

Town of Plainfield, Vermont
Select Board Meeting Minutes
October 26, 2020
Remote-Only Meeting Via Zoom

Electronic Participants: Select Board member Tammy Farnham, Jim Volz, Sasha Thayer (Chair), Linda Wells (Town Clerk/Treasurer), Kathy and Bob Fancher (community members), Jesse Cooper (community member and Planning Commission member), Serena Matt (community member), Sara Cain (community member), Tamera Ferro (community member), Alice Merrill (community member and Town grant writer), Keith Swann (community member and Friends of the Town Hall-Opera House president), Sarah Albert (community member and Conservation Commission chair), Eric Blaisdell (Times Argus)

Meeting started 7:00pm

Approval of/changes to agenda

No changes.

Announcements:

Social distancing will be followed at the fire department for Halloween.

The Plainfield Co-op encourages trick-or-treaters to use their Express Window and follow social distancing guidelines. The Journey Fellowship's 3rd Annual Trunk or Treat will be at Plainfield Park and Ride on Saturday, October 31st at 6pm.

COVID-19 Update:

Plainfield has only 1-6 cases reported cases for several months now.

Sasha encouraged folks to consider having the "COVID Talk" - a conversation to negotiate boundaries and establish expectations ahead of time.

Public Comment:

No public comment

Town Clerk/Treasurers Report:

Tax Payment Update: Linda reported there has been 16 requests for direct deposit.

General Elections: The office has been busy with absentee ballots (588 ballots have been processed). 50 ballots needed to be manually mailed out due to address changes, new residency, etc. The general election will be held at the Town Opera house, social distancing must be followed and masks must be worn. Screening will take place upon entry, and contact tracing will be completed as a precautionary measure. Ballot drop off shall be done at the municipal building through Monday, on Tuesday ballot drop off will be at the Town Hall.

Approval of Warrants:

Accounts Payable:

October 1st

October 7th

October 21st

Tammy moved to approve 10/1, 10/7, 10/21 account payables warrant and the motion passed unanimously.

Approval of Payroll:

October 2nd
October 9th
October 16th
October 23rd

Jim moved to approve 10/2, 9, 16, 23 payroll warrants and the motion passed unanimously.

Approval of Meeting Minutes:

August 12th
August 20th
September 14th
September 18th
September 22nd
September 28th
October 7th

Tammy moved to approve 8/12, 8/20, 9/14, 9/18, 9/22, 9/28, 10/7 and the motion passed unanimously.

Linda thanked Sasha for installing a doorbell intercom system for the municipal building, as it has been extremely useful for screening people before coming into the building and limiting interaction and distractions.

Route 2 Remediation Project Update:

Tammy apologized for not updating residents about the VTRANS work; they are working to gather information on the amount of ledge beneath the road. Tammy indicated that there may be limited road use for this time (1 lane traffic). Detours and emergency response will be addressed first. Tammy indicated that meetings will take place monthly to create an outline for the project and answer some of the questions that have been brought forth.

Sasha indicated that a few folks had mentioned that they thought the Route 2 project would be voted upon at town meeting. Tammy mentioned that an endorsement was needed from the town for the state to move forward on a project; several opportunities were offered for the town to get involved, including the survey and the 5 meetings offered to the town. Jim also mentioned that there were time constraints and the cost of the project was continuing to rise as time passed.

Pedestrian Bridge Project Update:

Tammy indicated that the town is still waiting to hear back about the grant. The project is on hold until they hear back from the grant as the money is needed to move forward. Tammy hopes that they will hear back by the middle of November in order to put out an invitation to bid. Tammy indicated that the town will not put the project out to bid until they find out if the grant

has been received. Tammy indicated that an RFP is still in the works, Tammy indicated that Dufranes (the engineer) is in the process of writing the RFP.

George questioned moving forward on the project before voting on the project. He expressed concern on paying \$4,500 more on getting bids. Sasha reiterated that in order to bring the project to bid the town needs concrete figures (bids). George stated that spending more money on the project does not make sense. Tammy specified that the towns people wanted figures on the project in order to vote – but the select board has chosen to wait on the approval of the grant before spending the additional \$4,500.

Update on the Brook Road Bridge Replacement Project:

Permit plans are in the works, final plans will be provided to the select board by the end of the year. FEMA grants will be pursued after receiving the final plans. The project is projected to be upward of 1,000,000 dollars. Sasha mentioned the project going to a vote once the plans are received.

