

**Town of Plainfield, Vermont**  
**Special Select Board Meeting & Budget Meeting**  
**December 16, 2020**  
**Remote-Only Meeting Via Zoom**  
**Approved Minutes**

**Electronic Participants:** Tammy Farnham, Vim Volz, and Sasha Thayer (chair and Emergency Management Director), Linda Wells (Town Clerk and resident), Sarah Albert (Conservation Commission chair and resident), Bob Atchinson (Energy Coordinator and resident), Will Colgan (Planning Commission and resident), Alice Merrill (grant writer and resident), Michael Moran (Recreation Committee member and resident), Keith Swann (Friends of the Town Hall-Opera House president and resident), David Strong (member Friends of the Town Hall-Opera House board member and resident), and Janice Walrafen (Development Review Board chair and resident); also present was Laura Ceraso (resident).

The meeting started at 4:04 pm

**Approval of/changes to agenda:**

Tammy requested to add advertising the pedestrian bridge project.

**Announcements:**

Sasha made a COVID-19 update.

**Public Comment:**

No public comment.

**Town Hall Opera House Contract with the Friends of the Opera House**

Keith sent a proposed contract for July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2020 through December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2020, and a copy of the 2021-2022 budget proposal to the select board. The contract that Keith sent outlined the services have been provided to the town up until December 31<sup>st</sup>. Tammy reminded that she previously requested an outlined contract for the last 6-months to accurately reflect the services that the Friends of the Opera House actually provided so that the Town can compensate accordingly. David added that \$1,000,000 liability insurance is required for doing business with the town, so that expense is relevant – however, it is not something that needs to be directly reimbursed. David explained that the Friends of the Opera House have been keeping their costs very low by using volunteers. Tammy explained that it appears the Friends of the Opera House are only providing 1/3 of the services previously provided. David exclaimed that he would rather have the select board look at putting a price tag on the services outlined in the contract. Jim requested to have a list of costs that the Friends of the Opera House have incurred. David exclaimed that the Friends of the Opera House would like to request \$1,500 for the 6-month period (1/2 of the previous annual contract). The Friends of the Opera House explained that their expenses for the 6-month period totaled \$2,000

Jim moved to pay the Friends of the Opera House \$1,500 for the 6-month contract, Sasha and Jim voted in favor, Tammy voted against.

Tammy explained that she feels like the town would be paying for services that were not fully rendered. Tammy asked why the Town of Plainfield is not signing the originally contract if they Sasha & Jim are okay with paying the full amount? Keith said that it would be helpful to do a 6-month contract due to COVID-19.

**FY 2021-2022 Town Hall/Opera House Budget:**

Sasha indicated that there is a \$1,000 increase reflected on the proposed budget. Keith outlined the \$1,000 increase is associated with management fees and paying an event coordinator. David explained that there is no correlation with management fees and money rendered, but there is still a non-monetary benefit. Sasha expressed that she does not believe the Town Hall/Opera House is a business. David explained that the revolving loan fund could be removed by paying out of the reserved fund with no cost to tax-payers, which would help to lessen the overall budget, and the operating costs would remain the same. Linda suggested not taking the revolving loan payment from the reserve fund. The budget proposal totals \$18,200.

Jim moved to adopt the budget.

Tammy added that she is concerned that expenses continue to go up, but revenue is staying the same. She explained that the revenue is already down for 2020-2021 due to COVID-19. Linda added that there are a lot of uncertainties with COVID-19 for the upcoming fiscal year.

Jim withdrew his motion and requested to take this up further on January 5<sup>th</sup>.

**Conservation Commission Budget:**

Sarah explained the current spending's total \$190.51 out of the \$375 budget, although according to Linda the spending's reflect \$1,100+ (\$919.67 should've come out of the Town Woodland Reserve Fund). Tammy requested to know the typical expenditures for the budget, Sarah outlined expenditures as memberships, workshops/training, printing costs, wooden stakes, flagging tape, etc. Sarah indicated that dog poop bags continue to get billed to the conservation commission, although she is unaware of who is ordering those and allocating them to the conservation commission. Sarah suggested to level-fund the conservation commission budget and increase the conservation fund to \$2,500 (previously \$1,500).

Tammy suggested to table this conversation and look at the budgets all together to establish what needs to be done to level fund/balance the entire 2021-2022 budget, Jim agreed. Sasha requested to entertain budget's that are lesser, and decide on a case-to-case basis.

**Select Board Budget:**

The cost of living has gone up 1.1%, so 1% would be the salary increase for employees. Linda agreed to send the monetary increase for employees to the select board. Sasha suggested to put more money into the budget to help support Linda & Carol in the Town Clerks Office. Linda said that support would be extremely helpful, but she isn't sure in what capacity, and it would likely need to be on an on-call basis. Linda suggested to bump the administrative assistant budget to \$3,500 (adding an additional \$1,000). The maintenance contract position still needs to be posted, but Linda explained that last year the expenditure was about \$900 less than budgeted. Tammy clarified that the line item was labor only, it did not include maintenance materials.

