

**Town of Plainfield, Vermont  
Select Board Meeting Minutes  
July 5, 2022**

**DRAFT**

**Present:** Jim Volz, Select Board Chair; Sasha Thayer, Select Board Member

**Present via Zoom or telephone:** Linda Wells, Town Clerk and Treasurer; Melinda Vieux; Peter Young; Kathy and Bob Fancher; Paula Emery, Administrative Assistant to the Select Board

**Agenda:**

- Executive session to address employee matters, 3 VSA 313
  - Return to regular meeting and call to order
  - Changes to Agenda
  - Announcements
  - Public comment
  - Town Clerk/Treasurer report
    - Set tax rate
    - Approve warrants
    - Approve minutes inc. June 21 and 27
    - Update on staffing changes and additions for town
  - Contract with Friends of the Town Hall/Opera House
  - Addressing trash/garbage pileup at residence on Brook Road
  - Follow-up re complaint about sign at 235 Brook Road
  - Emergency Management: Approval of Local Emergency Management Plan
  - New Business
  - Agenda items for upcoming Select Board meetings
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**Chairman Volz called the meeting to order at 7:05 PM.**

**Executive Session to Address Employee Matters, 3 VSA 313**

Volz stated that the Select Board agreed to give a raise to road crew in Executive Session.

**Changes to Agenda**

Thayer requested that the Local Emergency Management Plan item be moved to the July 19 meeting.

**Announcements**

Thayer announced that Covid variants continue to be a problem and urged people to continue to wear masking in public places and large group gatherings to prevent the spread of the coronavirus.

## Public Comment

There was no public comment.

## Town Clerk and Town Treasurer Report

Wells announced that Robin Miller began working as the new Assistant Town Clerk and Town Treasurer today and that things are going very well.

**Tax Rate:** Wells requested Select Board approval of the new tax rates.

- The new residential municipal tax rate is \$.8416, of which \$.8374 is municipal tax and \$.0042 is for the Local Agreement/Veterans Exemption. The non-residential tax rate is the same as the residential municipal rate.
- The education tax rate for residents is \$1.6667 and for non-residents it is \$1.7174.

Wells stated that there were surplus funds, some of which she applied to the Main Street Bridge repair costs.

Thayer suggested, and Wells agreed, that the Select Board should review next years' budget with an eye toward cutting taxes, given that there was surplus.

***Thayer moved to approve the Town Treasurer's tax calculation for the 2022-2023 fiscal year with the tax rate set out in that document [as stated above]. The motion carried.***

**Change of Due Date for Taxes:** Wells requested some changes in due dates for tax day because of overlap with elections. She requested that the town tax due date be changed to August 17 and that the School 1 payment be moved to November 16. There is no change for the School 2 payment, which is February 8, 2023. ***Thayer moved to approve the amended tax due dates for municipal tax of August 17, 2022 and that the first school tax date be moved to November 16, 2022. The School 2 tax date will remain February 8, 2023. The motion carried.***

**Warrants:** ***Thayer moved to approve Payroll Warrants from June 22 and 28, and an Accounts Payable warrant from June 30. The motion carried.***

**Approval of Minutes:** This item was moved to the July 19 meeting.

**Update on Staffing Changes:** The new Road Foreman started July 1 and things are going fine. Interviewing for a new road crew member has begun. Thayer clarified that the Town Clerk appoints Assistant Town Clerks and Town Treasurers and stated that when the Town Clerk resigns in September it is the responsibility of the Select Board to appoint a Town Clerk and Town Treasurer until the next Town Meeting. Wells confirmed that Robin Miller started July 5 as the new Assistant Town Clerk and Town Treasurer, while Carol Smith also holds that position and will remain in it when takes over for Wells.

## Contract with Friends of the Town Hall and Opera House

Keith Swann, Friends of the Town Hall and Opera House, stated that he'd sent the 2022-2023 management agreement contract to the Select Board and that it is the same as last year with

the addition of the use of 25 High Street for town events in exchange for town plowing and sanding. Swann stated that the payment remains as agreed upon in November.

There was discussion of the lease agreement, which will be taken up again at the July 19 meeting. **Volz requested that the addition of plowing the 25 High Street lot be run by Michael Bingham prior to Select Board approval of the maintenance agreement. This item will be taken up at the July 19 meeting. Swann requested that one member of the Select Board meet with the Friends group to review the lease agreement and Thayer agreed to do so.**

### **Addressing Trash Pileup at Residence on Brook Road**

Peter Young requested that the Select Board address the accumulation of materials on the bank of the Great Brook at a property near the bottom of the Cameron Road. He expressed concern about what will happen if there is another major flooding event. Some of the materials are large vehicles. Young suggested that there could be a fund with voluntary contributions to help the property owners with removal of the debris. Young expressed concern that the situation is a disaster waiting to happen.

Emery expressed concern about wastewater related to an RV that is parked on the bank of the brook and appears to be a dwelling. She echoed Young's concern about flood hazards on that property as well as another property further out the Brook Road.

Melinda Vieux was asked about whether Green Up may have funds for assisting landowners and the town with clean-up. She requested that the Select Board contact Kate Alberghini of Green Up Vermont for information about funding.

### **Follow-up on Complaint about Sign at 235 Brook Road**

Information from the previous meeting was reviewed. Thayer stated that she contacted Karen Storey, Plainfield Zoning Administrator. Volz stated that he researched whether the content of the message could be limited and found that the language of a political sign on private property cannot be limited. He suggested that Select Board members could contact the property owners to talk about the language of the sign and ask them to take it down. Young noted that the tree the banner is attached to has a sign on it that says: "No Trespassing -- Violators Will be Shot and Survivors will be Shot Again." **Volz offered to call the property owners.**

### **New Business**

Young asked whether there is a noise ordinance in Plainfield because of frequent discharging of fireworks within village limits. He noted that fireworks often mimic the sound of guns, which can be traumatic for many people. Thayer stated that there is a noise ordinance and that she has posted the information about the need for permits for fireworks in recent years. She has spoken with Greg Light, Fire Chief, about the requirements and he stated that he rarely receives permit requests, although they are required by law. She has also visited Northstar Fireworks and found that they are very careful with their use of fireworks, but do not provide safety training or enforcement of legal permit requirements when people purchase their fireworks. She noted that fireworks pose a fire risk and that state law requires a two week period for permitting for safety reasons.

Emery referred to the town ordinance that restricts the use of firearms within village limits. Thayer offered to look up the ordinance.

Young and Fancher offered to speak to the parents at each of the households involved in recent episodes. Volz suggested calling the State Police and letting them follow up on it. **Fancher requested that the Select Board publish a general reminder to the community about the fireworks statues. Thayer agreed and suggested that the Select Board approach Northstar to request that they require proof of permit for fireworks purchases.**

### **Agenda Items for Upcoming Select Board Meetings**

#### **July 18, 2022**

- Report from Road Foreman
- Update on Main Street Bridge Repair
- Update on Pedestrian Bridge Project
- Minutes from June 21 and 27
- Approval of Local Emergency Management Plan
- Contract with Friends of the Town Hall and Opera House

**Thayer moved to adjourn at 8:10PM and the motion carried.**

Respectfully submitted by Paula Emery.