

APPROVED MINUTES OF TOWN MEETING

Plainfield, Vermont

March 3, 2015

The legal voters of the Town of Plainfield are hereby notified and warned to meet at Plainfield Town Hall, 18 High Street, on Tuesday, the third day of March 2015 at ten o'clock in the forenoon to transact the following business and to vote by Australian ballot from 9:00 A.M. to 7:00 P.M. on Article 1.

Art. 1 To elect all necessary officers for the ensuing year: Moderator, Town Clerk, Treasurer, Selectboard, Lister, Auditor, Collector of Delinquent Taxes, Town Grand Juror, Town Law Agent, Cemetery Commissioner, and School Director.

Polls are open 9:00A.M. to 7:00P.M.

TOWN OF PLAINFIELD TOWN MEETING RESULTS

MARCH 4, 2015

AUSTRALIAN BALLOT RESULTS

ARTICLE 1- TOWN OFFICER BALLOT

MODERATOR 1 YEAR

Charles Barasch 201

COLL OF DEL TAX 1 YEAR

George Cushing 134

CLERK 1 YEAR

Linda Wells 208

TOWN LAW AGENT 1 YEAR

James Jamele 193

TREASURER 1 YEAR

Linda Wells 208

TOWN GRAND JUROR 1 YEAR

James Jamele 193

SELECTBOARD 3 YEARS

Betsy Ziegler 184

CEMETERY COMMISSIONER

Edward Hutchinson 193

LISTER 3 YEARS

Sandra Ross 190

CEMETERY COMMISSIONER

not enough write-ins for election 4 YEARS

AUDITOR 1 YEAR 2 YEARS

not enough write-ins

CEMETERY COMMISSIONER

not enough write-ins for election 5 YEARS

Lorraine Cappetta 3 YEARS

161

SCHOOL DIRECTOR

not enough write-ins for election 3 YEARS

Moderator Charlie Barasch opened the meeting at 10:08am welcoming everyone with a poem by Louis Huntoon called “March”, followed by a moment of silence for those no longer with us.

Announcements:

A pie sale is being held to benefit the purchase of new cushioned chairs for the town hall.
Friends of the Cutler Library are selling primroses and cookbooks.
Fireman’s Club is selling chili and have coffee and donuts.
Historical Society is downstairs with a display and selling calendars.
Energy Coordinator has a display downstairs with energy efficiency information.
Donations to the Food Shelf can be put downstairs by the kitchen.

Charlie gave the floor to Rep. Janet Ancel, Chair of the Legislative Ways and Means Committee, after voter approval. This is her 11th year in the legislature. She encouraged everyone to contact her should they want a copy of her newsletter and she will email to them.

There are three big issues at the legislature: Healthcare, Water Quality, and School Funding and Governance.

Healthcare: the bill proposes to use a payroll tax to increase Medicaid funding.

Water Quality: Lake Champlain needs to be cleaned up and there is a wide consensus in the legislature to take action on this issue.

School Funding and Governance: she just read the bill and no work has been started on this to date. There is a proposal for a 2% cap on spending by schools.

Budget: There is a gap of \$112 million; this is the difference between projected revenue and spending. A \$35 million dollar revenue package is needed to cover this deficit

A question was raised regarding consolidation of schools. Janet responded one size does not fill all schools. The legislature will consider all options to help all communities.

Melinda Vieux expressed thanks to Rep. Ancel for the help in making funding for Green Up Day possible by adding a line on the VT State Tax Return for donations.

Janet thanked the community and was available for questions downstairs.

Art. 2 To hear reports of Town Officers and act on same.

Auditors Certificate

Motion made by Tim Phillips, seconded by Bram Towbin

There was no discussion and the report was accepted.

Town Clerk Report

Motion made by Jan Waterman, seconded by Dan Marcus

Clerk advised the homestead form must be completed by homeowners only.

Jan thanked Linda and Carol for all the work they do for the town.

The report was accepted.

Town Treasurers Report

Motion made by Tim Phillips, seconded by John Monahan

Question about the Willard Perry and Batchelder Funds.

Linda will contact Jan about the Willard Perry fund. The Batchelder Fund was provided for tax relief and was administered by TD Bank until the administration was deeded to the Town Selectboard. The board has access to this fund for unbudgeted expenses. For example, the town used \$15,000 in 2013 for an unbudgeted audit that was required.

