

**Town of Plainfield  
Select Board Meeting  
March 12, 2018  
Approved Minutes**

**PRESENT:** Alexandra Thayer (Select Board Member/Acting Chair), Tammy Farnham (Select Board member), Linda Wells (Town Clerk/Treasurer), Keith Swann (Videographer), Cindy Wyckoff (Minutes Recorder), Allan Farnham (Resident), David Strong (Resident), Laura Zeisel (Resident), Bram Towbin (Road Commissioner), Greg Western (Kid Biking Day Discussion), Darren Ohl (Kid Biking Day Discussion), and Michael Billingsley (Emergency Management Director).

**Acting Select Board chair Alexandra Thayer called the meeting to order at 7:00pm.** Thayer welcomed new Select Board member Tammy Farnham.

**AGENDA**

- Review Agenda
- Public Comments/Announcements
- Organizational Meeting
- Approval of Minutes of February 26, 2019 Meeting - Deferred to March 26, 2018
- Approval of Town Meeting Minutes (The record or minutes of the annual town meeting must be approved and attested to by any two of the following: moderator, select board or justices of the peace. The clerk must request this approval within seven days after each town meeting and his or her request must be given prompt consideration. 24 V.S.A.§1152)
- Town Clerk's Report (Update from Town Clerk, Town Meeting, Election Outcomes, Re-approval of Borrowing for Town Fire Truck, Openings and Vacancies, Space in Town Hall for Municipal Materials, Approval of Warrants)
- Road Foreman Report
- Special Event Catering Permit
- Kid Biking Day Permission Request
- Appointments and Reappointments
- Traffic Ordinance (Rescission, Reapproval)
- Other Business

**REVIEW AGENDA**

- Thayer corrected an error in the agenda regarding the Road Foreman Report, changing it to Road Commissioner. Thayer added to the agenda a report by Emergency Management Director Michael Billingsley. **Thayer made a motion to approve the agenda as amended. The motion was approved.**

**PUBLIC COMMENTS/ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- Thayer noted an upcoming Sharps (Needles) Community Forum at the Capstone Building in Barre on 3/14/18 from 6-to-7pm.

- Thayer announced that there will be a public hearing for the Plainfield Traffic Ordinance at 7pm prior to the 3/26/18 Select Board meeting. Thayer explained that the recent approved changes were erroneously made to the 2009 version of the Traffic Ordinance instead of the more recent 2015 version.

#### **ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING**

- Thayer noted that the new Select Board chair is normally chosen at the first meeting following Town Meeting. Because Select Board member Ross Sneyd has indicated his interest in that position, but is not present tonight, it was decided to defer the vote until the meeting on 3/26/18. **Thayer made a motion to defer the decisions related to the organizational meeting until the 3/26/18 Select Board meeting. The motion was approved.**

#### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 26, 2019 MEETING - DEFERRED TO MARCH 26, 2018**

- **Thayer made a motion to defer approval of the 2/26/18 meeting until the next Select Board meeting when Sneyd is present. The motion was approved.** Town Clerk/Treasurer noted on the 2/26/18 Select Board meeting minutes, that *Parking* Ordinance should be *Traffic* Ordinance.

#### **APPROVAL OF TOWN MEETING MINUTES (The record or minutes of the annual town meeting must be approved and attested to by any two of the following: moderator, select board or justices of the peace. The clerk must request this approval within seven days after each town meeting and his or her request must be given prompt consideration. 24 V.S.A. §1152)**

- Thayer asked Town Clerk Linda Wells if she had a request to the Select Board to approve the minutes from Town Meeting. Wells responded that everyone to whom she normally sends the draft minutes has received them, and that she expects changes to be made before the draft is ready to be approved. **Farnham made a motion to defer approval of the minutes from Town Meeting to the 3/26/18 Select Board meeting. The motion was approved.**

