

**Plainfield Select Board Meeting**  
**September 12, 2016**  
**Approved Minutes**

**PRESENT:** Ross Sneyd (Select Board Member), Bram Towbin (Select Board Chair), Betsy Ziegler (Select Board Member), Keith Swann (Videographer), Cindy Wyckoff (Minutes Recorder), William Glanvill (Resident), Michael Nolan (Road Foreman), Jim Barlow (Attorney in Municipal Law), Mary Niebling (Social Concerns Committee), Rita Copeland (Twin Valley Senior Center), David Strong (Resident, Pedestrian Bridge Project), and Sarah Albert (Conservation Commission).

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

**AGENDA**

- Announcements and Public Comment: Old Home Days Variety Show Friday, 9/16/16, 7pm, Town Hall Opera House. Parade and other Events.
- Town Clerk's Report
- Road Report
- James Barlow, Attorney in Municipal Law, Presenting His New Practice
- Social Concerns Committee: Discussion Criteria for Deserving Groups
- Town Forest Contract
- Pedestrian Bridge Update
- Wording of Advertisement for Town Emergency Coordinator
- Discussion of Speeding Ticket Revenues
- Crime Remediation Discussion: Neighborhood Watch? Cameras?
- Update: State Bank Regulators Regarding Foreclosed Homes
- Minutes

Betsy Ziegler added discussion of Old Home Days to the agenda, Towbin added discussion with Washington County Mental Health, and Ross Sneyd added discussion of line painting. **Sneyd made a motion to adopt the agenda as amended. Ziegler seconded the motion. The motion was approved.**

**ANNOUNCEMENTS/PUBLIC COMMENT**

- Towbin announced that the Old Home Days celebration will start with a variety show at 7pm on Friday, 9/16/16, at the Town Hall Opera House. On Saturday, 9/17/16, there will be a series of events throughout the day, including music, a parade, an ecology walk, and a community photo. The East Hill School will be celebrating its 50<sup>th</sup> year at another event in the afternoon. Ziegler added details on the events planned for Saturday, stating that volunteers are still needed to help with various activities. Towbin also noted the Fire Department's barbeque, tickets for which are available from Greg Light.
- Country Club Road resident William Glanvill stated that his reason for attending the meeting was to discuss two concerns: 1) a large tree in the right-of-way by his property that needs to be removed; and 2) speeding and dust problems on Country Club Road. With regards to the first issue, Road Foreman Mike Nolan stated that he had intended to take care of the tree, but has been busy dealing

with road issues resulting from the recent heavy rain storms. Nolan stated that he will take care of the tree within the next couple of weeks. Regarding the second issue, Glanvill described the speeding and dust problems on Country Club Road and wondered if the Barre Country Club might be willing to help the Town pay for the road being paved. In terms of the speeding issue, Towbin noted that speed bumps were not an option due to the public controversy surrounding their use, but that he would check into the possibility of lowering the speed limit from 35 to 25 miles per hour. Sneyd suggested that the Town raise the priority of Country Club Road for patrol by the Sheriff's Department, noting similar speeding problems on other roads in the Town and more-than-usual dust being raised from vehicles driving on dirt roads due to the extremely dry summer. Ziegler suggested that Glanvill start a petition signed by other Country Club Road residents to augment evidence of the problem.

#### **TOWN CLERK'S REPORT**

- Town Clerk/Treasurer Linda Wells was not present.

#### **JAMES BARLOW, ATTORNEY IN MUNICIPAL LAW, PRESENTING HIS NEW PRACTICE**

- Towbin introduced James Barlow, an expert on municipal law, and invited him to talk about his new practice. Barlow noted his work with the Vermont League of Cities and Towns, his private practice in Bennington, and his position as City Attorney for the City of South Burlington. He has recently opened a practice out of his home in Marshfield and is offering his services to towns on both an hourly basis and for a modified flat fee for general counsel. Barlow reviewed his past experience working on a wide range of municipal issues for various-sized towns in Vermont and his preference for mediation and other problem-solving methods before resorting to litigation.

