

**Town of Plainfield  
Select Board Meeting  
December 9, 2019  
Approved Minutes**

**PRESENT:** James Volz (Select Board Member), Alexandra Thayer (Select Board Chair), Tammy Farnham (Select Board Member), Linda Wells (Town Clerk/Treasurer), Keith Swann (Videographer), Cindy Wyckoff (Minutes Recorder), Lauren Kelley (Intersection Discussion), Ben Koenig ((Intersection Discussion), Bram Towbin (Road Commissioner), Paula Emery (Intersection Discussion), David Strong (Intersection Discussion), Michele Braun (Friends of the Winooski), Greg Chamberlin (Intersection Discussion), Bob Atchinson (Energy Coordinator), Sarah Albert (Social Concerns Committee), Gail Falk (Social Concerns Committee), and Mary Niebling (Social Concerns Committee).

Prior to the beginning of the regular Select Board meeting, a public hearing took place regarding the Cutler Memorial Library planning grant. In addition to the members of the Select Board, those present were: Mary Hale, Loona Brogan, Barry King, and Lisa Ryan.

**Alexandra Thayer called the regular session of the Select Board meeting to order at 7:43pm.**

**AGENDA**

- Review Agenda
- Public Comment/Announcements
- Town Clerk's Report
  - Warrants
  - Health Insurance Starting January 2020 and Preliminary Discussion 2020-2021 Budget
- Road Commissioner's Report
- RAMP & Route 2 Blinking Light Intersection Discussion
  - Paula Emery and Ben Koenig
- Friends of the Winooski
  - Michelle Braun
- Energy Coordinator/Committee Budget
- Social Concerns Budget
- Other Business
- Agenda Items for 1/13/20 Meeting
- Adjourn

**REVIEW AGENDA**

- Thayer added to the agenda approval of Select Board minutes, approval of the letter for the Cutler Memorial Library, and update on the vermiculite removal application at the Historical Society building. **James Volz made a motion to approve the changes to the agenda. The motion was approved.**

**PUBLIC COMMENT/ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- Thayer reported on a recent Public Utilities meeting relating to the Marshfield dam.

## **TOWN CLERK'S REPORT**

### **- WARRANTS**

#### **- HEALTH INSURANCE STARTING JANUARY 2020 AND PRELIMINARY DISCUSSION 2020-2021 BUDGET**

- Town Clerk/Treasurer Linda Wells and Select Board members reviewed the dates and times of upcoming budget meetings.
- **Volz made a motion to approve warrants of 11/27/19, 12/2/19, 12/3/19, 12/6/19, and 12/9/19. The motion was approved.**
- **Tammy Farnham made a motion to authorize Thayer to sign the annual maintenance contract with Brook Field Service for the generator at the Town Hall Opera House in the amount of \$293. The motion was approved.**
- Discussion centered on the renewal of the health insurance plan for Town employees, the cost of which will increase 12.4% for 2020. Because the health insurance coverage is based on the calendar year and the Town's fiscal year runs from July to June, Wells had added 5% to the health insurance line item when the current Town budget was set to help offset an expected increase in the premium for the first six months of 2020. After discussing various coverage options, Thayer asked that the Select Board be mindful that while changing the coverage or increasing employees' contribution is a savings to the Town, it is also a reduction in pay for employees. While supportive of employees sharing increased health care costs with the Town, Road Commissioner Bram Towbin cautioned that it should be included in the calculus that Plainfield is competing against other, larger municipalities for talent. It was decided that the health care plan discussion would continue on 12/12/19.

## **ROAD COMMISSIONER'S REPORT**

- Road Commissioner Bram Towbin reported on the following:
  - Line painting, which Towbin would like to schedule for this spring, will cost \$9,000. Towbin will ask the company if the Town can pay half the amount at the time of service and the other half after 7/1/20, when the 2020/2021 Highway Department budget is available to draw from. Towbin recommended going with higher-quality application material so that it lasts for 2-3 years instead of the current material, which lasts only one season. It was decided that the budget discussion would continue at the meeting on 12/12/19. Towbin added that he would have the costs for the two big culvert projects at that time.
  - Towbin will be meeting with the engineers and the Road Crew on 12/10/19 regarding the project behind the Health Center.

