

**Town of Plainfield
Select Board Meeting
May 28, 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, Friends of the Town Hall Opera House), Cindy Wyckoff (Minutes Recorder), Mary Lane (Water/Wastewater Commission Chair), Bram Towbin (Road Commissioner), George Cushing (Delinquent Tax Collector), and David Strong (Friends of the Town Hall Opera House).

Alexandra Thayer called the meeting to order at 7:12pm.

AGENDA

- Review Agenda
- Public Comment/Announcements
 - May 31 & June 1 Cutler Memorial Book and Plant Sale & Request for Plant Donations
- Town Clerk's Report
 - Approval of Warrants
 - Purchasing Policy Discussion/Approval
- Mary Lane RE: Water/Wastewater Department Loan Approval for Engineering
- Road Commissioner's Report
 - Possible Reclassification of Road from Plainfield to US 302 - Brook Road in Plainfield – Select Board Approval for Pursuing This
 - Update on Main Street/US 2 Intersection Planning, including Implications for Water/Sewer
- Emerald Ash Borer Inventory & Select Board Endorsement
- Bike/Pedestrian Project
- Long-Term Planning
 - Revenues/Expenses for Town Hall Opera House
 - Delinquent Tax Collection
- Approval of May 13, 2019 Select Board Meeting Minutes
- Agenda Items for next Select Board Meeting
- Executive Session
- Adjourn

REVIEW AGENDA

- Thayer added an agenda item confirming arrangements regarding increasing the compensation for the Select Board minutes recorder to cover additional time scheduled for meetings in June, July, and August.

PUBLIC COMMENT/ANNOUNCEMENTS

- MAY 31 AND JUNE 1 CUTLER MEMORIAL BOOK AND PLANT SALE & REQUEST FOR PLANT DONATIONS

- Thayer announced the upcoming Book and Plant Sale at the Cutler Memorial Library.
- Thayer solicited for volunteers to help organize this year's Old Home Days event, which will be held on the second Saturday in September.

TOWN CLERK'S REPORT

- APPROVAL OF WARRANTS

- PURCHASING POLICY DISCUSSION/APPROVAL

- Town Clerk/Treasurer Linda Wells stated that she has received no responses to the Town's advertisement for bids to build an extension on the Town Shed. Road Commissioner Bram Towbin noted that he has not been contacted by anyone either.
- Wells stated that the completion date of the pilot program for ditching on Middle Road, which was originally supposed to be done by the end of June, has been extended to the end of July. Towbin noted that some work needs to be done to a driveway prior to starting the ditching project.
- Wells announced that the Better Back Roads grant application for work on Lower Road has been awarded. The grant will allow the Town to apply for funds to pay for ditching needed on Lower Road.
- James Volz identified some minor typos in the draft Purchasing Policy, which the Select Board reviewed and corrected.

MARY LANE RE: WATER/WASTEWATER DEPARTMENT LOAN APPROVAL FOR ENGINEERING

- Water/Wastewater Commission chair Mary Lane was present to request approval of a loan application to fund the 20-year evaluation of the Town's Water/Wastewater plant. Lane noted that three engineering firms responded to the request for quotations to perform the evaluation work and that the Commission decided to hire Aldrich & Elliot. The loan amount that the Town will request from the State Clean Water revolving loan program is \$22,600. If only the engineering evaluation is performed, 50% of the loan (\$11,300) amount is paid back over five years at 0% interest. **Volz made a motion to authorize the Water/Wastewater Commission to apply for a loan of \$22,600 from the State Clean Water revolving loan program. The motion was approved.**

TOWN CLERK'S REPORT (CONT'D)

