

Plainfield Town Meeting
March 6, 2018
Approved Minutes

Town Moderator Charlie Barasch called the meeting to order at 10:06am.

Moderator Barasch read aloud the text of **Article 1**: To elect all necessary officers for the ensuing year: Moderator, Town Clerk, Treasurer, Selectboard, Lister, Auditor, Collector of Delinquent Taxes, Town Grand Juror, Town Law Agent, Cemetery Commissioner, and School Director.

Before moving on to Article 2, Moderator Barasch announced the sale of food and other items for various fundraising efforts, including pies to purchase additional padded chairs for the Town Hall Opera House's balcony area, chili for the Fireman's Club, and primroses for the Cutler Memorial Library. Barasch also noted several informational display tables around the room. Barasch explained that Town Meeting follows Robert's Rules of Order and cited the procedures that would be followed. He then read a poem by William Carlos Williams entitled *The Dance*.

Moderator Barasch recognized State Representative Janet Ancel and, hearing no objections, invited her to address the meeting. Ancel reported on the work of the Ways and Means Committee, which she chairs, noting that most of the work this session has focused on property taxes and education finance. The committee is trying to find ways to reduce reliance on the property tax and move more toward an income-based system to fund Vermont's schools. Ancel reported that she also has been working on revising the State income tax system to address changes in the federal income tax. She noted that the State Legislature is much more active than it was last year and has a real sense of mission and focus that is a much easier environment in which to do work. Ancel's full Town Meeting report is available on her Facebook page, through a link to her Facebook page on Front Porch Forum, or by contacting her directly. Ancel responded to various questions posed by Amos Meacham, Steve Farnham, and Julie Hackbarth regarding some of the issues that Ancel had discussed. Alex Forbes thanked Ancel for her work.

ARTICLE 2: Shall the voters authorize the Selectboard to purchase the Gallison House property at 25 High Street for the purpose of providing parking for the Town Hall Opera House, and to finance this purchase for a sum not to exceed \$70,000 payable over a term not to exceed ten years?

- Moderator Barasch began by reading the text of the article and stating that the issue can be discussed, however, no amendments can be made to it due to its inclusion as an Australian ballot item at today's polls.
- Select Board chair Betsy Ziegler spoke in support of the Town purchasing the Gallison House property by stating that for many years, the Town Hall Opera House has been central to the community, yet today there are accessibility and parking issues that need to be addressed.
- Friends of the Town Hall Opera House secretary David Strong spoke in favor of the purchase, noting the traffic and safety problems. He stated that events at the facility provide rental revenue to the Town, which can be increased by increasing the availability of parking. Strong reviewed the financing plan for the purchase and noted that many of the systems in the Town Hall Opera House are new thus the venue will not require much in the way of capital improvements other than the

need for additional parking. Regarding the purchase of the property, Strong noted the track record of the Friends in raising money, including grants, and stated that the Town Hall Opera House's reserve fund of \$10,000 can be used to make the annual loan repayments. Strong suggested that if the Town votes to purchase the property, a committee be formed to decide what should be done with the house that sits on it.

- Select Board member Ross Sneyd noted two reasons for his support for putting the question on today's ballot: 1) giving voters the opportunity to directly weigh in on the purchase; and 2) because he believes the purchase is a great opportunity for the Town to make the entry to Plainfield Village more attractive whether the house is restored or torn down. Sneyd also noted that along with other recent enhancements to the Town and those being planned for, improving the property will make a positive statement to the State of Vermont, which will be making the decision on what happens to the nearby problematic intersection of US Route 2 and Main Street.
- Zoning Administrator Karen Storey asked if the measure passes, what is the short-term plan for the upkeep of the building in terms of it being an eyesore. Select Board member Alexandra Thayer responded that there is no plan. David Strong responded that two areas would require upkeep: 1) snow removal from the roof to keep it from leaking and tightening up of the building's exterior.
- George Cushing stated that to revamp the building to make it habitable will cost \$203,000-\$247,000 and that in addition to the \$70,000 purchase price, the interest over 10 years will be \$11,550. Cushing quoted a figure of \$8,000 per parking space for an additional 11 parking spaces, which would not make a difference in terms of increased rentals. He noted other areas that could be used for event parking, the potential for additional needed funding due to the absence of a solid plan for the building, and the general burden on the taxpayers.
- Emergency Management Director Michael Billingsley asked who actually would hold the title and deed to the property after the purchase and if there were any liability issues in terms of the building itself prior to it becoming a livable space. Thayer, noting that she was the Select Board member who was not in support of the purchase, responded that the Town would hold ownership and that any liability would lie with the Town. Thayer stated that no discussion has taken place regarding whether there would be an increase in the cost of the Town's insurance as a result of the purchase.
- Noting the example of what Brookfield has done with its own town hall through community effort, Paula Emery asked if procuring the house might be an opportunity for the Plainfield community to come together to do such things as painting the building, or if tapping into resources such as Central Vermont Career Center, Youthbuild, and/or Yestermorrow might help toward bringing the house into a usable condition. Emery noted that she believes that the building's value is in its historic significance and its potential to prevent the widening of US Route 2.
- Jeremy Matt asked if the building cannot be restored, will the Town be stuck with a building that cannot be torn down because of its historic significance. Betsy Ziegler responded that while the building is in an historic district, the building itself has not been designated as historic itself and can be torn down if necessary. In addition, because it is in an historic district, the Town would have some advantages in terms of qualifying for certain State funding.
- Greg Light noted that by purchasing the property, it would be taken off the tax rolls and income to the Town would be lost. Light also asked if any thought had been given to selling the existing Town Offices and moving them up to the Gallison building. Thayer responded that there has been no discussion regarding that.

