

Town of Plainfield, Vermont
Town Meeting Minutes

March 3, 2020

Town Moderator Charles Barasch called the meeting to order at 10:03am.

Moderator Barasch stated that the polls for casting Australian ballots were open and will remain so until 7:00pm. Town Clerk/Treasurer Linda Wells noted that there were various tables set up around the room and downstairs to sell items to fundraise for various entities and/or provide information to the community, including the Cutler Memorial Library, the Town Hall Opera House, the Conservation Commission, the Energy Committee, Fire and Rescue, the Hazard Mitigation Committee, and the Historical Society. Select Board Chair Alexandra Thayer explained that a board has been set up for people to post notes of appreciation to fellow community members.

Moderator Barasch recognized Glenda Bissex, who wanted to acknowledge that Plainfield Town Meeting participants were meeting today on Abenaki land.

Moderator Barasch noted that Robert's Rules of Order comprise the basic rules of order for this meeting except where Vermont law takes precedence, and cited other general rules to which the meeting would adhere. After asking for a show of hands from those present who are not registered voters, Moderator Barasch stated that unregistered voters may not vote, and unless there was a suspension of the rules, may not speak on articles in the warning. Moderator Barasch read aloud an 11th-century Chinese poem by Su Tung P'O entitled *A Painting By Wang The Clerk Of Yen Ling*.

Hearing no objections from the floor, Moderator Barasch invited Vermont State Representative Janet Ancel to address Town Meeting. Ancel began by introducing Vermont State Senator Andrew Perchlik and Vermont State Senate President Pro-Tem Timothy Ashe, who were present to observe the proceedings. Ancel reported on several issues that the House of Representatives is currently working on, including the Global Warming Solutions Act; the minimum wage bill; the Act 250 rewrite; and the Rent Rebate program. Alex Forbes thanked Ancel for all her precise and focused energy at the state level, to which meeting participants responded with applause. Ancel responded to questions from Jamie Spector regarding paid family leave; from Mary Niebling regarding the cannabis bill; from Steven Farnham regarding the minimum wage; from Bram Towbin regarding a local tax share on cannabis sales; from Owen Bradley, who gently noted that the term "black market" refers to slavery; from Amos Meacham regarding revenue projections from the sale of cannabis; and Tom Kelly regarding the tone of debate in the State Legislature.

Moderator Barasch began consideration of the items on the Warning.

ARTICLE 2: To hear reports of Town Officers and act on same.

- **AUDITORS CERTIFICATE:** **Scott Stewart made a motion to accept the Auditors Certificate. Tim Phillips seconded the motion.** There was no discussion. **The Auditors Certificate was accepted.**
- **TOWN CLERK'S REPORT:** **John Monahan made a motion to accept the Town Clerk's Report. Dan Marcus seconded the motion.** There was no discussion. **The Town Clerk's Report was accepted.**
- **TOWN TREASURER'S REPORT:** **Scott Stewart made a motion to accept the Town Treasurer's Report. Michelle Clark seconded the motion.** There was no discussion. **The Town Treasurer's Report was accepted.**
- **COLLECTOR OF DELINQUENT TAXES REPORT:** **Tim Phillips made a motion to accept the Collector of Delinquent Taxes Report. Scott Stewart seconded the motion.** Bram Towbin thanked George Cushing for

doing a good job as delinquent tax collector. **The Collector of Delinquent Taxes Report was accepted.**

- **ZONING ADMINISTRATOR REPORT: Tim Phillips made a motion to accept the Zoning Administrator Report. Janice Walrafen seconded the motion.** There was no discussion. **The Zoning Administrator Report was accepted.**
- **PLANNING COMMISSION REPORT: Scott Stewart made a motion to accept the Planning Commission Report. Tim Phillips seconded the motion.** Planning Commission member Bram Towbin reported that a draft of the Town Plan is available on the Town's website and that the Planning Commission is looking for feedback on it. In response to a question from Janice Walrafen regarding whether dates for public hearings on the draft have been scheduled, Towbin responded that they will likely begin in late April 2020 and the public will be notified of the exact dates. **The Planning Commission Report was accepted.**
- **LISTERS REPORT: Tim Phillips made a motion to accept the Listers Report. Scott Stewart seconded the motion.** There was no discussion. **The Listers Report was accepted.**
- **DEVELOPMENT REVIEW BOARD REPORT: Meg Davis made a motion to accept the Development Review Board Report. Janice Walrafen seconded the motion.** Brenda Lindemann asked if the minutes for the Development Review Board were posted to the Town website, to which Development Review Board Chair Janice Walrafen responded affirmatively. **The Development Review Board Report was accepted.**
- **CENTRAL VERMONT REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION REPORT: Dan Marcus made a motion to accept the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission Report. Scott Stewart seconded the motion.** Steven Farnham asked for a progress report on the Main Street/Route 2 intersection, to which Moderator Barasch responded that it would be addressed during the Select Board Report. **The Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission Report was accepted.**
- **SOCIAL CONCERNS COMMITTEE REPORT: Scott Stewart made a motion to accept the Social Concerns Committee Report. Tim Phillips seconded the motion.** Social Concern Committee member Mary Niebling stated that what is presented in the Town Report is not the committee's report and does not include some of the committee's recommendations. Niebling noted that the committee had recommended \$250 for Our House and that the amount had been changed to \$150 in the Town Report. In addition, Circle and the Onion River Food Shelf, both of which did not submit requests this year, were given \$525 and \$1,000 respectively by the committee, neither of which appears in the Town Report. **Lisa Ryan made a motion to amend the report to reflect the Social Concerns Committee's recommendations.** Town Clerk/Treasurer Linda Wells stated that when no request for funding is received, the process is to petition for funding. Niebling agreed that it was in fact the process, but that the Social Concerns Committee's report still existed. Alexandra Thayer asked who wrote the report, to which Niebling responded that it was written by Social Concerns Committee member Gail Falk. Tom Kelly asked if it was relevant to understand why the two groups who did not submit an application did not apply. Niebling responded that she did not contact the groups. Amos Meacham asked if the different information that was reflected in the Town Report was in the narrative portion or in the budget line items. Niebling responded that language regarding the two organizations was removed from the narrative. Elaine Parker asked if the structure of this meeting allows participants to vote on specific items that they do not agree with in the Social Concerns budget. Moderator Barasch responded that that could take place during discussion of the budget. Bram Towbin noted that it was not about the worthiness of the organizations, and that the process charges the Social Concerns Committee with determining amounts in an effort to avoid arguments regarding how much to fund particular organizations. Jan Waterman thanked the Social Concerns Committee for the hard work that it does again and again, to which meeting participants responded with applause. **Moderator Barasch made a motion to amend the amendment to state that in addition to changing the dollar amounts, the amendment reflect that the text be changed to include the deletions if they can be found. Amos Meacham seconded the motion.** Glenda