The report was accepted.

Collector of Delinquent Taxes

Motion made by Tim Phillips, seconded by Dan Marcus

Comments were made regarding the fees collected from delinquent tax collectors. Alex Thayer explained the statutory provision for collection of delinquencies.

There was discussion about omitting the names from the Town Reports. The Town had voted to publish the names in the annual report at Town Meeting several years ago and it will need to be voted on a separate warned article to change.

The report was accepted.

Listers Report

Motion was made by Tim Phillips, seconded by David Montgomery

There was no discussion and the report was accepted.

Planning Commission Report

Motion was made by Tim Philips, seconded by David Montgomery

Alice advised that the Planning Commission and Conservation Commission were awarded a municipal planning grant in the amount of approximately \$13,000 to conduct an inventory of native species in the Town. The Town match is about \$2,000.

Jan Waterman advised that Brett Engstrom has been hired to do field work and after pulling data from multiple sources will create a report. There will be public forums held, one this year and another next year.

The report was accepted.

Development Review Board

Motion was made by Tim Philips, seconded by David Montgomery

There was no discussion and the report was accepted.

Zoning Administrators Report

Motion was made by David Montgomery, seconded by Tim Phillips.

Brenda Lindemann had a question for the DRB regarding the website. Charlie advised this as out of order and that it should have been brought up during the DRB report.

The report was accepted.

Selectboard Report

Motion was made by Tim Phillips, seconded by Greg Light

Greg congratulated the board for a job well done this year. He inquired about the old fire station and asked about when the roof was going to be replaced.

Dave reported that the Town had received a Preservation Trust matching grant in the amount of \$250 for a structural analysis of the building. The Historical Society agreed to pay the match. We need the analysis report before we can determine what to do next, including applying for additional funding. Dan Gadd and Dave are following up with the person hired.

Alice explained that the board met with VTrans and the Central VT Regional Planning about the blinking light intersection. VTrans has budgeted \$40,000 this year to survey the intersection. Bram referred to a photo of the intersection from 1969 stating the intersection has been a problem for a long time and was referred to as the “peek a boo intersection”. This is the first step in getting the intersection improved. The town needs to continue to advocate for this so it does not get put on the back burner by the state again.

The crosswalk issue has complicated rules. Distance and line of sight are critical issues to be addressed. There will be public hearing during this process.

The Pedestrian Bridge project engineering phase is set to begin this year. We hope for a sidewalk connecting the Mill Street park and the town parking lot opposite the Town Hall in two to three years and a safe intersection in six years.

After multiple calls to VTrans district garage and a final call to Commissioner Minter the snow on the guardrail has been cleared.

Parking along the road by Local Potion can block sight distance. However, since the landowner appears to own the property, the town is unable to regulate the traffic there. This issue needs to be addressed to resolve the intersection problem.

The State has reviewed and moved the pedestrian signage further east and west on Route 2. Suggestions of homemade signage were proposed, “Dangerous Intersection, Go Slow, Welcome to Plainfield, we cherish our citizens Drive Slowly”, for positive signs coming into town. A “Dangerous Intersection” committee was proposed.

Thanks were expressed to the Selectboard and a Special Thanks to Alice who is leaving.

Meg Davis moved to call a question to stop debate, David Montgomery seconded the motion. Motion was approved.

Vote to accept the Selectboard report was approved.

The board expressed thanks to Alice for all her work serving on the board. Linda presented Alice with a peace lily and card.

Town Hall Opera House report

Motion made by Tim Phillips, seconded by David Montgomery

Sarah and Jade, Managers of the Opera House, were not yet in attendance so Dave asked people to complete a survey created to give ideas of what the community wants to see at the Opera House.

There is a lot going on at the opera house and we hope to hear from the community.

Bob Atchinson thanked the team that pulled the renovations together and also Will Fitzpatrick who lead in the energy conservation work.

The report was accepted.

Social Concerns Reports

Motion made by Gail Falk, seconded by Meg Davis

Leda Schubert thanked the committee for their hard work and stated we should approve the report as submitted with no further discussion. The report was accepted.

