

**Plainfield Select Board Meeting
February 22, 2016
Approved Minutes**

PRESENT: David Strong (Select Board), Bram Towbin (Select Board Chair), Betsy Ziegler (Select Board), Keith Swann (Videographer), Cindy Wyckoff (Minutes Recorder), Bob Atchinson (Plainfield Energy Coordinator), Laura Zeisel (Resident), Mike Nolan (Road Foreman), Eric Blaisdell (Times Argus), Jeannine DeWald (Plainfield Co-op).

Bram Towbin called the meeting to order at 7:00pm.

After adding several items, the agenda was as follows:

- Announcements/Public Comment – Energy Coordinator Bob Atchison Report
- Town Clerk’s Report
- Road Report
- Personnel Policy Revision Adoption
- Lower Village Bike/Pedestrian Sidewalk Contract
- Hazard Mitigation Committee Term Appointments
- Discussion of Forming Neighborhood Watch Group for Plainfield
- Town Hall Opera House - Management Plan Adoption – Request for Changes to the Front Exterior – Authorization of Repair Work in Office
- Resolution on Funding for Main Street Pedestrian Bridge Sidewalk Project
- Grant Administrator Position
- Development of Highway Capital Plan
- Minutes

Betsy Ziegler made a motion to approve the agenda as amended. David Strong seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

ANNOUNCEMENTS/PUBLIC COMMENT

- Towbin congratulated the Twinfield Union School’s Girls Basketball Team for winning the recent tournament.
- Towbin noted that the Boys High School Team is currently playing South Royalton for the semi-finals and wished the team the best of luck.
- Towbin thanked the two police officers – Detective Potter and Trooper Pouliot – who were involved in apprehending the suspects in the recent robbery at the Maplefields store.
- Towbin announced that there will be a public meeting on 3/30/16 at 6:30pm at the U32 Middle and High School Cafeteria to discuss the VT 14 Bridge Project at the junction of Route 14 and Route 2 in East Montpelier.
- Ziegler reminded that members are still being sought to serve on the Lower Village Pedestrian Sidewalk Project Committee. Engineering bids for the project are due on 2/23/16 at 4:00pm.

- Strong noted that a meeting will be held on 2/24/16 at 1:00pm at the Town Hall Opera House regarding the Agency of Commerce and Community Development's (ACCD's) Village Center Designation Program in reference to the former hardware store property and the Plainfield Inn. Richard Amore from ACCD will present on the program's benefits and eligibility requirements for commercial property owners in the designated area to receive tax credits and other incentives to support building improvements, and tours of the two properties will follow. Strong noted the meeting as a first step in developing a strategy for revitalization. The Select Board agreed to warn the meeting since at least two Select Board members would be in attendance.
- Resident Laura Zeisel, stating her support of small-town democracy in action and how well the Plainfield Select Board practices it, mentioned that it was spouse's David Strong's last meeting as member of the Select Board. Noting how Strong had frequently missed dessert in order to attend meetings, she presented a jar of candy for the group to share.
- Plainfield Energy Coordinator Bob Atchinson updated on the Electric Vehicle Charging Station, reporting that it has been wired and metered. Yet to be done is installing a small cash box, hanging signs, and painting stripes on the parking spot, but hopes to have the first two items completed by Town Meeting Day on 3/1/16. He reported that the project is currently under-budget, with available funds to pay for the signs and pavement striping. Road Foreman Mike Nolan offered equipment and paint from his department to do the striping. Atchinson stated that he would like to hold a commissioning ceremony, possibly on the afternoon of Town Meeting Day, to officially launch use of the charging station.
- Atchinson reported on municipal lighting, stating that there are three lamps that are not working, one on Route 214 by Goddard College, and two on Towne Avenue. Green Mountain Power has offered the labor to replace the lamps at no cost under the maintenance agreement if the Town provides the lamps. Once the cost of the lamps is determined, the Select Board will have a follow-up discussion at its next regular meeting.

