

Town of Plainfield Select Board Meeting
November 6, 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):
 - Approval of the Brook Field Service Preventative Maintenance Agreement contract for 2024
 - Request for approval to sign Brook Rd. bridge grant document
 - Update on Rec Field Clean-up
- Schedule budget meetings
- Update on discussion with Town attorney regarding 79 Bean Rd.
- Update on the issue of vacant homes in Plainfield
- Appointment of David Hill to the Hazard Mitigation Committee
- Approval of warrants:
 - Accounts Payable: 10/25/23
 - Payroll: 10/19/23, 10/26/23, 11/2/23
- Approval of draft minutes: 10/16/23
- Adjourn

Present: Select Board members Riley Carlson (Chair), Tim Davis, and Jim Volz. Also in attendance were Town Clerk/Treasurer Robin Miller, Delinquent Tax Collector George Cushing, Kim Nolan, Ryan Christiansen, Chris Ditmeyer, Emergency Management Director Michael Billingsley, and Eric Blaisdell of the Times Argus.

Chair Carlson called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm.

Changes to Agenda:

Davis asked if the Town has a distribution point for harm reduction supplies, i.e. Fentanyl test strips. Carlson suggested Davis ask Town Clerk Miller and/or Town Health Officer Jodi Vilardi and offered to provide contact information. Miller stated that she has no knowledge of such a

program in Town. Davis explained that he had been in touch with someone from the State and shared that the supplies are free. He stated he will gather information and add the issue to a future Select Board meeting agenda.

Carlson suggested, at the request of Assistant Town Clerk/Treasurer Carol Smith, the addition of discussion of a Green Mountain Power request to bury some power lines on Recreation Field Rd. that had been damaged by the July floods. He noted that Road Foreman Bingham has given his approval for the project. Select Board members agreed to the addition of this item after the Town Clerk/Treasurer Report.

Announcements:

There were no announcements.

Public Comment:

Carlson opened the floor to public comment. There was no public comment.

Town Clerk/Treasurer Report (Robin Miller):

Approval of the Brook Field Service Preventative Maintenance Agreement contract for 2024- Miller requested the Select Board approve the 2024 preventative maintenance agreement for Brook Field Service to service the generator at the Town Hall Opera House. Carlson stated that this is the usual yearly maintenance agreement which is quoted at \$340 if paid before November 10, 2023. Davis shared that Emergency Management Director Michael Billingsley had shared with him that he's researching options for replacing the Town Hall Opera House generator with a more suitable larger generator. Select Board members agreed that replacement of the generator is a separate issue from the approval of this maintenance agreement. **Volz moved to approve the Brook Field Service preventative maintenance agreement in the amount of \$340 for 2024. The motion carried unanimously.** Carlson signed the agreement.

Request for approval to sign Brook Rd. bridge grant document –

Miller acknowledged that the Select Board had previously signed the Brook Rd. grant document and shared that the State has requested the Town submit a different application which will also need to be signed. She requested approval from the Select Board for her to sign the document once it's completed, sharing that the document will include the same information as the previous grant document but with more detail and a timeline provided. Carlson clarified that this document is for the replacement of the Brook Rd. bridge in the village for which the Town received a Hazard Mitigation grant. Miller shared that she's been working on the grant application with Town Grant Administrator Alice Merrill and Keith Cubbon of Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission. **Volz moved to approve Town Clerk Robin Miller to sign the grant reapplication for the Brook Rd. bridge. The motion carried unanimously.**

Update on Rec Field Clean-up –

Miller noted that she had received two bids for the Recreation Field cleanup which she had provided to the Select Board members by email prior to this meeting. She shared that one is from Darkwing Enterprises for \$11,275 and one from Abare Lawn Care for \$13,000. Carlson notes that both bids cover the same amount of work.

Carlson recognized George Cushing. Cushing expressed his belief that these two bids are too high and shared that a local person had reached out to him and expressed interest in also submitting a bid. He expressed his displeasure with the inaction of the Recreation and Public Arts Committee (Rec Committee) on cleaning the basketball court following the flood. Volz spoke in defense of the Rec Committee and explained that the Select Board would like to receive a recommendation from the committee on the cleanup. Carlson clarified that the Rec Committee was invited to this meeting but was not currently in attendance. Davis suggested that the Select Board hold a special meeting once the new bid is received to further discuss the matter. Select Board members agreed to this.

Approval of Green Mountain Power Agreement:

Volz moved to approve the Green Mountain Power agreement to bury electric lines along the Recreation Field Rd. The motion carried unanimously. Carlson, Davis, and Volz signed the agreement.

Schedule budget meetings:

Volz explained that during the budget process the Select Board meets with all the Town committees and departments hear their recommendations for what they want their upcoming year's budget to be. Miller and Select Board members agreed that the meetings be scheduled starting the last week of November and continue no later than December 8, 2023. Miller stated she will reach out to committee and department heads to schedule. Carlson requested Miller provide the Select Board with the budget spreadsheet.

