

Town of Plainfield Minutes of Town Meeting March 3, 2009

Town meeting called to order at 10:00am, March 3, 2009 at the Plainfield Town Hall as warned. The polls were open from 9:00am to 7:00pm for Australian ballot voting on Article 1 and Article 2.

Article 1: To elect all necessary officers for the ensuing year.

The following officers were elected:

Moderator	Charles Barasch
Town Clerk	Linda B. Wells
Town Treasurer	Linda B. Wells
Selectboard 3 years	Gary Graves
Lister 3 years	Sandra Ross
Auditor 3 years	Lorraine Cappetta
Delinquent Tax Collector	George Cushing
Town Grand Juror 1 year	James Jamele
Town Law Agent 1 year	James Jamele
Cemetery Commissioner 5 years	Athalie Blackburn
Recreation Committee 1 year	not enough write-in votes
Recreation Committee 2 years	not enough write-in votes
Recreation Committee 3 years	not enough write-in votes
Recreation Committee 4 years	not enough write-in votes
Recreation Committee 5 years	not enough write-in votes
School Director 3 years	Patricia Boyle

Article 2: Shall the town borrow a sum not to exceed \$200,000 for the purpose of the development of a micro hydro electric power plant to be located on the site of the Old Batchelder Mill on Mill Street in Plainfield?

This article was approved. The results were 238 votes yes to 84 votes no.

Charlie welcomed everyone to town meeting and opened the meeting by reading the poem "Hunger Moon". Charlie announced that the Fireman's Club has food for sale and the Friends of the Library have Primroses for sale and a raffle for a basket full of Vermont products.

Janet Ancel, State Representative is here to speak to us. Janet is concerned about increased budget need and revenue shortfalls. She is also concerned about the proposal to cut 660 state workers. Marylou Wells tells Janet that she is concerned about job losses of self employed persons. She wants to know how they are being accounted for. Janet admits that there has not been a lot of focus on the self employed. Marylou also asked about the fact that Obama is considering taking away the benefit of claiming Mortgage Interest on taxes. Rose Paul spoke of a website you can visit about economic stimulus dollars. Rachel Desilets went on a site "stimulus.org" and only Burlington projects are listed Janet says she was not aware of that site, but other sites list this area. Mary Niebling is concerned that budget cuts are hitting low income people unproportionally.

Alex Thayer is troubled about the way we fund education tax with Act 60 and Act 68. Janet says that effort is being made to talk about how we fund schools, we could scrap Act 60 and Act 68 but we can't get rid of equity, if someone finds a better way, we will look at it.

Charlie now addresses the meeting to tell us that this is the first year that we can discuss Australian Ballot items, the legislature passed a law last year and he talked to the Secretary of State's Office yesterday and it is unclear how we are to do it. We can do it right before other business or we can do it now. If there is no objection we will now discuss Article 2. Shall the town borrow a sum not to exceed \$200,000 for the purpose of the development of a micro hydro electric power plant to be located on the site of the Old Batchelder Mill on Mill Street in Plainfield? Ben Koenig motions to discuss the article. Jan Waterman seconds.