- Thayer noted her opposition to the purchase, stating it was not a fiscally conservative decision for the Town to spend this kind of money and that the process was not transparent. She reviewed the costs involved in the purchase, noting that they did not include other expenses necessary in creating a parking lot nor the cost of demolishing the house. She expressed doubt that anyone would be interested in investing in a building where parking would not be available during events at the Town Hall Opera House. Thayer suggested that those who attend events at the Town Hall Opera House might park at the Park and Ride. She refuted the assertion that the State cares about improvements in the area in terms of addressing the US Route 2/Main Street intersection, and suggested that a vote against the measure is the prudent way to go.
- Amos Meacham noted that he had similar concerns to what Thayer had just expressed with regard to the costs involved if things do not fall into place. He asked why the measure was being voted on by Australian ballot. Town Clerk/Treasurer Wells responded that any item that is to be financed for more than five years has to be voted on through Australian ballot.
- Steve Farnham expressed his opinion that taking the property off the tax rolls was a specious argument. He asked if David Strong would address the economic viability relative to various options of how the land and building could be used, including using private funds so it does not continue to come back to the taxpayers. Farnham expressed his confidence that, based on the restoration efforts at the Town Hall Opera House, the Friends group would do the same with the Gallison house.
- Daniel Marcus asked who determined that the Gallison house was worth \$70,000 and what will happen to the building if the Town does not purchase it. Ross Sneyd responded that the property owner initially set the price at \$90,000, but through a series of negotiations with the Town, reduced the amount to \$70,000. Sneyd added that if the measure does not pass, the owner is the one who will decide what to do with the building.
- Responding to an earlier question, Laura Zeisel noted that despite the Gallison house itself being in an historic district, she was quite certain that in Vermont there is no restriction on tearing down historic buildings. She stated that there are workable uses for the building, including professional offices that are not usually open in the evenings and on weekends when the majority of Town Hall Opera House performances take place. Zeisel noted that the number of events at the facility has been increasing, that musical performers have noted the excellent acoustics, and that an arts reviewer called the facility “the new Central Vermont venue” for many things. Noting that Plainfield will have no control over what happens to the Gallison house if the Town does not purchase it, she urged voters to approve the measure.
- Marge Christie asked about potential ramifications in terms of the parking lot and building when, at some point, the State redoes the US Route 2/Main Street intersection. She noted that the State will not care about the Town’s investment in the property if it determines that the area needs to be dug up in order to reconfigure the intersection. Christie added that she did not believe that the Town should be in the real estate business.
- Camilla Kelly-Kinniburgh asked if it was discussed during negotiations if the area around the building could be leased for parking. Ross Sneyd responded that leasing was not an option.
- Rebecca Yahm noted that her daughter has been involved in performances at the Town Hall Opera House and drop off, pickup, parking, and road crossing have been dangerous issues for them. She believes that expanding parking would be a huge value; however, she has concerns about the mounting costs. Yahm expressed interest in hearing more about the possibility of grants to help defray the costs.