Water and Wastewater Commission Report

Motion made by David Montgomery, seconded by Tim Phillips

Jim Jamele thanked everyone for their patience through the crisis of freezing pipes. He also thanked the community for the support during the huge water project that was completed.

After voter permission granted Greg Chamberlin, Chief Plant Operator for the W/WW Depts. spoke.

Greg brought a broken pipe that was installed in 1972, and broke February 13, 2015. He talked about the debris being flushed into the system. Items he shared that are not to be flushed include condoms, dental floss, paper towels, health and beauty aids with micro beads, flushable wipes, and kitchen oils and fats. Odd items he has found are cue balls, children's toys, kitty litter, and many other items.

We need to stop dumping phosphorus into Lake Champlain. The State needs us to do what we can to help accomplish this. We need to keep the rest of this stuff out of the wastewater system. Flushing these items comes extra cost to the Town. In the past four years, Hartigan has had to come and clean the same crossing river every time they are here to clean other areas.

The WW plant has optimum capacity of 65,000 gallons per day. We use 50,000 gallons per day Now. There is not much room left. The cost for a new plant is \$12-15 million dollars.

Rates will increase to secure funding for an upgrade of the system. New regulations will Determine when our plant needs to be upgraded.

Greg advised they are working on a mailing to be sent to all users on the system.

Bob Atchinson stated there is no incentive to install low water toilets to save water. He feels meters should be read and billing should be based on usage not a flat rate.

Greg said all meters are being replaced and they will be reading them for usage numbers and assessment.

Jeremy Matt moved to call a question to stop debate, Dan Marcus seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

The report was accepted.

Conservation Commission reports

Motion made by Tim Phillips, seconded by David Montgomery

There are tree sale brochures available on the table.

The reports were accepted.

E911 report

Motion made by David Montgomery, seconded by Tim Phillips

Sandy advised the community that the 911 sign for all properties must be visible from the road. If your mailbox is beyond your driveway, do not put your 911 sign on your mailbox. Use a post or tree. You can post on you house if it is visible from the road. If you do not have a 911 sign call and one can be ordered for you.

The report was accepted.

Fire and Rescue report

Motion made by Jan Waterman, seconded by Mary Niebling

Bram reported on the expense of the rescue vehicle the town incurred even though this model Ford 550 had history of this problem. He had discussions with the local dealers and Ford Motor but did not get any reply or assistance for the Town. The Highway has since purchased a new Ford from another local dealer.

The report was accepted.

Emergency Management Report

Motion made by Tim Phillips, seconded by Jeremy Matt

There is a training on March 29th at 1pm at the Haybarn Theater at Goddard College to train volunteers to be ready should an emergency event happen. All that can are encouraged to attend as they are very shorthanded.

The report was accepted.

Recreation Committee Report

Motion made by Jeremy Matt, seconded by Tim Phillips

There was no discussion and the report was accepted.

Cemetery Report

Motion made by Jeremy Matt, seconded by Tim Phillips.

Meg Davis had questions about investing and delegation of the funds. Bram stated he will look into this and report back.

Jim Jamele stated there are two vacancies on the commission and could prove to be a hardship if one of the current member is unable to be present for meetings and financial decisions. If interested please contact the Commission.

Alex Thayer stated it is a fiduciary responsibility to invest the funds. Commission should look into not investing in fracking funds.

The report was accepted.

Energy Coordinator Report

Bob encouraged celebrating as the Town won the Home Energy Challenge last year resulting in a \$10,000 Energy grant that was used for the Town Hall Opera House. Applause! He commented there is climate change and everyone should conserve fuel, electricity, and water. There is a raffle to win a small energy strip and a shower head. People can sign up for a Home Energy visit too. The Energy folks conducted many visits last year. They are putting together a plan for a 9.9 kilowatt solar array to be located either at the park 'n ride or the property behind the old school house on Route 2. Input is needed from the community. He estimates the total cost will be \$32,000 with a \$9,900 incentive from Renewal Energy. We hope to have a vote in June to borrow roughly \$22,000 for this project. Thanks expressed to Bob and Ed Hutchinson who is involved in the energy coordination of Plainfield.

After many comments about climate change and energy use, Jeremy Matt made a motion to call a question and stop debate, the motion was seconded by Dan Marcus. The motion passed. The Energy Coordinator report was accepted.

