet been provided such a letter. Cushing added that any letter should be sent certified mail. Volz and Carlson stated the Select Board will draft a letter, having it checked by the Town attorney, to provide to Yasus. **Volz moved to send a certified letter from the Select Board to the dog owners letting them know there have been a number of complaints against their dog and that they need to keep it under control on their own property. The motion carried unanimously.**

Volz provided a brief update regarding the zoning violations at 79 Bean Rd. He stated that the Town attorney had shared that there has been no update from the court so he believes an estate has not yet been opened. He stated that the Town attorney had also said that there may be a statutory mechanism for the Town to sue the heir, Ashley Lynch, filing an enforcement action in the environmental court. The Select Board agreed to inquire about the cost of pursuing this action.

Appoint Alice Merrill as Town liaison for US 2/Main St project:

Volz moved to appoint Alice Merrill as Town liaison for the US 2/Main St. intersection project. The motion carried unanimously.

Approval of warrants:

Accounts Payable:

There were no accounts payable warrants presented for approval.

Payroll: 9/14/23, 9/21/23

Carlson presented for approval payroll warrants for September 14 and 21, 2023. **Volz moved to approve the presented payroll warrants. The motion carried unanimously.**

Approval of Fleet Permit: Duranleau Construction, Washington, VT:

Carlson presented for approval a fleet permit for Duranleau Construction of Washington, VT. **Volz moved to approve the presented fleet permit. The motion carried unanimously.**

Approval of draft minutes: 1/25/22 and 9/18/23:

Carlson presented for approval draft minutes from January 25, 2022 and September 18, 2023. **Volz moved to approve the presented draft minutes. The motion carried unanimously.**

Adjourn:

Carlson moved to adjourn at 7:14 pm. The motion carried unanimously.

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