

Town of Plainfield, Vermont
Select Board Meeting
May 27, 2020
Remote-Only Meeting Via Zoom
Approved Minutes

Present electronically: Select Board Members Sasha Thayer & Tammy Farnham

Other Electronic Participants: Baylen Slote (Zoom Support), Linda Wells (Town Clerk), Sarah Albert (Conservation Committee Chair), Jesse Cooper (Community Member)

Sasha Thayer called the meeting to order at 7:17pm.

Tammy introduced Baylen as the technology facilitator, as he volunteered to host the Zoom meetings to eliminate the “waiting room” function for select board meetings. Tammy requested for participants to use the comment or “raise hand” functionality in Zoom to weigh in on conversation for Baylen to unmute. Public comment will be held at the end of the meeting, which will allow opportunity for community members to speak and ask questions. The expectation within the Zoom platform is to state your first and last name before speaking, which will allow for accurate meeting minutes.

Baylen provided his phone number for Zoom support (802-310-1400).

Review Agenda:

Meeting Agenda amendments include:
appointments – road commissioner instead of road foreman
Rec Committee time slot - no longer needed on the agenda
meeting minute approval – 4/13 instead of 4/12
Signs relating to no littering – rec field

Announcements:

Sasha announced that Vermont COVID-19 cases continue to be stable as the economy starts to open back up. She urges community members to keep track of contacts for traceability in case of infection.

Town Clerk:

Linda requested to open up municipal building effective 6/1 for title researchers and notary by appointment only. The plexi-glass has not yet been installed within the space, so it’s preferable to ease into things. Linda stated they would maintain the same safety protocols including: masks, gloves and sanitation. Linda and Carol will be back to their regular schedule starting Monday (6/1). Auditors would have access for bank reconciliation, but Linda emphasized that they are not ready to allow meetings yet, as it would not be feasible to stay within guidelines.

Sasha Thayer moved to open the municipal building on June 1st subject to the town clerk’s digression as to numbers of people, locations and issues relating to masks. This motion was confirmed by Tammy Farnham & Sasha Thayer of the Select Board.

The Health Officer previously received an annual stipend of \$500, an invoice was sent to the town for a request for payment of services for the past year, with a total amount higher than budgeted. There was an issue with payroll, that resulted in the payment of \$583.45 (hours worked at the same rate of pay as town constable/animal control officer). Linda indicated that the he budget can allow some flexibility for this payment.

Tammy moved to pay the health officer the \$583.45 for the annual bill. This motion was confirmed by Tammy Farnham & Sasha Thayer of the Select Board.

Linda indicated that payroll would be ready on Thursday, and accounts payable would be ready on Friday.

Sasha mentioned the need for a “No Jumping off the Bridge” sign replacement. Which was stolen several years ago. George continues to discourage people to from jumping off the bridge, however it still happens. Linda indicated that she would look into the purchase of a new sign that says “DANGER – no jumping off the bridge”. Sasha reminded everyone that the town is not liable for those that choose to jump off the bridge and make unwise decisions.

Tammy moved to purchase a sign saying DANGER - no jumping off the bridge. This motion was confirmed by Tammy Farnham & Sasha Thayer of the Select Board.

David Strong recently sent a report regarding the current condition of the Rec Field, which emphasized the littering situation. George also said there are yard sale items, trash, and bottles. This highlights the need for a sign for Rec Field as a reminder to clean up after use. The sign should reflect “No littering”. Baylen mentioned that there is someone who brings food remainders to the Rec Field and Plainfield Park and Ride to feed the bears. The situation has been addressed several times, however, it still continues. Littering and lawn sale items are unacceptable at the Rec Field. Tammy mentioned that a sign will probably not make a difference for people who are participating in these behaviors, however it’s the responsibility of the town to remind individuals of their contribution to keeping the space maintained by carrying out their trash by depicting “no littering signs”.

Tammy moved to put up “No Littering” signs at the rec and park and ride. This motion was confirmed by Tammy Farnham & Sasha Thayer of the Select Board.

There is a Porta Potty and open access to picnic tables at the Rec Field that do not have sanitation protocols. Linda will call to have the Porta Potty to be removed from the Rec Field to limit the possible spread of COVID-19. Tammy suggested for the Town of Plainfield to rope off the seating area at the Rec Field. Sasha volunteered to make signs requesting to not use the tables during the current pandemic.

