

**Town of Plainfield, Vermont**  
**2020/21 Town Plan Hearing / Select Board Meeting**  
March 8, 2021 at 6:00PM (Town Hearing)  
March 8, 2021 at 7:00PM (Select Board)  
**Remote-Only Meeting Via Zoom**  
**Minutes - approved**

***Electronic Participants:*** Select Board members Tammy Farnham, Sasha Thayer (chair), and Jim Volz, Sarah Albert (community member and Conservation Commission), Rob Bridges (community member), Charlie Cogbill (community member), Will Colgan (community member and Planning Commission), Jesse Cooper (community member and Planning Commission), Paula Emery (community member and VLCT delegate), Baylen Sky (community member and Planning Commission), George Springston (community member), Linda Wells (Town Clerk/Treasurer), Betsy Zeigler (community member), & Eric Blaisdell (Times Argus Reporter).

**2020 Town Plan Hearing:**

Sarah noted that on page 86 under town properties talks about the town forest and it says twice that it is on Maxfield Rd which is incorrect it is actually on Gonyeau Rd. Sarah indicated that there is no mention of Gonyeau Rd, however Sasha iterated that the verbiage is correct. Will mentioned that one of the bullet points states “Maxfield Rd Town Forest”, he suggested to change it to “Town Forest”. It was agreed to change the verbiage to state both road names.

Sarah mentioned that someone had previously mentioned that the timeline within the plan seem unrealistic, as there are a lot of 1-year goals. Will suggested to eliminate the short term and change to near term to make them longer. Sasha will work on trying to figure out more suitable language/terms.

Sasha requested a change to the verbiage regarding tree removal.

Sasha suggested to be mindful of the use of the word “should” within the town plan. She highlighted a few areas of the plan that could be revised i.e.: page 21. Jim reminded that it does not state “shall”, and the town plan is ultimately a series of suggestions. Jim believes that the plan is supposed to be directing and is a guide on what we should be doing, therefore the word “should” is appropriate. Sarah pointed out that in the statute definition section (#26) should is defined as “an activity is encouraged but not mandated”. It was agreed that at the beginning of the town plan the statutory definition of “should” would be included. Rob suggested adding the definition of “should” immediately following the introduction 1.1.

Sasha recognized Susan Grimaldi for the artwork provided for the front page, her name will be added to the “special thanks” section.

Tammy suggested to finalize the Town Plan on 3/22, Will said that approving the text for the Town Plan would be great, as Plainfield does not currently have a town plan.

The purpose of the Town Plan was discussed.

At 6:58pm Jim moved to conclude the select board hearing on the 2020/21 Town Plan, with a unanimous approval of the select board members.

### **Select Board Meeting:**

Select Board meeting began at 7:02pm

#### **Approval of/changes to agenda:**

Sasha stated that the Board had received fleet permits which the board is being asked to approve from Cardinal Logistics Management Corporation, Concord, North Carolina and from Chevalier Drilling Company, Inc., Highgate Springs, VT and asked that consideration be given to adding these to the agenda. Jim moved to add those items to the agenda, with a unanimous approval of the select board members.

#### **Announcements:**

Sasha added that the Senior Center is hosting a St. Patrick's Day corned beef and cabbage meal fundraiser - \$10/person.

#### **Public Comment:**

Charlie Cogbill mentioned that he sent a letter to the select board pertaining to Article 6 & 7 for the 2021 town meeting warning and he has received a letter from Sasha responding to those comments. Charlie mentioned that Articles 6 & 7 are very vague. During the emergency select board meeting on 2/24 it was approved to add the phrase "for the future", which does not appear in the published version of the warning. Charlie is confused by the meaning of this question and believes that other town members will be as well. Charlie mentioned that meeting minutes have been posted late, of which have been posted later than 5 days. Sasha commented that when the draft meeting minutes are posted the agendas are taken down. Charlie stated that what is currently available to the town members on the website is not sufficient. Charlie mentioned that Act 162 provides that only elections do not need petition. Charlie stated there was no motion made to indicate that Article 6 & 7 would be added to the warning, he believes this is flawed. Charlie questioned whether Article 6 & 7 should be on the ballot and are valid. Sasha responded to Charlie's question's by stating that on January 8, 2021 Gary Graves requested for the select board to consider using Australian ballot. Sasha stated that there was a draft of the town warning and individual items were not discussed one by one but the document was chosen to be approved. Linda added that is the way she understood it also. Jim mentioned that if Charlie is correct, then at the next town meeting these can be validated. If the statutes are voted down then the point is mute anyway. Charlie suggested to discuss these questions with an attorney. Jim suggested to figure this out after the fact and rely on the league for now, if it's voted down then it's moot and if it's not legal, it cannot be implemented until after an in-person meeting.

#### **Town Clerk/Treasure Report –Linda Wells:**

Linda started by apologizing for providing the wrong warning to Sasha to post on the website, but this has since been updated. She mentioned that the correct warning was posted in all of the locations throughout the town.

The town reports went to the press last Thursday and will be mailed shortly after obtaining them. Absentee ballots will be mailed by the end of next week. Linda advised community members to request their ballot if they haven't already. Voting can be done in person at the Town Hall or by absentee ballot. More information regarding Town Meetings & Elections can be found at: <https://www.plainfieldvt.us/town-meetings--elections.html>

**Consideration of borrowing for a portion of Pedestrian Bridge Project town share:**

Linda mentioned that this process would be very similar to what we do now with VTrans. The borrowing interest rate is 1%, the term would be 5 years unless the select board wanted to bring it to the voters. Linda said that the borrowed amount would be approximately \$61,000 (+ with interest). Linda said that she would prepare the application and go from there.

