

**Town of Plainfield, Vermont**  
**Special Select Board Meeting & Budget Meeting**  
**December 10, 2020**  
**Remote-Only Meeting Via Zoom**  
**Approved Minutes**

**Electronic Participants:** Tammy Farnham (select board member), Jim Volz (select board member), Sasha Thayer (select board member - chair), Liz Nell (Plainfield Co-op board), Linda Wells (Town Clerk and Treasurer), Peter Youngbaer (Plainfield Co-op board/manager), Shana Siegel (Plainfield Co-op board), Mike Nolan (road foreman).

**Approval of/changes to agenda:**

***Jim requested to add an update on the conversations with the Web Administrator*** – Jim wanted to clarify the discussion from the December 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting and indicating a mistake, however that was not the case, there was an email from Linda indicating the land records would be available on December 17<sup>th</sup>. There were two sources from Linda, which is where the mistake originated, it was not on behalf of Kathy the current Web Administrator.

***Tammy requested to add Pedestrian Bridge Budget update*** – Tammy heard back from Ross and Andrea regarding the doing the Pedestrian Bridge project in phases. Those phases and the budget are near completion. Tammy wanted to get the select board’s approval to working with Alice to get the project out to bid for 12/18 and provide a 4-week bid period. Sasha indicated that there are sometimes a “bidders meeting” to get some of their questions flushed out to have a better understanding of the project and the specifics before placing their final bid, Tammy said that she would inquire with Ross & Andrea. The hope is to have the bids back by town meeting to put actual figures out to the voters.

**Public Comment:**

No public comment.

**Health Insurance Updates:**

Linda suggested to stay with BCBS with the same plan. The increase is 11%, employees are currently paying 7% but it will be increased to 10%, which will increase the towns portion by 7%. The current plan is CDHP Gold, which is under the Vermont Select Plans. Linda iterated that the town is familiar with the BCBS plan, and she suggested starting looking into plans sooner in the year rather than mid-December to encourage input from the employees. Linda requested for the town to contribute 60% of the deductible, employees 40%, this year the deductible is \$2,550 (last year the deductible was \$3,250). Jim and Sasha stated that they are okay with proceeding with the BCBS plan. Sasha reminded that there are unattributed costs to changing plans. Tammy restated that it makes sense to look into other health insurance options for next year.

Jim moved to continue with the BCBS plan with the 60%/40% deductible split and employee contribution increased to 10%, with a unanimous approval of the select board.

**Salary Increases:**

Linda indicated last year there was a 3% increase, this year it would just be the cost of living. Linda tried logging into the website to check the cost of living increase, this will be further discussed at the next meeting.

#### **Town 2021-2022 Budget Updates:**

Linda iterated there were not a lot of changes that they can do in the reserve funds. Linda mentioned that there were a few line items that could be cut a little bit and work on level funding the entire town budget. Linda mentioned that the highway fund might not be able to level funded. Linda mentioned that both budgets are ready for review, she will email them out today.

Linda mentioned that the Town of Plainfield received \$25,385.22 in funds from the State of Vermont supplemental highway funds due to COVID-19.

#### **Plainfield Town Lawsuit:**

A lawsuit was filed by Connecticut Attorneys Title Insurance Corporation, Plainfield and the town clerk is one of nine towns that under the lawsuit for closing their doors at the beginning of COVID-19. The provisions of the letter will be \$200/hour. A hearing is scheduled for 12/18. Jim would like to clarify to the attorney that the they need to represent Carol in the first instance and if Linda is substituted for Carol that they need to extend representation to her.

Tammy moved to hire Stitzle Page & Fletcher with the modification to include representation for Linda in addition to Carol, with a unanimous approval of the select board.

#### **Other Business:**

Sasha received an email from David Strong regarding refinishing the floors in the Town Hall Opera House and previously this funding has come from the Town Hall reserve fund (maintenance fund). Linda indicated that there is \$17,000 in that fund, which would be enough to cover that.