Ben Koenig says that he is concerned about sound; otherwise he thinks it is a great idea. Keith Terry, Selectboard Chair asks Claudia Clark of the Selectboard to answer the questions about the project because she has studied this on behalf of the selectboard. Claudia reports that she asked the turbine company, The Mavel Company, about noise levels. They reported that it was 85 decibels at 1 meter. She talked to the Noise Pollution Clearing House in Montpelier. Their primary mission is to reduce noise at the source. They are frequently called in after a project is done. They are excited to work with the town in the early stages of design. So to answer the question, no, we don't know what the sound will be. That is why we are asking to have the vote on the money, if we want to pursue the project then we need to fund the project. We can't study it unless we have money in the budget. We want to do this project environmentally sound and socially responsible, so noise is a very important factor. Ben wanted to know if there were similar projects around that we could compare to. Claudia answered that this turbine is different than what we normally see so we don't have another one to compare it to. My husband and I took a road trip to listen to power houses. Some are noisy and some are not. Marylou Wells wants to know if we can get Economic Stimulus money for this project. Claudia had read about \$\$ available for renewable energy and called Congressman Welch, Senator Leahy and Senator Sanders. She heard back from Senator Sanders office and the money is primarily for energy efficiency projects not for projects like ours. Marylou reminds us that we need a new grader. Charlie reminds us to stay on the subject. Keith tells Marylou that we would have to increase taxes to buy a grader. The Hydro project will be tax neutral. Marylou wants to know what this means. Keith answers that we will have to pay on the bond for the Hydro project, but we will produce our own power and save on those electricity costs therefore we will "neutralize" the cost. Bob Barasch is concerned about major repairs in the future and who would be responsible. Claudia answered that we do not expect any major repairs for 20 or 30 years but we would share the cost with GMP and we have done some work with an attorney in Montpelier, Gerry Tarrant who has an extensive background working with and doing utility agreements. Jan Waterman thanked Claudia for such a good presentation on the Hydro projects on two occasions. She further adds that she thinks partnering with GMP is a good idea and she thinks we should vote this in. Bernie Noe opines that you would have to be right next to the turbines to receive the noise level that would be damaging to

hearing, as you stepped away from the turbines the decibels would go way down. Claudia commented that you could not safely be that close to the turbines. Andy Robinson adds that he also thinks it's a good idea. Mit Allenby asks what is in this for GMP. Claudia answers that the contracts with Vt. Yankee and Hydro Quebec are expiring so GMP is looking for any renewable energy source that they can add to their portfolio. Con Hogan wants to know when the bond would end. Claudia answers that we would bond in 2010 for 20 years. Karl Bissex speaks in favor of the project. He doesn't think that the noise will be noticeable. Erin Malloy wants to know if the summer flow of the river will sustain the turbines. Claudia says that the analysis that Community Hydro did takes into account the various flows of the river. Ben Graham wants to know how much power will be produced and how much the town will use. Claudia answers that the facility is expected to produce 345,000 kWh per year. The town would own between 51% to 55% and we would use 52%. 179,000 kWh would be available for the town to use. Rachel Desilets wants to know if we considered keeping all of the power. Claudia answered that at the moment we are limited by Group Net Metering which means all facilities powered must be related. Joanne Szwed speaks up to say that she doesn't want to join up with GMP. Claudia tells her that the current grant is based on what they presented; it is based on a partnership with GMP. Mr. Capobianco wants to know that since GMP will own 48% do we have to pay for 48% of the power to them. Claudia answers that the 48% payment is the power itself. Bob Barasch speaks up to say that he remembers that years ago John Warshow did an extensive study on our dam and that he thought it was a risky project. Bob urges us to be cautious; we should not do this project without GMP. Steve Farnham thinks that this is a community that would like to do away with nuclear power, we need to do something different, and this project looks pretty good to him. He will vote for it. Susan Egerton is impressed by how much money this will save the town. Rob Bridges suggests we call the question to stop discussion. Rick Levy seconds. The ayes have approved stopping the discussion by 2/3 vote.

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

Auditor's Certificate Motion to accept by Rick Levy. Seconded by Jim Jamele. The ayes have accepted the report.

Town Clerk's Report Motion to accept by Rick Levy. Seconded by Jim Jamele. Jan Waterman wants to thank the anonymous contributor for the Fuel Assistance Fund. The ayes have accepted the report.

Zoning Administrator's Report Motion to accept by Jim Jamele. Seconded by Rick Levy. The ayes have accepted the report.

Treasurer's Report Motion to accept by Rick Levy. Seconded by Jim Jamele. The ayes have accepted the report.

Delinquent Tax Collector's Report Motion to accept by Jim Jamele. Seconded by Rachel Desilets. Mary Niebling would like to hear a report by the Delinquent Tax Collector. Sue Remington speaks, she says she has many people on payment plans, she

begs people to pay, she asks them to pay a little at a time. Some people are paying. She doesn't think that tax sales are the answer. Rick Levy wants to know what the selectboard has done to encourage the Delinquent Tax Collector to have tax sales. Keith Terry answers that a letter was written to Sue in 2007 asking her to have a tax sale. Sue came up with 4 properties that went to a lawyer to start the tax sale process. A year later, they still didn't go for tax sale. Alex Thayer opines that people will find a way to pay taxes if they are going up for tax sale. It is not up to the town to be a social service agency. If we don't do something now we will be in even more trouble when the next tax bill comes out. Susan Egerton commented that she was talking to someone and they were saying that Plainfield has a reputation for people being allowed to not pay taxes. The ayes have accepted the report.

