

Plainfield Town Meeting
March 1, 2016
Draft Minutes

Town Moderator Charlie Barasch called the meeting to order at 10:10am.

Moderator Barasch read aloud the text of **ARTICLE 1:** To elect all necessary officers for the ensuing year: Moderator, Town Clerk, Treasurer, Select Board, 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 Clerk/Treasurer Linda Wells noted the presence of various groups set up throughout the building, including displays by the Conservation Commission and Town Hall Opera House, State Senator Bill Doyle's survey, a sign-up sheet for those interested in a Neighborhood Watch Group, the Cutler Memorial Library's primrose sale, the Fire Department's chili sale, the Energy Team's display, a pie sale to raise funds for padded chairs for the Town Hall Opera House, the Historical Society's display, the Plainfield Co-op's display, and a cookie sale by the local Girl Scouts. Wells reported that she had copies of State Representative Janet Ancel's report, but that Ancel would not be present at today's meeting.

Moderator Barasch noted that the "Interim Report on Real Estate" handout on everyone's chair should go between pages 98 and 99 in the Town's *Annual Report*. He reminded that only Plainfield residents can vote, there is a 10-minute limit for speeches, and a two-statement per person limit on any given issue. Welcoming those in attendance, he read aloud the poem, "Reading in Fall Rain," by Robert Bly.

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

- **AUDITORS CERTIFICATE:** **Tim Phillips made a motion to accept the Auditors Certificate. Mary Lane seconded the motion.** There was no discussion. **The Auditors Certificate was accepted.**
- **TOWN CLERK'S REPORT:** **Peter Youngbaer made a motion to accept the Town Clerk's Report. Tim Phillips seconded the motion.** There was no discussion. **The Town Clerk's Report was accepted.**
- **TOWN TREASURER'S REPORT:** **Peter Youngbaer made a motion to accept the Town Clerk's Report. Laura Zeisel seconded the motion.** Peter Youngbaer noted that the Town Clerk's and Town Treasurer's Reports were very good. **The Town Clerk's Report was accepted.**
- **DELINQUENT TAX COLLECTOR'S REPORT:** **Mary Lane made a motion to accept the Delinquent Tax Collector's Report. Tim Phillips seconded the motion.** Bob Atchinson noted that he thought it had been decided at the last Town Meeting not to publish the names of those on the delinquent tax list. Select Board member David Strong and Delinquent Tax Collector George Cushing stated that the Auditors had been consulted and recommended continuing the practice. Steve Farnham recalled from the last Town Meeting that it was decided that it would have to be voted on in a duly Warned Article for the practice to be discontinued. **The Delinquent Tax Collector's Report was accepted.**
- **LISTERS REPORT:** **Tim Phillips made a motion to accept the Listers Report. Daniel Marcus seconded the motion.** Lister Sandy Ross commended retiring Lister Bill Benko for his service and solicited for new members. **The Listers Report was accepted.**

- **PLANNING COMMISSION REPORT: Mary Lane made a motion to accept the Planning Commission Report. Tim Phillips seconded the motion.** Sarah Albert asked if the proposed revised zoning regulations would go to a Town vote as it normally does. Select Board Chair Bram Towbin confirmed that there would be a vote in August after several public hearings. Planning Commission member Paula Emery noted that there are major changes proposed having to do with flood regulations and announced a public information meeting on 3/21/16. Peter Youngbaer asked if the Town vote would coincide with the State elections in August, which Bram Towbin responded was the plan barring any hold ups in the process. **The Planning Commission Report was accepted.**
- **DEVELOPMENT REVIEW BOARD REPORT: Mary Lane made a motion to accept the Development Review Board's Report. Tim Phillips seconded the motion.** There was no discussion. **The Development Review Board Report was accepted.**
- **ZONING ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT: Daniel Marcus made a motion to accept the Zoning Administrator's Report. Merrill Carpenter seconded the motion.** There was no discussion. **The Zoning Administrator's Report was accepted.**
- **SELECTBOARD REPORT: Tim Phillips made a motion to accept the Select Board report. Mary Lane seconded the motion.** Bram Towbin read the following tribute to fellow Select Board member Dave Strong, who was stepping down after six years on the Select Board:

The Strongman

I first met David five years ago during my first Select Board Meeting which was held downstairs in the Old Town Hall Office. A couple of weeks later this building was closed due to severe structural issues. This meeting here today, along with the countless other performances that have occurred since last year's re-opening, is a testament to David's steadfast leadership. I wholeheartedly admit to being skeptical of the rebuild due to a difficult history of renovation work and the formidable costs involved in making The Town Hall Opera House safe. David worked tirelessly in raising funds. He also committed untold months of onsite labor to deliver real value to the Plainfield taxpayer and the community at large. There were many others involved but they were inspired by his vision. I am sure of few things in life, but I can definitively say: We would NOT be meeting here today if it were not for David Strong.