Bissex asked how it can be added back into the Town Report, which is already in print. Moderator Barasch responded that the change will be reflected in the Town Meeting minutes. Charles Cogbill stated that he found it hard to vote for additional wording when he does not know what that wording is. Bob Atchinson asked if the Social Concerns Committee had a copy of the missing text that can be read aloud, to which a member of the Social Concerns Committee responded "not here." Melinda Vieux asked that those wishing to speak stand up or come to the microphone so that everyone can hear them. Social Concerns Committee member Alex Forbes stated that she would like to make an amendment to the amendment to the amendment, noting that she did not think that the process itself has been addressed and proposed that the committee meet with the Select Board to agree on a process so that items are not removed with the committee not knowing what happened or why. Moderator Barasch responded that an amendment cannot be made to an amendment of an amendment, but if the amendment passes, it can then be amended. Alexandra Thayer explained that the process is that the reports come to Town Clerk/Treasurer Linda Wells and she then passes them to the Auditors who put together the Town Report; if there is a glitch somewhere, it involves the Auditors either receiving something different from what was sent by a committee or board or that there was some change made to what the Auditors received. Thayer added that a process might be implemented to ensure that the Auditors are clear about what was received and what will go into the Town Report. Cutler Memorial Librarian Loona Brogan, who is not a Plainfield resident, requested permission to speak. Hearing no objection, Moderator Barasch granted permission. Brogan noted that the Cutler Library's report has been changed in the past and that it might be time to look at the Auditor's authority to make changes to the original submissions. Town Clerk/Treasurer Linda Wells stated that while the Auditors might try to shorten a lengthy report, they do not make changes to any of the numbers. Hearing that there was no further discussion, Moderator Barasch called for a vote on the amendment to the amendment. **The motion to amend the report to reflect the Social Concerns Committee's recommendations was approved.**

Immediately following, Moderator Barasch called for a vote on the amendment to the Social Concerns Committee's amendment. Glenda Bissex questioned why the Social Concerns Committee only recommended \$600 for Washington County Mental Health when the request was for \$1,500. Social Concerns Committee Mary Niebling responded that its request was much more than the other deserving organizations so it was reduced to \$600. Elaine Parker noted that the \$600 for the organization, which serves 77 people, was not enough. Leon Romasco stated that he thought that numbers were not supposed to be discussed until the Article 4. Moderator Barasch responded that the numbers can be discussed in the overall scheme of the report, but cannot be changed until Article 4 is under discussion. Alex Forbes stated that Washington County Mental Health is a crucial organization and she would encourage returning the funding amount to the full request. Amos Meacham noted that discussion should take place on the issue, but not at this point. Donny Osman stated his respect for the work and wisdom of the Social Concerns Committee and noted his support of its recommendations, but asked if there were any applications that were rejected entirely. Osman asked another question regarding the elimination of property values in the Grand List and why, which Moderator Barasch stated was out of order at this time. **The motion to accept the Social Concerns Committee's report as amended was approved.**

- **SELECT BOARD REPORT: Tim Phillips made a motion to accept the Select Board Report. Scott Stewart seconded the motion.** Glenda Bissex expressed her concern regarding the cessation of videotaping Select Board meetings and felt that substituting audio recording alone was not enough to understand the proceedings. Bissex urged reinstating the service, to which many meeting participants responded with applause. Lisa Ryan asked how much the cost was to videotape Select Board meetings annually. Select Board member Tammy Farnham stated that the Select Board has been working diligently to find different solutions after a cost increase came in mid-fiscal year from Central Vermont Television, noting that while the Select