Art. 3 Shall the Town appropriate the sum of \$8,333.00 as its share of the sixth 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, State and Federal funds, and rider fares.

Motion made by Bob Atchinson, seconded by Tim Phillips.

There was no discussion and the motion was approved.

Art. 4 Shall the Town establish a reserve fund with proceeds from the sale of forest products from Town property to be used to manage and improve Town owned woodland?

Motion made by Meg Davis, seconded by Bob Atchinson.

Sarah Albert reported that they hired a forester to make a plan for the town forest. The forest is currently softwood as it has not been managed and is overgrown not allowing other kinds of trees to grow. He recommends to thin the forest and stated in the long term will allow the native trees to grow in. The logging was bid out and the company chosen is Emerson Brothers. The net for the Town from the logging will be about \$2,000. They plan to create trails on the land once the logging is complete. The fund will be to reserve the revenue from logging activities and will be available for creation and upkeep of trails, the Town Forest, or for other forestry work on Town property.

The motion was approved.

Art. 5 Shall the Town voters authorize the expenditures for the following not-for-profit service agencies as recommended by the appointed Social Concerns Committee?

Central VT Adult Basic Education	\$ 500.00
Capstone (Central VT) Comm. Action	\$ 500.00
Circle/BWSS	\$ 500.00
Central VT Council on Aging	\$ 1,500.00
Central VT Home Health Hospice	\$ 2,700.00
Family Center of Wash Cty	\$ 450.00

Friends of the Winooski River	\$ 250.00
Good Beginnings of Central VT	\$ 300.00
Green Mountain Transit Agency	\$ 786.00
Home Share Now	\$ 250.00
Onion River Foodshelf	\$ 1,000.00
OUR House	\$ 100.00
People's Health and Wellness	\$ 750.00
Twinfield Learning Center	\$ 400.00
Twinfield Together Mentoring	\$ 250.00
Twin Valley Senior Center	\$ 1,500.00
VT Center for Independent Living	\$ 250.00
Washington Cty Court Diversion	\$ 250.00

Total \$12,236.00

Motion was made by Jan Waterman, seconded by Tim Phillips.

Steve Pappas asked about the difference of GMTA funding in Article 3 as compared to the funding in this article. The article 3 funding is for the US Rte commuter bus service. This article funding is for local transportation for patrons to go to doctor appointments and such.

Alex Forbes asked why the Montpelier Senior Center was not included. Gail Falk stated they were never historically given funding from town. We have the Twin Valley Senior Center here and we feel we should support it. Plainfield people using the Montpelier Senior Center choose to go there and use their facility.

The motion was approved.

Art. 6 Shall the Town voters authorize an appropriation of \$35,000.00 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 was made by David Montgomery, seconded by Tim Phillips.

Monica Light, Chair of the Trustees Board, stated they have had a remarkable year with a 13% increase in visits and have many volunteers supporting the library. She expressed thanks to Librarian, Loona Brogan. After given permission to speak, Loona thanked the trustees and volunteers for their support. Thanks given to Loona for responding so well to patrons.

The motion was approved.

Art. 7 To see what amount of money the Town will vote to pay for Water and Wastewater Departments for the period of July 1, 2015 to June 30, 2016.

Motion made by Jim Jamele to appropriate \$173,724.00 to pay for the Water operations to be paid by the users of the system, Meg Davis seconded the motion.

The motion was approved.

Motion made by Jim Jamele to appropriate \$252,711.00 to pay for the Wastewater operations to be paid by the users of the system, Bram seconded the motion.

There was no discussion and the motion was approved.

Art. 8 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, 2015 to June 30, 2016.

Alex Thayer moved to amend the budget up to \$908,495.20 to account for a typo in the report for The Cutler Library appropriation from \$33,000 to \$35,000, Steve Farnham seconded the motion.

Dave introduced Jade and Sarah the managers of the Opera House. They reported there are many programs going on. It all began with Old Home Day Review, and have had performances, birthday parties, and other events. They encourage community members to complete the survey.

Andy Robinson announced there is a poster board with names of all people that donated to the Town Hall renovation fund. He asked people to check to be sure their names are on the list and that they are spelled correctly .

