

Town of Plainfield Minutes of Town Meeting March 1, 2011

Town meeting was called to order at 10:10 A.M., March 1, 2011 by moderator Charlie Barasch as warned. He opened the meeting at the Plainfield Town Hall by reading a poem entitled "Spring" written by local resident Sherry Olsen. The polls were open from 9:00 Am to 7:00 Pm for Australian ballot voting on Article 1 and Article 2.

10:12 AM State Representative Janet Ancel thanked the Town for the privilege to serve Plainfield in Montpelier. She appreciates constituents' comments and encouraged to keep them coming. Her annual legislative report is available electronically and she will email it upon request. She is now Chair of the Finance committee. Stimulus funds are no longer available. There is an ongoing economic recession and Governor Shumlin supports single payer health care and again encouraged feedback from constituents on this issue. Representative Ancel was questioned about the suicide assistance bill; she has reservations about it. Town people voiced their concern about severe social services program cuts. Possible ways to increase income was taxing cigarettes, soda and they are looking into an internet sales tax.

Art. 1 To elect all necessary officers for the ensuing year.

MODERATOR			
CHARLES BARASCH	225		
TOWN CLERK			
LINDA WELLS	233	CEMETERY COMMISSIONER	
		JOANNE EDWARDS	202
TOWN TREAS			
LINDA WELLS	231	RECREATION DEPT 1 YR	
		not enough write-ins for election	
SELECTBOARD			
BRAM TOWBIN	184	RECREATION DEPT 2YRS	
		not enough write-ins for election	
LISTER			
WILLIAM BENKO	188	RECREATION DEPT	
		3YRS	
		not enough write-ins for election	
AUDITOR			
TERRY CALL - 2YRS	176	RECREATION DEPT	
- 3YRS		4YRS	
		not enough write-ins for election	
COLL OF DELINQUENT TAXES			
GEORGE CUSHING	199	RECREATION DEPT 5	
		YRS	
		not enough write-ins for election	
TOWN GRAND JUROR			
JAMES JAMELE	217	SCHOOL DIRECTOR	
		MONICA LIGHT - 2YRS	176
		MICHAEL NOBLES -	186

3YRS

TOWN LAW AGENT

JAMES JAMELE 218

All elected were incumbents, except the SB 3 yrs. Bram Towbin was new and was elected.

Art. 2 Shall the Town of Plainfield adopt existing Interim Zoning regulations as permanent zoning as proposed by the Planning Commission and approved by the Selectboard January 10, 2011? Article passed 160 votes yes 64 votes no

Art. 3 To hear reports of Town Officers and act on same.

Auditors Certificate

Greg Light moved to accept Auditor's Certificate with a second from Brian Pfeiffer and the motion was approved by two-thirds vote.

Town Clerk's Report

Bill Benko moved to accept the Town Clerk's Report with a second from Alice Merrill and the motion was approved by two-thirds vote.

Zoning Administrator Report - No report submitted

Town Treasurer's Report

Bill Benko moved to accept the Town Treasurer Report with a second from Jim Jamele and the motion was approved by two-thirds vote.

Collector of Delinquent Taxes Report

Jim Jamele moved to accept the Collector of Delinquent Taxes Report with a second by Bill Benko. It was asked if tax reminders could be sent out. Clerk Wells said tax dates are posted on the website, bill board, and newspapers. Alex Thayer added folks could put their own reminder with the three tax due dates and post it on their fridge. The motion was approved by two-thirds vote.

Lister's Report

Greg Light moved to accept the Lister's Report with a second from Rick Levy and the motion was approved by two-thirds vote.

Planning Commission Report

Bill Benko moved to accept the Planning Commission Report with a second from Jim Jamele. Brenda Lindemann asked if the Community Conversations vision statement could be put on the website. At this time no PC members were present and Clerk Wells said she will check with them. It was asked if there was a Summary for the interim regs. There are handouts available to look through. Other questions were: why is there Interim Zoning regs and why is it taking so long to get permanent zoning regs. Keith Terry reported a number of people were dissatisfied with the 2004 zoning regulations so the PC submitted interim regs to the Selectboard for adoption. The PC needs to update

the Town Plan before the Zoning Regulations can be fully updated. Because the Town Plan is not completed the interim regs are being considered for adoption as permanent zoning. The PC expects to have the Town Plan completed this year. If these interim regs are not approved today then the town has to revert back to the zoning regulations from 2004.