- **Tim Phillips made a motion to close the discussion and move on to the next article. Scott Stewart seconded the motion.** Moderator Barasch stated that a two-thirds majority was necessary to call the question and close discussion. After an inconclusive voice vote, Barasch called for a standing vote. The result of the standing vote was 56 in favor and 35 opposed to stopping debate. **The vote to stop debate failed to get a two-thirds majority, therefore discussion on the article continued.**
- David Strong stated that the Town was, in fact, in the real estate rental business, noting that it leases the space above the Town offices in the municipal building and receives rental revenue from the Town Hall Opera House. He noted that taxes on the Gallison property are \$2,000 and that the original asking price of \$90,000 was based on its \$90,000 assessment. Strong stated that if the Town did not purchase the property now, it was unlikely that the owners would offer it to the Town again. If nothing can be done with the Gallison house, it would cost \$25,000 to take it down, for which the Friends have \$20,000 that could be used for that. Strong noted that there is a lot of ways to fix up the building without cost to taxpayers.
- Warren Hathaway noted the passionate stances on both sides of the issue, but stated that in the end, the community needs to come together. He thanked Betsy Ziegler and Ross Sneyd from the Select Board for voting to allow the conversation to take place at Town Meeting.
- Sandy Ross, one of the Listers for the Town, noted that the Gallison house has been abandoned for a long time and is uninhabitable due to lead issues. Consequently, the assessment of the building will be lowered. Ross stated that she would like to see something done with the building that is of value to the Town.
- Jeremy Matt noted that the building is valued at \$90,000 but needs \$210,000 in work to make it a useful property, which makes its value less than zero.
- Ziegler noted a number of remarkable changes she has seen in the Town over the past 30 years and believes that given the creative, hardworking, and fiscally responsible people in the Town, the community can make this happen.
- Stating her respect for the points raised by those in support of the issue, Thayer reiterated her stance on fiscal accountability and not moving forward with so many unknowns, concerns regarding the lead issue, funds from the Friends group going toward demolishing the building and not toward the purchase price, and not being able to rely on the Town Hall Opera House's reserve fund in years when the Town spends its entire budget. Thayer clarified that her vote as a Select Board member was against the purchase and financing of the property, not against putting the issue before the voters at Town Meeting.
- Owen Bradley recommended that there be more dialogue and that the community should not divide itself on this issue.
- Lisa Ryan noted some of the resources available to address the issues regarding this and other properties, including tax credits to offset the cost of lead abatement and other improvements.
- Deb Barnwell suggested that since some properties up for sale in the area are still on the market, there might be more time for further discussion and that the selling price of the Gallison property might possibly be reduced during that time.
- Elaine Parker noted that the current administration in Washington is taking away grant funding and incentive programs, and if we are to take advantage of what is out there, we need to act now.
- Steve Farnham stated that the issue before the Town currently is whether to acquire the property and that questions regarding restoration versus demolition of the building can be considered at a later time when more information is known. He noted that whether the Town purchases the

property, it still may need to deal with the building in the future; thus we should consider the option that provides the Town with the most leverage.

- Paula Emery asked if there are any buildings along US Route 2 that have been purchased by developers, yet are in foreclosure and sitting empty, to which some in the room responded yes. She recommended looking into this issue further.
- In terms of the cost of demolition, former Select Board chair and current Road Commissioner Bram Towbin noted that the house on Cameron Road, which was poised to fall into the Great Brook, was demolished using only a small amount of taxpayer dollars.
- Allan Farnham noted that because of the issues with the Gallison house, if it needs to be torn down, the costs would be closer to \$35,000 or \$40,000.
- **Dave Montgomery called the question to end debate. Camilla Kelly-Kinniburgh seconded the motion.** Moderator Barasch called for a voice vote, which passed by a two-thirds vote. **The motion was approved.**

ARTICLE 3: Shall the action taken at the 2017 annual Town meeting authorizing \$200,000 of bonded indebtedness to purchase a new fire truck be validated and confirmed?

- Ross Sneyd explained that when the measure authorizing the bonding of the fire truck was approved by voters last year, the State financing requirements for advertising the question prior to the vote had not been met. Sneyd expressed the hope that voters would reaffirm their vote from last year to purchase the fire truck.
- Allan Farnham asked why the recent purchase of a new Highway Department truck was not put to a vote similarly to how the voters were asked to approve the purchase of the new fire truck. Ziegler explained that because the term of the loan for the firetruck was in excess of five years, the Town was required to have a municipal vote on it. Town Clerk/Treasurer Linda Wells further explained that while both vehicles were purchased partially using reserve funds, the Highway truck was financed for fewer than five years thus no municipal vote was required.
- **Scott Stewart made a motion to call the question and stop debate. Jeremy Matt seconded the motion.** Moderator Barasch called for a voice vote, which passed by two-thirds. **The motion was approved.**

ARTICLE 4: To hear reports of Town Officers and act on same.

- **AUDITORS CERTIFICATE: Tim Phillips made a motion to accept the Auditors Certificate. Scott Stewart seconded the motion.** There was no discussion. **The Auditors Certificate was accepted.**
- **TOWN CLERK'S REPORT: Tim Phillips made a motion to accept the Town Clerk's Report. Scott Stewart seconded the motion.** There was no discussion. **The Town Clerk's Report was accepted.**
- **TOWN TREASURER'S REPORT: Tim Phillips made a motion to accept the Town Treasurer's Report. Scott Stewart seconded the motion.** There was no discussion. **The Town Treasurer's Report was accepted.**
- **COLLECTOR OF DELINQUENT TAXES REPORT: Scott Stewart made a motion to accept the Collector of Delinquent Taxes Report. Tim Phillips seconded the motion.** There was no discussion. **The Delinquent Tax Collector's Report was accepted.**
- **LISTERS REPORT: Greg Light made a motion to accept the Listers Report. Scott Stewart seconded the motion.** There was no discussion. **The Listers Report was accepted.**