Lister's Report Motion to accept by Rick Levy. Seconded by Jim Jamele. Sandy Ross, Lister discussed how the reappraisal process works. Taxes are based on the Town budget and the School budget. If everyone's property value goes up fairly the taxes should not go up. We all share the burden. We need to get as close to a 100% CLA as possible so that we won't have to reappraise again too quickly. Donny Osman wants us to thank Sandy. It's a thankless job, and he won't thank her either, but he appreciates her. The ayes have accepted the report.

Planning Commission Report Motion to accept by Jan Waterman. Seconded by Bob Atchinson. Ben Graham of the Planning Commission says that the Planning Commission is working on a revision to the Town Plan. It hasn't been done since 2000. They want to include the whole town in the process. There is a survey that they would like everyone to fill out, and they will have Public Meetings that they want everyone to attend. The ayes have accepted the report.

Selectboard's Report Motion to accept by Karl Bissex. Seconded by Bill Benko. The ayes have accepted the report.

Social Concerns Committee Motion to accept by Mary Niebling. Seconded by Rick Levy. Susan Egerton, chair of the committee, spoke. She wants people to know the meetings are posted in 3 places around town. Susan spoke about the process of going over all the applications for funding. All the information that was received was made available to the public. The Social Concerns Committee will accept checks for any amount over and above what they recommend for the various agencies to be passed along to the agencies. Susan would also like to have a fund raiser in the future to help offset the funding from the town for these agencies. The ayes have accepted the report.

PACA Committee Report Alice Merrill spoke about PACA's vision and mission. Adrienne Allison introduced the new Skills Directory put out by PACA. It is now available and it's free. Brenda Lindemann wants us to know that a lot of effort was put into the directory. Ban Graham says that there are a lot of local skills and resources listed in the directory. Susan Egerton thanks the committee for their work. The ayes have accepted the report.

Water Department Report Motion to accept by Rick Levy. Seconded by Bill Benko. The ayes have accepted the report.

Wastewater Department Report Motion to accept by Rick Levy. Seconded by Jim Jamele. The ayes have accepted the report.

Cemetery Commissioner's Report Motion to accept by Jim Jamele. Seconded by Rick Levy. Rick Levy wants to know if the town can access some of the cemetery funds. Dale Bartlett answers no because the law says that the money can't be touched except for cemetery uses. Andy Robinson wants to know if the Cemetery could buy the Hydro Bond, and Dale again replies no. The ayes have accepted the report.

Conservation Commission Report Motion to accept by Bill Benko. Seconded by Bob Atchinson. The ayes have accepted the report.

E-911 Report Motion to accept by Bill Benko. Seconded by Rick Levy. The ayes have accepted the report.

Fire and Rescue Report Motion to accept by Jim Jamele. Seconded by Jan Waterman. The ayes have accepted the report.

Fire Warden Report Motion to accept by Rick Levy. Seconded by Bill Benko. Jan Waterman thanked Greg Light for his work as Fire Warden. The ayes have accepted the report.

Plainfield Energy Coordinator Report Motion to accept by Jan Waterman. Seconded by Jim Jamele. Bob Atchinson, the Energy Coordinator would like to tell us that they have received a grant to do free energy audits in homes and offer free energy improvements. The ayes have accepted the report.

Art. 4 Shall the Town voters authorize an appropriation of \$2,500.00 to the Conservation Fund? Motion to accept by Jim Jamele. Seconded by Andy Robinson. George Springston spoke in favor of the conservation fund; it is available to anyone wanting to conserve land in town. The ayes have approved the motion.

