

**Town of Plainfield
Select Board Meeting
April 23, 2018
Approved Minutes**

PRESENT: Alexandra Thayer (Select Board Member), Ross Sneyd (Select Board Chair), Tammy Farnham (Select Board Member), Linda Wells (Town Clerk/Treasurer), Keith Swann (Videographer), Cindy Wyckoff (Minutes Recorder), David Montgomery (Resident), Alice Merrill (Resident), Bram Towbin (Road Commissioner), George Cushing (Resident), and David Strong (Friends of the Plainfield Town Hall Opera House).

Ross Sneyd called the meeting to order at 6:30pm.

Prior to the start of the meeting, the Select Board interviewed Jade Walker for a vacant position on the Twinfield School Board. The Select Board then interviewed Michael Birnbaum and Jeremy Matt separately for a position on the newly formed Central Vermont Internet Communications Union District.

AGENDA

- Interview School Board Candidates
- Interview Central Vermont Internet Board Candidates
- Review Agenda
- Public Comment/Announcements
- Appointment to Twinfield School Board and Central Vermont Internet Board
- Town Clerk's Report & Warrants
- Road Report
- Block Party: Carlo Rovetto
- Gallison House Update
- Select Board Institute Update
- Emergency Management
- Minutes
- Adjourn

REVIEW AGENDA

- Sneyd removed the Block Party: Carlo Rovetto item from the agenda. **Sneyd made a motion to adopt the agenda as amended. The motion was approved.**

PUBLIC COMMENT/ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Sneyd announced that 5/5/18 is Green Up Day.
- Alexandra Thayer announced that the Sharps Disposal Alliance will hold a community forum in Barre on 5/2/18.
- Thayer announced that there will be a Spring Fling Sunday Brunch from 1am to noon on 4/29/18 at the Twin Valley Senior Center. Donations will support the Meals on Wheels program for Cabot, Calais, East Montpelier, Marshfield, Plainfield, and Woodbury.

APPOINTMENT TO TWINFIELD SCHOOL BOARD AND CENTRAL VERMONT INTERNET BOARD

- Sneyd noted that one candidate, Jade Walker, was interviewed for the open Twinfield School Board position. **Tammy Farnham made a motion to appoint Jade Walker to the Twinfield School Board. The motion was approved.**
- Sneyd noted that two candidates were interviewed for the open position on the Central Vermont Internet Communications Union District: Jeremy Matt and Michael Birnbaum. **Thayer made a motion to appoint Michael Birnbaum as the Plainfield representative to the Central Vermont Communications Union District. The motion was approved.** After a brief discussion, **Thayer made a motion to appoint Jeremy Matt as an alternate to the Central Vermont Communications Union District. The motion was approved.** Sneyd will communicate with all three to let them know the Select Board's decisions.

TOWN CLERK'S REPORT & WARRANTS

- Town Clerk/Treasurer Linda Wells presented the annual financial plan for the Highway Department for Select Board authorization. It is based on the budget for the 2018-19 fiscal year and needs to be submitted to the Vermont Agency of Transportation. **Sneyd made a motion to approve the annual financial plan for Town Highways to be submitted to the Vermont Agency of Transportation. The motion was approved.**
- Wells presented an agreement for year two of a three-year contract with Jason Cushing for mowing Town properties. **Sneyd made a motion to approve the contract with Jason Cushing to mow Town properties through 2020. The motion was approved.**
- Wells wanted to make the Select Board aware that new guidelines from Central Vermont Solid Waste Management District will require that towns increase their recycling efforts.
- **Sneyd made a motion to approve the warrants of 4/11/18, 4/13/18, 4/16/18, and 4/20/18. The motion was approved.**
- Wells reminded that the date of the public information hearing for the Gallison property reconsideration vote will be held on 5/7/18 at the Town Hall Opera House. The reconsideration vote will be held on 5/17/18 at the municipal building from 9am to 7pm. Absentee ballots will be available on 4/27/18.
- **Sneyd made a motion to approve a Fleet Permit request from Structures RBR and a Single Vehicle permit request from Fred Vance Trucking. The motion was approved.**
- Wells noted that Lynn Gallison wanted Wells to relay to the Select Board the estimate of \$9,000 that he had gotten for repair of the foundation of his house.

ROAD REPORT

- Road Commissioner Bram Towbin reported that the new Highway Department truck should be arriving the first week of May. After being updated, it will be ready to put into use by June.
- Towbin noted a meeting on 4/25/18 of Road Foremen coordinated by the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission regarding the Emerald Ash Bore, which has been spotted in the area. There are also two other pests present that could potentially cause harm to forests.
- Towbin reported that the Road Crew has begun grading roads.
- Towbin noted that the six-month personnel reviews went positively.
- Towbin reported that he had photographed and geo-tagged damage to trees from the October windstorm as required by FEMA for reimbursement.
- Thayer reported to Towbin calls she has received regarding the Town grader filling in areas by roads that the homeowners had recently cleaned out. Towbin responded that the Road Crew is trying to

correct, within reason, some of the issues that normally result from snow melts during the transition from winter to spring.