Meeting Minute Approval:

Sasha moved to approve the April 13th and May 11th meeting minutes. Tammy requested for Linda to verify the suggested changes were made. This motion was confirmed by Tammy Farnham & Sasha Thayer of the Select Board.

Appointments:

Michael Morlan – Recreation Committee – 1 year (end on March 31st)

Carla Siegle – auditor (ends up on Town Meeting Day)

Both committees will be up to full strength.

Sasha, moves to appoint Michael Morlan as a member of the Rec Committee and Carla Siegle as an auditor. This motion was confirmed by Tammy Farnham & Sasha Thayer of the Select Board.

The Road Commissioner who expressed interest is no longer interested. Tammy requested to put an advertisement out, as the appointment needs to be filled.

Public Meeting Requisition:

Will Cohan requested to have a public meeting in the Opera House. The use of the Opera House will require significant cleaning protocols. Prior to COVID-19 the town hired a person to clean, but he never started. The cleaning procedures will be pretty significant and detailed. The expectations from the state indicate that if someone uses the bathroom the bathroom will need to be cleaned in between use. This is impossible to manage, as such there will be no bathroom use until further guidelines are put into place.

Linda suggested having someone monitor at the door to ensure masks and adequate safety.

Tammy added the necessity for the person at the door to also screen for COVID-19 symptoms.

There is a need for further research and guidance of perimeters of meetings at the Opera House; this will be discussed further in a special meeting. It may make the most sense to have an online platform for meetings forthcoming.

Jesse Cooper further emphasized the need to use the Town Hall Opera House. The League of City and Towns requires the use a public space for a public hearing. The use of Zoom or other electronic video/media platforms are insufficient a public hearing. Jesse requested the use of the space in a really limited context. The development of procedures and planning would need to take place in a more elaborate discussion, perhaps in the context of a special meeting.

The special meeting will also include topic for discussing technology for select board meetings once in-person meetings resume. Tammy indicated that this might require further consultation.

Conservation Committee Requisition:

Sarah Albert (Chair of the Conservation Committee) requested to have the trails of the town forest brush hogged and to have stumps ground down on paths, which was last done in 2015. An estimate was provided from Bellavance Land works for \$125/hr for stump grinding (estimated 6hrs) and \$700 for brush hogging totaling \$1,450 - \$2,000, which would be paid out of the Town Woodland funds (including approximately \$5,800) which would allow for sufficient funding. Sarah approached other contractors for estimates who were unwilling due to the current trail condition.

Tammy moved to allow the conservation committee to use **up to** \$2,000 of the Town Woodland funds to do the described stump grinding and mowing of the forest. This motion was confirmed by Tammy Farnham & Sasha Thayer of the Select Board.

Roadside Mowing Bids:

Linda outlined the two bids for Highway Department for roadside mowing (2 passes for 40 miles.) The two bids included: BA Stevens \$8,500 and Donnell Dexter – \$7,400 (2-year contract for the same price 2020 & 2021)

Tammy moved to approve Donnell Dexter to complete the roadside mowing for \$7,400/year with a two-year contract. This motion was confirmed by Tammy Farnham & Sasha Thayer of the Select Board.

Hazard Mitigation Plan:

Tammy moved to approve hazard mitigation plan and local emergency management plan. This motion was confirmed by Tammy Farnham & Sasha Thayer of the Select Board.

Agenda Items for 5/28:

Status of pedestrian project
Loader purchase

Agenda Items for 6/8:

Community input for Brook St bridge replacement alternatives – online presentation possibility.
Overview of Financials
 Town Hall rental income
Update on health center erosion mediation project
RT 2 main st. construction project
Appointments (?)
Central VT Regional Planning Commission Ideas
Opening buildings/facilities

Public Comment:

Tammy reviewed the current situation at hand regarding Sasha's Select Board chair position. She stated that Sasha was voted in and the petition cannot overrule her position. The Select Board will work to address the concerns voiced by the town, but changes may not be seen overnight. Tammy thanked the community for their emails and suggestions, as we are all in this together.

Tammy moved to Adjourn at 8:42, this motion was confirmed by Tammy Farnham & Sasha Thayer of the Select Board.