#### **ROAD REPORT**

- Road Foreman Mike Nolan reported on the Road Crew's recent work to smooth roads, which has been particularly necessary this year due to the dry conditions.
- Nolan noted that the equipment is in good shape and that the Road Crew will start preparing the equipment for winter once colder weather nears.
- Nolan reported that a recent leak in the Town's chloride tank, which was noticed before too much of the contents seeped out, has been replaced.
- The culvert work on Gore Road went well. Towbin stated that he received feedback from residents on the lack of adequate notice that the road would be closed while the work was being performed, and will make sure that there is at least a week or more of warning in the future when a road needs to be closed due to work. Nolan noted other problem areas on Town roads that the Road Crew has been working on recently, which will hopefully prevent washout problems going forward.
- Resident Mary Niebling thanked Nolan for removing the Center School sign from in front of her house. Towbin noted the delay was due in part to the Road Crew having to spend time doing additional work as a result of new Workers Compensation rules preventing the hiring of an outside contractor to mow grass along the Town roads.
- Ziegler noted a call she received from a resident about an unneeded stop sign at the corner of Batchelder Road and East Hill Road. Nolan responded that the Town was legally obligated to post the sign.

## **SOCIAL CONCERNS COMMITTEE – DISCUSSION CRITERIA FOR DESERVING GROUPS**

- Towbin introduced Social Concerns Committee member Mary Niebling and Twin Valley Senior Center executive director Rita Copeland, briefly explaining the Social Concerns Committee’s role in recommending grant funding from the Town for charitable causes. Discussion followed regarding the current criteria being used for selection—number of people served, budget, historical precedent, quality of application, and responsiveness of the organization—and considering other factors such as the presence of an endowment, the type of services being provided, and end-of-year budget surpluses. Niebling will take the Select Board’s recommendations back to the Social Concerns Committee. Towbin suggested that the committee draft a list of criteria for the Select Board to review and possibly formalize the process with an official written policy. Because the application process has already begun for this upcoming funding cycle, any formal policy will have to be applied in the following year.
- Discussion ensued regarding who currently serves on the Social Concerns Committee and vacancies needing to be filled. Sarah Albert voiced her interest in joining the committee. **Ziegler made a motion to approve the appointment of Sarah Albert to the Social Concerns Committee. Sneyd seconded the motion. The motion was approved.**

## **TOWN FOREST CONTRACT**

- Conservation Commission member Sarah Albert presented the results of the archeology assessment at the Town Forest performed by the Northeast Archeological Research Center. No issues were found that would preclude the work that is being planned to construct the two parking areas leading into the Town Forest.
- Albert also presented the contract for Stone Hammer LLC, the company that will construct the two parking areas entering into the Town Forest. The only change from the original bid was that boulders instead of utility poles will be used for the barrier around the parking area on Gonyeau Road. Albert noted no change in cost with this alteration. **Ziegler made a motion to approve the contract for \$11,777 with Stone Hammer LLC to construct two parking areas at the Town Forest. Sneyd seconded the motion. The motion was approved.** Albert stated that work would begin in late September or early October. Albert also asked guidance on procuring the signs specifying hours of operation at each entrance, which will be installed by the contractor.

## **PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE UPDATE**

- Project Advisory Committee member David Strong reviewed the general details of the Pedestrian Bridge and Sidewalk project, stating that VTRANS is providing approximately \$360,000 for the project with a 10% match, or \$33,000, from the Town. The Dufresne Group won the contract to perform the study and design, put it out to bid, and oversee the project construction phase. The Dufresne Group subcontracted some of the engineering work to Engineering Ventures in Burlington, which has requested an additional fee of \$2,500 for services relating to subsurface conditions found that warrant a change in the design. Strong noted that the Town’s project manager, Pat Travers, had recommended agreeing to the proposed contract amendment and that the actual cost of the bridge, according to the Dufresne Group, could end up costing less than originally estimated. In addition, there is a \$50,000 contingency in the budget, some of which has already been used, leaving a current balance of \$27,500. Approving the proposed \$2,500 would leave \$25,000 in the contingency budget item. **Ziegler made a motion to increase the amount by \$2,500 to \$58,900 to**

**the Dufresne Group. Sneyd seconded the motion. The motion was approved.** Strong noted that the Dufresne Group hopes to be ready to go out to bid this spring and begin construction by next fall. Strong added that Nick Meltzer from VTRANS had noted that the bridge wing walls were deemed to be historic, resulting in an adverse-effect finding and making it necessary to document the wing walls before being removed. Towbin thanked Strong for his work.

