

**Town of Plainfield
Select Board Meeting
November 27, 2017
Approved Minutes**

PRESENT: Ross Sneyd (Select Board Member), Betsy Ziegler (Select Board Chair), Alexandra Thayer (Select Board Member), Keith Swann (Videographer), Cindy Wyckoff (Minutes Recorder), Linda Wells (Town Clerk/Treasurer), Bram Towbin (Road Commissioner), Michael Billingsley (Emergency Management Director), Eric Blaisdell (Times Argus), Emily Harris (Vermont Emergency Management), Mike Nolan (Road Foreman), and David Strong (Friends of the Plainfield Town Hall Opera House).

Betsy Ziegler called the meeting to order at 7:07pm.

AGENDA

- Review Agenda
- Public Comment/Announcements
- Town Clerk's Report: Warrants, Health Insurance
- Road Report
- VT Emergency Management Presentation: Emily Harris
- Emergency Management Coordinator Discussion
- Website Platform Discussion
- Library Grant Update
- Gallison House Update
- FEMA Grant Writing Payment
- Approve Minutes
- Other Business
- Adjournment

Prior to discussing the agenda, Ziegler noted the rules of procedure at public meetings, specifically: keep it civil and short; wait for the chairperson to acknowledge the person wishing to speak; and address the meeting, not the individual.

REVIEW AGENDA

- Ross Sneyd noted that a full 20 minutes would not be needed for the Website Platform Discussion, but that he would provide a brief update, and that there was nothing new to report regarding the Library Grant Update item. Ziegler removed the FEMA Grant Writing Payment item from the agenda and amended the times that various discussions would begin during the meeting. **Sneyd made a motion to adopt the agenda as amended. The motion was approved.**

PUBLIC COMMENT/ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Ziegler announced that the Twinfield Holiday Bazaar will take place on 12/2/17 from 9am to 3pm. The proceeds will help fund arts and enrichment activities at the school.

- Ziegler noted that the Neighborhood Watch Group met a week ago and plans to meet monthly on the third Saturday of each month from 4-5pm at the Cutler Memorial Library. The meeting schedule will begin in January 2018 with no meeting scheduled for December. All are welcome to attend.

TOWN CLERK'S REPORT: WARRANTS, HEALTH INSURANCE

- Town Clerk/Treasurer Linda Wells reported that the Town of Groton's Fire Department has talked with the Town of Plainfield's Fire Department and Rescue Squad and agreed that Plainfield will service the Pigeon Pond area of Maple Hill. The area is actually part of Groton, but is more accessible from Plainfield. **Sneyd made a motion that the Select Board sign the agreement with Groton that states that Plainfield will service the Pigeon Pond area in Groton. The motion was approved.**
- Wells presented information on the rates and deductible amounts for the coming year's health insurance coverage for Town employees, noting increases in both premium and deductible amounts. Discussion followed on the costs to both the Town and the employees under various contribution scenarios. Sneyd noted that the decisions before the Select Board are: 1) what contribution the Town is going to ask employees to make in terms of the monthly premium; and 2) how much the Town will pay toward the deductible. After discussion regarding the various choices, **Sneyd made a motion to ask employees to pay 7% toward the premium with the Town contributing \$1,625 toward the deductible for single person coverage and \$3,250 to family coverage. The motion was approved.**
- Wells requested that the Select Board begin to set up budget meetings with the Highway and Fire Departments. Sneyd suggested that the Cutler Library should also meet with the Select Board this year. Wells noted that she has asked that departmental budgets be submitted by 12/8/17. Budget meetings were scheduled for 12/13/17 at 4pm and 12/14/17 at 4pm.
- **Sneyd made a motion to approve warrants of 11/20/17, 11/22/17, and 11/24/17. The motion was approved.**

ROAD REPORT

- Road Commissioner Bram Towbin read aloud winter parking regulations, which he plans to post on social media.
- Towbin reported that the "No Skateboarding" signs had come in and confirmed that they would be posted at the Park and Ride coming down the hill toward the Fire Station and in the area of Main Street coming down from the blinking light on Route 2.
- Towbin wanted residents to know that dramatic changes in the weather make for changes in road conditions, and asked that people be aware that the Road Crew is mindful of the conditions at any given time and responds accordingly. Alexandra Thayer noted an added danger posed by those who are not used to driving in slick weather, and cautioned drivers to slow down when these conditions are present.
- Road Foreman Mike Nolan noted that the current freezing/thawing conditions are creating ruts in the roads, and drivers should be mindful of them.
- Nolan reported on two tree issues: one on Greatwood Drive and the other on the Town land by the old high school, the latter of which is posed to fall on a propane tank at a neighboring property. Discussion followed on separate quotes that Nolan has received to deal with both trees. Towbin stated that the tree on Town land by the old high school should be dealt with right away since it poses an immediate threat to safety.

- Sneyd noted that Vermont Rural Roads is planning a workshop this winter on speed control options, which he will provide further details on once they are known.