## **RAMP & ROUTE 2 BLINKING LIGHT INTERSECTION DISCUSSION**

### **- PAULA EMERY AND BEN KOENIG**

- Residents Paula Emery, Ben Koenig, and David Strong were present to discuss the issue of closing the Main Street bridge during the proposed reconstruction of the Main Street/Route 2 intersection, including its effect on safety and businesses. Emery noted that the land behind the Park and Ride is for sale, an area that has been mentioned as a possible site for a traffic bridge while the Main Street bridge is closed. Stemming from discussions at a recent RAMP meeting, the area around the bridge could be beautified, possibly into a river park, as part of a walkable village. Thayer stated that Erin Parisi from the Vermont Agency of Transportation (VAOT) will be attending the 1/13/20 Select Board meeting. Emery, Koenig, Strong, and Towbin proposed the creation of an advisory committee that would gather information and hold hearings to remove some of the burden from the Select Board as the process moves forward. Thayer noted her concern about how things would be structured with VAOT's timeline as well as the role of an advisory committee. Strong noted several people who have expressed their willingness to serve on the advisory committee and presented a

draft resolution creating the advisory committee, spelling out how things would work, and when the advisory committee's report would be due. Thayer stated that the Select Board needed time to make a thoughtful decision about an advisory committee and what its role would be, and that because the meeting was behind time, that decision needed to be put off to another meeting. All agreed that the issue could go on the agenda for the 1/13/20 Select Board meeting.

## **FRIENDS OF THE WINOOSKI**

### **- MICHELLE BRAUN**

- Michelle Braun, director of the Friends of the Winooski (Friends), was present to discuss the organization's work with the Winooski headwater communities—Plainfield, Marshfield, and Cabot—with regard to flood resilience. The High Meadows Fund, which has funded the work of the Friends thus far, would like the Friends to expand beyond working with private landowners and engage with community leaders to ensure that the Friends' efforts on flood resilience are aligned with the priorities of the leadership in those communities. The plan is to prepare a proposal to the High Meadows Fund by the end of January 2020 with the three communities to work together on flood resilience. Braun requested a commitment by the Select Board that it is interested in engaging with the Friends on this effort and assigning someone to work on a planning committee. **Farnham made a motion to officially state that Plainfield is enthusiastic about participating in the next phase of the Water Wise Woodlands project. Volz proposed that the word "supportive" be used in place of "enthusiastic" in the motion. The motion was approved.** Thayer noted that the Select Board will appoint Bram Towbin to the planning committee.

## **ENERGY COORDINATOR/COMMITTEE BUDGET**

- Energy Coordinator Bob Atchinson was present to discuss the proposed Energy budget, noting that the total budget amount was similar to last year. Atchinson agreed to create a form for residents to sign up for energy audits, which will be posted to the Town's website. Atchinson noted that the line item with no cost associated with it refers to a question of whether cellulose in a portion of the attic at the Town Hall Opera House had been installed. Atchinson recalled that that area was left incomplete when most of the insulation work was originally done so that the electrician installing new lighting would have better access. Because Efficiency Vermont had signed off on all of the work needed at the Town Hall Opera House, including the attic area, Atchinson is waiting for confirmation that the work in that portion of the attic has been paid for but not completed. If not confirmed, the value of the cellulose for that area is approximately \$1,600, which the Town would have to provide. Thayer proposed signing off on the Energy budget and that Atchinson can submit additional information within the next few days.

## **SOCIAL CONCERNS BUDGET**

- Sarah Albert, Gail Falk, and Mary Niebling were present from the Social Concerns Committee to present their recommendations for funding the various proposals that were submitted. Falk noted that the total amount was less than last year; however, two of the organizations that usually apply—Circle and the Onion River Food Shelf—did not get their applications in on time. It was decided that rather than extending the time for them to submit their applications, they would be advised to go through the petition process. Discussion followed regarding adjusting the amounts of a couple of the applications and if the Social Concerns Committee's review was valuable to the decision-making process. The Select Board decided to reduce the funding for Our House from \$250 to \$150 for a combined total of \$7,696 and leave the rest as recommended by the Social Concerns Committee.

#### **OTHER BUSINESS**

- **Volz made a motion to authorize Thayer to sign the letter to Julia Connell on behalf of the Cutler Memorial Library. The motion was approved.**
- Thayer reported that the recently submitted vermiculite application form needed to be slightly altered, which she will do and resubmit.
- Thayer noted a request from Efficiency Vermont to talk to Jon Copans of the RAMP project regarding how the project is proceeding. **Volz made a motion to approve the Efficiency Vermont release form. The motion was approved.**
- Thayer suggested tabling the approval of minutes until the 1/13/20 meeting.

#### **AGENDA ITEMS FOR 1/13/20 MEETING**

- Erin Parizo from VAOT will be attending the meeting regarding the intersection project.
- Bram Towbin regarding the Friends of the Winooski.
- The meeting will be held at the Town Hall Opera House, perhaps in the downstairs area to avoid heating the entire building.

#### **ADJOURN**

- **Volz made a motion to adjourn at 8:40pm. The motion was approved.**

Respectfully submitted by Cindy Wyckoff