**Approval of fleet permits for:**

- Cardinal Logistics Management Corporation, Concord, North Carolina
- Chevalier Drilling Company, Inc., Highgate Springs, VT

Tammy moved to approve the 2 fleet permits with a unanimous approval of the select board.

**Warrants:**

*Accounts Payable:* 3/1, 3/3

*Payroll:* 2/26, 3/5

Jim moved to approve these warrants and the motion passed unanimously.

**Meeting Minute Approval:**

Jim noted some corrections needed in the December 28, 2020 minutes to remove all of the third paragraph after the first two sentences and those were made. Jim Volz then moved for approval of December 26, 28, and 29, 2020 minutes with the changes to the December 28 minutes and the motion passed unanimously.

Jim Volz moved for approval of January 7 & 12, 2021 and the motion passed unanimously.

Approval of the minutes for January 19, 2021 was deferred to the next select board meeting because the minutes were incomplete and need revision.

Jim Volz moved for the approval of the January 12 and 22, and 25, 2021 minutes with the correction of his name from "Vim" to "Jim" and the motion passed with Jim and Sasha voting, aye, and Tammy abstaining because she hadn't read the minutes.

Tammy noted a needed change in a typo in the February 3 minutes from "paging to "paving" and that change was made. Jim note a needed change in the February 8, 2021 minutes to correct his name to read "Jim" and Tammy noted that in the first paragraph under the Road Foreman update, "sign" needed to be changed to "notice" and these changes were made. Jim moved for the approval of the minutes of February 3 and 8, 2021 with these changes made and the motion passed unanimously.

Jim noted that the February 24, 2021 draft minutes needed to state the date that the agenda was posted, and change to note that this occurred on February 23, 2021 was made. Jim moved for

the approval of the minutes of February 24, 2021 with this change and the motion passed unanimously.

Jim noted that his name needed to be changed to read “Jim” in the February 22, 2021 minutes and the correction was made. With that correction, Jim moved for the approval of the February 22, 2021 minutes and the motion passed unanimously.

**The select board finalized the following meeting minutes:** December 26, 28, & 29, 2020, January 7, 12, 22, & 25 2021, February 3, 8, & 24, 2021.

**Connecticut Attorneys Title Insurance Company lawsuit against Plainfield and 8 additional towns:**

Sasha stated that other defendants had requested that Stizel, Page & Fletcher schedule a follow-up meeting relating to the possibility of seeking compensation from Plaintiff Connecticut Attorneys Title Insurance Company for legal fees. Sasha attended that meeting and stated that the attorneys do not think that would occur. The bill to Plainfield for its share of the attorneys fees is \$3,585.30 to Stizel, Page & Fletcher for legal services (on the last warrant). She noted that the legal costs were shared by the nine towns, meaning that the towns had had to pay over \$32,000 in legal fees that could have been used for other things. Jim also noted that the hourly rate charged by the attorneys was very reasonable.

Relating to the \$3,585.30 bill for legal fees, Sasha noted that the 2020-2021 budget line for legal services of is only \$2,000 and that the remaining amount would have to come from somewhere else in the budget. Linda indicated that she believed that the by the end of the year the remaining funds would be found in the budget.

**Route 2-Main Street Intersection Remediation Project Update - Tammy Farnham:**

Tammy discussed the design cost for utilities with the state and what next steps look like. The state said that the town can use the same engineer, as they are already involved in the project. The town’s cost in the project is primarily utilities and design costs which equates to approximately \$14,000. Tammy suggested that on March 22, 2021 Melissa Rutter from VTrans (Utility Coordinator Supervisor) join the select board meeting to assist in providing information about the design cost for utilities and on how the town should fund these design costs.

**Pedestrian Bridge Update - Tammy Farnham:**

Tasmmy stated that signing the contract with contractor needed to be scheduled. Jim & Sasha agreed that the contact should be examined by the town’s lawyer. Tammy said that she would touch base with Ross to obtain more information regarding the contract and how to sign the contract.

The most current update signifies that the start date is projected for mid-July.

**Planning for Town Meeting Informational Hearings on March 18 and March 30 at 6PM:**

Sasha mentioned that one of the controversial topics likely include voting via Australian ballot, as the rest of the topics are routine. Sasha said that she would draft a notice pertaining to the Town Meeting Informational Hearings; she will circulate the notice to the SB members prior to publishing.

**COVID-19 Update:**

Sasha emphasized the importance of being cautious because of the COVID-19 variant.

**Agenda for Upcoming Meeting:**

*Agenda for March 18, 2021:*

Select Board Informational Hearing re Town Meeting Warning Articles

*Agenda for March 30, 2021:*

Select Board Informational Hearing re Town Meeting Warning Articles

*Agenda for March 22, 2021 Select Board Meeting:*

- Minutes approval including 1/19/21 minutes
- Update on RT.2-Main St intersection project, inc. Melissa Rutter, Vtrans Utility Coordinator Supervisor, to assist in providing information about the design cost for utilities and on how the Town should fund these design costs
- Update on Pedestrian Bridge Project
- Approval of 2021 Town Plan

**Adjournment:**

Tammy moved to adjourn and the motion passed unanimously at 8:38 PM.