TOWN CLERK'S REPORT

- Town Clerk Linda Wells reminded that Town Meeting Day is next week. Polls will be open from 9:00am to 7:00pm and Town Meeting will begin at 10:00am. Absentee ballots are available upon request by calling or stopping by the Town Office. One can still register to vote until 5:00pm on 2/24/16 at the Town Office or online via the Vermont Secretary of State's website at www.sec.state.vt.us.
- Wells reported that the Vermont Council on Aging had missed the deadlines for applying for funding from the Town through both the Social Concerns Committee's recommendation process and the subsequent petition process. Ziegler suggested the possibility of making an amendment during discussion of Article 6 at Town Meeting. Towbin noted that while anyone can raise an issue from the floor during the meeting, opening it up for this organization would mean opening it up for others, diminishing the function of the Social Concerns Committee and petition process.
- Wells presented five resumes submitted for the Community Resiliency Project Coordinator position. The Select Board will review the submissions and discuss them at the 2/24/16 special meeting.
- Towbin congratulated Wells on her work on getting out the *Town of Plainfield's 218th Annual Report* for 2015. Wells noted that those who didn't receive one can pick up a copy at the Town Office.

ROAD REPORT

- Towbin provided background on an issue with the company that the Town is under contract with for the next year and a half to supply uniforms to the Road Crew, stating his dissatisfaction with recent cost increases, communications, and the unfortunate way that the company conducts business. Wells noted that she had also received a letter from the company stating there would be an increase in the rug service for the Town Office beginning with the next delivery.
- Road Foreman Mike Nolan reported that things are generally going well in the department. The Road Crew is trying to smooth roads made rough by the freezing and thawing cycle, but is limited due to the wear and tear on the road grader. The Crew has also been doing a lot of brush cutting and working on frozen culverts, the latter of which they need to address the worst of before the heavy rain that is expected later in the week.
- Wells reported that she believes the Vermont State Emergency Funds can be used for repairs to the dislodged blocks in the river at the base of Cameron Road, which was incurred by flood damage, and recommended that the Select Board meet to discuss this and other priorities prior to the application due date of 4/1/16.
- Nolan reported that the WIFI hookup at the Town Garage is scheduled for tomorrow, the installation of which will help with the electronic tracking of the Road Crew's work activities. Towbin noted that once everything is functional, the Select Board should regularly review the information at its meetings. Wells will also begin forwarding road- and highway-related emails so that Nolan is directly aware of grant opportunities.
- Strong noted that there has not yet been a lot of overtime this year as compared to last due to the relative lack of snow to date.

PERSONNEL POLICY REVISION ADOPTION

- Strong noted the general acceptance of the revised personnel policy among employees, recommending its adoption with the following amendment. On page 21 under the heading Limited Term Appointment, Strong, in consultation with Wells, proposed limiting the appointment period to six months without the option of renewal and deeming such appointees ineligible for regular employee benefits. The proposed revised language would read as follows: *Limited Term Appointment: A limited term appointment is made when a special project requires the addition of employees for a specific term or to fill a position of an employee on a leave of absence. Such appointment shall be for a period not to exceed six (6) months. Salary or wages are within the established range for the position. Such employees shall not be eligible for regular employee benefits.* After noting other changes that had been made and reviewed earlier in the revision process, **Strong made a motion to adopt the Revised Personnel Policy as amended. Ziegler seconded the motion. The motion was approved.**

LOWER VILLAGE BIKE/PEDESTRIAN SIDEWALK CONTRACT

- Towbin noted the grant money available to study a sidewalk that would complete the loop in the Lower Village. Discussion followed on various residents living in the Village that may be interested in joining the committee.