Board is not looking to discontinue it at this time, it is looking for cheaper options. Lisa Ryan repeated her question regarding the annual cost, to which Select Board member James Volz responded close to \$4,000 annually. Select Board chair Alexandra Thayer explained that the decision to discontinue the videotaping was a fiscal issue mindful of people saying that taxes are too high, but because of the response from the community to continue videotaping, it is possible to amend the budget. Bram Towbin noted that Select Board videographer Keith Swann was videotaping today's Town Meeting for free, to which meeting participants responded with applause. Glenda Bissex, quoting from the minutes of the 2/10/20 Select Board meeting, stated that in response to a question regarding the annual cost for videotaping meetings, Thayer responded \$2,940. **The Select Board Report was accepted.**

- **WATER/WASTEWATER COMMISSION REPORT: Scott Stewart made a motion to accept the Water/Wastewater Report. Tim Phillips seconded the motion.** There was no discussion. **The Water/Wastewater Commission Report was accepted.**
- **TOWN CONSTABLE/ANIMAL CONTROL REPORT: Scott Stewart made a motion to accept the Town Constable/Animal Control Report. Tim Phillips seconded the motion.** There was no discussion. **Town Constable/Animal Control Report was accepted.**
- **CONSERVATION COMMISSION REPORT: Tim Phillips made a motion to accept the Conservation Commission Report. Scott Stewart seconded the motion.** Conservation Commission chair Sarah Albert noted that there is a stand in the room with handouts from the Conservation Commission; that there will be a tree and shrub sale again this year; that Joanne Garton from Vermont Forests, Parks, and Recreation will be presenting the results of the roadside Emerald Ash Bore survey taken in Plainfield last summer at a meeting on 3/12/20; and that the Conservation Commission is looking for new members to help with some newly proposed projects. **The Conservation Commission Report was accepted.**
- **E911 REPORT: Tim Phillips made a motion to accept the E911 Report. Scott Stewart seconded the motion.** There was no discussion. **The E911 Report was accepted.**
- **FIRE AND RESCUE REPORT: Tim Phillips made a motion to accept the Fire and Rescue Report. Scott Stewart seconded the motion.** Fire Chief Greg Light thanked Pat Martin, who served as the Plainfield Fire Chief for 23 years, and to Gary Graves, whose community service totals 50 years. Meeting participants responded with applause to each. Light strongly recommended that residents replace any smoke detectors that have been up for more than 10 years, and appealed to people not to drive around detour signs. Light stated that Fire and Rescue is always looking for volunteers to help in any way they can, and noted that the department has over 300 years of combined service, to which meeting participants responded with applause. **The Fire and Rescue Report was accepted.**
- **HAZARD MITIGATION COMMITTEE REPORT: Tim Phillips made a motion to accept the Hazard Mitigation Committee Report. Scott Stewart seconded the motion.** Hazard Mitigation Committee chair Amos Meacham noted that there are openings on the committee. Much of the committee's activities have centered on the Marshfield Dam. A forum is coming up on 5/23/20 regarding preparations for people at risk during a disaster. Alexandra Thayer noted that there is a survey on the Hazard Mitigation table that the committee would like residents to complete. Hazard Mitigation Committee secretary Michael Billingsley noted that Amos Meacham will be stepping down as chair of the committee and thanked him for his service, to which meeting participants responded with applause. Billingsley stated that Alice Dworkin will be joining the committee, and noted that there is one more opening available that he hopes will be filled by someone from the first-responder community. Billingsley announced that there will be a forum on 3/19/20 to gather public input on proposed alternatives and other issues around the Brook Road Bridge Replacement project. Billingsley asked that those with household members or neighbors that might need special help during an emergency present those issues during the 5/23/20 forum that Meacham spoke about earlier. Thayer encouraged people to sign

up for VT-Alert, which is an emergency notification system that provides current weather and health information. Brenda Lindemann asked if the committee had any information on the coronavirus. Thayer stated that Vermont Governor Phil Scott had recently put together a task force on it. She noted that many of the same precautions to avoid the seasonal flu can help to protect from other viruses. Janna Osman stated that Mark Tucker of the Caledonia Central Supervisory Union has provided information regarding precautions that children and teachers can take. Winona Johnson asked if that information was available on the website, to which Osman responded that it should be, and will forward a link to Thayer to post on Front Porch Forum. **The Hazard Mitigation Committee Report was accepted.**