Once the Town Plan has been completed, the PC will work on updating the current Zoning Regulations. Alex Thayer said the process is lengthy and is based upon the Town Plan. Town Plan has to be updated every 5 years. Sandra Ross added the PC cannot make decisions laterally and have to follow the statutes piece by piece and encourage the public to attend PC meetings. Laura Ziesel said it is an open process and meetings are posted.

PC member Matt Cota did enter the meeting and advised that letters will be going out requesting input from the town voters and that the PC encourages participation to help in rewriting the Town Plan.

The motion was approved by a two-thirds vote.

Selectboard Report

Greg Light moved to accept the Selectboard's report with a second from Bill Benko.

Loona Brogan said she would like the Selectboard to include in their report issues when there are a significant number of community members who attended, for example, the Route 2 oak trees issue. Keith Terry said there is no particular protocol for the report. It would be cumbersome to include individual issues that came before the Selectboard because what is important to one is not important to another. Issues that come before the Selectboard are recorded in the minutes and these are available at the Town Clerk office and printed in the Fieldnotes.

Rick Levy raised questions that a proper cemetery audit has not been submitted for two years. The Selectboard has no jurisdiction over elected Town officials to ask the cemetery to produce the audit and this was confirmed by the Town Attorney Jim Jamele.

Steve Farnham questioned the process of making changes to the minutes after they are approved. Keith Terry said the Selectboard cannot make changes once approved but they can make statements in future minutes to correct mistakes or add more information.

The motion was approved by a two-thirds vote.

Social Concern's Committee Report

Greg Light moved to accept the Social Concern's Committee Report with a second from Bill Benko.

Greg Light noted that Marshfield appropriates less money and recommended that next year's committee should consider working with Marshfield and come up with reasonable funding amounts. He added this process is backed by the Town and disappointed that only two people are on it and he strongly recommended that people need to step up and serve.

The motion was approved by a two-thirds vote.

PACA Committee Report

Greg Light moved to accept the PACA Committee Report with a second from Becky Buchanan. It was asked if PACA and the Rec Committee be combined as one. No one was present to speak from the Rec committee. The PACA committee is very active and it was felt that it was better that PACA continue to do their mission and others need to step up and fill the Rec Committee vacancies as well as the many other town vacancies. Christine Farren added there needs to be an interest and then the rec committee will get involved. Karl Bissex has been on many committees and noted it is usually families who step up and get involved in the recreation committee.

The motion was approved by a two-thirds vote.

Water System Report

Sandy Ross moved to accept the Water System Report with a second from Dan Marcus and the motion was approved by a two-thirds vote.

Wastewater System Report

Sandy Ross moved to accept the Wastewater System Report with a second from Rick Levy.

Jim Jamele said there is a vacancy for this commission. Commission members do get a small stipend and they have to be on the water system. He encouraged folks to sign up.

Bob Atchinson informed the wastewater building has had an energy audit and will be putting a package together for the Selectboard's review.

It was questioned as to why some committees receive a stipend and others do not. Selectman Gary Graves answered because only board members and commissions such as selectboard, school board, etc. receive a stipend as they are elected or appointed and have more responsibility while committee members are volunteers.

The motion was approved by a two-thirds vote.

Cemetery Report

No report was included in the Town Report as decided by the Town Auditors even though Cemetery Commission Chairman Dale Bartlett submitted the inventory on time to the Town Clerk's office. Mr. Bartlett offered to give an oral report

Due to the treasurer's illness the reports were received late by the auditors. They were audited and returned for correction and the corrections were not submitted in time for the town report printing. There was much discussion about the amount of cemetery funds and questions as to why the Town does not have access to those funds. It was stated that cemetery funds are for upkeep and costs and not for town use. Town Attorney Jim Jamele confirmed it is statutory that cemetery funds are explicitly for cemetery use.

Alex Thayer moved to accept Mr. Bartlett's report with a second from Steve Farnham and the motion was approved by two thirds vote.