- **PLANNING COMMISSION REPORT:** Tim Phillips made a motion to accept the Planning Commission Report. Scott Stewart seconded the motion. There was no discussion. **The Planning Commission Report was accepted.**
- **DEVELOPMENT REVIEW BOARD REPORT:** Tim Phillips made a motion to accept the Development Review Board Report. Scott Stewart seconded the motion. There was no discussion. **The Development Review Board Report was accepted.**
- **CENTRAL VERMONT REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION REPORT:** Tim Phillips made a motion to accept the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission Report. Scott Stewart seconded the motion. There was no discussion. **The Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission Report was accepted.**
- **ZONING ADMINISTRATOR REPORT:** Tim Phillips made a motion to accept the Zoning Administrator's Report. Scott Stewart seconded the motion. There was no discussion. **The Zoning Administrator Report was accepted.**
- **SELECT BOARD REPORT:** Scott Stewart made a motion to accept the Select Board report. Tim Phillips seconded the motion. Ross Sneyd noted that Betsy Ziegler would be retiring from the Select Board and cited examples of her service to the community over many years, including working with children at Twinfield School; nourishing the community with local produce grown at her and husband Joe Klein's Littlewood Farm; numerous projects and improvements to the Town, especially coordinating Old Home Days and spearheading the Lower Village Sidewalk study; and tending to the flower beds in the Village. On behalf of the Select Board and those in the Town Office, Sneyd expressed his appreciation to Ziegler for her work and that she will be missed. Ziegler thanked everyone, noting that it has been a learning experience and that others should consider serving the community. Leon Marasco thanked Ziegler for marrying him and his wife many years ago. **The Select Board Report was accepted.** Town Clerk/Treasurer Linda Wells presented a collage and appreciation certificate to Ziegler thanking her for her service to the Town.
- **SOCIAL CONCERNS COMMITTEE REPORT:** Tim Phillips made a motion to accept the Social Concerns Committee Report. Scott Stewart seconded the motion. Social Concerns Committee member Sarah Albert stated a discrepancy in the recommended funding for the Twin Valley Senior Center between the figure of \$2,300 in the Social Concerns Committee Report on page 67 and \$2,800 in the spreadsheet on page 69 in the Town Report. Albert noted that the correct figure should be \$2,300. Ziegler explained the reason for the change was that board members from the Twin Valley Senior Center had made a request directly to the Select Board for an increase of \$500, which was granted based on need. Laura Zeisel thanked the Social Concerns Committee for its work and also those who had brought food donations today for the Onion River Food Shelf. Zeisel provided instructions for those who wish to donate food items both later today and in the next few days. **Karen Storey made a motion to amend the spreadsheet figure of \$2,800 on page 69 of the Town Report to \$2,300 to reflect the correct amount that the Social Concerns Committee had recommended for the Twin Valley Senior Center. Ross Sneyd seconded the motion. The motion to amend was approved.** George Cushing stated the reasons why the Twin Valley Senior Center had gone to the Select Board to request additional funding. Moderator Barasch explained to Cushing that discussion on the dollar amounts of funding would take place later in the meeting. **The Social Concerns Committee Report as amended was accepted.**

- **WATER/WASTEWATER COMMISSION REPORT:** Scott Stewart made a motion to accept the Water/Wastewater Commission Report. Tim Phillips seconded the motion. There was no discussion. **The Water/Wastewater Commission Report was accepted.**
- **CONSERVATION COMMISSION REPORT:** Tim Phillips made a motion to accept the Conservation Commission Report. Scott Stewart seconded the motion. There was no discussion. **The Conservation Commission Report was accepted.**
- **HAZARD MITIGATION COMMITTEE REPORT:** Tim Phillips made a motion to accept the Hazard Mitigation Committee Report. Scott Stewart seconded the motion. Hazard Mitigation Committee chair Amos Meacham noted that there is an open seat on the Committee and provided an overview of its current and upcoming work. **The Hazard Mitigation Committee Report was accepted.**
- **FIRE AND RESCUE REPORT:** Scott Stewart made a motion to accept the Fire and Rescue Report. Tim Phillips seconded the motion. There was no discussion. **The Fire and Rescue Report was accepted.**
- **E911 REPORT:** Tim Phillips made a motion to accept the E911 Report. Scott Stewart seconded the motion. There was no discussion. **The E911 Report was accepted.**
- **EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT DIRECTOR REPORT:** Tim Phillips made a motion to accept the Emergency Management Director Report. Scott Stewart seconded the motion. Emergency Management Director Michael Billingsley stated that a lot of new mapping and aerial photography has been done recently, noting that there are approximately 90 households that are in significant flooding zones in addition to those already identified along the Great Brook. Billingsley requested that those who are not sure if they are in a house vulnerable to flooding should fill out a household vulnerability form so a plan can be devised to help residents get out quickly in the event of rapidly rising waters. Billingsley also requested input from residents in shaping the update to the new Hazardous Mitigation Plan at a meeting to be held at 6:30pm on 3/21/18 at the Town Hall Opera House. **The Emergency Management Director Report was accepted.**
- **RECREATION COMMITTEE REPORT:** Tim Phillips made a motion to accept the Recreation Committee Report. Scott Stewart seconded the motion. There was no discussion. **The Recreation Committee Report was accepted.**
- **CEMETERY COMMISSION REPORT:** Scott Stewart made a motion to accept the Cemetery Commission Report. Tim Phillips seconded the motion. Cemetery Commission member Greg Light noted that the reserve fund is likely to be depleted in 10-to-15 years, and as a group, the Commission is trying to do a lot of work as volunteers to maintain the cemetery. Light solicited for volunteers to help with the work. **The Cemetery Commission Report was accepted.**
- **ENERGY COORDINATOR REPORT:** Scott Stewart made a motion to accept the Energy Coordinator Report. Tim Phillips seconded the motion. Energy Coordinator Bob Atchinson reported on the recent purchase of a new infrared camera to detect heat loss in buildings and noted the table display showing heat loss areas in both the Town Hall Opera House and the Municipal Building. He stated that he hopes that the heat leakage in the roofs can be addressed through grants. He urged residents to sign up for a free home energy audit. Atchinson stated that at a recent local gathering on climate change, an expert noted that 97% of scientists believe that climate change is a result of human activity while only 44% of humans believe that humans are causing climate change. He stressed the need to work robustly for change before it is too late to save our planet for future generations. **The Energy Coordinator Report was accepted.**