Art. 5 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	\$300.00
Good Beginnings of Central VT	\$300.00
Green Mountain Transit Agency	\$786.00
People's Health and Wellness	\$750.00

Prevent Child Abuse	\$500.00
Retired Senior Volunteer Program	\$150.00
Onion River Foodshelf	\$700.00
Twinfield Learning Center	\$375.00
Twin Valley Senior Center	\$500.00
VT Association of the Blind	\$300.00
Washington Cty Court Diversion	\$150.00
Washington Cty Youth Service Bureau	\$300.00
Total	\$10,386.00

Motion by Mary Niebling to accept. Seconded by Bill Benko. Erin Malloy would like to amend the amount to Good Beginnings of Central VT to \$400.00. Seconded by Rachel Lamagna. Owen Bradley verifies that the Social Concerns Committee has gone over all of these. Donny Osman supports these amounts. Lisa Olsen of the committee welcomes checks for higher amounts to be given to the agencies. Mary Lane stated that the agencies were given ample time to increase their request. The nays have opposed the proposed amendment. Monica Bettis wants to know how Green Mountain Transit uses the money in our area. Bob Atchinson says that transportation from Rte 2 in our area is a concern, they are considering a van pool or bus depending on demand. Motion to call the question by Karl Bissex. Seconded by Andy Robinson. The ayes have approved calling the question by 2/3 vote. The ayes have approved the original motion.

Art. 6 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. Motion to accept by Mary Niebling. Seconded by Daniel Marcus. Bill Benko wants to know what the budget for the library is; what they spend the money on. Betsy Blackshaw, a trustee, answers that they are level funding this year. Alex Thayer opines that libraries are a good source for people especially in hard economic times. Melanie Benko says that we should be informed of what the library is spending money on. Donny Osman agrees that we should know where each dollar goes. Betsy Blackshaw points out that last years budget shows line items. Rhea Wilson thinks that we should give the money to the Kellogg Hubbard library. Alex Thayer reminds us that it is a 20 mile round trip. She supports our library. Meg Davis thinks that it is very important to have local media access. Leda Schubert supports the library, but can we continue to support it? She says that we should use the library, that way, you get your moneys worth. The ayes have approved the motion.

Art. 7 Shall the Town voters authorize an expenditure for the Twinfield Together Mentoring Program in the amount of \$250.00? Motion to accept by Jan Waterman. Seconded by Will Roberts. Greg Light wants to know why Marshfield was only asked for \$50.00. Will Roberts spoke highly of the program. Rick Levy asks again why the difference. No one could answer that question. Mary Niebling asks about the student mentoring program. Deb Stoleroff says this is an adult mentoring a student instead of a student mentoring a student. Jim Jamele wants to know why this wasn't under the Social Concern's Committee. Linda Wells answered that it was petitioned separately. Greg Light thinks that both towns should support it equally. Donny Osman thinks that \$250.00

is not a lot of money. Will Roberts asks; do we want a mentoring program? I think we do and it's a good program. Sue Remington thinks it's a valuable program. Karl Bissex offers that the skills directory may tie in and match an adult skill with a student. Susan Egerton wants to know how a student gets matched. Will answers that they fill out an application. Janna Osman supports this program. David Bruce motions to amend the amount to \$50.00. Seconded by Gary Graves. Greg Light wants to know if Marshfield already has a mentoring program. Will Roberts says its one combined program for Twinfield Community Students. Rick Levy thinks that next year they need to go through the Social Concerns Committee. Elaine Parker motions to call the question and stop debate. Seconded by Lisa Olsen. The ayes have approved the motion. We will now vote on the amendment. The nays have opposed the motion to amend. Now we go back to the original motion. Greg Light motions to call the question and to stop debate. Gary Graves seconds. The ayes have approved the motion to call the question. We will now vote on the original motion to authorize the expenditure of \$250.00 to Twinfield Together Mentoring Program. The ayes have approved the motion.