Karl Bissex emphasized that with embezzlement issues around the state he encouraged Mr. Bartlett to keep working with auditors to stay on task.

Bram Towbin suggested meeting with the town attorney and figure out a way to utilize the cemetery money for the town such as buying a piece of equipment and renting it to the town.

Round of applause for the cemetery commission.

Conservation Commission Report

Greg Light moved to accept the Conservation Report with a second from Bill Benko.

Sarah Albert stated that the conservation committee has offered input to the Planning Commission for the Town Plan they but have not heard back from them.

The motion was approved by two thirds vote.

E-911 Report

Bill Benko moved to accept the E-911 Report with a second from Bob Atchinson and the motion was approved by two thirds vote.

Fire and Rescue Report

Sandy Ross moved to accept the Fire and Rescue Report with a second from Rick Levy.

Steve Farnham asked if the two reports, Fire/Rescue and Fast Squad, could be combined as one report. Greg Light answered that Fast Squad requires much more paperwork such as health reports, licenses, etc. Mr. Light has asked for help for the past eight (8) years and would like to see new blood in both the Fire/Rescue and Fast Squad. Steve Farnham asked what are the requirements and the perks. The training is anywhere from 80 to 200 hours, perks are the thanks; get to meet a lot of people and advised contacting Fire Chief Martin for more information.

Alex Thayer asked if there is a particular recommendation for the 911 house number. Yes there is a standard sign for both mailbox and the house. Greg Light said it is easier to find a house in Marshfield rather than in Plainfield. Sandra Ross 911 Coordinator said that is because Marshfield decided to pay for standard signs whereas Plainfield did not. Keith Terry said the new sign standards do not affect the 911 signs. Sandy Ross will check into the cost for signage for Plainfield.

Round of applause for the Fire and Rescue and Fast Squad service.

The motion was approved by a two thirds vote.

Fast Squad (See Fire and Rescue Report)

Fire Warden Report No report submitted

Energy Coordinator Report

Rick Levy moved to accept the Energy Coordinator Report with a second from Sandy Ross.

Bob Atchinson gave an overview of some programs in place such as an energy camp at Twinfield School. School board member Pat Boyle added the students are excited about participating in this program.

Laura Zeisel thanked Bob for the shelter at the bus stop. Round of applause.

Mr. Atchinson reported the Town received grants to do an energy audit at the town hall and the wastewater plant and is working on grants to follow through with recommendations from the audit from Efficiency Vermont. The motion was approved by a two thirds vote.

Art. 4 Shall the Town authorize an appropriation of \$2500.00 to the Conservation Fund? Greg Light moved to authorize an appropriation of \$2500.00 to the Conservation Fund with a second from Sarah Albert and the motion was approved by a two thirds vote.

Art. 5 Shall the Town of Plainfield appropriate the sum of \$8,333.00 as its share of the second year cost of commuter bus service along Route 2 with service into Montpelier? This appropriation funds a portion of the total cost of the service, which will also be supported by appropriations from other towns, a state grant, and rider fares. Bob Atchinson moved to accept Article 5 as written with a second from Kate Harper and the motion was approved by a two thirds vote. Bob Atchinson reported the projected ridership averages 38 people per day and they exceeded it in January 2011 with 51 people per day. 19% of the total riders are from Plainfield. Mr. Atchinson thanked the Selectboard for applying money from the Town budget to have the Shelter installed.

Round of applause

Dan Marcus said he would use the bus but it has time constraints. Mr. Atchinson advised folks could call GMTA to set up rides because many buses are running through. Other questions were: what's the chance of getting another bus route established; how long does the Town contribute and the length of the commitment.

At the voters' consent Moderator Charlie Barasch permitted GMTA representative David Armstrong to speak: Mr. Armstrong said today the Town is voting on the second year. After the third year typically AOT picks up the costs. Bus schedules are available on the GMTA website and not much chance for other bus routes. He said call dispatch for your requests. Monica Light added it also provides a connection to Waterbury from Montpelier.

Art .6 Shall the Town voters authorize the expenditures for the following not- for-profit service agencies as was recommended by the appointed Social Services Committee?