- Moderator Barasch announced that this concluded the Reports of Town Officers in Article 4. He noted other reports, not from Town Officers, that were scattered throughout the Town Report as well as the volunteer application form.
- Town Clerk/Treasurer Linda Wells thanked former Constable George Cushing for his 10 years of service to the community and presented him with a gift certificate and a certificate of appreciation.

ARTICLE 5: Shall the Town establish a reserve fund for the Emergency Operations Center and Shelter?

- **Tim Phillips made a motion to approve Article 5. Scott Stewart seconded the motion.** Emergency Management Director Michael Billingsley noted that the Town Hall Opera House has been designated as the Emergency Operations Center and the Haybarn at Goddard College as an evacuation shelter. The evacuation shelter at the Haybarn has no supplies thus this reserve fund, if approved, will be used as a resource to address that shortfall.
- Brenda Lindemann asked if there was a collection site for voluntary supplies such as dog crates or other necessary materials. Billingsley responded that currently the Haybarn cannot shelter animals during an evacuation. Animals can be sheltered at the Barre Auditorium and any animal-related contributions can be given to the Vermont Animal Disaster Rescue Team.
- Thayer suggested that a list will be created over the coming months of items needed for the shelter, but if anyone wants to donate items now, a place can be found to store them.
- Cutler Memorial Library librarian Loona Brogan noted that the Library has been involved with the Town's resiliency planning and is working on being a partner in the community as a disaster preparation and response resource. Brogan stated that she will be training librarians around Vermont to be a disaster response resource at the local level. **The motion to accept Article 5 was approved.**

ARTICLE 6: Shall the Town appropriate \$1,000 to the Emergency Operations Center and Shelter Reserve Fund?

- **Tim Phillips made a motion to approve Article 6. Scott Stewart seconded the motion.** David Strong asked if this was a one-time or annual allocation. Ross Sneyd responded that the Select Board had recommended an allocation of \$1,000 this year, but in future years the allocation might be a different amount. Ed Hutchinson noted that the amount was not very much. Sneyd agreed, but stated that the amount is only part of what is in the budget for emergency management and that budget constraints determined the \$1,000 amount in the reserve fund for this year. Betsy Ziegler noted that the additional amount in the budget for emergency management is \$3,000. Alexandra Thayer stated that if there are no emergency events, there may be items such as food that will not need to be purchased. Amos Meacham noted that there are other resources for needed items, but that the money from this fund will be used to stock basic shelter supplies. Billingsley added to Meacham's point that there would be reimbursements from such entities as the Red Cross after a disaster event, but at this point the goal is to have everything in place that would be needed to shelter people adequately if an event were to occur. **The motion to accept Article 6 was approved.**

ARTICLE 7: Shall the Town appropriate the sum of \$8,333.00 as its share of the eighth year cost of commuter bus service along Route 2 with service into Montpelier? This appropriation funds a portion of

the total cost of the service, which will also be supported by appropriations from other towns, State and Federal funds, and rider fares.

- **Tim Phillips made a motion to approve Article 7. Scott Stewart seconded the motion.** Hearing no objection from the floor, Moderator Barasch allowed Public Affairs Coordinator for Green Mountain Transit (GMTA) Chris Loyer the opportunity to address the meeting. Loyer explained the reason for the appropriation request of one-third of a 20% local match contribution.
- Margie Christie asked if Loyer had ridership and usage figures to which Loyer responded affirmatively and provided details.
- Paula Emery stated that she would use the bus a lot more if more times were offered and if the route into Montpelier was along US Route 2 rather than Towne Hill Road so she could connect to buses going to Barre. Loyer responded that at the current time, there are no plans to expand services, and that it is possible to adjust the route if GMTA receives enough local concerns, which has not yet happened. Loyer noted ongoing and upcoming opportunities for public input. If service expands, that would require additional funding.
- Steve Farnham noted that he has used the bus service and has found it satisfactory in general; however, he noted the difficulty he has experienced in trying to reach someone by phone in Burlington to get information.
- Sandy Ross asked why it is not possible to get to the Burlington airport. Loyer noted that it is possible to get there, but entails multiple transfers. Given the current ridership, it is not cost-effective to provide a more direct service at this time.
- Alexandra Thayer asked if GMTA would think about a connection from Richmond to the airport. Loyer noted that in order to expand routes, GMTA needs local contributions, which means multiple towns need to agree to increase contributions for increased service.
- **George Cushing made a motion to call the question and stop debate. Paula Emery seconded the motion. The motion to call the question and stop debate was approved. The motion to accept Article 7 was approved.**

ARTICLE 8: Shall the Town voters authorize the expenditures for the following not-for-profit service agencies as recommended by the appointed Social Concerns Committee?