Art. 8 Shall the Town establish a Plainfield Area Community Association, PACA, reserve fund for money collected for creation of the skills directory and the town website? Motion to accept by Mary Niebling. Seconded by Jan Waterman. Motion by Jan Waterman to amend to add "and maintenance". Seconded by Meg Davis. Ben Graham thinks that the fund is available for whatever they need it for. Keith Terry says that the Selectboard has already made an agreement that they would maintain the website. The skills directory decisions have been made by PACA. If it becomes a reserve fund the selectboard will have control over it. PACA has raised money to put in the reserved fund. The town has not appropriated any funds for it. Rick Levy motions to call the question. Seconded by Bill Benko. The ayes have approved calling the question. We will now vote on the amendment to insert, and maintenance. The motion on the amendment is defeated. 22 Ayes and 31 Nays. Ben Graham motions to amend to shall the town establish a PACA reserve fund for any funds collected for PACA. Seconded by Greg Light. Steve Farnham wants to know if PACA could maintain their own funds. All money raised by PACA must go through the town funds as they are a committee of the town. Motion by Brian Hurlbert to call the question and stop debate on the proposed amendment. Seconded by Bill Benko. The ayes have approved by 2/3 vote to stop debate. Now we will vote to amend original motion to say: shall the town establish a PACA reserve fund for any funds collected for PACA? The ayes have approved the amendment. Jim Jamele motioned to call the question and stop debate. Seconded by Bill Benko. All are in favor. Now we vote on the amended motion. The ayes have approved the amendment.

Art.9 To see what amount of money the Town will pay to vote to pay for highways, bridges, fire department, and administrative operations of the Town of Plainfield for the period of July 1, 2009 to June 30, 2010. Keith Terry will make a motion that we appropriate a sum of \$756,636.94. Seconded by Jim Jamele. Keith noted that the selectboard has decreased the budget from last year. He also noted that some expenses went way up such as Health Insurance, which increased 21% but employees will be expected to pay a higher percent of their premium. Sand and repair parts were way up in

price as was almost everything we purchased. The state withheld 15% of the transportation funding to the town, and we also had to increase the amount needed to cover delinquent taxes. It was on the table to decrease the amount towards the equipment fund but we chose not to do that because we believe it would negatively affect budgets down the road. The grader is 22 years old which is more than the life expectancy of such a machine. The Selectboard chose not to budget for a new grader due to the economic times. The Selectboard will have to borrow money if the grader breaks down. The cost of a new one is over \$200,000.00. Jed Clifford wanted to know if we could lease one. Keith answered that it was a possibility. Sandy Ross motioned to amend the budget and add \$60,000.00 to the budget to be used towards the purchase of a grader as soon as possible. Seconded by Bram Towbin. Rick Levy thinks we should wait. Donny Osman thinks we should get the opinion of the Highway Boys. Lyndal Lumbra thinks the grader is worn out. Pat Boyle wants to know what we have spent on maintenance. Keith says the current maintenance budget is \$6500.00. Elaine Parker does not think we should borrow money in troubling times. Bernie Noe says the question is would a new grader do a better job or not. Jim Jamele thinks we would have a substantial amount of money available for a lease. Ben Graham thinks we need to put up the money sooner to save on interest. Mary Niebling motions to call the question and stop debate. Seconded by Bill Benko. The ayes have approved the motion to call the question. The nays have opposed the amendment. Sandy motions to amend the budget to add \$30,000.00 to the Equipment Reserve Fund. Seconded by Meg Davis. Greg Light motions to stop debate and call the question. Rick Levy seconds. The ayes have approved the motion to stop debate. Voted on the amendment. The ayes approved adding \$30,000.00 by 2/3 vote. We will now vote on a budget of \$786,636.94. The ayes have approved the motion.

Art.10 Shall the Town of Plainfield vote to remove the systemic Fluoride treatment from its water supply? Motion to accept by Janice Walrafen. Seconded by Meg Davis. Mary Niebling wants to know why everyone gets to vote on this instead of just the people on the system. Jim Jamele answers that this is the law. Donny Osman says that he will abstain from voting on this. Rob Bridges says that for the first time ever he agrees with Donny. Donny says where's the defibrillator?! Greg Light thinks that putting fluoride in the water takes away a person's right to choose. He feels we can get fluoride from other sources as we choose. Elanor Chapin also strongly feels that we should not have fluoride in the water. Steve Farnham reminds us that even if you live out of town, you may purchase products from town that use fluoridated water. George Springston agrees that people not on the system should not vote. He also adds that there is evidence that fluoride prevents tooth decay and the town doesn't put dangerous amount in the water. Owen Bradley thinks that if everyone gets to vote on the grader than everyone gets to vote on the fluoride. Jeff Hunsberger from the Health Department is here to speak. He needs permission to speak. The ayes have approved allowing him to speak. He wants to dispel the bad effects of fluoride. He says the Health Center dentists support the use of fluoride. Studies show that fluoride does not adversely affect adults or children. Jim Gerstman asks if fluoride is a poison. Jeff did not have an answer. Jim is concerned about what the residual buildup of fluoride does to your body. Deb Stoleroff reminds us that we have a fluoride program at school. Sarah O'Brien speaks up to say she is against