Battered Women's Services	\$ 525.00
Central VT Comm. Action Council	\$ 500.00
Central VT Council on Aging	\$ 1,750.00
Central VT Home Health & Hospice	\$ 2,500.00
Family Center of Wash Cty	\$ 400.00
Friends of the Winooski River	\$ 50.00
Good Beginnings of Central VT	\$ 200.00
Green Mountain Transit Agency	\$ 786.00
People's Health & Wellness	\$ 750.00
Retired Senior Volunteer Program	\$ 150.00
Sexual Assault Crisis Team	\$ 200.00
Onion River Foodshelf	\$ 700.00
Twinfield Learning Center	\$ 400.00
Twinfield Together Mentoring	\$ 250.00
Twin Valley Senior Center	\$ 1,000.00
VT Association of the Blind	\$ 200.00
Washington Cty Court Diversion	\$ 150.00
Washington Youth Service Bureau	\$ 300.00
Total	\$10,811.00

Rick Levy moved to accept the expenditures with a second by Greg Light.

Debra Stoleroff moved to amend the Friends of the Winooski expenditure from \$50.00 to \$300.00 with a second from Rick Levy.

Loona Brogan spoke in favor of the amendment adding that Plainfield's Martin Johnson who lived at Greatwood Farm (now the campus of Goddard College) used to swim in the Winooski River until people piped their sewage into the river. He vowed to clean up the River and was the first to take on the project.

Greg Light pointed out that Marshfield is not giving any funds to Friends of Winooski and he encourages voters to stick with what the committee has decided.

Peter Youngbaer pointed out that Friends of Winooski did not argue the said amount and Bob Barasch added that all these social concerns would like more money and opposes the amendment on those grounds.

Karl Bissex moved to stop discussion of this amendment with a second from Sandy Ross. All in favor of stopping this amendment and the ayes have it.

All in favor of changing the amendment from \$50 to \$300 was defeated with two-thirds vote.

Other discussion ensued as to why Plainfield funds \$400.00 to the TLC afterschool program while Marshfield only funds \$100.00. Greg Light suggested that whoever is on next year's committee that they work with the Town of Marshfield to expend an equal sharing for TLC funding.

Steve Farnham asked why school activities were not in the school board budget. School Board member Pat Boyle said some of the programs are independently funded separate from the school although the Supervisory Union receives and processes the checks.

Expenditures for non-profit agencies were approved in the amount of \$10,811.00 by a two-thirds vote.

12:28 PM Award Certificates: Because of the changes of PC, ZBA and adding the DRB Clerk Wells and Selectman Keith Terry awarded certificates to former members for their years of service:

Zoning Board of Adjustment Members:

Alexandra Thayer for 19 years

Doug Weinreich for 12 years

David Montgomery for 26 years

David Diamantis for 3 years

Joseph Klein for 3 years

Planning Commission Members:

Doug Weinreich for 6 years

Melinda Vieux for 14 years

Frank Mitchell for 6 years

Ben Graham for 6 years

Bob Atchinson for 3 years

Sarah Albert 15 years

Selectman Keith Terry thanked them on behalf of the town for their faithful service.

Other certificates were awarded to:

Greg Light for his 6 years as Fire Warden and Allen Clark for his 10 years of service to the Conservation Commission.

Clerk Wells presented Selectman Keith Terry a card and money tree for his 5 years of service on the Selectboard.

Keith Terry stated he felt honored to serve the community. He would occasionally hear complaints about Plainfield but Plainfield is a great place to live particularly if you have an emergency. Plainfield has a great team. He also gave appreciation for his wife's support for his service which has impacted her life. She knew a lot of people in

Plainfield by their voice because of the many phone calls but would not know them in person.

Art. 7 Shall the Town voters authorize an appropriation of \$25,000.00 to the Cutler Memorial Library to pay for the librarian and the purchase of books and materials to support the mission of the library?

Sarah Albert moved to accept Article 7 with a second from Sandy Ross.

Loona Brogan said she is honored to be the librarian to this community. She has promoted many Library activities such as audio, wifi, etc. The Library has received a loan for a new heating system.

Bob Atchinson made a motion to amend the article to add \$1000.00 for lighting at the library with a second from Kate Harper. Monica Light asked why it wasn't included in the original warning.