American Red Cross	\$ 100.00
Central VT Adult Basic Education	\$ 400.00
Capstone (Central VT) Comm. Action	\$ 500.00
Central VT Council on Aging	\$ 1,350.00
Central VT Home Health Hospice	\$ 2,500.00
CIRCLE	\$ 525.00
Family Center of Wash County	\$ 500.00
Friends of the Winooski River	\$ 300.00
Good Beginnings of Central VT	\$ 300.00
Green Mountain Transit Agency	\$ 786.00
Home Share Now	\$ 325.00
Onion River Foodshelf	\$ 1,000.00
OUR House	\$ 100.00
People’s Health and Wellness	\$ 700.00
Sexual Assault Crisis Team	\$ 50.00

Twinfield Learning Center	\$ 400.00
Twinfield Together Mentoring	\$ 250.00
Twin Valley Senior Center	\$ 2,800.00
VT Center for Independent Living	\$ 200.00
Washington CTY Court Diversion	\$ 250.00
Washington CTY Mental Health	\$ 500.00
Washington CTY Youth Service Bureau	\$ 325.00
Total	\$14,161.00

- After Moderator Barasch read the text of the article and the dollar amounts recommended for each agency by the Social Concerns Committee, **Tim Phillips made a motion to approve Article 8. Scott Stewart seconded the motion.**
- Ross Sneyd clarified that the Select Board had adopted the recommendations of the Social Concerns Committee with one change, which was to add an additional \$500 to the Twin Valley Senior Center’s (TVSC’s) allocation. He noted that the additional \$500 was reflected in the list that Moderator Barasch just read. **Sneyd made a motion to amend Article 8 by deleting the final phrase in the text so that the proposed amended text of the article would read: “Shall the Town voters authorize the expenditures for the following not-for-profit service agencies.” Daniel Marcus seconded the motion to amend Article 8. The motion to amend the article was approved.**
- Amos Meacham commented that he was pleased with the process of agencies requesting funding through the Social Concerns Committee rather than through debate at Town Meeting, but was concerned about the precedent set of organizations requesting additional funding from the Select Board after the Social Concerns Committee had made its recommendations. He stressed that he greatly appreciates the work that the TVSC does. TVSC Board of Directors Chair Pat Boyle explained that the TVSC had requested to speak with the Social Concerns Committee but did not receive a response, therefore went to the Select Board, which granted the additional \$500. Boyle expressed TVSC’s gratitude for the support from the Town and noted some of the work that it does for the community. Social Concerns Committee member Mary Niebling noted that the email from the TVSC was received after the Social Concerns Committee had met and made its recommendations to the Select Board. At that point, it was up to the Select Board to decide what to do. **The motion to accept Article 8 as amended was approved.**

ARTICLE 9: Shall the Town voters authorize an appropriation of \$37,500 to the Cutler Memorial Library to pay for the librarian and the purchase of materials and services that the library acquires to make accessible to the community?

- **Steve Farnham made a motion to approve Article 9. Tim Phillips seconded the motion.**
- Marcy Shaffer Hale, chair of the Cutler Library’s Board of Trustees, thanked everyone for their support over the years and noted that the Library had asked for level funding from the Town this year. Hale reported that the Library raised just over \$5,000 through its annual appeal. The Library also submitted a grant in partnership with the Town to the Vermont Community Development Program (VCDP) and received \$28,000 to work on an expansion and accessibility project. She invited members of the community to provide their thoughts and ideas. Hale noted that there is an open position on the Board of Trustees and anyone interested should send an email to the Library.

- Cutler Librarian Loona Brogan asked for a round of applause for the members of the Board of Trustees and the Friends of the Library. She thanked those who have purchased primroses at today's meeting in support of the Library, and the Town for getting the VCDP grant on the Library's behalf. Brogan announced that the Library would be hosting the next community supper at the Grace **United** Methodist Church on 3/27/18 at 6pm. She thanked Michael Billingsley and the support group for reinvigorating the community suppers as well as the Grace Methodist Church for partnering in the effort. Brogan spoke about the importance of public libraries to communities and thanked the community for its support. **The motion to accept Article 9 was approved.**
- Bob Rosenfeld, who recently became treasurer of the Cutler Library Board of Trustees, thanked Town Clerk/Treasurer Linda Wells, Assistant Town Clerk/Treasurer Carol Smith, and the Select Board for their graciousness as well as Auditors Lorraine Cappetta and Mary Etta Chase for helping him to be a better treasurer.

ARTICLE 10: To see what amount of money the Town will vote to pay for Water and Wastewater departments for the period of July 1, 2018 to June 30, 2019.