- **RECREATION COMMITTEE REPORT: Tim Phillips made a motion to accept the Recreation Committee Report. Scott Stewart seconded the motion.** There was no discussion. **The Recreation Committee Report was accepted.**
- **CEMETERY COMMISSION REPORT: Tim Phillips made a motion to accept the Cemetery Commission Report. Scott Stewart seconded the motion.** Cemetery Commission member Ed Hutchinson solicited for volunteers, stating that there are vacancies on the five-member commission, which cannot do business without a quorum of three members present. He spoke about the difficulties involved in removing a fair number of diseased pine trees around the cemetery due to an adjacent wetland mitigation project. **The Cemetery Commission Report was accepted.**
- **ENERGY COORDINATOR REPORT: Scott Stewart made a motion to accept the Energy Coordinator Report. Tim Phillips seconded the motion.** Energy Coordinator Bob Atchinson noted the work that the Revitalizing All Marshfield and Plainfield (RAMP) project has been doing. He directed meeting participants to a table with literature on energy-related issues and encouraged people to sign up for one of the 30 home energy visits available to Plainfield and Marshfield through Efficiency Vermont. Atchinson announced that there will be a RAMP-sponsored Community Transportation Week starting 5/2/20 through 5/8/20 with many activities planned. He reported on changes to the buses traveling between Montpelier and Saint Johnsbury, noting that the fare will remain free, and that there are new ways to connect to areas via public transportation that previously did not exist. Glenda Bissex thanked Atchinson for all the needed and timely energy-related activity and asked how the gap was being filled between the donations collected by users of the Mill Street electric vehicle charging station and its operation costs. Atchinson responded that it comes from the Town's general fund, explaining that the honor system for collecting fees is being used because of the costly amount to install equipment that charges according to exact usage. James Volz thanked Atchinson for all the work he does on energy issues, to which meeting participants responded with applause. Responding to a question from Brenda Lindemann regarding the Hitching Post, Atchinson explained the concept of connecting neighbors both driving and needing rides through a number of pick-up locations. RAMP Transportation Committee member Nancy Ellen reported on the work being done currently to install a Hitching Post location at the corner of Main and Mill Streets in the Village. Meg Davis inquired as to how drivers are being educated on the Hitching Post concept, to which Alexandra Thayer noted the various ways it has been publicized as well as inviting people to attend the 3/9/20 Select Board meeting where it will be on the agenda. Jesse Cooper stated that during the process of updating the Town Plan, it was found that public transportation usage has been steadily declining since 2012, and that it will be interesting to see if a model such as the Hitching Post will grow in popularity. Nancy Ellen noted that the Hitching Post has both a website and Facebook page and that there will be a celebration regarding the installation of new locations in the area. **The Energy Coordinator Report was accepted.**
- **CV FIBER REPORT: Tim Phillips made a motion to accept the CV Fiber Report. Scott Stewart seconded the motion.** There was no discussion. **The CV Fiber Report was accepted.**
- **TOWN HEALTH OFFICER'S REPORT: Tim Phillips made a motion to accept the Town Health Officer's Report.**

Scott Stewart seconded the motion. There was no discussion. **The Town Health Officer's Report was accepted.**

- **CENTRAL VERMONT SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT DISTRICT REPORT: Tim Phillips made a motion to accept the Central Vermont Solid Waste Management District Report. Scott Stewart seconded the motion.**

Conservation Commission chair Sarah Albert stated that after 7/1/20, a law will go into effect regarding recycling food waste, and noted that the Conservation Commission will be holding a composting workshop this spring. Betsy Ziegler stated that composting containers are available for reasonable prices through the Central Vermont Solid Waste Management District (CVSWMD) from its office in Montpelier. Ziegler explained some of the types available as well as places to drop off compost. Paula Emery asked about some of the issues that have arisen around composting in the Village. Town Health Officer Baylen Slote reported that there is a rodent issue in the Village and that he is exploring options for rolling out universal recycling laws and possibly developing rodent proof communal composting in the Village. With regard to the coronavirus, Slote noted that there is an epidemic of fear surrounding the issue and that there are some practical steps that can be taken to protect yourself, including increasing your health with advanced treatment protocols to help ward off contagion. Steven Farnham asked if those taking immunosuppressant drugs are at a higher risk, to which Slote responded affirmatively, repeating that such practical steps as washing one's hands will help. Paul Emery inquired if Village residents are being asked not to compost at this time.

Alexandra Thayer responded that the Town has not yet applied a standard to deal with the issue, however, those who compost should be thoughtful about how secure their compost structure is. James Volz noted that there are rat-proof bins, and Slote raised the possibilities of setting up a community compost bin or training on rodent-proof composting solutions. Betsy Ziegler stated that green cones are rodent proof, but there is no way to retrieve the compost. Janice Walrafen asked if money was available through CVSWD to help towns with this new mandatory composting ordinance and noted that the North Branch Nature Center collects compost in rodent-proof bins. Slote added that Vermont Compost also takes food scraps and that compost hauling services are available. Michael Carriveau stated that rodents are only a small portion of the wildlife that composting draws, and that raccoons and bears are more dangerous. Slote agreed, but stated that as a health officer, he is responding to the rodent issue that residents are raising. Slote noted that he has spoken to the individual who is dropping food at the Recreation Field or Park and Ride. Camilla Kelly-Kinniburgh stated that a lidded metal garbage can with the bottom removed and partially sunk into the ground is rodent proof. Betsy Ziegler noted that CVSWMD will be offering composting workshops in Montpelier and Barre and that there might be one offered in Plainfield. Becky Atchinson stated there will be one offered in Plainfield at the end of June, but that the date has not yet been set. **The Central Vermont Solid Waste Management District Report was accepted.**

- Moderator Barasch concluded the Reports of Town Officers portion of the meeting. He noted that there is a volunteer form in the back of the Town Report for those interested in filling open seats on committees and boards.
- Thayer announced that Town Clerk/Treasurer Linda Wells has been involved in the Town Clerk's office for 25 years, to which the meeting participants responded with applause. Wells was presented with a card, a vase of flowers, and a gift certificate to one of her favorite restaurants. Wells thanked everyone, and, noting the increasing amount of work that the Town Clerk's office is tasked with, stated that she could not do this without Assistant Town Clerk/Treasurer Carol Smith. There was another round of applause for Smith.

