

Town of Plainfield, Vermont
Select Board Meeting
August 24, 2020 Remote-Only Meeting Via Zoom
Approved Minutes

Electronic Participants: Tammy Farnham (Select Board member), Sasha Thayer (Select Board Chair), Jim Volz (Select Board Member), Betsy Zeigler (Community Member/ Central Vermont Solid Waste Planning District Representative), Eric Blaisdale (Times Argus Reporter), Jessie Cooper (Community Member) and Linda Wells (Town Clerk/Treasurer), Alice Merrill (Community Member), Adam Zylka (University of Vermont Spatial Analysis Lab), & Cathleen Gent (CV Solid Waste Management District)

Meeting was called to order at 7:00pm on August 24th, 2020.

Approval of/changes to the Agenda:

Agenda approved, no changes.

Public Announcement:

Jim mentioned that the first community conversation regarding the Route 2 intersection project went well and received a lot of good community feedback. There are more meetings to come and the select board encourages community participation and involvement.

Town Clerk & Treasurer Report (Linda Wells):

Tax bills were mailed on August 13th

First municipal tax payment is due on September 16th by 4pm – mail or drop off.

Elections: Primary went well.

The general election closes on November 3rd at 7pm.

Absentee ballots will be mailed mid-September. Linda encourages residents to vote as soon as possible. You can also deliver your ballot to the town clerk's office.

A few adjustments will be made to the drop box to ensure security.

You can request an absentee ballot online at OLVR@vermont.gov or request a ballot from the town clerk's office. Linda will remind people on Front Porch Forum & Facebook.

All ballots must be received by November 3rd at 7pm, mailing on November 3rd will not be sufficient as post-mark date does not count.

Approval of Minutes:

July 27th – approval moved to next meeting.

August 4th – approval moved to next meeting

Warrants:

Payroll – August 14th

Payroll – August 21st

Accounts Payable – August 20th

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

Email Scam:

Linda received an email from what appeared to be from Sasha requesting a check sent to the vendor. In the second email, they requested a certified check sent to a vendor in Florida. Linda looked into it found that it was fraudulent and reported it to the attorney general's office.

Update on the Catch Basin Repair:

The catch basin was repaired on August 11th by Darrell Mathews Excavation, Linda indicated that they were able to get the job done in 1 day.

Guardrail Update:

The guardrail was installed on Barre Hill and replaced on Lower Road by F.R Lafayette. The lower road installation was okayed by Michael, and he did not realize that it was not approved by the select board. Linda and the select board agreed that they can find money in the budget to make it work ~ approximately \$700.

Digitize Town Land Records Grant:

FEMA COVID-19 relief to aid the digitization of town land records. Linda is going to apply for funds once the bids are received. September 3rd grant is due.

Sasha participated in a webinar regarding the digitization that it could go back as far as 40 years. This grant requires 5 years to be digitized. Updates can be modified again in December for the grant.

LGER grant:

COVID-19 expense reimbursement, deadline is September 4th, back-up documentation due in December. Expenses equate to about \$1,700. Linda will submit the application and work on the totals afterward. Sasha indicated the cost of Zoom & sick time for quarantining should also be included in the expenses.

Additional Support for Town Clerk/Treasurers Office

Sasha suggested that it might be time to look into providing additional support (part-time) for the town clerk's office. COVID-19 is definitely playing a part in it, but everything seems like it's snowballing. Carol & Linda are the only two people in the office right now. Tammy mentioned re-evaluating some of the tasks that Linda has taken on since Mike has been out. Mike hopes to be back at the beginning of September. This will be re-evaluated at the next select board meeting.

Pedestrian Bridge Update:

Andrea clarified that a clause could be added to make it so that busses, trailer trucks and emergency responders could use the bridge. The current scope of the bridge does not clarify. Based on the special meeting with community members and their concerns, the general consensus was that the community wanted final numbers from the newest bid (town cost of \$4,500) and to bring the numbers to the voters. Tammy stated that she believes that we should do what members of the community wanted.