Sasha mentioned that the contract indicates less than 20 hours per month. Linda suggested to change the line item to \$2,750, the select board agreed that makes sense.

**Recreation Committee Budget:**

Michael enlightened the select board on a few projects in the pipeline for the recreation area. The 2020-2021 budget is \$3,200, Michael explained that he is not able to speak on behalf of the budget. Tammy suggested dropping the budget to \$3,000 with consideration to the unmet expenditures on mowing. The budget will be revisited on January 5<sup>th</sup> to be finalized.

**Energy Conservation Budget:**

Bob mentioned the total budget for 2020-2021 is \$510, the proposed budget for 2021-2022 is \$400. Bob explained that the energy conservation committee got involved with “Button Up” to help with heating costs and energy saving. Bob said that due to COVID-19 he is only doing thermo-imaging outside, whereas previously they were doing energy audits. Tammy inquired with Bob about how conferences/trainings are benefitting the community. Tammy suggested making resources available to the community via social media or the Plainfield website. The budget will be revisited on January 5<sup>th</sup> to be finalized.

**Planning Commission Budget:**

Will started by sharing that he cut the Planning Commission budget to less than half! He explained that all the line items were cut in half except for training which remained at \$150, and mapping which was cut from \$800 to \$0. Various other line items were discussed to make sure everything matched, i.e.: advertising costs, miscellaneous expenses, etc. The budget will be revisited on January 5<sup>th</sup> to be finalized.

**Emergency Management Budget:**

Sasha is proposing to cut the budget in half (\$750 or \$500) for the next fiscal year. Sasha indicated that there are reserves set aside in the instance of an emergency. Tammy said that if funds were not spent from the \$1,500 last year than a budget of \$500 makes more sense, Jim and Sasha agreed.

**Hazard Mitigation:**

Sasha said that Hazard Mitigation did not spend anything in 2019-2020, and suggested to cut in half. Tammy said \$100, Jim & Sasha agreed.

**Law Enforcement:**

Tammy requested to keep the budget the same (\$10,000), Jim & Sasha agreed.

**Pedestrian Bridge Project Bid Advertisement:**

The advertisement indicates for bids to be dropped off by January 22<sup>nd</sup> at 4pm. The pre-bid meeting is scheduled for January 7<sup>th</sup> at 11am via Zoom. A link will be set up and posted on the Plainfield website. Tammy will finalize the advertisement and send to Linda for posting in the paper on Friday (if possible). The required bid period is 3-weeks, but the bid period will actually be 5-weeks with consideration to the holidays. Sasha requested for Linda to look into what was posted last January and let the select board know.

### **Development Review Board Budget:**

Janice requested for all line items to remain the same except for training which they would be willing to decrease to \$100. In previous years, they have cut their budget significantly so they felt there was not a lot of room to cut the budget more than \$100. Tammy thanked Janice as they don't have a very big budget so cutting it by \$100 is a huge help, Jim & Sasha agreed.

### **Town of Plainfield Job Postings:**

Maintenance Position/Contract: Sasha developed a contract for the maintenance position for the Town of Plainfield. Sasha specified that David was paid \$20/hour, but hours varied over the course of the year. The contract specifies that the position is up to 20 hours per month. The wage is negotiable, up to \$20/hour; but the hourly wage will be left out of the contract to encourage interested parties to make a proposal. Tammy inquired about making the position contracted, as the person would need to have liability insurance which makes the position unappealing. Sasha suggested to advertise the position to obtain interest as David is ending his role effective January 1, 2021. Sasha intends to put the advertisement/description out on social media (a free service), if there is no interest than the town could pursue paying for advertisements.

The constable advertisement/description (initially posted in July) will be reposted.

Web Administrator role has been outlined as a support person and provide maintenance (approximately 5 hours a week). Tammy & Jim urged to develop the description without the current issues with the web administrator in mind and eliminate some of the language. Sasha suggested for committees to do their own posting and the web administrator be more of a support position. Tammy & Jim suggested various edits, Sasha stated that she would revise and email the amended description.

Tammy moved to adjourn at 7:23pm, with a unanimous approval of the select board.

### **Upcoming Meetings & Agenda Items:**

#### **January 5, 2021 Special Select Board Meeting/Budget Meeting 5:30pm-8:30:**

Finalize Budgets:     Fire & Rescue Department  
                              Highway Department  
                              Town Hall/Opera House  
                              Other Committees discussed on 12/16

#### **January 7, 2021 Special Select Board Meeting/Budget Meeting 9am-11am:**

Finalize and approve the budget for town meeting

#### **January 11, 2021 Select Board Meeting**

Set dates and times for Town Meeting informational meetings via Zoom  
Route 2-Main Street Intersection Remediation project  
Pedestrian Bridge Project  
Brook Road Bridge Project  
Refinishing the Town Hall-Opera House Floors