

**Town of Plainfield, Vermont
Select Board Meeting Minutes
December 21, 2021**

Approved

Present:

Jim Volz, Select Board Chair
Sasha Thayer, Select Board
Tammy Farnham, Select Board
Linda Wells, Town Clerk and Treasurer
Eric Blaisdell, Times Argus
Josh Pitts, Water and Wastewater Commission
Mary Lane, Water and Wastewater Chair
Jason Booth, Aldrich and Elliott
Wayne Elliott, Aldrich and Elliott
Paula Emery

Agenda:

- Announcements
- Public Comment
- Town Clerk/Town Treasurer Report - Linda Wells
 - Approval of warrants
 - Approval of minutes inc. July 27, October 19, November 16, December 7
- Clarification of Development Review Board Appointment Term
- Water/Wastewater Department – US Infrastructure Bill - Mary Lane
- The Health Center Gully Remediation Project Easement
 - Operation and Maintenance Agreement per Operation and Maintenance Plan
 - Designation of Select Board member to sign necessary documents
- Skating Rink Consideration & COVID Conditions - Ryan Gillard
- Review of parking spaces in front of former hydroponics store possible reduction of number of parking spaces
- Framework for appointment of committee to assist with recommendations for use of ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) funds
- Goddard College Student Council Request for Mask Mandate
- For upcoming meeting: Meeting request from Olivia LeClerc - re Central Vermont Prevention Coalition purpose and services
- Other Business

Jim Volz called the meeting to order at 7:11PM.

Changes to Agenda

Media inquiry regarding mask mandates and cannabis was added.
Status update on Old Fire House was added.

Alice Merrill letter review and Pedestrian Bridge Update was added.

Announcements

There were no announcements.

Public Comment

Paula Emery announced that no one has plowed Main Street along the curbs.

Town Clerk/Town Treasurer Report - Linda Wells

Approval of Warrants

Wells requested approval for accounts payable warrants for December 8 and 13, and payroll warrants for December 12, 10, and 17. **Farnham moved to approve the warrants and the motion passed unanimously.**

Approval of Minutes: July 27, October 19, November 16, December 7

Thayer moved to approve December 7 minutes. Farnham requested changes to December 7 minutes. The motion did not pass.

Clarification of Development Review Board Appointment Term

Thayer moved to clarify that Mary Niebling's term on the Development Review Board will end on April 30, 2023. The motion passed unanimously.

Update on Old Fire House

Volz reported that he spoke with Suzanne Jamele about the legality of removing the Old Fire House building and learned that removing it for safety reasons is legal, while anticipatory demolition is not legal.

Thayer requested clarification about the cost of \$7,500 for demolition and Farnham confirmed that this was agreed upon with Southgate. Volz suggested that Ty Walker could also take it down for \$4,000 and there was discussion about who, how and when the building could be removed.

Farnham agreed to ask Southgate to meet with the Select Board (SB) on December 29 to discuss and come to a decision.

Farnham also requested that any changes to the Letter of Intent for Southgate be emailed to her ASAP so that she can have it ready for the 29th.

Water/Wastewater Department – US Infrastructure Bill Funds - Mary Lane

Mary Lane, Chair of the Water and Wastewater Commission (WWC), introduced Wayne Elliott and Jason Booth, of Aldrich and Elliott Water Resource Engineers. She explained that the commission has been working with Aldrich and Elliott for years and that the firm is excellent about proactively providing information about resources for town projects.

Elliott explained that they estimate that Plainfield will receive about \$375,000 in ARPA funding and that water and wastewater projects are eligible. These funds can cover the cost of the replacement of water and wastewater lines in the Route 2 Intersection project, and that it will also be possible to use funding from the federal infrastructure bill for that project. Federal funding through the Clean Water and Safe Drinking Water Acts are also available but their use requires a bond vote.

Booth added that there is a timeframe for committing to the funds, which must be kept in mind. He warned about awareness of the timeline because the funds need to be committed in 2024.

Elliott added that Plainfield's Water and Wastewater Commission has been very proactive in planning infrastructure investments for the town.

Lane referenced the Water and Wastewater Commission's Asset Management Plan, which has been in place for many years. The next big item in that plan is to run water and wastewater lines from School Street to Bunker Hill. After that, they plan to run lines some distance up the Lower Road.

Farnham clarified that if projects are ready to roll they may be able to access the funding sooner. Booth responded by noting that the projects have to be "shovel ready" and that neither of the projects are yet shovel ready. He suggested that A&E can work with the WWC to get them going sooner.

Elliott stated that ARPA and Infrastructure funds are different pots of money. The next step is for Aldrich and Elliott to continue to work with the WWC to align the projects with funding.

Lane asked if the WWC will be able to take a seat on the ARPA committee and Farnham said that they would likely be in more of an informational/resource to the committee.

The Health Center Gully Remediation Project Easement

Operation and Maintenance Agreement per Operation and Maintenance Plan

Designation of Select Board member to sign necessary documents

Thayer distributed copies of the Memorandum of Understanding and Easement Deeds to SB members for clarity. **No action was requested.** Farnham pointed out that the maintenance terms were different in the written contract than as explained by Christian Meyer (Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission) at the last meeting. She requested that Thayer speak with Mike Nolan about the role of the Road Crew in meeting the requirements of the project.

Review of parking spaces in front of former hydroponics store authorized by Select Board and possible reduction of number of parking spaces

Farnham reported that she spoke with the land owner, who had not received Volz's email asking him to meet with the SB on 12-21-21. **Farnham will re-send the email and include Volz and Thayer. The land owner agreed to set up a date to discuss the parking with the SB.**

Thayer reviewed with the Board findings of research done by Linda Wells, particularly noting a 2007 Zoning Board of Adjustment (ZBA) decision where mention was made of a plan that showed a history of six parking spaces next to the building and two next to the retaining wall. The ZBA never gave permission or granted the parking spots, nor were they asked to do so.