- The Select Board continued to review the draft Purchasing Policy. **Tammy Farnham made a motion to approve the Purchasing Policy as amended. The motion was approved.**
- Bram Towbin asked if the safety vests have been ordered for the 15 Twinfield Union School students who will be undertaking an inventory of the Town's ash trees. Wells noted that she will order the vests.
- Thayer presented an application for an Access permit from Devonia LLC, the new hemp farm located at 865 Lower Road. **Volz made a motion to approve the application for an Access permit by Devonia LLC. The motion was approved.**
- Thayer noted the need for the Select Board to consider approving a warrant for the Animal Control Officer regarding unlicensed dogs in the Town. After a brief discussion, **Volz made a motion to authorize the Animal Control Officer take the steps necessary to deal with unlicensed dogs. The motion was approved.**
- **Volz made a motion to approve warrants of 5/16/19, 5/24/19, and 5/31/19. The motion was approved.**

ROAD COMMISSIONER'S REPORT

- POSSIBLE RECLASSIFICATION OF ROAD FROM PLAINFIELD TO US 302 - BROOK ROAD IN PLAINFIELD – SELECT BOARD APPROVAL FOR PURSUING THIS

- UPDATE ON MAIN STREET/US 2 INTERSECTION PLANNING, INCLUDING IMPLICATIONS FOR WATER/SEWER

- Prior to the Road Commissioner's report, Bram Towbin provided a brief update on the progress being made on the Town Plan, which he expects will be completed by the end of June or early July.
- Towbin reported on the following:
 - Regarding obtaining quotes for the work to build an extension onto the Town Shed, Towbin noted that he will post it to social media sites.
 - Three road projects are or will be underway: 1) addressing a culvert-erosion issue on Brook Road, remediation of which will start at the end of June; 2) a pilot program for ditching on Middle Road; and 3) a project on Lower Road.
 - Paving will be done in Martin Meadow, on Towne Avenue, and at the bottom of East Hill Road.
 - Crack filling on roads will be done in the fall.
 - An estimate is being sought for repainting crosswalks.
 - Street cleaning will be done tomorrow.
 - The sidewalks were cleaned last week.
 - Betsy Ziegler and the Conservation Commission have done very nice work planting in the Village.
- Thayer raised the issue of reclassifying Brook Road that runs from Plainfield to US Route 302, parts of which are in both Plainfield and Orange. Reclassifying the road, which is considered a major collector, would make it easier to access funding. Towbin noted that various requirements need to be met prior to obtaining the new designation, which he hoped that Dan Currier at Central Vermont Planning Commission might be able to have waived. Thayer presented a letter she had drafted to Dan Currier requesting consideration regarding Brook Road reclassification, noting that the Select Board can decide at a later time whether to move forward on the actual change. **Farnham made a motion to authorize Thayer to sign and send the letter to Dan Currier regarding the reclassification of Brook Road. The motion was approved.**

EMERALD ASH BORER INVENTORY & SELECT BOARD ENDORSEMENT

- Thayer reported on a Maple Hill School and Farm program, which provides training to those conducting an inventory of ash trees. The program involves students from local schools, who will both perform the inventory and deliver a presentation on the effort at the end of the process. Towbin provided background on the Emerald Ash Borer's presence in the area and the damage it causes to ash trees. The project will identify all ash trees along Town roads and in the right-of way, including any privately owned ash trees that may potentially impact Town roads or the right of way.

BIKE/PEDESTRIAN PROJECT

- Thayer noted that she has not received anything further from Bike/Pedestrian Bridge Project Manager Pat Travers, thus recommended tabling the item until the next meeting.

OTHER BUSINESS

- Bram Towbin noted that he had recently been approached by someone from the Plainfield Fire Department who expressed interest in sponsoring a block dance in front of Positive Pie. Because it would involve closing the street, the Select Board would need to approve it. Thayer agreed to reach out to Fire Chief Greg Light for more information.