David had recommended a particular company with a quote of just over \$3,000, and Sasha wondered about putting the project out to bid. Tammy mentioned that Marshfield puts those projects up on their website so that the community knows what's going on and what is up for bid. Linda added that those bids could also be put onto FPF & Plainfield People. Sasha mentioned that a proposal would need to be outlined. Tammy requested to add this item to the agenda for December 14<sup>th</sup>.

#### **Mutual Aid with Marshfield & Other Towns:**

Sasha informed Mike and the rest of the select board members of the conversation held with Marshfield and several other towns at the Cabot town garage. Chris Martin is looking to see if there are any insurance concerns regarding the use of a mutual aid. In the instance of another town needing aid Jim suggested that the road crews work together to develop a plan, and likewise if Plainfield needed assistance. The intent of the aid is not intended to be burdensome, Mike expressed concern for helping out other towns where there might be significant travel involved. The select board agreed that the mutual aid makes a lot of sense.

#### **Highway Department Budget:**

Mike mentioned that he was struggling to stay in line with the previous year's budget for tires and that the town is over budget on guardrails. The select board requested for Mike to present his budget on 10/16.

**Plainfield Co-op USDA RBDG grant application & Town participation:**

With the upcoming intersection project, the Co-op has considered a lot of various aspects of remaining in their current building, or moving their location (new construction or standing building) and are looking to complete a feasibility study (estimated to be \$8,000). The Co-op is looking for a sponsor for a grant through the USDA RBDG to pay for their feasibility study. The Co-op thought that the town of Plainfield might consider becoming a sponsor for a mutual benefit. The regional planning commission might be able to aid in the administrative work to support the town of Plainfield and the Co-op. Tammy requested further information in reference to the grant regarding expectations, Shana responded that the grant is primarily a planning grant. Tammy mentioned that the sponsorship and responsibility of the town is very unclear. The letter of intent is needed for tomorrow (12/11), the application has not yet been released. Peter iterated that this is preliminary, and they are just looking for a letter of intent. Shana said that if the town is not comfortable the Regional Planning Commission agreed to doing the sponsorship and writing the letter of intent. Sasha mentioned that the Regional Planning Commission has a lot of knowledge regarding these kinds of grants. Tammy inquired about writing the letter of intent, and having the opportunity to back out after looking at the application - Shana said that would prohibit the Co-op from receiving the grant. Shana indicated that the grant is done by a point system; experience applicants (Regional Planning Commission), by in (Co-op & the Town of Plainfield both as beneficiaries), and a money match. Tammy reminded that this is just an intent, the town does not need to proceed with the application. Sasha said that she would follow-up with Bonnie and Shana to discuss the details of the intent letter further. Tammy iterated that the focus remains on the Co-op for this grant.

Jim moved to support the USDA RBDG letter of intent and that the Regional Planning Commission does the planning to the grant, with a unanimous approval of the select board.

**Contracts:**

Animal Control – Sasha reached out Marshfield & East Montpelier to see if we could coordinate with another town animal control services.

Town Constable - Sasha suggested to renew the town constable advertisements. Sasha has reached out to Kate Hayes to return the laptop provided by the town.

Web Administrator – Sasha made some changes to the web administrator role and will circulate to the other select board members and revisit on 12/14.

Tammy expressed concern for the scheduled budget meetings having agenda items unrelated to the budget. This is the second meeting that has been completed without addressing the budget, aside from employee health insurance.

Sasha reminded that the Conservation Committee agreed to lessen their reserve fund in order to help the budget for last fiscal year, but hoped that it would be increased again in the future

Tammy did not want to make that decision yet, as she wants to be fair to them as they were nice enough to agree to that initially. Jim inquired about the ultimate goal, Tammy expressed that the

objective is to level fund next fiscal year. If the budget for some areas increases, then the budget in other areas needs to decrease to create a balance.

Sasha will request an update of the reserve funds from Linda for each area to look those over and see where cuts can be made.

**Agenda Items:**

Web Administrator Job Description

Highway Department Budget

Salary Increase Amount

Town Hall Opera House Floor Refinishing

Social Concerns – 14<sup>th</sup>

Tammy moved to adjourn at 7:02pm, with a unanimous approval of the select board.