Thayer reported that she emailed copies of related documents to Select Board members earlier in the day, and noted that there is a possibility of finding more historical evidence supporting the town's position on parking spaces in front of the building.

Volz reiterated that if the land owner thinks he has a certain number of parking spaces which the town is preventing him from using, he should come forward with documentation to prove his point. Volz clarified that he does not think that the SB has the burden of proof in this situation.

Thayer noted that she also sent SB members some Plainfield Historic District information related to the building in question and the Old Fire House.

This item will be included in the agenda of a future Select Board meeting. No date was determined. Thayer will email materials to SB members for review.

Skating Rink Consideration & COVID Conditions - Ryan Gillard

Gillard was not present. The SB discussed masking at the ice rink. Farnham asked how the ice rink is different from the remainder of the Recreation Field, which does not have mask requirements or signage about Covid. **The item was moved to the January 4 agenda.** Volz asked if a mask mandate should be put on the agenda for the next meeting. Thayer requested that it be referred to as a covid protocol rather than a mask mandate.

Farnham stated that the guidelines and protocols are the same regardless of the use of the Recreation Field – that ice skating is no different from soccer, so if you don't require a mask for soccer you can't require one for ice skating. She suggested that the answer to the Recreation Committee's request to put the ice rink up should be that they should come to the next meeting for a discussion of covid protocol.

Farnham moved to approve allowing the Rec Committee to set up the ice rink. Thayer opposed; Volz opposed. The motion failed.

Framework for Appointment of Committee to Assist with Recommendations for Use of ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) Funds

The SB discussed criteria for committee membership. **Thayer will create a draft and circulate it to SB members for discussion at the January 4 meeting.**

Goddard College Student Council Request for a Mask Mandate

There was no one present from Goddard, so the item was moved to January 4.

Funding for Main Street Bridge Repairs – Letter Review

Farnham updated the SB on the Pedestrian Bridge status. Daniels Co. anticipates returning the bridge to two lanes by the end of the week. Daniels Co. has to do two more pours and are hoping to complete them this week. After they complete the pours, they will remove their barriers from the bridge and materials from the streets and parking lots, including the traffic lights. They have some material in the parking lot on Route 2 that they will have to leave and that the SB needs to discuss.

Farnham reviewed a letter written by Alice Merrill, which she shared with SB via email. The letter was drafted to inquire about available funding for the repair of the Main Street bridge. Farnham reviewed the content of the estimate:

Bridge Surface Repairs

- \$225,000 if bridge remains open for one-way traffic during repairs – estimated 2-3 month duration
- OR –
- \$175,000 if bridge is closed to traffic during repairs – estimated 1 ½ month duration

Underside of Bridge Repairs

- \$175,000 for replacement of the underside of the bridge – estimated 1 ½ month duration (concurrent with above)

Total

\$400,000 or \$350,000.

There was discussion about the use of federal infrastructure funding for this bridge repair. The purpose of the letter from Merrill is to find out about available funding. Farnham asked if the repair could be coordinated with the Route 2 intersection project.

There was discussion about state bridge inspections and whether the bridge inspectors would or should have noticed the issues with this bridge. Thayer reported being troubled by the lack of information about the state of the bridge prior to the Pedestrian Bridge Project. State inspections indicated that the bridge was in fine shape.

Farnham suggested that the above questions go to Mike Nolan.

Thayer stated that if, when the project was initiated, we had been told that the bridge was in poor condition and if the issues with the membrane had been detected we would have chosen to build a new bridge, rather than a sidewalk on the existing bridge.

Farnham said that SB members can review all bridge reports at the town garage. The Daniels Co. had to set up staging for the Pedestrian Bridge job, which is what allowed them to find the problem with the membrane. She said that it is not clear that bridge inspectors were ever able to get underneath the bridge enough during inspections to detect the failure of the membrane.

Blaisdell noted that Merrill's letter says that the membrane was installed in 2006.

[Parts of this discussion were inaudible due to technological issues.]

Volz suggested gathering information.

Blaisdell requested a copy of the letter from Alice Merrill.

Thayer requested a review of Merrill's letter with some editing before it is sent.

Thayer suggested that 2022 budget need to include this amount in the Highway Department, and that there is a need for rapid information.

Farnham stated that she has a meeting with VHB coming up and that she may be able to get a better sense of what they think about the SB's questions. She suggested that it may be worth looking at a temporary fix for the bridge and wait until the Route 2 Intersection closure for full repair, since it has to be closed during that time anyway. Daniels Co.'s current repairs extend four feet into the current bridge.

Thayer suggested asking VHB Engineers if they know of other membranes that have failed in the state.

For upcoming meeting: Meeting request from Olivia LeClerc - re Central Vermont Prevention Coalition purpose and services

Volz reported that she wants to talk to the SB but she is not at the meeting. This item was moved to February 1.

Media Inquiry Regarding Mask Mandates and Cannabis

This item was in response to a survey. The SB's answers to both questions were "no."

Other Business

There was brief discussion of how to prepare a job description for the road crew position.

There was discussion about the need to post meeting minutes, in draft form, within five calendar days of the meeting.

There was discussion about budget meeting minutes.

Farnham moved to adjourn at 9:08PM. The motion was approved unanimously.

Respectfully submitted by Paula Emery.

Agenda Items for December 29, 2021

Budget
Old Fire House with Jay Southgate
Road Crew Job Description

Agenda Items for January 4

Mask Mandate
Covid Protocol
Ice Skating Rink at Recreation Field
Goddard College
Finalize the Committee Requirements for ARPA
Report on Route 2 Intersection
Approval of Minutes