The amendment was approved to increase the appropriation from \$25,000 to \$26, 000 by a two-thirds vote.

Art. 8 To see what amount of money the Town will vote to pay for water and wastewater departments for the period of July 1, 2011 to June 30, 2012.

Town Clerk Linda Wells moved with a second from Deb Stoleroff to appropriate \$130,140.04 for the water budget and to appropriate \$201,689.04 for the wastewater budget.

Bob Atchinson asked there was a capital improvement fund to pay for any energy efficiency. Jim Jamele affirmed they do have a capital improvement fund.

The motion was approved by a two-thirds vote.

Art. 9 To see what amount of money the Town will vote to pay for highways, bridges, fire department, and administrative operations of the Town of Plainfield for the period of July 1, 2011 to June 30, 2012.

Keith Terry moved to appropriate \$793,323.52 to pay for expenditures as written in Article 9 for Fiscal Year 2011-2012 with a second from Jim Jamele.

Both the Town Clerk and Selectboard reported the income of the town significantly exceeds what was projected. Delinquent tax collections have been high even up to \$25,000.00. After the success of collecting the taxes, there is very little delinquent tax left so we could not plan on that income and so lowered the projected income from \$75,000.00 to \$50,000.00. This matches the item in the expense column to cover the amount the town usually has to pay the school district even though the town may not have collected it yet.

After the second collection in February an amount has to be sent to the school and the balance in sent in May.

As of February 23, 2011 the total of last year's delinquent taxes was \$119,700. That is income already figured to pay this year's budget. Even with lowering that projected income by \$25,000.00 is 7.3% less than the present year's budget.

Keith Terry said State aid for highways was raised because the town's actual receipts were \$91,000.00, raised the highway grant and miscellaneous income line and added the Town Hall rental for \$8,000.00.

Budget adopted last year had two items that were not included in this year's budget \$25,000.00 for the garage heating system and \$7,000.00 for an outside audit. The town only had one auditor and Mary Etta Chase stepped forward and we did not have to hire an outside auditor.

The budget does include a 5% wage increase (3% step increase and a 2% cost of living increase given to all hourly employees.

Sarah Albert commented that the street tree maintenance budget item was removed from the budget last year as a one-time omission but noted it is not included in this year's budget but noted there is an increase to the landscape budget item.

Keith Terry said when the Selectboard received the budget request from the Conservation Commission it did not include the street tree maintenance funds and perhaps that omitted item could be used out of the landscape item.

Sarah Albert moved to amend the street tree line item by adding \$500 with a second from Kate Harper.

David Strong suggested the selectboard could earmark that amount from under line item town property landscaping instead of adding another \$500 to the budget.

Since this suggestion was agreeable, Sarah Albert wanted to withdraw her motion but according to moderator Charlie Barasch the motion could not be withdrawn.

The town voted on the amendment to add \$500 to the street line item and the amendment was defeated by two-thirds vote.

There were concerns about Highway overtime. Overtime is paid because they have to come in after 2 pm. (normal schedule is 6 AM to 2 PM) It was suggested rather than working longer hours to hire a 4th employee. Another asked how other towns handle this situation. Selectboard does not know how other towns budget for highway employees.

Laura Zeisel added that fringe benefit costs such as health insurance puts the cost over the budget. Karl Bissex pointed out that the current crew has been responsible and skilled with equipment and they work well. Steve Farnham is please with their road work, but suggested a part-time employee with cross training.

Road Foreman Mike Nolan who was not present should be asked if there is a need for another employee.

Bob Atchinson moved to amend to add \$5,000.00 to the existing \$8,000.00 to the town hall maintenance line item with a second from Ben Graham.

Selectman Graves said its time to take a good look at the building to fix it right and strongly recommended stopping adding so much money each year. There are heating, insulating, and rot issues, structure concerns, etc and it doesn't do the town a service by nickel and diming each year. It would be best to have a building inspector take a look and provide figures for budgeting. Also Mr. Caleb Pitkin has an interest in moving the Town Hall to another location for local theatre purposes.

Monica Light supports Selectman Grave's comment on the process of budget development and Ben Graham support's Selectman Graves comments but said there was a need to have the building inspected sooner rather than later because it is a major energy expense.

