

Town of Plainfield, Vermont
Select Board Meeting
November 9, 2020, 7PM
Remote-Only Meeting Via Zoom
Approved Minutes

Electronic Participants: Tammy Farnham (select board member), Jim Volz (select board member), Sasha Thayer (select board member - chair), Jesse Cooper (community member and Planning Commission member), Alice Merrill (community member and Town grant writer), Keith Swann (community member and Friends of the Town Hall-Opera House president), Greg Light (fire chief), Susan Grimaldi (community member), & Gary (last name unknown)

Approval of/changes to agenda:

Sasha informed that Linda is working late tonight and will be unable to join the meeting, thus the town clerk/treasurer report will be lessened.

Announcements:

COVID-19 Update: Plainfield cases have grown to 6 people. There are additional cases in Washington county and they are on the rise. Sasha reported there was only 1 person that attempted to enter the Town Hall on election day, this person was still able to vote by dropping off their ballot. Sasha outlined several testing facilities and precautions to take pertaining to COVID-19. She reiterated the "COVID Talk" mentioned in a prior select board meeting.

Public Comment:

No public comment.

Town Clerk/Town Treasurer Report:

November 3 General Election: 713 ballots were provided before 9am on Thursday morning. There were 1073 total ballots (827 mailed in ballots, only 73 people voted in person). A big thank you to all the volunteers. Jim thanked Sasha for spending the day screening on election day.

Tax payments update:

The direct debit cut off was for tax payments was on Nov 1st. Sasha advised to send banking information in by 1/25/2021 to be included in the February debit for taxes. The documentation needed includes a voided check and written authorization.

Approval of warrants:

This will be discussed on November 23rd when Linda is in attendance.

Approval of minutes, including October 13, 21, and 26:

Jim moved to approve the above meeting minutes, the motion passed unanimously.

Route 2-Main Street Intersection Remediation Project Update:

Tammy reported that there are still holes being drilled to try to establish where the ledge is. Emergency services have been discussed and Tammy indicated that the state is willing to assist

with additional expense to give adequate emergency care. Establishing detours will help direct where the town/states attention needs to be directed. There will be greater updates going forward. Greg inquired when the fire department can be brought into the conversation, Tammy expressed that the state needs to figure out various options before requesting help from the town on how to proceed with emergency services. Sasha and Greg expressed that it seems backwards that the fire department is not involved from the beginning. Tammy iterated that the state is familiar with various alternative options and that input from the fire department will be forthcoming. Sasha indicated that it makes sense to circumvent Tammy as the middle person and that Greg should be the primary contact. Tammy indicated for right now she is the primary contact in these initial stages and that she will know more on 11/23.

Pedestrian Bridge Project update:

Tammy stated the town is still waiting to hear back on the grant. No further updates.

Brook Road bridge replacement project update:

Sasha indicated that information is needed by January 6th on whether the town wants to commit to the project (also needed from VHB). The deadline for the FEMA grant will be the end of January 30th or 31st. Sasha indicated that Stephanie Smith (EM/FEMA) & Grace Vinson (CVRPC) expressed willingness to come to a select board meeting to answer questions and give a likely time frame and give additional information. Alice stated if the town wants to move forward with the grant then it should be decided upon sooner rather than later. The project is anticipated to be 25% from the town. Alice suggested looking into bonding for funding the project, Sasha indicated that Grace might be able to touch on some possibilities. Tammy and Jim agreed that it was fine to invite Grace & Stephanie to the next select board meeting (11/23).

Planning for budget preparation:

Tammy proposed to select timeframes for 3-hour increments starting in December. December 3rd 8-11am, December 8th 4-7pm, December 16th 4-7pm, Jim & Sasha confirmed those dates and times work for them.

Sasha indicated that the select board has previously requested written reports related to budget items to have some figures to look at prior to convening to discuss the 2021 budget. Sasha brought up a purchasing policy and Tammy expressed making it transparent for townspeople to understand upcoming contracts as it allows for comparison/bidding. Tammy mentioned the importance of having a true contract for vendors as it outlines the expectation from both parties, and modify as necessary. Sasha reinforced the importance of having a contract, and outlined an example involving the cemetery committee and the legal backing that a contract upholds. Sasha said that she would ask Linda to put together a list of contracts that the town has and circulate ideas. Three areas necessitating contracts include: David Strong's role, webmaster and plowing. Tammy and Sasha agreed that it might be a good idea to involve an attorney to review contracts developed by the select board. A special meeting was scheduled on 11/17 at 4:30pm-6pm to discuss the logistics of developing contracts for the 3 above positions/roles.

Updated Town plan:

Jesse advised that they are waiting on a revised Town Plan document. Will submitted the document to the Central Vermont Planning Commission for amendment.

COVID-19 update & issues re re-opening the TH/OH for various uses:

Sasha expressed that things went well for opening the Town Hall for election day, but it does not seem as though it makes sense to re-open the Town Hall at this point, Tammy and Jim agreed.

Tammy enquired about a contract from the Friends of the Opera House pertaining to the Town Hall/Opera House. Sasha indicated that the direct deposit has been taken care of by Linda. Sasha advised that she would do some research the grant for the lighting upgrade to find out if the entire grant (50%) will need to be accepted, as the Friends will need to fundraise which might be difficult given the current circumstances; per the section 1.1- paragraph c, it indicates “up to” and the grant could be lessened to accommodate/cut-out the optional light. The select board agreed to take until 11/23 to review the 10-page contract. Keith said that he would check to see if there was a deadline for the grant.

Tammy, Sasha & Jim agreed the Town Hall will be opened on a case-to-case basis as unique/individual situations arise.

Upcoming Meetings:

November 12th:

Executive Session

November 17th (4:30-6pm):

Town Contracts

Items for November 23, 2020 Select Board Meeting:

- Route 2-Main Street Intersection Remediation project
- Pedestrian Bridge Project
- Brook Road Bridge Project (with Stephanie & Grace)
- Budget meeting schedule
- Upcoming contracts
- Updated Town Plan
- Grant for lighting upgrade for Town Hall/Opera House

December 3rd (8-11am), December 8th (4-7pm), December 16th (4-7pm):

Budget Meetings

December 14th:

Social Concerns Committee

December 28th

No select board meeting due to Christmas

Adjourn:

Jim moved to adjourn at 8:29pm, with a unanimous approval of the select board.