ARTICLE 3: Shall the Town appropriate the sum of \$8,333.00 as its share of the ninth year cost of commuter bus service along Route 2 with service into Montpelier? This appropriation funds a portion of the total cost of the service, which will also be supported by appropriations from other towns, State and Federal funds, and passenger

fares.

- **Steven Farnham made a motion to approve Article 3. Amos Meacham seconded the motion.** There was no discussion. **The motion was approved.**

ARTICLE 4: Shall the Town voters authorize the expenditures for the following not-for-profit service agencies as recommended by the appointed Social Concerns Committee?

Central VT Adult Basic Education \$ 400.00
Capstone (Central VT) Comm. Action \$ 500.00
Central VT Council on Aging \$ 1,300.00
Central VT Home Health Hospice \$ 2,500.00
Family Center of Wash County \$ 500.00
Good Beginnings of Central VT \$ 300.00
Green Mountain Transit Agency \$ 786.00
Our House \$ 150.00
People's Health and Wellness \$ 750.00
Twinfield Learning Center \$ 400.00
Twinfield Together Mentoring \$ 250.00
Twin Valley Senior Center \$ 3,500.00
VT Center for Independent Living \$ 100.00
VT Family Network \$ 100.00
Washington CTY Mental Health \$ 600.00
Washington CTY Youth Service Bureau \$ 500.00
Total \$12,636.00

- **Scott Stewart made a motion to approve Article 4. Tim Phillips seconded the motion.** Jamie Spector asked why the Select Board changed the funding for Our House from \$250 to \$150. Select Board member James Volz responded that the Select Board gave a lot of weight to the recommendations of the Social Concerns Committee, but felt that those agencies that did not submit a request should not receive funding or, if so, at the level of what was approved last year. Spector stated that her question was specifically about Our House, which did submit a request for \$250, but was given only \$150. Select Board chair Alexandra Thayer noted the steep increase in the cost of health insurance, that Plainfield residents have stated that it is difficult to pay their taxes, and that Our House serves only five people. Select Board member Tammy Farnham added that the Town's current allocation to Our House is \$50 more than it was last year. Noting the importance of the Onion River Food Shelf (ORFS) in terms of food security, Michael Billingsley stated his frustration that the Select Board did not follow the Social Concerns Committee's recommendation of \$1,000, despite the fact that the organization did not submit a request. Thayer responded that the protocol set up is to respond to funding requests and there was no request made by the ORFS; nor did ORFS subsequently petition for funding after the deadline. Noting the confusion around the information printed in the Town Report, Lisa Ryan suggested that it should be clear in the Town Report what the Social Concerns Committee recommended and what was changed by the Select Board. Carla Siegel asked why ORFS did not submit a request, to which no one responded. Amos Meacham echoed his support of the work of the Social Concerns Committee and noted that the total Social Concerns budget was almost \$1,000 less than last year. **Amos Meacham made a motion to amend the Social Concerns budget to fund Circle for a total amount of \$525, Onion River Food Shelf for a total amount of \$1,000, and add \$100 to Our House. Lisa Ryan seconded the motion to amend. The motion to amend was approved.** Steven Farnham expressed his appreciation to the Select Board for its vigilance as guardians of the Town's finances, however, agreed that what gets published in

the Town Report should be what the Social Concerns Committee expressed. Farnham asked the Social Concerns Committee to address why the process of not considering funding for organizations that do not submit requests was not followed. Committee member Sarah Albert responded that the committee felt bad that because the Onion River Food Shelf did not submit a request, it would not receive funding. She added that she was disappointed that it did not follow up with a petition for funding. Linda Wells noted that Assistant Town Clerk Carol Smith contacted ORFS to remind it about the petition process. Carol Smith added that she had to tell other organizations that did not get their requests in by the deadline that it was too late, and felt it was unfair that those organizations were not added as well. Ed Hutchinson was concerned about the abuse of process where the Social Concerns Committee recommended funding for those that did make requests. Alexandra Thayer agreed that the Social Concerns Committee's report should go into the Town Report as written, with any Select Board changes clearly noted, but felt that the Town is disregarding the effort of those organizations that do follow the process. James Volz added that it also provides an incentive for not submitting a request, and recommended that only those who follow the process be considered. Michelle Clark suggested a compromise to follow the Social Concerns Committee recommendations this time, but send a letter to those who were funded without a request that states that the Town will not be able to provide funding in the future without a request. As a retired executive director of an organization that sought funding from towns, Peter Youngbaer noted that Plainfield has a reputation of having a rigorous review process that, if not followed, will result in not being funded. **The motion was approved.**

ARTICLE 5: Shall the Town voters authorize an appropriation of \$37,500 to the Cutler Memorial Library to pay for the librarian and the purchase of materials and services that the library acquires to make accessible to the community?