- Town Clerk/Treasurer Linda Wells recommended that since they are separate budgets, separate motions should be made and votes taken on the proposed figures for the Water and Wastewater departments.
- **Tim Phillips made a motion to approve the amount of \$193,539 for the Water Department for the period of July 1, 2018 to June 30, 2019. Scott Stewart seconded the motion.**
- **Peter Youngbaer made a motion to amend the wording of the article to include "to be paid for by the users of the system." Tim Phillips seconded the motion to amend.** There was no discussion on the amendment. **The motion to amend the article was approved.**
- **The motion to accept the Water department portion of Article 10 as amended was approved.**
- **Alexandra Thayer made a motion to approve the amount of \$264,565 for the operation of the Town of Plainfield's Wastewater System to be paid for by the users of the system for the period of July 1, 2018 to June 30, 2019. David Montgomery seconded the motion.** Baylen Slope asked why the two budgets were not combined. Wells and Assistant Town Clerk/Treasurer Carol Smith responded that they were separate departments and that some households only use water and one household only has sewer. Slope asked for clarification regarding what it means "to be paid for by the users of the system." Water/Wastewater Commissioner Tim Phillips explained that the Water and Wastewater systems are not paid for by the taxpayers of the Town. The system is owned by the Town, but all of the expenses of running the system are borne by the users who are actually connected to the system. Wells provided further explanation, noting that residents outside the system have wells and septic systems that they pay for privately. A town-wide vote is needed because the Town is ultimately responsible for the systems. **The motion to accept Article 10 as amended was approved.**

ARTICLE 11: To see what amount of money the Town will vote to pay for highways, bridges, fire department, and administrative operations of the Town of Plainfield for the period of July 1, 2018 to June 30, 2019.

- **Ziegler made a motion to accept the figure of \$966,706.05 to pay for highways, bridges, fire department, and administrative operations of the Town of Plainfield for the period of July 1, 2018 to June 30, 2019. Amos Meacham seconded the motion.** Ziegler explained the approximately

\$40,000 increase over last year's budget, detailing areas in the Select Board budget where the increases occurred. She noted that all the proposals and increases came to the Select Board throughout the year as a result of citizens' concerns and new State requirements, including increased traffic enforcement, ambulance services, the new fire truck purchase, and matching amounts for grants, if funded. Ziegler noted that the increase actually was more but it came to the \$40,000 figure due to cuts elsewhere in the budget.

- Alexandra Thayer clarified the fact that although other reserve funds are included in the budget as a line item, there is not a separate \$1,000 for the Hazard Mitigation reserve fund, which will come out of the \$3,000 line item.
- Steve Farnham asked why some budget figures in the Town Report do not match **with the grant income on the last page of the budget**. Wells responded that some of the grant projects are ongoing and might not reflect the full expense of the projects.
- Michael Billingsley noted that he had requested that \$1,000 to be put aside in a reserve fund for supplies for the emergency evacuation shelter, and that that \$1,000, along with the \$3,000 in the Emergency Management budget line item, would have come close to the \$4,200 he had requested. Ziegler stated that the \$1,000 could not be put in the reserve fund because, at the time, there was no reserve fund thus the \$1,000 allocation was put into the Emergency Management budget line item until the reserve fund was approved. **Billingsley made a motion to amend the budget to increase the Emergency Management line item from \$3,000 to \$4,000 so that \$1,000 could be set aside specifically for the shelter. Amos Meacham seconded the motion.** Loona Brogan noted that she too thought that the total was going to be \$4,000. Ross Sneyd stated that there were difficult choices when the budget was put together and while the Select Board understands that there is an important need for Emergency Management funding, it tried to weigh it against all the other responsibilities the Town has. Steve Farnham wanted to clarify that the vote was to raise the budget by \$1,000 and by implication go to the Emergency Management Fund. Because it might not be inferred that way, a decision might be made to use the money for some other purpose. Farnham asked if the motion needs to specify what the increase is for. Moderator Barasch and Ross Sneyd agreed that the motion clearly states that the additional \$1,000 will go into the Emergency Management budget. **The motion to amend the Emergency Management budget by an additional \$1,000 was approved.** Moderator Barasch noted that the new budget was in the amount of \$967,706.05. **The motion to accept the new figure of \$967,706.05, which includes the increased amount in the Emergency Management budget of \$1,000, was approved.**

ARTICLE 12: Shall the Town of Plainfield authorize the Selectboard to apply any surplus from the current fiscal year to reduce taxes in the next fiscal year?

- **Peter Youngbaer made a motion to approve Article 12. Amos Meacham seconded the motion.** There was no discussion. **The motion to accept Article 12 was approved.**

ARTICLE 13: Shall the Town vote to accept the provisions of public statutes relating to the collection of taxes by the Town Treasurer, (VSA 32 Section 4791) and vote to collect municipal taxes thirty days from mailing and not prior to August 15, 2018 and collect school taxes on November 14, 2018 and February 13, 2019, collecting half of the total school taxes on each of those dates?

