

**Town of Plainfield, Vermont**  
**Select Board Meeting**  
**August 24, 2021**  
**Minutes - Approved**

**Present:**

Tammy Farnham – Select Board  
Sasha Thayer – Select Board  
Jim Volz – Select Board, Chair  
Linda Wells – Town Clerk and Treasurer  
Jacqueline Decker  
Tim Phillips  
George Cushing  
Eric Blaisdell – The Times Argus  
Grace Vinson – Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission  
Janet Daum  
Bob Fancher – Plainfield Historical Society  
Lucy Blue  
Melinda Vieux  
Greg Chamberlin – Water and Wastewater Department  
Tristan MacGregor – Water and Wastewater Department  
Emily Lanxner  
Betsy Zeigler  
Paula Emery (Administrative Assistant – Minutes)

**Agenda**

Changes to Agenda  
Announcements  
Public Comment  
Town Clerk/Town Treasurer Report - Linda Wells

- Re-roofing municipal building update
- August 18 tax collections
- Action on Right of Way permit applications for water/wastewater department work:
  - o Jacqueline Decker, Walker Lane
  - o Jacqueline Decker, Timothy Phillips & Theodore James Cochran, Walker Lane and Towne Avenue
- Approval of warrants for August 6, 13, 20 and 27 and accounts payable warrants for August 3 and 12
- Approval of minutes for July 27 and August 3

Update on Pedestrian Bridge construction project  
Continuity of Operations Planning, Grace Vinson, Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission (CVRPC)  
Old Home Days

Website transfer to Town Clerk and website assistant  
Road Foreman report  
Executive session re employee matter  
Adjourn

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**The meeting was called to order at 7:01 by Jim Volz.**

### **Changes to Agenda**

The SB will hold off on making a decision on the “Action on Right-of-Way” item until hearing from the Road Foreman.

### **Announcements**

Pedestrian Bridge: Sasha announced that Mill Street will remain open to traffic during the Pedestrian Bridge project and that the town website reflects this change to the traffic pattern.

Farnham reported that Daniels is not going to need to make Route 2 into one lane traffic.

Thayer and Volz requested that that people obey the traffic lights.

### **Public Comment**

George Cushing spoke about the pedestrian bridge project’s lighting issues, asking why the contractor is stopping traffic on Route 2 and why the traffic lights are on all night long. Tammy replied by saying that Daniels needs time to work out all of the traffic details and requested that people practice patience. Volz stated that the purpose of the lighting is to control the flow of one lane traffic over the bridge.

Farnham reminded all that she is the communication conduit for this project and that the contractor charges by the hour. She has to communicate through the proper channels and she discourages people from attempting to address traffic concerns directly, as it will drive the cost of the project up.

### **Town Clerk/Town Treasurer Report - Linda Wells**

- ♦ Re-Roofing Municipal Building Update – Wells reported that the roofing job is finished, although there was an issue with the budget and the contractor requested an increase. Wells will email the revised bill to the SB and will pay the contractor a partial payment on the original invoice. She will wait until the SB reviews the new bill to complete the payment.
- ♦ August 18 Tax Collections – The tax collection went well. Processed \$905,896.00. Unpaid balance is \$54,502.00 amount. The latter is lower than usual for this time of year. Wells reminded tax payers that if they wish to switch to autopay they need to do so by mid-October.
- ♦ Warrants – Wells requested approval for payment of warrants for Accounts Payable from August 3 and 12, and Payroll from August 6, 13, 20, and 27. **Farnham moved to approve the warrants and the motion was approved unanimously.**
- ♦ Action on Right-of-Way Permit Applications for Water/Wastewater Department Work:
  - Jacqueline Decker, Walker Lane  
Requesting approval of a right-of-way to extend the proposed wastewater pipe (see below) to the septic pipe being installed at her home.

- Jacqueline Decker, Timothy Phillips & Theodore Cochran, Walker Lane and Towne Avenue

Requesting a right-of-way for a new septic extension at the intersection of Walker Lane and Towne Avenue. The new line will extend up Walker Lane from an existing manhole on Towne Ave. It is approximately 48 feet long and will be installed under review of the Water and Wastewater Department, so that it can be transferred to that department's ownership upon completion.

Tim Phillips spoke (as a homeowner) explained that the pipes are old, made of clay and permeated by roots. The solution the three neighboring homeowners are proposing is that they pay for Decker's extension because the extension will allow them to connect to it, fixing three houses in one job. The landowners would like to do this before Walker Lane is repaved, because if they have to add the cost of repaving the road to the project, they cannot afford to do it. They have spoken with Mike Nolan, Plainfield Road Foreman, and would like to have their project approved tonight so that they can align with the paving job, which is scheduled for October.

Tristan MacGregor of the Water and Wastewater Department stated that he thinks this solution is the best one because the pipes are failing and this meets all of the requirements. He thinks this is best for everyone and is happy with this solution.

Farnham asked MacGregor whether this is something that the town would offer to others in the community and whether it is a normal procedure. MacGregor's said that they've taken over other sections of pipe in the past and that this is fine.

Greg Chamberlin of Water Wastewater Department agreed that it is fine.

No action was taken at this time on this topic.