- **Steven Farnham made a motion to approve Article 5. John Monahan seconded the motion.** Hearing no objections, Moderator Barasch granted Cutler Memorial Librarian, and non-resident, Loona Brogan permission to speak. Brogan thanked the Friends of the Library and announced a film entitled, *One Town at a Time*, that will be shown at the Library on 3/6/20. Brogan thanked outgoing board chair Marcy Hale, to which meeting participants responded with applause. Brogan thanked the Town for its assistance in obtaining a planning grant for Cutler Library expansion. Marcy Hale thanked Candace Beardsley at Spruce Mountain Inn for providing an interest-free loan of \$10,000 to the Library to cover grant expenses before funding was received. Hale noted that it is her last month serving on the board and that Carla Siegel will be replacing her, both point to which participants responded with applause. Michael Billingsley announced that the Friends of the Cutler Memorial Library will be sponsoring a community supper on 4/28/20, noting that there also would be one in March. Brenda Lindemann asked whether the Library had a program for children, to which Brogan responded that there is not an ongoing program at this time due to lack of parking and interior Library space, but that the Library circulates a lot of children's books and that many families come in on their own schedules. The Library is looking at parking lot expansion grants to alleviate that issue. Nicola Morris thanked Brogan for her diligence, dedication, and creativity in her job at the Library, to which participants responded with applause. **The motion was approved.**

ARTICLE 6: Shall the Town establish a Municipal Building Maintenance Reserve Fund for future building maintenance of the municipal building?

- **Scott Stewart made a motion to approve Article 6. Tim Phillips seconded the motion.** Amos Meacham asked if this was a new fund, to which Town Clerk/Treasurer Linda Wells responded affirmatively, adding that part of the reason was because the Town no longer has revenue coming in from the rental area upstairs in the municipal building. **The motion was approved.**

ARTICLE 7: Shall the Town fund the Municipal Building Maintenance Reserve Fund with any unexpended budget funds in the Municipal Building Maintenance and Repairs budget line item? • **Scott Stewart made a motion to approve Article 7. Tim Phillips seconded the motion.** There was no discussion. **The motion was approved.**

ARTICLE 8: To see what amount of money the Town will vote to pay for the Water Department for the period of July 1, 2020 to June 30, 2021?

- **Water/Wastewater Commissioner Tim Phillips made a motion to appropriate the amount of \$228,218 for the Water Department to be paid for by the users of the system for the period of 7/1/20 to 6/30/21. Scott Stewart seconded the motion.** As a customer of the Water Department for an apartment house on the system, Bob Atchinson asked if users are now being charged by the gallon rather than by housing units. Phillips responded that at this time no changes have been made to the billing structure that has been in place for many years, however, one of the things that the Commission wants to do in the coming year is to look at changing how the bills are calculated. The Commission now has usage numbers from meters that were installed four years ago, and it needs to figure out how to use those numbers correctly because there is a certain amount of money needed to run the system. **The motion was approved.**

ARTICLE 9: To see what amount of money the Town will vote to pay for the Wastewater Department for the period of July 1, 2020 to June 30, 2021.

- **Water/Wastewater Commissioner Tim Phillips made a motion to appropriate the amount of \$311,315 for the Wastewater Department to be paid for by the users of the system for the period of 7/1/20 to 6/30/21. Scott Stewart seconded the motion.** Michael Billingsley asked how many users were on the system. Water/Wastewater Department System Operator Tristan MacGregor Stewart responded that there are roughly 300 connections serving roughly 1,000 people for both systems. Stating that she was not a user of the system, Select Board chair Alexandra Thayer expressed her appreciation to the two employees of the Water/Wastewater Department, the three members of the Water/Wastewater Commission, and Assistant Town Clerk/Treasurer Carol Smith for the work they all do, to which meeting participants responded with applause. **The motion was approved.**

ARTICLE 10: To see what amount of money the Town will vote to pay for highways, bridges, fire department, and administrative operations of the Town of Plainfield for the period of July 1, 2020 to June 30, 2021.

- **Glenda Bissex made a motion to appropriate \$1,027,794 to pay for highways, bridges, fire department, and administrative operations of the Town of Plainfield for the period of 7/1/20 to 6/30/21. Sarah Albert seconded the motion.** On behalf of Road Foreman Mike Nolan, Road Commissioner Bram Towbin requested that during mud season, anyone expecting deliveries by truck to their houses touch base with Nolan at 454-7166 and leave a message prior to making delivery arrangements. This does not include FedEx and milk delivery trucks. Acknowledging the good work that the Road Crew does on the roads, Deborah Stoleroff asked if, during mud season and especially on highly trafficked roads, traffic can be diverted before the roads get damaged. Agreeing that it was a great idea, Towbin responded that because the Town receives State funding for those roads, the Town is prohibited from blocking traffic. Stoleroff inquired if drivers can be asked not to travel those roads, to which Towbin responded that the Road Crew has made requests, but with mixed results. **The motion was approved.**

ARTICLE 11: Shall the Town of Plainfield authorize the Selectboard to apply any surplus from the current fiscal year to reduce taxes in the next fiscal year?