BIKE/PEDESTRIAN PROJECT (CONT'D)

- David Strong asked the Select Board if it sees any role, beyond reviewing bids, for the project's Advisory Committee going forward. If not, Strong suggested that the Select Board advise Project Manager Pat Travers that until instructed otherwise, there is no reason for him to consult with the Advisory Committee. Discussion followed, including how the Main Street/Route 2 intersection project, slated for construction in 2022, might impact the new sidewalk installed as part of the Pedestrian Bridge project. Both Towbin and Strong noted that VTRANS has been made aware of the Pedestrian Bridge project in both recent and past meetings, with Strong adding that VTRANS will have to fix any damage it might cause to the sidewalks. Thayer responded that she would like to have that verified. Towbin noted that he will make Green Mountain Power (GMP) aware of the impending work at the intersection in terms of the location of GMP's utility poles in the area.

LONG-TERM PLANNING

- REVENUES/EXPENSES FOR TOWN HALL OPERA HOUSE

- DELINQUENT TAX COLLECTION

- Farnham reviewed the reasoning behind the Select Board's need to begin working on the Town budget prior to December by gaining a better understanding of the revenue and expense figures in various departments in order to determine goals for the Town.
- David Strong and Keith Swann, members of the Friends of the Town Hall Opera House (Friends), were present to provide information on the Town Hall Opera House. Strong noted that the current net operating cost is under \$10,000, that the current debt figure is \$22,000, and that there is more than \$7,000 in a dedicated reserve fund for the Town Hall Opera House with \$10,000 being added to that figure this year. Strong stated that with the additional parking on the former Gallison property, and more once the building is razed, revenue will increase because groups can hold larger events. Strong noted that revenues can be increased by targeting the facility rental market for private events and by increasing the private rental fee from \$100 per day to \$150 per day. Strong proposed that, starting on 7/1/19, the Friends work with a designated Select Board member to help develop its marketing campaign for private events, which would result in a reasonable expectation of raising \$7,500-\$8,000 in revenues in the coming year. **Volz made a motion to raise the private party rental fee from \$100 to \$150 for events. The motion was approved.** Farnham agreed to be the Select Board designee for working with the Friends in developing its marketing campaign for private events. Volz offered to provide additional help if needed.
- Delinquent Tax Collector George Cushing was present to discuss delinquent taxes, reporting that the current figure is approximately \$50,000. When he took over the position in 2009, the figure was closer to \$216,000. Cushing noted his process in working with people to catch up on tax bills. Discussion followed on school taxes and the lack of attention paid by taxpayers when school budgets are presented to voters.

APPROVAL OF MAY 13, 2019 SELECT BOARD MEETING MINUTES

- **Volz made a motion to approve the 5/13/19 Select Board meeting minutes as written. The motion was approved.**

COMPENSATION FOR THE SELECT BOARD MINUTES RECORDER

- Select Board minutes recorder Cindy Wyckoff noted that because there will be only one meeting per month during the upcoming months of June, July, and August, and that those meetings will each be extended by one hour, she requested that the Select Board approve compensation at her current

rate of \$12.50 per hour for two additional hours per meeting. One hour would be for the meeting itself and the other hour for the corresponding write up of the minutes. The result would be \$100 in compensation per each three-hour meeting. After a brief discussion, **Farnham made a motion to increase the compensation for each three-hour meeting to \$110. The motion was approved.**

AGENDA ITEMS FOR NEXT SELECT BOARD MEETING

- Pat Travers RE: the Bike/Pedestrian Project

MEETING TO SET THE TAX RATE

- A short discussion took place regarding a meeting date for the Select Board to set the tax rate. Although Farnham is out of town on the proposed date of 7/3/19, she can be available to participate by phone. Thayer will check in with Wells before finalizing the meeting date.

ADJOURN

- **Volz made a motion to adjourn at 9:15pm. The motion was approved.**

EXECUTIVE SESSION

- **Thayer made a motion to go into executive session under the provisions of 1 V.S.A. § 313(1)(E) to discuss a complaint that could lead to litigation. The motion was approved.** The executive session concluded at 9:45pm. No action was taken by the Select Board at the conclusion of the executive session and the meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted by Cindy Wyckoff