

**Town of Plainfield, Vermont**  
**Special Select Board Meeting**  
**July 23, 2020**  
**Remote-Only Meeting Via Zoom**

**Electronic Participants:** Sasha Thayer (Select Board Chair), Tammy Farnham (Select Board Member), Jim Volz (Select Board Member), Linda (Town Clerk Treasurer), Keith Swann (Community Member)

Special Select Board Meeting was called to order at 7:43am.

**Approval of/changes to the Agenda:**

Agenda approved.

**Public Comment:**

No public comment.

**Treasurers Report:**

All select board members confirmed receipt of the draft tax rate proposal. Two scenarios were outlined; current tax revenue is currently good and Linda reported earnings of \$54,446.76 last fiscal year. In the first tax calculation scenario Linda took \$50,000 off concluding with a tax rate of .7826 which is less than last year's tax rate. In the second tax calculation scenario, the only difference is \$20,000 was taken off the remaining funds at the end of the year and the tax rate was calculated to be .7960.

Delinquent tax in 2019 totaled \$45,349 (municipal & school taxes), with the inclusion of prior years' delinquency, the total is \$72,820 at end of June. George talked about doing a tax sale but Linda stated this might not be appropriate right now given the pandemic. We did budget \$25,000 to offset the delinquent taxes. Sasha stated that George felt things are coming in steady given the current circumstances – this will be further discussed at a regular board meeting.

Linda suggested to go with .7826 to keep the tax rate level to help the tax payers. School tax rate is also down this year (see below).

School last year: 1.8267 for residential, 1.7859 non-residential

School this year: 1.8008 for residential, 1.7826 non-residential

Tammy noted that the two options have an approximate difference of \$16,000 in usage of the reserves and it makes sense to keep tax rates as low as possible because it's going to be a difficult year for residents.

Tammy moved to approve Option 1 with the calculation of the amount raised as \$908,881.12 with a tax rate of .7826, with a unanimous approval of all Select Board members.

Sasha states that this tax rate approval requires authorization to use \$50,000 of the surplus funds to offset the tax rate.

Jim moved to allocate \$50,000 of the surplus to offset the tax rate, with a unanimous approval of all Select Board members.

**Town Hall Opera House Grant Application:**

Sasha indicated that Keith is listed as the “authorizing officer”, however it may need to be a Select Board member as the town is essentially applying for the grant. Linda added that the money is going to go through the office and she urged a Select Board member to be on the application.

Keith explained the grant as the state paying 50% of the cost for the new fixtures, and the Friends of the Opera House would fundraise 25% and 25% would come out of the annual reserve/building maintenance fund. Tammy noted that the town needs to be able to come up with the full value, as we are the ones agreeing to the grant.

Linda stated that the budget is for required maintenance, not for above and beyond. Keith explained that one of the current lights is a safety concern (hung by ropes), and there is a concern with a second light as well that is hung up on the balcony, the third light within the request could be dropped if needed. Sasha stated that the town hall reserve fund has \$17,026.55 (last town report). Tammy stated that the reserve fund is for *required* maintenance, not for optional fixture/esthetics. Tammy pointed out that the situation outlined sounds like something was added, established it was unsafe and is now requesting for it to be fixed; which seems as though it is not transparent to the public.

The proposed 2021 budget for the Town Opera House \$4,500 for maintenance and repairs. Linda advised that taking it out of the budget would be preferable rather than taking it out of reserve.

The town will need to pay the expected ½ (expected \$4,500 for the lighting) if the grant if the funds are not raised. Jim inquired with Keith about what the fundraising plan is – and Keith stated that he will reach out to the performers that use the space, as well as community outreach.

Linda inquired about the life of the grant, Keith stated that he requested a project start date of October 1<sup>st</sup> and completion by end of year. Tammy noted that she believed seeing almost a year span for the project completion, Keith said that he would look into extending the deadline.

Jim moved to approve submitting the grant with the understanding that the matching amount will come out of the maintenance and repair budget, which will be half of the match, with The Friends of the Opera House raising the other half of the amount, with a unanimous approval of all Select Board members.

The grant contact is currently represented by Keith – the authorizing official should be a Select Board member to ensure email correspondence is received and addressed as necessary. Sasha stated that she is willing to be the authorizing official.

Jim moves to appoint Sasha to be the authorized person for the purposes of this grant, with a unanimous approval of all Select Board members.

**Upcoming Agenda Items:**

Town Hall modification expectations to ensure approval by the Select Board

**Adjournment:**

Jim moved to adjourn at 8:31am, with a unanimous approval of all Select Board members.