Update on discussion with Town attorney regarding 79 Bean Rd.:

Carlson provided historical context on the issue stating that in the past the Plainfield Development Review Board (DRB) had issued a decision that the RV on the property at 79 Bean Rd. should be removed. He stated it had been up to the Select Board at that time to enforce that decision which had not occurred due to the high cost of legal representation. He further explained that in the meantime the owner of the property has passed away and the Town is now waiting for the estate to enter probate. He shared that Town Attorney Tarrant had suggested an experimental option which might encourage the court to speed up the probate process but that he estimated would cost the Town \$7,500 to \$20,000. Carlson stated his preference for waiting for the estate to open in probate. Davis pointed out the current challenge posed by the aggressive dog owned by the residents at the property. Volz stated that Tarrant has advised that the Town

Animal Control Officer take steps to enforce the Animal Control Ordinance. Carlson will follow up with Animal Control Officer Peter Yasus to ensure a letter is sent to the residents regarding the aggressive dog.

Carlson recognized Kim Nolan. Nolan stated that the dog at 79 Bean Rd. is not slipping out of its collar but rather is being let out by the owners who then yell for the dog for over a half hour while the dog on her property behaving aggressively toward both her and her husband. She further stated that she has attempted to contact the police but has not received a response. She requested contact information for Animal Control Officer Yasus which Carlson stated he will provide her. Nolan stated her belief that there may also be illegal drug activity happening at 79 Bean Rd. Carlson urged Nolan to report illegal activity to the police. Miller stated she will share contact information for Washington County Sheriff Bret Meyer with Nolan.

Carlson recognized Ryan Christiansen. Christiansen stated that the dog at 79 Bean Rd. has behaved aggressively toward him and his family as well. He reminded the Select Board that at a previous Select Board meeting Animal Control Officer Yasus had requested a standard letter be drawn up and inquired if the Select Board had followed up on this. Volz responded that he had discussed this with Town Attorney Tarrant and is waiting on a response about what language needs to be included. Volz stated he will draft a letter. Christiansen expressed his displeasure with the actions of the past Select Board in not enforcing the DRB decision. Carlson explained that the Town has since sent a letter to the current occupants regarding the violation and asking them to control their dog and to vacate the property. He further explained that the Town would have to go to court to enforce the violation fines. Christiansen pointed out that the Select Board does not have the decision making authority to decide whether to enforce zoning regulations, rather the Select Board is tasked with enforcing the regulations. Volz stated the Town is following the advice of Attorney Tarrant and fully intends to and is taking steps to enforce the zoning regulations but is held up by waiting for the estate to go to probate before filing suit.

Carlson recognized Chris Ditmeyer. Ditmeyer expressed support for Christiansen's stance. She further stated her belief that the septic system at 79 Bean Rd has not been approved which is of interest to her as her property is directly downstream. She stated that the owners of 79 Bean Rd don't appear to understand that they're not in compliance and encouraged a home visit from the Select Board. Davis expressed that he has a conflict of interest and is unable to be involved in personal interactions regarding the residents.

Carlson recognized Michael Billingsley. Billingsley voiced his belief that it would be unsafe for Select Board members to make a home visit to the residents of 79 Bean Rd., citing recent escalation in drug-related violence in the Plainfield and Barre area. Carlson, Davis, and Nolan stated their agreement that a home visit is not a good choice at this time.

Update on the issue of vacant homes in Plainfield:

Carlson stated that Volz had discussed the issue of vacant homes in Plainfield with Town Attorney Tarrant at the urging of George Cushing during the last Select Board meeting. He shared that Tarrant had stated that the Town could enact of an ordinance which would compel the cleaning or repair of any premises that the legislative body judges to be dangerous. Carlson noted Montpelier and Woodstock, VT have ordinances to this effect.

Carlson recognized Cushing who stated he had reached out to the Barre City Clerk and would like to provide a copy of Barre's vacant home ordinance to Town Clerk Miller to distribute to Select Board members. He encouraged Select Board members to consider adopting a similar ordinance. Miller stated she would scan and email the document to Select Board members the following day.

Carlson recognized Billingsley who stated that, in his role as Emergency Management Director, he has attempted to reach out to the owner of 79 School St. to discuss options available through the FEMA buy-out program. He stated he hopes to speak with the owner soon.

Carlson noted that Jamie Spector, chair of the Recreation and Public Arts Committee, had joined the meeting. He provided a recap of the issue "Update on Rec Field Clean-up" discussed earlier in the meeting. Spector stated that the Rec Committee could potentially remove the skate park features ahead of any work done to reduce costs. Spector also provided an update, stating that the Rec Committee had been turned down for a grant from Ben & Jerry's Foundation intended to fund a water fountain at the Recreation Field and continues to seek grant funding for a climbing structure for 5-12 year olds.

Appointment of David Hill to the Hazard Mitigation Committee:

Carlson stated that Hazard Mitigation Committee Chair Maggie Baird had recommended appointment of David Hill to the committee. **Carlson moved to appoint David Hill to the Hazard Mitigation Committee. The motion passed unanimously.**

Approval of warrants:

Accounts Payable:

Carlson presented for approval accounts payable warrants for October 25, 2023. **Volz moved to approve the presented warrants. The motion carried unanimously.**

Payroll:

Carlson presented for approval payroll warrants for October 19 and 26 and November 2, 2023. **Volz moved to approve the presented warrants. The motion carried unanimously.**

Approval of draft minutes 10/16/23:

Carlson presented for approval draft minutes from October 16, 2023. **Volz moved to approve the presented draft minutes. The motion carried unanimously.**

Adjourn: **Volz moved to adjourn at 6:54 pm. The motion carried unanimously.**

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