

Town of Plainfield, Vermont
Select Board Meeting
July 13, 2020
Remote-Only Meeting Via Zoom

Electronic Participants: Sasha Thayer (Select Board Chair), Tammy Farnham (Select Board Member), Jim Volz (Select Board Member), Jeremy, Eric Blaisdell (Times Argus reporter), Sarah Albert (Community Member), Jeremy Matt (Zoom meeting coordinator/assistant), Linda Wells (Town Clerk & Treasurer) & Keith Swann (Community Member).

Approval of/changes to the Agenda

Agenda change – Linda will present the contract relating to loan for \$60,000 for the loader.

Public Comment:

Jeremy stated that the role as “meeting coordinators” might not be worth anyone’s time, as it seems like the select board members have a better sense of Zoom and how to utilize its various functionalities. Jim agreed to be the meeting facilitator for this SB meeting, as him and Sasha agreed that the select board members would be able to take on that role so that Jeremy and Bayln don’t need to dedicate their time. Jeremy has been extensively involved in CV fiber, and his responsibilities are ramping up.

Town Clerk/Treasurer’s Report – Linda Wells

-Elections/Absentee Ballots/Voting: Absentee ballots are coming in steadily, they are processing daily to keep up with the flow. Linda anticipates ballots slowing down soon, as absentee ballots are only valid up until August 10th. Appointments for early voting can be allowed per request. However, Linda indicated it is preferable to have absentee ballots sent in or come in on election day. On the absentee ballot community members can elect for primary and secondary election ballots. BCA meeting next Thursday at 5:00pm outside regarding upcoming election, re: new voters, COVID-19 voting, volunteers.

-Treasurers Report:

Linda reported earnings of \$54,447 at the end of the 2019 fiscal year – Linda indicated we are in “good shape”. The town received the municipal portion of tax adjustments in the amount of \$31,005. Approximately 75% of homestead tax bills have been paid, income taxes are due July 15th, property tax bills have been delayed because a tax rate has not been sent out, the deadline for property tax bills will be determine based on when they are sent out. The select board tax adjustment/rate meeting will be held on July 23rd at 7:30am.

Linda stated that bills totaling \$45,000 are due at the beginning of August, fund adjustments are not necessary at this point.

-Warrants:

Payroll June 26th

Accounts payable 24th

Accounts payable June 26th

Accounts payable June 29th
Payroll July 3rd
Accounts payable July 10th

Tammy moved to approve the above warrants, with a unanimous approval of all Select Board members.

-Complaint(s):

Some community members have called regarding the status of Kathleen Hayes and her role as town constable and animal control officer as she has been unresponsive from various calls. Jim states that if she isn't responsive then she should be effectively done. At this point Kathleen has followed up regarding the dog complaint. It is still important to seek an alternative person to fill Kathleen's role. Sasha indicated that she had sent a job description to Tammy and Jim for review and approval

Jim moved to approve the town constable job description that Sasha circulated, with a unanimous approval of all Select Board members. Sasha said that she would get the job description posted as soon as possible.

Linda reported a second complaint regarding two dead trees in town, the community member stated if the trees fall it could cause significant damage. However, it does not appear that the trees are in town right-of-way. Jim stated that it is not our responsibility, as it is private property, but it seems like we should notify the property owner of the complaint. Jim suggested for Linda to reach out to the property owner via a short letter and let them know that a community member reported a complaint regarding the dead trees on their property.

-Highway Equipment Note:

Loan for \$60,000 for 5-year term at 2.39%, 5 equal annual payments. 1st payment is due July 14th, 2021 for the Loader. The interest payments will total \$4,302. The approval and signatures are needed from the select board to verify the promissory note, Plainfield tax certificate highway borrowing, highway equipment resolution.

Tammy moved to approve the note that Linda sent regarding the purchase of the loader for \$60,000, with a unanimous approval of all Select Board members.

Tammy moved to approve the highway equipment resolution, with a unanimous approval of all Select Board members.

Jim moved to approve the Plainfield tax certificate highway borrowing, with a unanimous approval of Jim & Sasha.

Linda agreed to coordinate the signing of these documents (physically or electronically).

Meeting Minute Approval:

June 22nd

Jim moves to approve June 22nd minutes, with approval of Sasha & Jim as Tammy temporarily was disconnected from the Zoom meeting.

