

Town of Plainfield Select Board Special Meeting
May 30, 2024
149 Main St. 2nd floor and Via Zoom
Minutes - Draft

Agenda:

- Changes to Agenda
- Announcements
- Public Comment
- Road Foreman's Report (Michael Bingham)
- Town Clerk's Report (Bram Towbin)
- Discussion of approved Article to expand Select Board from three to five members
- Discuss Town EV Charger
- Update on 79 Bean Road Zoning Violations
- Approval of Warrants:
- Accounts Payable - May 20 and 21, 2024
- Payroll - May 15 and 18, 2024
- Approval of Draft Minutes: April 22 and May 9 and 13, 2024
- Set date for next Select Board Meeting
- Adjourn

Present: Select Board members Jim Volz (Chair), Karl Bissex, and Patti Jamele. Also present were Town Clerk/Treasurer Bram Towbin, Emergency Management Director Michael Billingsley, Town Energy Coordinator Bob Atchinson, Charles Scott, Kim Nolan, Chris Ditmeyer, and Eric Blaisdell of the Times Argus.

Chair Volz called the meeting to order at 6:04 pm.

Changes to Agenda:

Towbin requested that "Discuss Town EV Charger" be moved to an earlier time in the meeting so that Town Energy Coordinator Bob Atchinson could participate. Volz stated this agenda item would be moved to the beginning of the meeting following public comment. Volz suggested adding "Approve Emergency Management Expenditure" to the agenda and moving "Update on 79 Bean Road Zoning Violations" to earlier in the meeting. Select Board members agreed to these changes.

Announcements:

Volz recognized Michael Billingsley who shared that the Hazard Mitigation Committee plans to hold a special public forum meeting on Wednesday, June 5, 2024 at 7 pm to discuss the implications of the strong solar storm which is forecast.

Public Comment:

Volz recognized Charles Scott, alumnus of Goddard College, who shared that Goddard College is under contract for sale. He asked if the Town is aware of the identity of the potential buyer and if the potential buyer is a private developer how the Town will ensure the campus is developed to the benefit of the community. Towbin shared that rumors have suggested that Malone Properties is the potential buyer and he stated that the Town has reached out to Patrick Malone with no response. Bissex shared that he has heard that there is a community informational meeting being held at Goddard College campus on June 1, 2024 at 3pm. Billingsley, speaking as a former Goddard faculty member and alumnus, shared that the potential buyer as well as a member of the Goddard College Board of Directors have been invited to the June 1st meeting.

Discuss Town EV Charger:

Volz recognized Atchinson who requested that a red donation box be ordered which will be installed on the post of the EV charger at the Mill St. Park. Atchinson agreed to purchase the box with the Town EIN number and submit for reimbursement. Billingsley asked if a cash free metering system for the EV station has been researched. Atchinson explained that this type of system would come with additional cost. Atchinson stated he will also install a placard with directions for EV charger users. Towbin suggested a flat fee per hour be charged. Atchinson stated payments must be by donation.

Road Foreman's Report (Michael Bingham):

Towbin stated that Bingham was unable to attend the meeting. Towbin shared information regarding needed changes to the Town's culvert policy as supplied to him by Bingham ahead of the meeting. Volz stated that the new Town culvert policy will be discussed at the next Select Board meeting.

Town Clerk's Report (Bram Towbin):

Towbin described the reforms made at Town Meeting the previous week which increased the Select Board from three to five members and also changed the Town Clerk and Town Treasurer positions from elected to appointed. He explained that the two new seats on the Select Board must be filled by special election. He stated the election will be held on the same day as the Presidential Primary on August 13, 2024; this election will be warned on July 3, 2024. He stated

that petitions to run for the open seats will be available on the Town website and at the Town Clerk's Office.

Towbin explained that an audit is necessary because the Town finances are in rough shape. He stated his belief that a bookkeeper needs to help get the Town books in order prior to an audit. He stated that he has advertised for an Assistant Town Treasurer for a 24 hours/week position. He stated his hope that this person would then transition into the Town Treasurer position. He encouraged the Select Board to move forward with forming a committee to define the job descriptions of the Town Clerk and Town Treasurer. Volz pointed out that the pay for Town Treasurer is set at Town Meeting. Towbin stated his willingness to give up some of his salary toward that position. Eric Blaisdell asked if Towbin would need to be appointed to his positions as Town Clerk and Treasurer now that the position had been changed from elected. Towbin expressed his understanding that the Select Board has the right to replace him within 40 days of the election and stated his interest in remaining in the positions currently. **Volz moved to appoint Bram Towbin to be the Clerk and Treasurer. The motion carried unanimously.**

Update on 79 Bean Road Zoning Violations:

Volz recognized Kim Nolan. She expressed her frustration with the slow progress on the enforcement of the zoning violations at 79 Bean Road and stated she had hoped that Town Attorney Tarrant would attend the Select Board meeting to answer questions. Volz stated he is in discussion with Tarrant and will provide updated information as it's available. Volz recognized Chris Ditmeyer who asked what permit the current occupants of 79 Bean Rd have applied for. Volz encouraged Ditmeyer to inquire at the Town Clerk's Office. Towbin stated he will connect with Zoning Administrator Karen Storey for the requested information.

Approve Emergency Management Expenditure:

Volz recognized Billingsley who explained that he had received two bids for installation of air conditioning for the cooling center on the ground floor of the Town Hall Opera House. He requested that the Select Board sign a contract with Vermont Energy to do the work as their bid was lower and they will work with Efficiency Vermont for a rebate for the Town. **Jamele moved to authorize the Chair of the Select Board to sign the contract with Vermont Energy Contractor Supply Corporation for the installation of an air conditioner for the Town Hall. The motion carried unanimously.** Volz signed two copies of the contract. Billingsley shared that the generator installation at the Town Hall and move of the old generator to the Town Municipal Building will occur August 1, 2024. Jamele thanked Billingsley for his help during Town Meeting.

Discussion of approved Article to expand Select Board from three to five members:

This item was discussed during the Town Clerk's Report.

Approval of Warrants and Fleet Permits:

Accounts Payable - May 20 and 21, 2024

Bissex moved to approve accounts payable warrants dated May 20 and 21, 2024. The motion carried unanimously.

Payroll - May 15 and 18, 2024

Bissex moved to approve payroll warrants dated May 15 and 18, 2024. The motion carried unanimously.

Approval of Draft Minutes – April 22 and May 9 and 13, 2024:

Jamele moved to approve draft minutes dated April 22 and May 9 and 13, 2024. The motion carried unanimously.

Set date for next Select Board Meeting:

Volz stated that the Select Board meets the second and fourth Mondays of the month. He stated the next Select Board meeting will be June 10, 2024 at 6 pm.

Adjourn:

Jamele moved to adjourn at 6:58 pm. The motion carried unanimously.

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