- Strong provided Ziegler with a map of the Recreation Field.

#### **DISCUSSION OF SPEEDING TICKET REVENUES**

- Towbin, stating that he has not yet received the historical data from the Sheriff's Department, suggested tabling discussion on speeding ticket revenues until the next meeting, to which all agreed. Towbin briefly reviewed the issue of the dramatic decline in the Town's ticket revenues, noting that information he has received from neighboring towns does not reflect a decline.
- Sneyd noted that during a recent walk on Middle Road, he observed a Barre Town cruiser traveling extremely fast with no lights or sirens going. Sneyd left a message on the Barre Town Police Chief's voicemail regarding the incident.

#### **CRIME REMEDIATION DISCUSSION: NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH? CAMERAS?**

- Because there were no residents present to discuss the crime remediation issue, Towbin suggested tabling the item until the next meeting, to which all agreed. Ziegler noted that the Resiliency Committee has also discussed the issue and can further explore and help support it.

#### **UPDATE: STATE BANK REGULATORS REGARDING FORECLOSED HOMES**

- Towbin noted that in response to a recent letter sent by the Select Board regarding foreclosed homes in the Town, the Deputy Commissioner of the State Banking Regulators has requested additional information. The Select Board was encouraged by the response.

#### **WORDING OF ADVERTISEMENT FOR TOWN EMERGENCY COORDINATOR**

- Discussion centered on fine-tuning the language for the Emergency Management Director position description, resulting in an amended final version as follows:

##### **Emergency Management Director - Town of Plainfield**

- a. This is a part-time, volunteer, emergency preparedness and response position that reports to the Select Board, and coordinates with Plainfield Select Board, Plainfield Hazard Mitigation Committee, and the Plainfield Emergency Response Team, including first responders during emergency incidents.
- b. Applicant should have prior first aid or EMT training and certification.
- c. Applicant must be willing to attend FEMA, DHS, and state emergency trainings in hazardous incident response and coordination.
- d. Applicant must be willing to attend other related trainings when available, including trainings in: incident response, emergency management, shelter operation, and disaster.
- e. Applicant must hold a valid vehicle operator's license, and be available and on call for participation during hazard and disaster events lasting up to 72 hours.
- f. Applicant will be responsible for operating and maintaining the local Red Cross shelters and available to provide training to volunteers.

- g. Prior disaster training and/or experience managing or assisting with emergency events is desirable.
- h. A Plainfield resident able to work with local organizations, schools, and other groups to develop emergency preparedness would be preferred.
- i. Media communication skills would be highly desirable including: public speaking, writing news releases, and preparing public information handouts.

**Ziegler made a motion to adopt the revised language for the Emergency Management Director position description and request that the Town Clerk run the advertisement promptly via local social media. Sneyd seconded the motion. The motion was approved.**

#### **DISCUSSION WITH WASHINGTON COUNTY MENTAL HEALTH**

- Towbin noted his recent conversation with a representative at Washington County Mental Health Services about the possibility of coming to Plainfield to discuss mental health issues and how to access services. The Select Board agreed that it was an appropriate topic for public discussion in a general framework and that it should take place during a regularly scheduled Select Board meeting in late November. **Sneyd made a motion to authorize Towbin to contact Karen Kurrle at Washington County Mental Health Services to arrange a public discussion. Ziegler seconded the motion. The motion was approved.**

#### **LINE PAINTING**

- Sneyd asked if there was funding available for doing the line painting work on Towne Avenue that had been recommended by Gary Graves at the last meeting. Towbin will follow up with Town Clerk Linda Wells.

#### **OLD HOME DAYS**

- Discussion centered on the current planning of activities for the Old Home Days celebration, including picking up equipment, need for lighting in the church yard for the street dance, possible street closure/parking restrictions during the street dance, police details, and the need for additional volunteers on Saturday. It was decided that some lights would be rented. A brief discussion took place regarding the ongoing issue of people leaving items on the church wall and not picking them back up when the items are not taken after a day.

#### **MINUTES**

- **Sneyd made a motion to approve the minutes from the 8/22/16 Select Board meeting as drafted. Ziegler seconded the motion. The motion was approved.**

**The meeting adjourned at 9:08pm on a motion by Sneyd. Ziegler seconded the motion. The motion was approved.**

Respectfully submitted by Cindy Wyckoff