VT EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PRESENTATION: EMILY HARRIS

- Emily Harris, the Northeast Regional Coordinator for Vermont Emergency Management, was present to talk about emergency management issues as they relate to towns in Vermont. Harris emphasized the importance of a town's Local Emergency Operations Plan (LEOP) and its requirement to designate the town's three points of contact for the State to use during a disaster. Plainfield's three points of contact are, in order of contact, Fire Chief Pat Martin, Emergency Management Director (EMD) Michael Billingsley, and Select Board member Alexandra Thayer. Harris stated the importance of keeping a town's LEOP up to date and noted that she is available as a resource to help towns in their updating process. Discussion ensued regarding the role of an emergency operations center, the mutually agreed upon role of the EMD, and clarity regarding public messaging. Harris noted upcoming training opportunities, including the next ICS-402 training on 4/19/18 from 5:30-8pm at Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission in Montpelier. Billingsley recommended that since Thayer is the only ICS-trained member of the Select Board, Sneyd and/or Ziegler should also receive training in the event that Thayer is not available during an emergency event. Harris stated that if five or more people request an ICS-402 training, she can come out and deliver it onsite and that the ICS-100 training is offered both as an 8-hour in-person class or online. Harris also noted a two-day, all day Basic Public Information Officer training that will be offered on 2/15/18 and 2/16/18 at the Williston Fire Station. Billingsley will be taking an EMD training on 2/17/18 at the State House in Montpelier. Harris recommended that, if Plainfield appoints an Emergency Management Coordinator before then, that person should also attend the EMD training. Harris presented an information-flow diagram between towns and the State during a disaster. Harris stated that since Plainfield has completed all the requirements, it has an Emergency Relief and Assistance Fund rating of 17.5, the highest a town can get. This means that after a federally declared disaster, the federal government will pay 75% of the cost of the damage. The remaining 25% is split between the towns and the State. If a town has done nothing in terms of preparing for a disaster, it will receive a 7.5% reimbursement from the State and be responsible for 17.5%; if a town has made some preparations, it will receive 12.% from the State and be responsible for the other 12.5%; and if a town has gone above that, as Plainfield has, the State will pay 17.5%, leaving the town responsible for only 7.5%. Harris noted that having an LEOP gives a town access to hazard mitigation funding. The next LEOP update period starts on Town Meeting Day and due by 5/1/18.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT COORDINATOR DISCUSSION

- The Select Board reviewed the draft job description for the Emergency Management Coordinator. After a brief discussion regarding the position's possible impact on the budget, it was decided that the budget item be renamed from Emergency Management Director to Emergency Management. Billingsley will propose budget figures for this item. **Thayer made a motion to approve the Emergency Management Coordinator position as described. The motion was approved.** Thayer urged Billingsley to find someone to fill the position as soon as possible.

WEBSITE PLATFORM DISCUSSION

- Sneyd reported that the new Webmaster is trying to connect with those who currently post to the Town's website to help inform her about what website platform would be the best fit. Ivey Hardy, who maintains the current site, owns the domain name. Sneyd agreed to reach out to Hardy to notify him that the Town is transitioning to a new website and discuss transferring ownership of the domain name to the Town of Plainfield along with any costs associated with that. There was a brief

discussion regarding budget considerations in regard to the timing of the new website's launch. Sneyd will provide an update on the status of the process at the next meeting.

GALLISON HOUSE UPDATE

- David Strong provided an update on the Gallison property, which the Town is interested in acquiring for the purpose of providing additional parking for events at the Town Hall Opera House. Strong recounted why last year's previous attempt to purchase the property was not successful. The owner is once again interested in selling the property to the Town, and Town Attorney Jim Jamele is going over the contract from last year with the property owner's attorney. The sale is contingent upon Plainfield voters approving the purchase at Town Meeting. Discussion followed regarding the additional parking spaces that the property would provide; an architect's assessment of the condition of the house; the possibility of selling the house to an entity that would restore versus demolish it; possible contribution toward the purchase price of the property via money raised by the Friends of the Plainfield Town Hall Opera House (Friends); and possible contribution toward the purchase price of the property through the sale of surplus Town property behind the old school house. With regard to selling the Town property behind the old school house, Thayer suggested that a realtor with connections to those interested in renewable energy be considered because the site is ideal for a solar array. Strong noted that if a purchase and sale agreement is reached on the Gallison property and brought before the voters for approval at this coming Town Meeting, the possibility of contributions toward the sale price from both the Friends fundraising campaign and the sale of the Town property should be included in the warning of the article, which needs to be drafted within a month and a half from now. A brief discussion followed on options to finance the remaining funds needed. George Springston has agreed to flag the property and will be doing so this week.

APPROVE MINUTES

- After noting three corrections/additions to the draft minutes, **Sneyd made a motion to approve the minutes from the 11/13/17 regular Select Board meeting as amended. The motion was approved.**

OTHER BUSINESS

- Possible dates for additional budget meetings were discussed.
- Due to the second Monday in December falling on Christmas Day, it was determined that the only regular meeting in December would be on 12/11/17.
- Ziegler noted several budget areas that will likely see increases, including the possibility of increasing police services and the purchase of speed tables and/or signs. Sneyd suggested putting the issue of increased police services on the warning for Town Meeting. Thayer noted the need to get the Highway and Fire Departments' view on speed bumps.

ADJOURNMENT

- **Sneyd made a motion to adjourn at 9:00pm. The motion was approved.**

Respectfully submitted by Cindy Wyckoff