Updated Town plan:

Select Board hearing for Town Plan - the SB has not yet received delivery from the Planning Commission. The Planning Commission had a hearing on October 8th and following that made a few changes to the plan. Will has pretty much made the changes, is in the process of getting them made to a PDF version of the plan for the Planning Commission to give final approval to. Then there will be the formal delivery to the Select Board, once that occurs, for a town of less than 2,500, the Select Board only one hearing must be held (at a minimum).

****Time frame for SB hearing is no less than 30 nor more than 120 days **after the planning commission hearing** may the select board hold their first public hearing with a required 15-day notice in the newspaper and posted physically around the community. ***This means that the SB hearing could occur no earlier than November 7th and must occur no later than Oct 8-Nov 8 = 31 days. -December 8 = 61 days, -Jan 8 = 92 days - Feb 5 = 120 days.*** Once the select board has their hearings, **they have up to one year from the date of final planning commission hearing to adopt the town plan by select board vote or at a town meeting.** Major changes at the SB level do trigger another SB hearing.

Jesse encouraged more feedback, as more is better! Tammy encouraged a shorten synopsis of the plan and/or changes to encourage more feedback, as the document is extremely lengthy. Jesse suggested looking at the table of each section to get a condensed summary of each topic.

Conservation Commission:

Sarah Albert requested approval from the select board for a boardwalk (or bog-bridge) to be reconstructed in the Town Forest. Maple Hill School has offered to do the labor if the town is willing to pay the cost of lumber (hemlock)/materials. The total cost is estimated (from P&R) to be just under \$400. Sarah requested for the select board to approve the cost of \$750 to fund the boardwalk in the Town Forest.

Jim moved to approve up to \$800 from the Town Woodland Fund to reconstruct the boardwalk at the Maxfield entrance to the Town Forest, with a unanimous approval of the select board.

Consideration of vegetation/tree removal from rear end of Town Hall/Opera House lot affecting Keith Swann and Cindy Wykoff property. The quote from the tree removal is quoted to be \$650 for the boxelder (deteriorating) and the maple tree (leaning away from the garage). Jim & Tammy agreed that it makes sense to take down the single tree of concern/risk to the garage. Sasha suggested to authorize expenditure up to \$650. Tammy suggested to take down all three trees to avoid this concern in the future. George suggested to make a decision and move on. Sasha proposed to authorize up to \$650 for the tree removal and if it's a modest amount to remove all three then they can reconvene. Jim moved to authorize, with a unanimous approval of the select board.

Updated on grant for lighting upgrade for Town Hall/Opera House

Tammy indicated that before moving forward the Friends of the Opera House should establish how much funding they have. Keith said at this point they have not started fundraising. The project is reimbursable, the money is not needed upfront. Keith did advise that the quote may no longer be valid when the project is started as the quote was given several months ago.

COVID-19 update and issues relating to re-opening the Town Hall/Opera House for various uses.

Sasha indicated that there hasn't been much change in COVID-19 since September. Jim suggested that if people want to use the Opera House that they make a proposal and the select board have the authority to approve/decline. Tammy suggested "for town use only" before opening it up to the public. The friends of the opera house indicated that they would be happy to help manage the COVID-19 aspects of re-opening the Opera House. Sasha reminded that there are lots of aspects of using the space, i.e.: 6ft spacing, one-way direction, screening, etc. Jim urged to base the re-opening of the Opera House on the basis of a request to use the Opera House, as there is nothing to decide at this point

Jim moved to table the discussion until there is someone asking to use the Town Hall, with a unanimous approval of the select board.

Town Hall/Opera House Contract with Friends of the Plainfield Town Hall/Opera House
Jim, Tammy & Sasha agreed that the rental and deposit checks should be cashed and cleared and if everything is clean upon return of the space then the deposit check could be reissued to the renter. This is something that will need to be discussed with Linda to make sure that she is on board, as Keith indicated that is not something that was previously done. Tammy suggested that rental and liability should be looked into if the town is not maintaining the lot. Jim suggested for the town attorney to review the contract and offer suggestions. If the Opera House will not be used to full capacity then it does not seem as though the Friends of the Opera House should receive \$3,000. Tammy recommended a modified contract for COVID-19 and the understanding of the current circumstances. Sasha indicated in the meantime we should look at the Town Hall/Opera House website to make sure the information (& contracts) are accurate.

Agenda items for November 9, 2020 Select Board Meeting

- Route 2-Main Street Intersection Remediation Project Update
- Pedestrian Bridge Project Update
- Brook Road Bridge Project Update

- Process for upcoming contracts, review Plainfield Purchasing Policy
- Town Hall-Opera House contract with the Friends of the Town Hall-Opera House and various arrangements needed for reopening

Adjournment:

Jim moved to adjourn at 9:38 pm, with a unanimous approval of all select board members.