#### **PUBLIC COMMENTS/ANNOUNCEMENTS (CONT'D)**

- David Strong noted a recent *Times Argus* article related to coverage of Plainfield's Town Meeting, which basically stated that discussion regarding the purchase of the Gallison House was handled improperly. Strong noted that he had checked with the Secretary of State's Office, which said that the Town was perfectly within its rights, and that there is a new regulation that allows discussion. After noting the new regulation to Editor Steve Pappas, who wrote the *Times Argus* article, Pappas responded that he stands by the article as written. Town Meeting Moderator Charles Barasch cited to Pappas a more recent regulation allowing such discussions, but has not heard back from Pappas nor has there been a correction in the newspaper. Discussion followed on what next steps to take to correct the misrepresentation. Thayer noted that that is nature of the free press and Farnham agreed, however, Thayer offered to send a follow-up message to Pappas giving the newspaper an opportunity to correct the article. Laura Zeisel noted that a correction was needed both to let members of the public know that what the *Times Argus* wrote is incorrect, and, to support Moderator Barasch. Thayer will contact Pappas regarding the error.
- Zeisel expressed her concern that the organizational meeting was taking place in the absence of Select Board member Ross Sneyd, but noted that the issue had already been addressed.

- Zeisel announced that she no longer wishes to be the Town's representative to the Board of Supervisors for the Central Vermont Solid Waste Management District. Zeisel approached Betsy Ziegler to take over Zeisel's position, which Ziegler is considering.
- Regarding the sharps (hypodermic needles) issue, Zeisel noted that the Additional Recycling Collection Center is one of eight locations in the City of Barre that collect sharps that have been deposited by people in secure boxes.

**TOWN CLERK'S REPORT: Update from Town Clerk, Town Meeting, Election Outcomes, Re-approval of Borrowing for Town Fire Truck, Openings and Vacancies, Space in Town Hall for Municipal Materials, Approval of Warrants**

- Town Clerk/Treasurer Linda Wells presented a list of appointments, noting that only the ones in bold are ready to be voted on and the rest can be voted on at the next Select Board meeting on 3/26/18.
- **Thayer made a motion to approve the warrants of 3/2/18, 3/9/18, and 3/9/18. The motion was approved.**
- **Thayer made a motion to approve a special event permit request for Caledonia Spirits on 3/24/18 at 1039 Upper Road. The motion was approved.**
- Road Commissioner Bram Towbin and Wells recommended that the time period on fleet permits be changed from its current timeframe of 3/1 through 6/30 to 2/1 through 6/30 to accommodate changes in winter weather. Wells presented a notice from the State Agency of Transportation that could be posted regarding enforcement of Fleet and Single Vehicle permits. **Farnham made a motion to post the notice in two places from the Agency of Transportation regarding Rule 118-4 regarding the enforcement of Fleet and Single Vehicle permits. The motion was approved.**
- **Thayer made a motion to approve a fleet permit request from Gillespie Fuels and Propane Inc. and Randolph Coal and Oil. The motion was approved.**
- **Thayer made a motion to approve a fleet permit request from Pike Industries and a fleet permit request from Bellevance Landworks and Hauling. The motion was approved.**
- Wells reported on the results of Town Meeting, noting that in terms of the officers, all incumbents were reelected and Tammy Farnham was elected to the Select Board. Scott Harris was reelected as a School Director as a write-in candidate. On the Cemetery Commission, both a three-year and four-year position were filled, with openings of a one-year and five-year position left unfilled. Also unfilled are Auditor positions for a one-year term and a two-year term. The turnout was 28% of voters: 263 voters out of 940 on the checklist. Regarding the other Australian ballot items, the Gallison House article was approved 138 to 120, and the action to validate the fire truck vote from 2017 passed with a vote of 225 to 33. All other articles were passed as written in the Warning. The Water/Wastewater budgets were approved: Water in the amount of \$193,579 and Wastewater in the amount of \$264,565. The Select Board budget was approved with an addition of \$1,000 to the Emergency Management line item for a total budget of \$967,706.05. Thayer noted that the election results were promptly posted to the website.
- Wells noted that she will work with the Friends of the Town Hall Opera House to identify a storage area for election supplies in the building.