fluoride in the water. Carla Hancock is unclear about the safety of fluoride. Janice Walrafen feels dental health is related to nutritional health. Jed Clifford wants to know if Plainfield wants to be further involved in our health. Ben Graham wants a choice. He does not want fluoride. Motion by Susan Egerton to call the question. Seconded by Jed Clifford. The ayes have approved to call the question and stop debate. The ayes have approved the original motion.

Art.11 Shall the Town voters authorize the Selectboard to spend surplus funds, or money left over in town funds, in the next fiscal year? Motion to accept by Janice Walrafen. Seconded by Susan Egerton. Rob Bridges asks, don't we do this every year? Charlie answers that yes, we do. The ayes have approved the motion.

Art. 12 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)? Motion to accept by Meg Davis. Seconded by Janice Walrafen. The ayes have approved the motion. Charlie wants to know where is the motion we vote down every year!?

Art. 13 Will the town vote to collect property taxes thirty days from mailing and not prior to August 1, 2009 and collect school taxes on November 18, 2009 and February 10, 2010, collecting half of the total school taxes on each of those dates? Motion to accept by Janice Walrafen. Seconded by Jim Jamele. The ayes have approved the motion.

Art.14 To transact any other business that may properly come before the meeting. Alex Thayer motions that we consider the following:

“Shall the voters of the town of Plainfield request the Vermont Legislature to:

1. Recognize that the 2% of our New England region's power grid supply that is provided by Vermont Yankee Nuclear Power Plant can be replaced with a combination of local, renewable electricity and efficiency measures, along with the purchase of hydro generated electricity, and excess power already in the New England electricity market;
2. Given the viable alternatives and the risks posed by continued operation, ensure that Vermont Yankee will cease operation in March 2012, after having completed its 40 year design life by not granting approval for operation of the plant after that date and by not determining that further operation will promote the general welfare;
3. Hold the Entergy Corporation, which purchased Vermont Yankee in 2002, responsible to fully fund the plant's clean-up and decommissioning when the reactor closes, as the corporation pledged to do when it purchased Vermont Yankee.”

Seconded by Bob Atchinson. Bram Towbin thinks that it's not as simple as what is being proposed. A significant amount of power comes from the plant. Jim Jamele motions to call the question. Seconded by Janice Walrafen. Ayes have approved calling the question by 2/3 vote. The ayes have approved the original motion.

Keith Terry would like to recognize Greg Light for his 3 years of service on the Selectboard. It has been a pleasure to work with Greg. Greg thanks Keith and he adds

that he thinks Plainfield is the best town in the country to live in. Rob Bridges wants to thank the rest of the Selectboard.

Rob Bridges wants to know if we could look into having the vote on the budget at noon every year. Steve Farnham made a motion to have the Selectboard send a letter to the legislature to enact a law that would make Town Meeting Day a paid holiday. Seconded by Janice Walrafen. Ayes have approved the motion. Motion to adjourn by Rob Bridges, (not seconded) Deb Stoleroff wants us to take a moment to recognize Sue Barasch who is not at Town Meeting for the first time in over 40 years. Sue has given a lot of herself and her time to us and our families. Think of someone we care about who may be leaving us soon. Motion to adjourn by Rob Bridges. Seconded by Monica Light. The ayes have approved the motion and the meeting is adjourned at 2:15 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Carol Smith, Assistant Clerk

At a Selectboard Meeting on May 11, 2009 Keith Terry moved to accept the minutes of Town Meeting Day 2009. Seconded by Claudia Clark. All are in favor and the motion is approved.