- **Scott Stewart made a motion to approve Article 11. Tim Phillips seconded the motion.** Michael Billingsley asked if the Select Board can explain if unexpended monies from previous Emergency Management budgets were available for future emergency management needs or if they went back into the general fund. Select Board chair Alexandra Thayer responded that she has been in touch with Goddard College, the Health Department, and the Red Cross regarding issues around an emergency shelter in Plainfield, but that no monies have yet been expended. Thayer added that replacing the generator at the Town Hall Opera House, which is not very robust, might be one of the ways those monies can be used. Thayer has also been in discussion with the Maple Hill School, which is in Marshfield. Town Clerk/Treasurer Linda Wells stated that an emergency management reserve fund was established last year, and Thayer noted that half of what was left in the emergency management budget line item was put into the reserve fund. Amos Meacham inquired about the process of putting unexpended monies into reserve funds, asking if reserve funds receive those funds first before any monies are returned to the general fund. Wells responded that the reserve funds are in the budget, and if the Town went way over budget and there was no surplus, those reserve funds would not be funded. Conservation Commission chair Sarah Albert noted the Town Woodlands fund and the Street Tree fund are not budgeted items; the Town Woodlands fund gets funded by any logging in the Town Forest and the Street Tree fund gets the proceeds from the tree and shrub sale. **The motion was approved.**

ARTICLE 12: Shall the Town vote to accept the provisions of public statutes relating to the collection of taxes by the Town Treasurer, (VSA 32 Section 4791) and vote to collect municipal taxes thirty days from mailing and not prior to August 12, 2020 and collect school taxes on November 18, 2020 and February 10, 2021, collecting half of the total school taxes on each of those dates?

- **Tim Phillips made a motion to approve Article 12. Dan Marcus seconded the motion.** There was no discussion. **The motion was approved.**

ARTICLE 13: To transact any other non-binding business that may properly come before the meeting. • **Lisa Ryan made a motion that Town Reports be published as submitted, or if changed or modified, that those changes be duly noted in the Town Report along with the entity that made the change. Dave Montgomery seconded the motion.** Steven Farnham stated that a better way to solve the problem is to have the Select Board and the person submitting the report agree on what is going into the Town Report before it is published rather than noting changes made after the reports are submitted. Select Board member James Volz stated that the Select Board thought that that was already happening, adding that no one knows how the particular report in question got changed. Select Board chair Alexandra Thayer noted that if the Auditors are responsible for what gets printed in the Town Report, they should flag discrepancies before it is printed. Select Board member Tammy Farnham stated that the Select Board was not aware of any changes and that it was not the Select Board's intention. A comment was made that if reports were submitted earlier, it might provide the time to discuss and agree on any changes, which is the standard process for publishing anything. Steven Farnham noted that the process and those submitting reports should be trusted, and he invited people to vote against the amendment. **The motion was approved.**

- Energy Coordinator Bob Atchinson presented a Declaration of a Climate Emergency from the Town of Plainfield, noting that the intention was to know that the problem exists, embrace it, and take some action steps regarding it. **Bob Atchinson made a motion that Plainfield adopt this declaration of climate emergency and that we therefore act as if there is an emergency, with the understanding that it is non-binding. Sarah Albert seconded the motion.** There was no objection to not reading the declaration aloud. Mike Carriveau stated that he felt that the declaration is way beyond what should be happening, noting that issues such as

acid rain and global warming, which were once of great concern, went away. Now the issue is climate change, which we are taxing willingly to bring in money. He stated that Vermont has the lowest rate of carbon dioxide emissions in the United States and what we do have is coming from the south and west, that every year advances in technology diminish the amount of carbon dioxide emissions, and that the trees are doing the job of taking up carbon dioxide and producing oxygen. Carriveau stated that efforts going into curbing carbon dioxide emissions should be put into things that we can do something about such as composting, and that taxing ourselves on carbon dioxide emissions is self-defeating. Michael Billingsley noted that climate-assessment experts have laid out the kinds of climate-related difficulties that we are currently in the middle of, and those that we can expect in the future are probably bigger than we imagine. He stated that many major cities in Canada declared a climate emergency two years ago and, subsequently, its federal government proclaimed a climate emergency nationally. Billingsley stated that the problem is not with taxes, but allocating existing resources to respond to climate-related events. Elaine Parker noted that she recently heard on the radio that the state most responsible for emissions per capita is Vermont. James Volz noted that the statistic was for New England. **Deborah Stoleroff made a motion to call the question. Sarah Albert seconded the motion.** Moderator Barasch stated that the motion requires a two-thirds vote. Noting that the verbal vote was inconclusive, Moderator Barasch asked those wishing to vote yes to stop the debate stand and raise their hands while the votes were being counted. This was followed by asking those opposed to stopping debate to do the same. Moderator Barasch announced that the vote was 25 in favor of calling the question to 11 opposed. **The motion to call the question passed by a two-thirds vote and was approved.** Prior to a vote on the declaration, Moderator Barasch decided to read it aloud. The declaration follows:

Declaration of a Climate Emergency

Town of Plainfield, VT

(For adoption by the citizens of Plainfield at Town Meeting, March 3, 2020)