HAZARD MITIGATION COMMITTEE TERM APPOINTMENTS

- Towbin announced that the Hazard Mitigation Committee, which replaced the Flood Advisory Committee, met and agreed to stagger the terms of the new appointees as follows: George Springston – one year; Bram Towbin – two years; Theresa Bienz – one year; Yoko Kishishita – two years; Dan Gadd – one year; and Michael Billingsley – two years. **Strong made a motion to appoint the above-mentioned individuals to the terms indicated. Ziegler seconded the motion. The motion was approved.** Towbin noted that there is another opening on the committee if anyone is interested in joining. Towbin also announced that information will be available at Town Meeting on a training being organized by Rob Bridges for Red Cross and shelter workers.
- Strong asked about the Hazard Mitigation Committee’s opinion on the woody debris problem on the Great Brook above Fowler Road. Towbin reported that while there has been no official findings, the initial feeling was that while there could be a threat to the road warranting the Town’s intervention to correct the situation, there should be a proper survey conducted to reconcile the current disagreement between the property owners regarding land ownership. Towbin explained that a surveyor needs to actually mark boundaries and a lawyer then needs to certify it for the survey to have standing.
- Strong suggested that when the Select Board structures a team to work with the soon-to-be-hired Community Resiliency Project Coordinator, it appoint one or two members from the Hazard Mitigation Committee. It was decided that the applicants’ submissions would be reviewed first before engaging members of the Hazard Mitigation Committee. Ziegler suggested that those chosen for the Community Resiliency Committee be good group participants that will contribute in a positive way.

FLEET PERMIT REQUESTS

- Ziegler presented the names of three companies requesting approval of fleet permits: United Natural Foods, Inc., Pike Industries, Inc., and Hillcrest Trucking/Chris Barkyoumb. **Ziegler made a motion to approve all three fleet permit requests. Towbin seconded the motion. The motion was approved.**

DISCUSSION OF FORMING NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH GROUP FOR PLAINFIELD

- Noting that numerous residents who had expressed both interest and concerns regarding the formation of a Neighborhood Watch Group in Plainfield were not present (presumably due to an important high school basketball game currently being played), the Select Board decided to announce the topic at Town Meeting where interest could be gauged and followed up on with a meeting to allow for a fuller discussion that would include varying viewpoints. Discussion followed on the role of the State Police in assisting a community in forming such an entity and the existence of the current Neighborhood Watch Group on Maple Hill in Marshfield. Towbin will call someone in Marshfield to see how they have structured their group and how it is working in that community.

TOWN HALL OPERA HOUSE - MANAGEMENT PLAN ADOPTION

- Following up on the discussion at the last Select Board meeting, Strong mentioned subsequent additions made to the Town Hall Opera House Management Plan. He reviewed the utilization of the facility in 2015, noting its use by the local government for Select Board meetings, public hearings, and committee meetings. It was rented 119 days out of the year, half of which were for rehearsals,

private events, and classes. There were 55 public events held, including movies, dances, variety shows, educational programs, meetings, craft fairs, theatrical performances, and concerts. Estimated overall attendance in 2015 was 3,000. The use confirms it as a valuable space for the community and important to keep going. Strong stated that parking is one of the factors limiting the size and number of people attending events, and detailed general theater guidelines for parking for various-sized events. He noted the current number of parking spaces available in the vicinity of the facility and outlined additional potential parking spaces if various options to expand that number are pursued in the future. Strong stated that annual routine maintenance and operations costs total \$16,000: \$4,500 in maintenance and \$11,500 in operations, and that the Select Board's goal is for annual revenue to equal or exceed operations costs (i.e., - \$11,500) by FY2019-20.

- Strong requested that the Select Board entertain a resolution to adopt the plan. Agreeing that the facility is an asset to the community, Ziegler requested clarification on the sources of funding for its operations/capital expenses and noted her concerns about potential options to expand the current parking area across from the facility. After continued discussion, **Ziegler made a motion to formally adopt the Management Plan for the Town Hall Opera House. Towbin seconded the motion. The motion was approved.** Strong noted that the plan calls for it being updated annually.