- Sneyd noted that Assistant Town Clerk/Treasurer Carol Smith has been trying to get the State and Fairpoint Communications to clean up some of the trees on US Route 2. Thayer related recent communications she has had regarding who is responsible for dealing with trees threatening powerlines. Smith was commended for her work toward addressing this issue.

OTHER BUSINESS: CORRECTION TO TIMES ARGUS ARTICLE

- Thayer reviewed the issue of the *Times Argus* incorrectly stating in an article following this past Town Meeting that Town Moderator Charles Barasch had allowed an illegal discussion on the floor while voting was taking place on the purchase of the Gallison property. Thayer noted that a retraction had been made by the paper, which was extremely small, and therefore wanted to submit an opinion piece affirming that Barasch was correct in allowing the discussion. Debate followed about whether to continue pursuing the issue with the *Times Argus*, which resulted in agreement that Thayer should submit the letter under her name on behalf of the Select Board.

SELECT BOARD INSTITUTE UPDATE

- Thayer reported on various topics she learned about during a Select Board Institute training, including upcoming Select Board action needed on a conflict of interest statement; the requirement to warn the public before the Select Board makes a decision on any important issue; and the positive and negative aspects regarding the highway departments of individual towns assisting one another. Discussion followed with Road Commissioner Towbin about the kind of cooperation Plainfield currently engages in with other towns.

GALLISON HOUSE UPDATE

- Thayer offered information regarding costs she has identified in the construction of a retaining wall, needed permits, and zoning. Sneyd made note of the lack of respect that has gone on in some instances in discussions around the purchase of the Gallison property and proposed that the Select Board arrange for a moderator to facilitate the informational hearing scheduled for 5/7/18. It was decided that Sneyd would contact Town Moderator Barasch and ask him to perform in that role at the public informational hearing. David Strong challenged the validity of the cost figures for the retaining wall presented earlier by Thayer. Strong noted that if the 5/17/18 vote affirms the original vote to purchase the property and the Select Board decides to demolish the building, the Friends of the Town Hall Opera House are willing to enter into a contract to be responsible for its removal. Farnham requested confirmation that the Friends are willing to donate only if the building was to be demolished, to which Strong responded affirmatively. Thayer noted that the property owner recently had forwarded to the Town an estimate to repair the foundation, stating that she did not think that the Town would be liable for the damage. Sneyd and Strong noted that the Water/Wastewater Department had acknowledged that the damage was caused by flushing the hydrants. A brief discussion followed on what the Town policy should be regarding the acknowledgement of responsibility for damage in any situation. George Cushing noted the loss of taxes on the Gallison property if the Town purchases it and that the purchase price of \$70,000 was not such a good deal. In terms of the possibility of snow being plowed into the Winooski River from the lot across from the Town Hall Opera House, Towbin made it clear that the Town does not plow snow into the river, and in the event of a big storm would cart the snow away as it currently does at Mill Street Park. Farnham thanked Thayer for her efforts in gathering the cost figures related to possible work needed at the Gallison property if purchased by the Town for a parking area.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

- Sneyd noted that the position of Emergency Management Director will be open as of 5/15/18 and recommended that the Select Board revisit the job description to determine if that is what the Select Board would like to move forward with in recruiting for a new candidate. Thayer suggested the possibility of the position being filled by a team rather than by a sole person who has to bear all of the responsibilities. Sneyd will include discussion on the position at the 5/14/18 Select Board meeting and invite Fire Chief Pat Martin to discuss his view on how the emergency management position intersects with the Fire Department. Sneyd proposed that the Town fulfill the outstanding request for reimbursement from outgoing Emergency Management Director Michael Billingsley. Towbin offered to donate \$200 from his Road Commissioner stipend, which Sneyd noted was not appropriate. **Sneyd made a motion to pay the entire \$236.25, which includes mileage of \$164.25 and printing costs of \$72 to outgoing Emergency Management Director Michael Billingsley.** Discussion continued regarding retrieving a series of maps from Billingsley that can be used by the Hazard Mitigation Committee and purchasing from Billingsley the walkie-talkies he bought. Farnham asked how it would work for others who pay for their own mileage if Billingsley is reimbursed. Towbin noted that no precedence has been created because in this particular instance, the Town had an overzealous volunteer whose heart was in the right place but who broke protocol and stepped down. **The motion was approved by a vote of two, with one opposed.**

APPROVE MINUTES

- **Sneyd mad a motion to approve the minutes from the 4/9/18 regular Select Board meeting and the 4/16/18 special Select Board meeting as written. The motion was approved.**

ADJOURNMENT

- **Sneyd made a motion to adjourn at 8:36pm. The motion was approved.**

Respectfully submitted by Cindy Wyckoff