- **WHEREAS**, in April 2016 world leaders recognized the urgent need to combat climate change by signing the Paris Agreement, agreeing to keep global warming “well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels” and to “pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C”.
 - According to the United Nations’ Special Rapporteur on Extreme Poverty, 1.5°C of global warming could expose 500 million people to water poverty, 36 million people to food insecurity because of lower crop yields, and 4.5 billion people to heat waves.
 - Later, in October 2018, the United Nations International Panel on Climate Change released a special report, which projected that limiting warming to even the dangerous 1.5°C target this century will require an unprecedented transformation of every sector of the global economy by 2030.
 - A The death and destruction already wrought by current average global warming of 1°C demonstrates that the Earth is already too hot for safety and justice, as attested by increased incidents of wildfires, floods, rising seas, diseases, droughts, and extreme weather events;
- **WHEREAS**, the United States of America has disproportionately contributed to the climate and ecological emergencies and thus bears an extraordinary responsibility to rapidly solve these crises;
- **WHEREAS**, Emergency Climate Mobilization is imperative to immediately end the use of fossil fuels, to massively reduce our daily usage of energy, to obtain all necessary energy from renewable sources, and to begin the drawdown of carbon from the Earth’s atmosphere. The measures to restore a safe climate must include:
 - A rapid, just, managed phase-out of fossil fuels,
 - Elimination of greenhouse gas emissions as quickly as possible to establish a zero emissions

economy,

- A widespread effort to safely drawdown excess carbon from the atmosphere, ○ A full transition to a regenerative agriculture system, and
- Prevention of the Sixth Mass Extinction through widespread conservation and restoration of ecosystems;

- **WHEREAS**, the massive scope and scale of the actions necessary to stabilize the climate and biosphere will require unprecedented levels of public awareness, engagement, and deliberation to develop and implement effective, just, and equitable policies to address the climate emergency.
- **THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT:** We, the Citizens of the Town of Plainfield do hereby **Declare a Climate-Driven, Economic and Ecological Emergency**. We acknowledge that we must reverse or reject all policies not in alignment with this declaration and must work alongside, or in spite of, the media to communicate this urgency for change, and must develop a plan of action, which individuals, communities, businesses, and governments must initiate now.
- **Be It Further Resolved That:** We, the Citizens and Government of the Town of Plainfield must and will, enact legally-binding policies to reduce carbon emissions to **Net-Zero* by 2030** by take taking bold actions, such as weatherizing our buildings, electrifying vehicle fleets, supporting public transit, rapidly increasing renewable energy generation, and maintaining our forests for sequestering of carbon to remove the excess of atmospheric greenhouse gases;
- **Be It Further Resolved That:** Plainfield can and will act as a regional leader through initiating this emergency climate mobilization to convert to an ecologically, socially, and economically regenerative local economy at emergency speed, as well as advocating for the statewide, regional, national, and international efforts necessary to reverse global warming and the ecological crisis;
- **Be It Further Resolved That:** Climate Justice requires that frontline and marginalized communities, which have historically borne the brunt of the extractive fossil-fuel economy, participate actively in the planning and implementation of this emergency mobilization effort and that they benefit first from the transition to a climate-safe economy, which mitigates the effects of ongoing ecocide, (the complete destruction of an ecosystem due to human activities), to prevent extinction of human and all species, in order to maintain a livable, just Planet for all.

* Net Zero Energy means that a building or community balances its energy needs with energy produced from renewable, zero-emission sources.

The motion that Plainfield adopt this declaration of climate emergency and that we therefore act as if there is an emergency, with the understanding that it is non-binding, was approved.

• Alexandra Thayer announced that there are documents related to the Main Street/Route 2 intersection that have been posted to the Town website. A forum will be held for community input, but the date has not yet been set. Tammy Farnham stated that the first piece that needs to happen is feedback from the community on the design. James Volz noted that most of the problems with the design have to do with implementation, therefore if residents do not wish to move forward with the current design, then there is no concern about its implementation. Peter Youngbaer stated that his concerns are not with the design, but with the implementation and that if we say yes to a design without reassurance on the implementation process, then it will create a serious problem. Youngbaer asked if there was a drop-dead date that the Vermont Department of Transportation (VAOT) needs to hear from the Town. Thayer responded that if the Town does

not endorse the design, the project goes on the back burner, but was not aware of a drop-dead date. Youngbaer stated that he had heard from VAOT that it wants to do the project in concert with the reconstruction of Route 2 in 2023, which, given all that would need to happen at the Legislature before then, means that we would need to know when the drop-dead date is. Thayer noted that the Select Board could ask VAOT when the deadline is, to which Youngbaer responded that the Select Board itself could set the deadline and ask the community for feedback by then. Thayer asked Youngbaer to review the minutes from a meeting on the project back in 2014 where there was a vibrant and lengthy discussion on project design, and posed the question of how to get people's feedback who may not be able to attend a forum. Youngbaer noted that now the questions are about implementation and how to deal with such ramifications as alternative bridges, alternate roads, etc., which are 100% on the Town and none of which came out at the 2014 meeting. He stated that he is looking for leadership from the Select Board to tell community members when they need to provide their feedback. Paula Emery asked how the Select Board wants to receive input. Farnham responded that it will start with the forum and from there identify if the community finds the design acceptable; at this point, the Town has no power to negotiate because it has not said yes to the design.

- **Dave Spence made a motion to adjourn at 1:45pm. Alexandra Thayer seconded the motion. The motion was approved.**

Respectfully submitted by Cindy Wyckoff