

**Plainfield Select Board
Emergency Select Board Meeting
April 3, 2020, 10 AM**

Minutes

Present electronically were: Select Board members Tammy Farnham, Jim Volz, and Sasha Thayer. Also present electronically and participating were Town Clerk Linda Wells, Assistant Town Clerk Carol Smith, Road crew members Mike Nolan, Steve MacLaren and Michael Bingham, Water/Wastewater plant operators Greg Chamberlin and Tristan MacGregor-Stewart, and Water/Wastewater Commissioners Mary Lane and Josh Pitts.

The reason the meeting was called to check in with the employees, evaluating employees work schedules, and to address compensation for employees during the COVID-19 pandemic. Greg Chamberlin reported that he's largely been working from home with Tristan MacGregor-Stewart being at the plant for the regular work week. Greg explained that the Water/Wastewater employees are having to put off some service to that tanks and that he is trying to clear up in his work from home. The road crew is able to work their regular hours.

There was discussion regarding continuing to pay town employees their full wages during this COVID-19 pandemic. All members of the selectboard expressed support for the employees, the work they perform, and continuing to pay the employees their full wages during this time of response to the pandemic. Tammy asked how employees can perform the same duties that they do during this pandemic, and staying efficient, while utilizing as many hours as we can, how can we catch up on some things that may have been put aside. Sasha asked about Greg being able to put time into putting procedures and policies in writing. Greg indicated that he feels that this is a good use of his time. Water/Wastewater Commissioners Mary Lane and Josh Pitts concurred. Both also are in support of the Water/Wastewater employees receiving their full pay during this time.

Linda reported that she's taken a laptop home to be able to work from home in part. She will be trying to work on some policies she's needed to attend to and reviewing grants to make sure that they are up to date. The plan is to have Carol have as much time in the office as possible for her to be able to attend to needed tasks in the office. Carol expressed that her biggest concern is the possibility of contamination on the mail. Sasha suggested getting that researched or the possibility of the mail being set aside for a period of time to let the virus die. Mary Lane suggested using gloves and then hand sanitizing afterwards.

There was also discussion of sorting out what is urgent and what isn't urgent in the mail that comes in. Tammy noted that she'd seen a couple of things about the virus not lasting as long on paper. Tammy recommended putting the mail in a box for a day and expressed that there is no mail that comes to the town by mail that is so urgent to open the mail immediately.

Carol Smith, who handles the Water/Wastewater payments also expressed concern about receiving cash and that has instructed those paying to pay by check. Sasha also supports the idea of exploring the possibility of setting up a system to allow payments to be made electronically to avoid handling cash or checks.

Tammy raised the idea of putting up a figurative white board of things to do that can be done during this time. Greg asked about putting on the white board procuring N 95 masks which filter out the germs in the event that they are needed to do needed tasks. Greg reported that they have rubber gloves and suits if they

are needed, and have gas masks and shields. Jim pointed out that if wash hands regularly and don't touch your face, you don't really need a mask, and that what he has been hearing to save the masks for health care workers.

Sasha also reviewed what the state has been doing across the state to respond to the COVID-19 crisis and expressed that she's really pleased with what the state has been doing, and also pleased with what our town employees have been doing. Jim and Tammy expressed their appreciation as well.

At the close of the discussion, Jim Volz moved that we continue to pay our employees their full pay during the COVID-19 crisis and we can revisit this issue in a month or so after we see where we are. Tammy moved to amend that motion to add "with the understanding that everybody is making the effort to put in their 40 hours in." There was further discussion among the board members and those present at the meeting. This amendment was acceptable to Jim. The amended motion was "that the Town continue to pay all our employees with the hourly rate that they currently have, with the understanding that everyone is making the effort to fill their time doing things they need to put in their full 40 hours." The vote was taken by roll call with all Select Board members voting unanimously in favor of the motion. It was noted that this includes Town Clerk Linda Wells as she is also a town employee.

There was further discussion that once things get back to normal in the Town Clerk's office they will be flooded with work. The possibility of being able to pay taxes and other town bills online as a way to possibly reduce workload in the future was raised. Linda will look into this. Tammy noted that there is some indication that having such an arrangement actually increase on-time payments and reduced delinquency.

The decision was made to have a similar check-in meeting in two weeks to make sure the employees' needs are being met, with the next meeting being on April 17, 2020 at 10:30 AM.

Under the public records law, the normal time frame for getting minutes out is five days. In the bill recently passed, the time can be extended to 10 days. Tammy moved to amend having our Select Board meeting minutes completed extending the time to 10 days in accordance with the amended Public Records Act. The vote was taken by roll call with all Select Board members voting unanimously in favor of the motion.

Tammy also raised that when Sasha is speaking with someone, relating, for instance, to the Wellness and Recovery Campus at Goddard College, that she send an email out to the Board re what has occurred so that Select Board members have a current understanding of what is going on, who she spoke with and a quick summary of what it was in reference to. Jim agreed with this request. Sasha provided additional information she had received in a call yesterday from Assistant Secretary of Human Services Kerry Sleeper and Principal Assistant to Secretary of the Agency of Human Services Mike Smith and the arrangements that were able to be made for them to be present at the Select Board meeting on April 6th. Sasha appreciated Tammy's request and agreed to do that.

Tammy spoke also about the fact that the Town has not been asked to approve the Agency of Human Services plan to establish a recovery facility at Goddard. She emphasized that what we've been asked as a Select Board is to support this, this process, that the town has not been asked to do this, or not do this, but have been asked to provide support. Tammy stated that it's not up to the Town to make a decision about the use of Goddard, but that the Town has been asked to provide support. Sasha shared further that a member of the community demanded that the Town should have gone to court to stop the project at Goddard and that Sasha's personal view is that the Town would not have been successful, even if the Town

could find an attorney. And it's uncertain whether the Courts would be open for such a lawsuit. Tammy emphasized that it's people being informed, people being heard, as well as that being heard is different than the Select Board making change because of concerns raised. As people bring concerns to the State, Tammy assumes that the state is going to make that evaluation. To her, our part is to make sure our community is heard. She doesn't think that anyone is asking our opinion, the Select Board, about anything. Sasha suggested that concerns expressed by the community to the State have been heard and mentioned that the Frequently Asked Questions about the Wellness and Recovery Campus at Goddard College included some facts that reflect some changes, like a reduction in the number of people that will be on the campus, and also expecting to hear from Dep. Sec. Kerry Sleeper on Monday that they have tightened up the procedures for people remaining on campus and what the response would be to residents going off campus. Tammy reinforced that the Select Board job is to make sure that our community members are heard and address those with the State. All on the Board concurred. Sasha also mentioned that Amos Meacham wrote a very thoughtful piece which he posted on Facebook and that she took the liberty to pass that along to Candace Morgan, Principal Assistant to the Agency of Human Services Secretary and that she'd gotten an appreciative response soon after. Jim said that this post was also on Front Porch Forum and he felt what Amos wrote was well done. Tammy also felt that Amos' piece was very well done, and that he was posing questions to get people thinking about this.

There was no further business.

Jim Volz moved to adjourn. The vote was taken by roll call vote with all Select Board members voting unanimously in favor of the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 11 AM.

Minutes prepared by Sasha Thayer.

Minutes approved by the Select Board on April ____, 2020.