RESOLUTION ON FUNDING FOR MAIN STREET PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE SIDEWALK PROJECT

- Towbin noted that the proposed sidewalk will go from the Mill Street Park, include a bridge that crosses the Winooski River, and continue with a new sidewalk going up to the Town Hall Opera House area. Strong stated that the project cost is estimated to be \$392,600. The Town is responsible for 10%, or \$39,360, of the total project cost. \$3,000 has already been allocated in the current FY2015-16 budget and, if approved, \$3,700 will be allocated in FY2016-17. Strong recommended that the remaining balance be covered by an allocation of \$2,660 in the FY2017-18 budget, and the use of up to \$30,000 from the Arch Batchelder Fund. **Strong made a motion to approve the above plan for paying the Town's share of the Bridge Project. Ziegler seconded the motion. The motion was approved.**

CONTINUATION OF TOWN HALL OPERA HOUSE DISCUSSION– CHANGES TO FRONT EXTERIOR – AUTHORIZATION OF REPAIR WORK

- Strong displayed a drawing of the front exterior of the Plainfield Town Hall Opera House showing the location of a proposed deadlight window. Explaining that any changes made to the exterior of the building need to be reviewed by the Preservation Trust of Vermont, Strong requested authorization from the Select Board to submit the proposed exterior change for review by the Preservation Trust of Vermont. After a brief discussion, **Ziegler made a motion to submit the proposed exterior change to the front of the Town Hall Opera House to the Preservation Trust of Vermont for review. Strong seconded the motion. The motion was approved.** Ziegler noted that there is paint peeling off the interior windows upstairs in the main hall that she is concerned may be lead-based and requested that the issue be added to the maintenance plan. Strong noted that there are funds for work on the building that can be reallocated based upon need and suggested that someone who knows about lead-based paint abatement be consulted.
- Strong described what needs to be done to complete the interior work on the building's first level, and requested approval to hire Fitch Builders, which had submitted an estimate of \$2,525. Strong proposed paying for the work with unexpended funds from the budget line item for the Town

Building Maintenance Manager position. A discussion followed on whether those funds were actually available, with Strong assuring that Town Clerk Wells was in agreement that the funds had not been allocated for another use. Ziegler stated that she thought that the priority for expending funds on the building should go toward the more pressing issue of the windows in the main hall upstairs. Strong, noting that this was the first time he had heard of the possibility of a lead-paint issue, agreed that it was a valid concern that should be investigated. Ziegler stated that despite mixed feelings, she would support allocating funds for the completion of the interior work on the building's first level. **Strong made a motion to approve the allocation of funds in the amount of \$2,525 from the Town Building Maintenance Manager position budget line item to hire Fitch Builders to complete the interior work on the first level of the Town Hall Opera House. Ziegler seconded the motion. The motion was approved.**

- **Ziegler made a motion to have the Select Board officially ask the Plainfield Town Hall Committee to investigate the chipping paint around the windows in the Town Hall Opera House. Strong seconded the motion. The motion was approved.**

GRANT ADMINISTRATOR POSITION

- The Select Board decided to table this item until the Special Select Board meeting on 2/24/16 at the Plainfield Town Hall Opera House as well as discuss the selection process for the Community Resiliency Project Coordinator position.

DEVELOPMENT OF HIGHWAY CAPITAL PLAN

- The Select Board decided to table this item until the Special Select Board meeting on 2/24/16 at the Plainfield Town Hall Opera House.

MINUTES

- Strong presented minutes from the 1/25/16 Select Board meeting. Noting minor changes, **Strong made a motion to approve the minutes from the 1/25/16 Select Board meeting as amended. Towbin seconded the motion. The motion was approved.**
- Strong presented minutes from the 2/8/16 Select Board meeting. Noting minor changes and with the addition of the Hazard Mitigation Committee's mission statement by Towbin, **Strong made a motion to approve the minutes from the 2/8/16 Select Board meeting as amended. Ziegler seconded the motion. The motion was approved.**

The meeting adjourned at 9:05pm on a motion by Strong. Towbin seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

Respectfully submitted by Cindy Wyckoff