## **ROAD FOREMAN REPORT**

- Road Commissioner Bram Towbin noted that they continue to put up signs regarding clarity on the parking rules. No one has had to be towed, and Constable Kathleen Hayes is doing a good job getting people to move their cars.
- Towbin addressed former Road Commissioner Allan Farnham's concerns regarding the material that had recently been spread on Town roads by explaining that the materials the Road Crew usually has on hand had been exhausted and the area in the quarry where the Town gets the stone was frozen thus another type of material had to be used.

## **SPECIAL EVENT CATERING PERMIT**

- This item was covered during the Town Clerk's Report.

## **KID BIKING DAY PERMISSION REQUEST**

- Greg Western and Darren Ohl, the latter of whom owns the Vermont Bicycle Shop in Barre, were present to ask permission to hold a biking event staged at the Park and Ride with riders biking down the rail trail towards Marshfield. The date of the event has not yet been decided upon, but Ohl expects it will be sometime in April or May, depending upon the weather. Ohl will inform the Select Board once the date is set. Ohl agreed that all trash will be removed after the event.

## **APPOINTMENTS AND REAPPOINTMENTS**

- **Farnham made a motion to approve the appointment of Mary Etta Chase as Auditor. The motion was approved.**
- **Farnham made a motion to approve the appointment of Mary Trerice to the Conservation Commission. The motion was approved.**
- **Farnham made a motion to approve the appointment of Sandy Ross as E911 Coordinator. The motion was approved.**
- **Farnham made a motion to approve the appointment of Michael Billingsley as Emergency Management Director. The motion was approved.**
- **Farnham made a motion to reapprove the appointment of Kathleen Hayes as Constable so that the appointment is in the same timeframe as other appointments. The motion was approved.**
- **Farnham made a motion to approve the appointment of Bob Atchinson as Energy Coordinator. The motion was approved.**
- **Farnham made a motion to approve the appointments of: Patrick Martin as Fire Chief; Dennis Blair as First Assistant Fire Chief; Andy Hebert as Second Assistant Fire Chief; and Gary Graves as Deputy Fire Chief. The motion was approved.**
- **Farnham made a motion to approve the appointment of Bram Towbin as Road Commissioner. The motion was approved.**
- **Farnham made a motion to approve the appointments of the following to the Recreation Committee: Dan Gadd, Nic Hooker, Chloe Budnick, and Jamie Spector. The motion was approved.**
- **Farnham made a motion to approve the appointments of the following to the Hazard Mitigation Committee: Amos Meacham, Theresa Bienz, Michael Billingsley, Dan Gadd, Susan Grimaldi, Bram Towbin, and Alexandra Thayer (Thayer as ex-officio). The motion was approved.** Thayer noted that there was one opening still to be filled on the Hazard Mitigation Committee.

- **Thayer made a motion to appoint Mike Nolan as Road Foreman and Highway Administrator. The motion was approved.**
- **Farnham made a motion to appoint Nicko Rubin as Tree Warden. The motion was approved.**
- **Farnham made a motion to appoint Tim Phillips to a three-year term as Water/Wastewater Commission and Janice Walrafen to the Development Review Board. The motion was approved.**

