

Town of Plainfield Special Select Board Meeting
August 25, 2022, 4 PM
Minutes - Approved

Agenda - times are approximate

Changes to Agenda

Announcements

Public Comment

Capital Fire dispatch modernization, cost plan and funding - Greg Light

Public Health - rental housing inspection and appointment of deputy Health Officer

Purchase of Water Department water source property - Mary Lane (possible executive session)

Adjourn

Present: Jim Volz, Select Board Chair, Sasha Thayer, Select Board Member, Fire Chief Greg Light, Barre City Deputy Fire Chief and vice-president of the Capitol Fire Commission Joe Aldsworth, Mary Lane, Water/Wastewater Commission chair, Tristan MacGregor-Stewart, Water/Wastewater Department Operator

Changes to Agenda: Volz proposed a change to the agenda to appoint a school board member because Lauren Cleary resigned. This change was approved unanimously.

Announcements: Sasha reminded people of the Fire Department Chicken BBQ at Old Home Days on September 10, 2022, that there are limited tickets and people should get ahold of Fire Chief Greg Light or Paula Ackel. Thayer also stated that there is an opening on the Planning Commission as Baylen Sky has resigned due to the birth last week of another baby. Anyone interested should get in contact with the Town Clerk.

Capitol Fire dispatch modernization, cost plan and funding

Joe Aldsworth provided some history regarding dispatching services and current challenges. Aldsworth explained that the dispatch system equipment is approximately 31 years old which was originally purchased with funds from an earmark obtained by Senator Patrick Leahy in 1990. The equipment is in need of replacement and they have been trying to figure out how to fund replacement. They have tried various approaches without success and with changes in technology and Federal requirements now are experiencing a decrease in radio coverage. In addition, the State is having difficulties with dispatching 110 agencies throughout the state and is having difficulty retaining staff. Locally there are two dispatching centers in Barre and Montpelier and Plainfield has had a contract with Montpelier probably since 1996. The costs for making needed changes to the system are \$3.2 million dollars with funding from the State being available. However, the governor has stressed that they want these dispatch centers to be financially sustainable and don't want them coming back for more assistance.

Aldsworth provided the select board with a spreadsheet showing the proposed costs to the town on an annual basis to support keeping the Capitol Fire Dispatch system functional without ongoing financial assistance from the State. These amounts will be in addition to annual costs for emergency services dispatch and for ten years come to about \$1500 per year with an escalator. These funds gathered each year from the local affected towns will provide a fund for equipment replacement when its needed ten years away. This approach provides money on hand when something happens, rather than coming to towns and asking for a larger amount to address the problem.

The Town was asked to approve a letter of support in order for the Capitol Fire Dispatch to show community support for the \$3.2 million grant. Fire Chief Light stated his support of this request. Aldsworth provided a prepared letter of support for the Board to approve. **Thayer moved that the Town of Plainfield approve the letter of support from the Town of Plainfield for the Capitol Region's Capital Region Communications System Project which officially recognizes the support of the Capitol Region Communication System Project and that Jim Volz as chair of the Select Board is authorized to sign this on behalf of the Select Board and the motion passed unanimously.**

Thayer also raised the question with Fire Chief Light whether the Fire Department has a generator and whether the Fire Department might be interested in having the installation of a generator which would supply both the Fire Department and the Municipal Building in the event of a power failure. Greg says that the Fire Department does have a generator, but it's old. Ardsworth said that there is currently funding available to pay 90% of the cost of a generator through Hazard Mitigation Program Grant funding and that notice of this was issued about three weeks ago. Ardsworth recommends not to undersize the generator and recommends reaching out to generator vendors requesting a proposal.

Volz noted that if we were to obtain a generator for both buildings, the current Fire Department generator might be able to be moved to replace the old generator at the Town Hall-Opera House.

Public Health - rental housing inspection and appointment of deputy Health Officer - Thayer explained Baylen Sky is the Town Health Officer and that former Town Health Officer Justine Gadd used to be the Town deputy health officer, but this appears to be no longer the case. Thayer has not been able to connect with Gadd to see if she'd be willing to continue to serve as a deputy town health officer. Thayer explained that there are circumstances where the Town Health Officer has to go out and do a rental inspection or follow up on something related to public health and sometimes that is a circumstance that involved a personal connection of one kind or another that presents a conflict of interest so that having a deputy town health officer is helpful. Thayer proposed that the Select Board follow up on that for the next meeting and invited anyone who is interested in serving as a deputy town health officer get ahold of the Select Board. Thayer explained that we do have a circumstance right now where the Town Health office has been called to weigh in on something that puts the Town Health Officer in that situation. Thayer explained further that the Town has received a request for a rental housing inspection from a Plainfield landlord, but Thayer won't be able to get that done until we have a deputy to assist with that.

Purchase of Water Department water source property: Tristan MacGregor-Stuart explained that recently a property holder in Marshfield informing the Water Department of their intent to sell a lot of land that abuts the land the Town of Plainfield owns for Plainfield's water source. The deed for that property includes a right of first refusal for two lots, one a .6 acre lot of land and another 12 acre parcel of land. Tristan identified the issues being protection of these parcels from use which could potentially affect water quality for the thousands of people that use town water. He said now which is happening is going back and forth about some of the details and how to proceed as far as how much land to purchase and at what cost and whether the Town can assist in the purchase. Sasha Thayer confirmed from Tristan that the 1994 deed of another 13 acre parcel of land to the Water Department reserved certain rights to use that parcel, including riding horses over it and logging, but that when the current owner sells the adjacent land, those rights will go away. However, that is a different parcel from those on which the town has right of first refusal.

Thayer noted that it appears that what has been sent to the Water Department is a right of first refusal for the entire 84 acres. Tristan confirmed that the Water Department's reading of the deed is that they have right of first refusal for the .6 acre parcel and the 12 acre parcel. Tristan identified as needing to be decided at this meeting may be whether Tristan can hire a lawyer to explore purchasing just the .6 acre of parcel and the 12 acre parcel.

Thayer moved that the meeting go into executive session pursuant to 3 VSA 313 because it involves negotiation for the purchase of real estate and the motion passed unanimously,

The meeting returned to public session. No decisions were made regarding the purchase of the property.

The matter of appointing a school director to fill out the remainder of Lauren Cleary's term was not taken up during this meeting.

Thayer moved to adjourn and the motion passed unanimously.