- **Amos Meacham made a motion to approve Article 13. Peter Youngbaer seconded the motion.** There was no discussion. **The motion to accept Article 13 was approved.**

ARTICLE 14: Shall the Town of Plainfield enter into a communications union district to be known as Central Vermont Internet, under the provisions of 30 VSA Ch82?

- **Steve Farnham made a motion to approve Article 14. Amos Meacham seconded the motion.**

Alexandra Thayer explained that there is a similar district in the Connecticut Upper Valley that has been in place for some time that, town by town, is providing high-quality internet service. There is no expenditure from towns, but it sets up a municipal structure to explore the opportunities for high-speed internet. Rebecca Yahm asked how it actually worked. Thayer was not sure how it worked, but that its goal is to provide fiber optic connections, town by town, working with an internet provider. Steve Farnham noted that he was in favor of learning more about a process that does not cost any money and related his own difficulties getting affordable internet service at his residence. Amos Meacham asked who would be involved from the Town to which Thayer responded someone appointed by the Select Board. Linda Wells asked if the Town would be committed in any way to which Thayer responded that it only authorizes the Town to be a participant. Peter Youngbaer noted that it would be in competition with his internet provider and voiced concern that we would be giving an unfair advantage to one provider over another with this action. Youngbaer also asked if the statute gives this district assessment authority to which Thayer responded that the statute prohibits creating any entity that could burden taxpayers. **The motion to accept Article 14 was approved.**

ARTICLE 15: To transact any other non-binding business that may properly come before the meeting.

- Emergency Management Director Michael Billingsley announced that he is looking for someone to fill the volunteer position of Emergency Operations Coordinator to assist him and help with communications in a disaster event.
- **Energy Coordinator Bob Atchinson made a motion to adopt the resolution below that asked the citizens of the Town to ask the State and Federal government to act prudently to ameliorate climate change on the planet. Sarah Phillips seconded the motion.**
- **Moderator Barasch read aloud the following resolution:**

WE, the undersigned voters of the Town of Plainfield, request that the Selectboard warn the following resolution for the 2018 Plainfield Town Meeting:

WHEREAS extreme and erratic temperatures, increasingly severe storms, a rise in tick-borne diseases, and threats to farmers and maple sugar makers clearly demonstrate that climate change is one of the most urgent problems facing Plainfield, our state, our nation, and the world;

WHEREAS the State of Vermont has stated a goal in the Comprehensive Energy Plan to obtain 90% of its energy from renewable sources by 2050, yet is making insufficient progress towards achieving that goal;

Now, therefore, be it resolved:

1. That the Town of Plainfield urges the State of Vermont to:

- a. Halt any new or expanded fossil fuel infrastructure, including but not limited to pipelines; and,
- b. Firmly commit to, at least, 90% renewable energy by 2050 for all people in Vermont, with firm interim deadlines; and,
- c. Ensure that the transition to renewable energy is fair and equitable for all residents, with no harm to marginalized, or rural communities.

2. That the residents and the government of the Town of Plainfield will do our parts to meet or exceed these goals and achieve 95% renewable energy by 2040 by committing to efforts such as:

- a. Protecting town lands from fossil fuel infrastructure, such as denying easements or agreements for any pipelines transporting fossil fuel products across town lands;
- b. Address transportation issues in the Town and School District by embracing the use of alternatively fueled vehicles, such as biodiesel or electric-powered units, and supporting public transportation;
- c. Working together to weatherize all town buildings and schools in the town and school district, 80% of residences, and ensuring that all new construction and renovation comply with the current state energy codes, and renewables with Act 174 planning standards;
- d. Enlisting state or independent support to install photovoltaic solar on suitable town and school property, and continuing the discussion to install low-head hydroelectric generation at the Plainfield Mill Street dam site;
- e. Embracing other initiatives to improve residents' quality of life, while helping to reduce overall energy use in Plainfield.

3. That the Plainfield Energy Team will report at town meeting annually on the town's progress on these efforts.

- Peter Youngbaer asked if the resolution was non-binding to which Moderator Barasch responded affirmatively. Glenda Bissex asked how the figure was arrived at regarding Plainfield achieving 95% renewable energy by 2040. Atchinson responded that they wanted to set the standard higher than what the State has set. Amos Meacham asked if the resolution would have any impact on such issues as permitting or is it just a statement of values. Betsy Ziegler noted that it was a goal to move towards. Baylen Slope asked what it means in terms of being non-binding to which Thayer responded that it was aspirational and giving guidance regarding what people in the Town would like to see happening. **The motion to accept the resolution was approved.**
- Allan Farnham inquired as to why the Town sold the old plow truck. Ross Sneyd explained that the 1973 truck had mechanical problems that were too expensive to fix so it was sold to a logger in Maine for \$4,000. Farnham noted that it had only 14,000 on the odometer and was not happy with the decision to sell it.

- Bob Atchinson thanked the Town for approving the Energy Plan Resolution, noted free LED lightbulbs available on the Energy Committee's display table, and urged people to sign up for a free energy audit.
- **Peter Youngbaer made a motion to adjourn. Loona Brogan seconded the motion. The motion to adjourn was approved. Town Meeting was adjourned at 1:35pm.**