#### **TRAFFIC ORDINANCE (RESCISSION, REAPPROVAL)**

- Thayer noted that the changes made by the Select Board on 2/26/18 to the parking portion of the Traffic Ordinance had been erroneously made to the 2009 version of the Ordinance, and not the more recent 2015 version. The Select Board thus needs to rescind its vote on 2/26/18 and then approve those same changes to the 2015 Traffic Ordinance. A public hearing on the revised Traffic Ordinance had been scheduled for 3/26/18, which can still be held. **Thayer made a motion to rescind the Select Board's 2/26/18 decision to amend the Traffic Ordinance because changes were erroneously made to the 2009 version of the Traffic Ordinance rather than to the most recent 2015 version. The motion was approved.** Thayer reviewed the changes proposed to the 2015 version. There was a brief discussion regarding some of the proposed changes, including the problem of people parking in the right-of-way, even if they are parking at the end of their driveways. **Farnham made a motion to approve the proposed changes to the 2015 version of the Traffic Ordinance. The motion was approved.**

#### **EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

- Emergency Management Director Michael Billingsley noted that Green Mountain Power (GMP) operates the Marshfield Dam, which overhangs the Town of Marshfield, but potentially can have a significant impact on Plainfield. Members of the Plainfield community have been involved in discussions with GMP about dam safety. After gaining permission from the Plainfield Select Board four or five months ago, Billingsley investigated/gathered evidence on the Dam for the Public Utility Commission, which subsequently has opened a case. The case number is 18-0537-INV. Billingsley noted that he is participant, not a party in the investigation, the difference being that a party in the investigation is empowered to present evidence, question witnesses, and make representations in a legal fashion once the investigation is formalized. Billingsley has asked Plainfield Attorney Jim Jamele if it were possible to make a request for the Town of Plainfield to have party status and Jamele is prepared to draft a letter with that intent if authorized to do so by the Select Board. Billingsley will be meeting with the select boards of Marshfield and Cabot to ask if they also wish to be parties in the case. Billingsley noted that GMP already has party status and is currently filing objections to Billingsley's concerns. Discussion ensued with Hazard Mitigation Committee member Bram Towbin noting the specific technological inadequacies in the antiquated procedures, crumbling spillway gates at the Dam, and its exemption from various inspection rules. Billingsley noted that the public will have a chance to discuss the issue as part of a public meeting of the Hazard Mitigation Committee on 3/21/18 at the Town Hall Opera House, which will include updating the Town's Hazard Mitigation Plan. Billingsley stated that owners of dams, under current regulations, are not held liable for consequential property loss or loss of life in a way that would be financially onerous to the dam owners. Towbin stated that if GMP is going to under-invest in safety at the Dam, it needs to be held fully liable for any damage resulting from a dam failure. Towbin noted that GMP, not the Public Utility Commission, hires the company that inspects the dam every

five years and the company is beholden to GMP thus is not forthcoming when the public asks questions regarding the findings. **Farnham made a motion to authorize Plainfield Attorney Jim Jamele to prepare a letter to be filed requesting party status for the Town of Plainfield in the matter of Docket #18-0537-INV RE: The Status of Maintenance Repairs at Green Mountain Power Corporation's Marshfield #6 Dam in Cabot, Vermont. The motion was approved.**

- Billingsley announced the following:
  - GMP has requested that Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission do a table-top drill with regard to responding to a dam incident;
  - Billingsley will be presenting an Emergency Management Director report for the months of 1/1/18 through 3/7/18 to the Select Board at its next meeting;
  - Select Board members Ross Sneyd and Tammy Farnham have not received ICS402 training, and the next training is scheduled for 4/19/18 at Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission;
  - Community Suppers have started up again and the next one will be sponsored by the Cutler Memorial Library on 3/27/18 at the Grace Methodist Church; and
  - the Hazard Mitigation Plan has five new segments that will be discussed at a meeting on 3/21/18 at 6:30pm at the Town Hall Opera House.

#### **OTHER BUSINESS**

- **Thayer made a motion to appoint Karl Bissex to the Revolving Loan Committee. The motion was approved.**
- Thayer noted a number of agenda items for the next Select Board meeting.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

- **Farnham made a motion to adjourn at 9:05pm. The motion was approved.**

Respectfully submitted by Cindy Wyckoff