- ◆ Approval of Minutes for July 27 and August 3

**Thayer moved to approve the August 3 minutes. Approved unanimously.**

### **Update on Pedestrian Bridge Construction Project**

Farnham reported that Daniels has been working on the west wall and that they found voids beneath the wall, so she met with Dufresne Engineering, VHB, and the contractor. Jay Southgate, who used to own the property, met with them as well. They drilled to find the voids and determined that they had to close the front entrance of the building in order to find the voids. However, the back entrance was found to be unsafe, so they had to build new stairs, driving the cost of the project up, but there's project money set aside for this, so it may not affect the budget. They have to remove the existing wall to fill the voids, which may also create some overages of the budget. They were able to save money on the street side of the project.

George Cushing stated that the engineers should be asked to ante-up on this error because they should have found those voids before the project began. Farnham stated that the engineering

company drilled holes to find voids, but they are under layers of concrete that is in an L shape. Southgate told the engineers and project manager that water used to run down Main Street and cut through to the river through the basement at the front entrance. Thayer stated that she went through the whole file in 2017 and suggested that the SB go through the file to determine what was stated by the engineering firm.

Farnham stated that she was able to get the contractor to take money off of the total but that there are slabs of concrete poured over slabs of concrete. They may be able to build off of the current slab but can't tell until they open it up with the excavator. The cost will be determined once they open the slab. She restated that she is the conduit for information on the project and that going through her will save the town money. She spoke with VHB about setting up regular weekly or bi-weekly meetings so that she can give updates to the community.

**Continuity of Operations Planning (COOP)** – Grace Vinson, Emergency Management Planner, Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission (CVRPC)

Vinson used a PowerPoint for her presentation which may be found on the Select Board page of the website at <https://www.plainfieldvt.us/select-board.html> . A Continuity of Operations Plan is a plan to ensure that a town can continue to meet its essential functions regardless of what is happening out in the world, such as a snowstorm, flood, pandemic, etc. It identifies the important things that need to be done every day, week, and month, who is responsible for doing them, and who would replace that person if they are unable to do their task.

Vinson has begun working on Plainfield's COOP plan template.

*The wifi connection was unstable, so Vinson was inaudible at times during her presentation.*

**Old Home Days**

Thayer reported that Greg Light, Chief of the Plainfield Fire Department, said that the Fire Department will do their chicken BBQ no matter whether there's an Old Home Days event or not. The Fire Department has not scheduled a dance for the evening, so that is not going to happen. Thayer requested that all indoor events be canceled this year.

Bob Fancher said that the Plainfield Historical Society is planning their parade float and that Susan Grimaldi is planning to do her history walk. They need to know whether to continue planning as soon as possible.

Discussion centered around which events could happen and which couldn't, with **agreement among SB members that Old Home Day events that can be done safely shouldn't be canceled. SB agreed to cancel the parade and the Variety Show.**

Emily Lanxner addressed the SB to request that her band be hired to perform on a moving float, offering to parade around town playing music on Friday evening. There was discussion about the various ways that this might or might not work. **Volz informed Lanxner that the SB will get back to her,** but that the chances are that the town will not hire her band to perform.

### **Website Transfer to Town Clerk and Website Assistant**

Thayer reported issues with website uploads, with posting being removed while she's making a change to a website page. Former webmaster, Kathy Bizzoco said in an email that she's continuing to work on the website without being paid although her employment ended December 15, 2020. Farnham stated she had changed Kathy's password.

Farnham said that she is willing to allow website management to shift to Linda or to continue doing it herself.

Thayer said that the whole idea was to get committees to post their own minutes.

**Farnham requested that changes to postings on the town website be communicated with the Select Board before posting them publicly.**

Thayer and Wells met with someone who applied for the webmaster position. **SB decided to hold a special meeting to interview the applicant.**

### **Road Foreman Report**

Nolan reported that he looked at the permits (discussed above) and approves of them. Would like to get it done as soon as possible, as the contractor doing the blacktop said they would come on October 1.

**Thayer moved to approve the two right of way permits (Decker and Decker, Phillips and Cochran at Walker Lane and Towne Ave.) and the motion was approved unanimously.**

Nolan asked to revisit the question about changing Robert Lane from Class 4 to Class 3. Thayer stated that the landowners need to follow the town policy on Class 4 roads, then make a formal request to the SB.

Nolan discussed the failure of another catch basin at the Recreation Road and Mill Street. The contractor who did the catch basin at the bridge on Mill Street last month is available to do this one. Nolan requested permission to work with the same contractor without going through the bidding process again because the season is coming to an end and the bidding process will slow it down and possibly delay until next year.

Thayer reviewed the statute and found that the job can proceed without the bids. She asked Nolan to get a quote from the contractor to Linda Wells so that the SB can review it and make a decision about whether and how to proceed.

Greg Chamberlin stated that the storm drain at the bottom of Robert Lane is compromising the roadway because it is clogged. Nolan agreed to meet him there to look at it.

Nolan reported that the sand pile is in and that they will begin working on culverts next week.

**Executive Session – Employee Matter**

**Thayer moved that the public portion of the meeting be concluded so that the Select Board could go into executive session regarding an employee matter. The motion was approved unanimously at 9:10PM.**

**Upon return from executive session, Farnham made the motion was made to grant a raise of 3% for Steve Larrabee and Michael Bingham and the motion passed unanimously.**

**Adjournment – Farnham made a motion to adjourn and it passed unanimously.**

Respectfully submitted by Paula Emery.