Selectboard was asked if there are plans to hire someone to do a thorough inspection of the town hall. At this time the selectboard has not hired an inspector and there is no money in the budget to do so.

Keith Terry's major concern is the roof, major structural change and a new furnace is needed. He reminded the public that \$100,000 was put into this building some years ago and asked is this building worth putting any more large amounts of money into it.

Selectman David Strong supports the addition of \$5,000.00 to the budget.

Rachel Desilets asked if there were reserve replacement funds and Clerk Wells said there was no reserve fund for the town hall but there is a municipal building reserve fund.

Betsy Ziegler moved to call a question to stop debate on the amendment with a second from Mary Neibling and the motion passed with a two-thirds vote.

All in favor of the amendment to increase the town hall maintenance budget line item from \$8,000.00 to \$13,000.00 and the motion was approved.

1:30 PM Ben Graham moved that the line item for the PACA Skills directory be changed to PACA Local Directory with a second from Sandy Ross and the motion passed with a two-thirds vote.

Peter Youngbaer said there seems to be a misunderstanding of using the \$5,000.00. He moved to amend Bob Atchinson's motion to include the town budget to use the \$5,000.00 from the town hall maintenance item for a full building audit with second by Ben Graham. Alex Thayer questioned the procedure to add the directive to the budget vote and moderator Charlie Barasch disagreed stating the town can do directives.

Mary Neibling spoke in favor of the amendment and called a question to stop debate with a second from Dave Spence.

All those in favor of stopping the debate passed with a show of hands 27 to 7.

All those in favor of adding the directive to the Selectboard to use money from the town hall maintenance to conduct a complete audit of the building passed with a show of hands 27 to 12.

Monica Light inquired as to why Central Vermont Humane Society is a new line item as it has not been in previous budgets. Selectman Graves said the Selectboard approved this amount because it allows Plainfield citizens to drop off stray animals during business hours and the ACO can bring in stray animals at anytime 24 hours a day.

All in favor of paying \$798,353.52 for Fiscal Year 2011-2012 to pay for highways, bridges, fire department, and administrative operations of the Town of Plainfield for the period of July 1, 2011 to June 30, 2012 was approved.

Art. 10 Shall the Town vote to accept the provisions of public statutes relating to the collection of taxes by the Town Treasurer, (VSA 32 Section 4791) and vote to collect municipal taxes thirty days from mailing and not prior to August 1, 2011 and collect school taxes on November 9, 2011 and February 8, 2012, collecting half of the total school taxes on each of those dates?

Jim Jamele moved to accept Article 10 as written with a second from Sandy Ross and the motion was approved by a two-thirds vote

Art. 11 To transact any other business that may properly come before the meeting.

The following community members who had a booth setup at the Town Meeting extended their appreciation to the community:

Mary Neibling on behalf of supporting PACA by selling pies

Joyce Fowler on behalf of Friends of the Cutler Memorial Library

Alexis Smith on behalf of the Plainfield Historical Society and reminded the community of an exhibit of historical pictures of Plainfield at the community center until Sunday March 13, 2011.

Fire and Rescue for their coffee and pastries.

Betsy Ziegler on behalf of the Twinfield School Farm Project by taking seed orders.

Michael Birnbaum from Cloud Alliance spoke. His company has been providing broadband service for five years to the community and informed the community about the proposed 100 ft wireless broadband tower which will provide coverage for Plainfield and surrounding communities such as Hardwick, Wolcott and Woodbury. He said a public informational meeting is scheduled for Monday, March 14th 7:00 PM at the Town Hall.

Peter Youngbaer inquired about the 5 vacancies on the rec committee and suggested abolishing the voting process and appointing people to fill the vacancies. Keith Terry says it needs to be placed on next year's warning to vote to appoint rather than elect. Also public hearings have to be conducted beforehand.

PACA announced a Raffle for a hammock from Guatemala donated by Bram Towbin with a drawing on May 1, 2011. Proceeds will go to a new local directory as a good resource of local skills and provides connection within the community and surrounding towns.

1:55 PM Sandy Ross moved to adjourn with a second from Gary Graves and the motion was approved.

Respectfully submitted,
Jeanne Lamica
Linda Wells

Approved by the Selectboard April 11, 2011.