Tammy moved to proceed with Dufresne with the additional cost of \$4,500 for putting the pedestrian bridge back out to bid, with a unanimous approval of all Select Board members.

Sasha recapped that this is a cost that the town is incurring at 100%, as the engineering cost grant has been exhausted. The intent is to receive new bids and bring the numbers to the voters to establish whether to proceed or halt the project.

Stray Animal Contract:

Tammy moved to move the Stray Animal Contract up in the agenda, with a unanimous approval of all Select Board members.

Tammy mentioned that in the last meeting Linda stated that the Human Society could not do the “limit dollar amount”, as the Humane Society cannot keep track of it. The first step from the Humane Society is to seek payment from the pet owner, but the contract requires the town to agree to pay \$100/canine, \$60/feline after 30 days of receiving an invoice in the event the invoice is unpaid by the owner.

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

Jim moved for Sasha to be authorized to sign the contract, with a unanimous approval of all Select Board members.

Tammy enquired about an update on some dog issues that were brought forth by a community member. Kate and Sasha concluded that there are two dogs that prompted the concern, and it seems as though the concern has lessened.

The town is still looking for a town constable and animal control officer.

Plainfield Road Commissioner:

Tammy suggested looking at a job description for Mike Nolan (Road Foreman) and build upon that to define the Road Commissioners role. Sasha suggested for the Road Commissioner’s role to include identifying resources (grants, funding). Tammy signified that when Allan Farnham was the Road Commissioner, that he was also the Foreman, so it seems as though Mike’s job description would’ve been revised since he is solely the Foreman. Sasha stated that she would look into this and reconvene on the topic in the next meeting.

Emerald Ash Borer Research/Data Collection:

Adam Zylka from talked about the University of Vermont’s progress in researching the emerald ash borer and the health of the ash trees in Vermont. Adam inquired about the allowance of some data collection in Plainfield. Joanne had previously done some data collection along the road right-of-way. Sasha mentioned that the data might be helpful to determine where to focus the efforts of the town to get rid of the trees that are in poor health. Tammy enquired about the use of a drone for this research and how to reassure community members that their privacy is not being violated, Adam ensured the privacy of community members. Tammy requested a write-up of the project and description of data collection from Adam to distribute to community members on social media outlets in effort to proactively disclose the project.

Jim moved to approve the University of Vermont spatial analysis lab to do follow-up filming relating to the emerald ash borer, with a unanimous approval of all Select Board members.

Household Hazardous Waste (HHW):

Betsy Ziegler is Plainfield’s representative on Central Vermont Solid Waste Planning District Board.

Cathleen Gent from the CV Solid Waste Management District educated listeners on Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) collections with the intent to help keep hazardous waste products

(pesticides, cleaning materials, paint, solvents, etc.) outside of landfills. The district has been setting aside funds and received a grant in the amount of \$500,000 (in recognition for having a year-round hazardous waste facility). The anticipated cost of the facility is approximately 1.2 million dollars. The Location desire is primarily Montpelier, Barre, Berlin (possibly East Montpelier), and it is a 19-member municipality, so a central location is favorable. The HHW facility is intended to open in the spring of 2022. Cathleen indicated that there is nothing being asked of the select board, it is primarily just to bring select board up to speed and allow time for questions and concerns. Tammy, Jim and Sasha all recognized their support for HHW. Cathleen signified that there is a grant that Plainfield is eligible to apply for, to obtain compost bins for public use.

Executive Meeting:

An executive meeting will be held on Thursday August 27th at 7:30am.

Tammy indicated that she would like Linda to join.

Within this meeting Zoom (sharing screens, navigating the PowerPoint material, etc.) will be discussed for the Route 2 intersection conversations with community members.

September 14th:

Route 2 Intersection Project – Next steps: survey (?) & final decision

July 27th & August 4th meeting minute approval

Additional Support for Town Clerk/Treasures Office

Plainfield Road Commissioner Job Description

First Meeting in October:

Revisit Town Hall Opera House Contract

Adjournment:

Tammy moved to adjourn at 8:44pm, with a unanimous approval of all Select Board members.