Sarah Albert requested to raise the issue regarding Gonyeau road (town forest access). Sasha instructed Sarah to follow up with this at a future meeting as this was not previously discussed with Mike. This topic can be added to the agenda for the July 27th Select Board Meeting.

Town Hall Opera House Lighting Grant Application:

Grant application is extended to July 27th – it would be helpful to have the content for a letter of support instead of an outlined concept. A draft of the letter of support will be up for approval on the 23rd, as well as an approval of the grant application. Keith stated that the town is the beneficiary of the grant, as the town is the owner of the building. The grant is for a 50/50 match. Since it's a safety issue, ¼ is hoped to come from the town opera repair fund, and ¼ might be able to be fundraised by the Friends of the Opera House. There are 2-3 lights that need to be replaced, estimated value will be \$9,600 – as such \$2,400 would expected from the town.

Intersection Update:

Tammy met with Erin & Claire Rock (Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission) in reference to putting together content to provide to community members regarding the intersection. There are two options and town input is important to establish what they want. Meeting settings should be varied to ensure participation from a several community members. Each board member would hopefully be willing to commit to a few meetings to divide and conquer. Meetings should be held in a 2-3-week time period with great variety for attendance (various times, various settings: rec-field, town hall, zoom). Sasha and Jim requested for Tammy to put together a proposed schedule (time/dates) and forums, and for each SB member to commit to 1-2 meetings. After feedback is received, a survey can be sent out to each resident to assume their decision – robust or simple design by mid-September. The hope is to start these meetings at the end of August so that a final decision by the SB can be decided at the beginning of October. Sasha volunteered to do COVID-19 screening at the Town Hall for the meeting held there. Meetings shall be done via reservation (email or phone #).

Jim moved to allow Tammy to create a schedule for these intersection meetings to occur, with a unanimous approval of all Select Board members.

Jim moved for Tammy to continue to be the contact for the CVRPC regarding the intersection project, with a unanimous approval of all Select Board members.

Update on Painting the Concrete Blocks at the Rec-field:

Sasha and George Cushing discussed painting each block a different color at the recfield to cover up the graffiti currently displayed on the blocks. Travis Hodgkin's previously agreed to be give the town left over paint. Sasha thinks various colors would be pretty, whereas Tammy urged to paint them all the same. Sasha stated that she wasn't willing to paint them all the same color – she then suggested a rainbow pattern and/or a proposal with Photoshop. Jim agreed with Tammy, 24 different colors would look tacky. Sasha intends to send out some visuals before the next meeting for further discussion.

Road Commissioner:

No job description at this point. Further research will need to be done to develop a description. Sasha urged board members to email suggestions if they come across anything valuable and/or targeted toward a universal road commissioner role.

Required Masks Worn by Town Employees and Public Officials:

Jim said that he believes it's fine to require masks worn by town employees and public officials. Vermont Emergency Management is offering materials and posters to enforce masks – Sasha is going to request 8 posters.

Jim moved that elected and appointed officials and town employees follow the state guidelines for social distancing and mask wearing when at work. This motion was declined by Sasha and Tammy and was revised to reflect the following motion:

Tammy moved that elected and appointed officials and town employees wear a mask when dealing with the public. with a unanimous approval of all Select Board members.

Tammy pointed out that the town road crew isn't wearing masks when interacting with one another, nor are Carol and Linda. Jim will look into the current COVID-19 state guidelines and compliance.

Charge for Times Argus for Producing Public Records Response:

Jim is not in favor for the charge, Sasha agreed that producing public records is time consuming, but appropriate for various scenarios. Tammy stated that she is fine with that decision; however, she described a scenario where the town charges attorneys when public information is requested. In this instance charging does not seem appropriate. This decision is in no way precedence in the future.

Meeting Adjournment – 9pm

Jim moved to adjourn, with a unanimous approval of all Select Board members.

Agenda Items:

Thursday July 23, 2020 @ 7:30am

Tax Adjustment/Rates

Town Hall Opera House Lighting Grant Application

Required Masks Worn by Town Employees and Public Officials – employee check in

Monday July 27, 2020

Town Forest Access Road

Intersection Updates

Cement blocks at Rec-Field

Road Commissioner Job Description Draft approval