Alice went over the budget and stated the goal is to keep the tax rate constant. The majority of the expenses is in the highway department with a budget increase 2%. The Selectboard budget decreased by 1.9%. All employees will receive a cost of living increase and the Water and Wastewater Commission adjusted their salaries to be competitive with wages in Central Vermont. A new backhoe was purchased, the town agreed to pay the Health Officer a stipend, a budget of \$3,000 was added for the Main Street Pedestrian Bridge project, and there is a large increase in dispatch.

The Conservation Commission street tree funding has been moved to the Tree Warden line and a traffic control for Town events at the Opera House has been added.

Bram commented that 911 needs to change the dispatch funding from individual towns to regional funding.

The motion to appropriate \$908,495.20 was approved.

Art. 9 Shall the Town of Plainfield authorize the Selectboard to apply any surplus from the current fiscal year to reduce taxes in the next fiscal year?

Motion to approve was made by Jeremy Matt, seconded by Tim Phillips.

There was no discussion and the motion 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, 2015 and collect school taxes on November 4, 2015 and February 10, 2016, collecting half of the total school taxes on each of those dates?

Motion was made by Jeremy Matt, seconded by Tim Phillips.

There was no discussion and the motion was approved.

Charlie Barasch reminded people that there is a Volunteer Application at the back of the Town Report for people to submit should they want to volunteer in some way.

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

The Town has an unnamed brook and this information was brought to the Selectboard. The

Selectboard decided to ask the Conservation Commission to research. After a name is chosen, the town citizens must sign a petition supporting that name chosen and forward it to the VT Dept of Libraries Board for approval.

Charlie Cogbill: the Conservation Commission researched this and did community outreach. There were 14 names suggested. The Commission narrowed down to three categories: people, common usage, and local Native Americans.

The choice for people is Martin Brook after Arthur Martin who lived on bordering property and fished in the brook.

Common usage choice is Little Brook as is has been referred to since 1965.

Native American is the Abenaki name Coosuc and Coos which refer to white pine place.

Charlie made a motion to have a straw vote to name the brook that will result in submission of a signed petition from the Town voters to the VT Dept of Libraries, Dan Marcus seconded the motion.

George Springston did a lot of research on this and the latest maps that are on display show the path of the brook.

Alice stated that the Selectboard passed this on to the CC to research and get community input To come up with names and the intent of this was to use those names, take a straw vote on those names and send the chosen name on to the VT Dept of Libraries Board.

Alice proposed to vote on all 4 name options and then submit a petition with the winning name. Henry Harris, made a point of information, objecting to the pronunciation of the Abenaki names.

There was a lot of discussion about where the river runs over the land, who the traditional Native Americans were, Abenaki or Mohegan, and the whole process of naming the brook.

Henry moved to table this conversation, and Charlie recommended the motion be to postpone this discussion indefinitely. Deb Stoleroff seconded the motion.

After further discussion the motion was approved.

Deb Stoleroff spoke against school consolidation for Twinfield. She made a motion the town vote to not consolidate our school into a larger school supervisory union.

A lot of discussion ensued whether this is premature, should the board send a letter to Rep Janet Ancel, too many questions about what schools could be consolidated, and against sending a directive to the Legislature.

Deb then amended her motion to

After hearing our District Representative Janet Ancel speak on the consolidation bill the Town should respond by saying we are not in favor of losing our school or local school board.

Glenda Bissex seconded the motion to amend.

After more discussion, Glenda made a motion to call a question to stop debate, Mary Niebling seconded the motion. The amendment was approved.

The motion as amended was approved.

Brenda Lindemann made a motion to not print the names of delinquent taxpayers in the town report.

This must be a warned article and can not be done in Other Business.

It was suggested by Alex that we get the history of why we started putting the names in the report. Steve Farnham suggested we also get input from the Collector of Delinquent Taxes.

The motion was withdrawn.

Thanks to Mary Niebling and the volunteers who made pies. The proceeds will be used to help purchase new folding chairs with pads for the Town Hall Opera House.

Alice made a motion to adjourn at 2pm, Bram seconded the motion and the motion carried.

Respectfully submitted March 6, 2015,

Linda B. Wells

Clerk/Treasurer

Approved by the Selectboard March 9, 2015.