The Town Hall Opera House refurbishment is a formidable achievement. It should be praised but even more impressive is Dave's life-long dedication to civic duty. There are so many unglamorous smaller projects, equally important in their own way, that really highlight what it means to be a great citizen. I doubt many of you recall his organizing the removal of thousands of tires from a backyard of a Town Property. This was accomplished by not burdening the local taxpayer. David spent a significant amount of time in an arduous grant process. Or there was the time he comforted an extremely upset resident who came to our Select Board meeting unannounced. After the formal session adjourned, he spent hours carefully discussing the problem with the property owner. Or the time he meticulously transcribed the minutes of an endless meeting regarding the re-construction of the infamous Blinking Light Intersection, that has plagued everyone for decades. I would note that through his efforts we have affected the glacial timetable and residents can expect real action in the next few years. It came as no surprise that when I looked up the Strong family name on the internet, I came upon a crest with the Latin inscription "Tentadna via Est." This translates as "the path must be taken." David sees his life's work of community building as a steady marathon down a righteous path, rather than a

boisterous sprint in front of a cheering crowd. There are times when you can be feted with garlands, but more often you're huffing and puffing on a rainy uphill road.

David's effectiveness is twinned with another wonderful attribute, a calm disposition. I have hoped some of his even-temperedness would rub off on me... the results are still pending. Treating everyone with respectful consideration is the hallmark of the Strong way. There have been many occasions where people have been extremely inappropriate in their written or verbal comments. David proceeds with a polite acknowledgement of the dissatisfaction while never resorting to the pettiness of personal invectives.

Perhaps this calmness springs from the deep appreciation of his roots. As a certified flatlander I'm not used to driving on thoroughfares named after families of people that I know. I traveled on Strong Road, in the neighboring town of Orange, to watch David's famous maple syrup operation. Of course, being from the city, I ended up lost in the woods and never found the shack. I did come across a couple of old family buildings that exuded memories of generations of Strong men and women. There is a sketch of David as a young boy in his house on East Hill Road that speaks to a sense of belonging that is foreign to most in our contemporary, transient culture. I felt this power again when David showed me a water trough that is located in front of the barn he restored. I asked him why would they put this elaborate water container so near the road. It turns out that, back in the day, farmers were give a tax break for building out watering facilities for traveling horses. I was moved by the pride in which he spoke of days gone by.

Another interesting factoid about the barn itself. One door was tall but the exit door was short. Dave asked me if I understood the design. Of course I didn't. He then told me that wagons would enter one side filled to the brim with hay; but after leaving they didn't need the clearance. The minutia is unimportant. The tender safe-guarding of this knowledge is the heart of the matter. It is who Dave is and, by default, who we are as a community. We treasure connection with the past and with each other. It might seem incomprehensible in a world that places a premium on efficiency and progress; but David's example shows that we have our own definitions of those terms.

I will note that even though this is David's last official meeting as a Select Board member, I am scheduled to meet with him on Friday. We are having a sit-down with State officials to discuss progress on the intersection. We will be in the same room downstairs where I first met him. Some might ask, "Well if he's not on the Select Board, why would he continue to want to spend time on a very tedious project?" I guess the answer is, the Strongman credo, "the path must be taken."

Dave Strong expressed thanks for the joy he has experienced in working with the community. Linda Wells presented him with a framed montage of photographs depicting some of the projects that Strong had worked on during his tenure. **Peter Youngbaer made a motion to include Towbin's remarks about Strong in the minutes of next year's Annual Report. Tim Phillips seconded the motion. The motion was approved.** Towbin noted that although his name comes first on the Select Board Report, Strong had actually written it. At the request of Peter Youngbaer, Towbin and Strong gave an update on the Blinking Light intersection project. Strong credited Sue Minter for helping to push the project forward at the State. **The Select Board Report was accepted.**

- **PLAINFIELD TOWN HALL OPERA HOUSE REPORT: Mary Lane made a motion to accept the Plainfield Town Hall Opera House Report. Tim Phillips seconded the motion.** Laura Zeisel announced that a support group called The Friends of the Plainfield Opera House had recently been formed, and urged everyone to review the information on display as well as sign up to participate in the group's activities. Plainfield Town Hall Event Coordinator Jade Walker reviewed upcoming events and noted locations where the full schedule for the facility can be found. **The Plainfield Town Hall Opera House Report was accepted.**
- **SOCIAL CONCERNS COMMITTEE REPORT: Daniel Marcus made a motion to accept the Social Concerns Committee Report. Tim Phillips seconded the motion.** Glenda Bissex asked why the Central Vermont Council on Aging was not receiving any funding this year. Kit Gates responded that due to changes in personnel at the agency, the request had not been submitted in time, but wished to request the funding. Moderator Barasch noted that any amendment to the recommendations of the Social Concerns Committee should be made during discussion of Article 6. **The Social Concerns Committee Report was accepted.**
- **WATER/WASTEWATER COMMISSIONER'S REPORT: Mary Lane made a motion to approve the Water/Wastewater Commissioner's Report. Tim Phillips seconded the motion.** Chief Facility Operator Greg Chamberlin was granted permission as a non-Plainfield resident to speak. He thanked everyone for their patience over the past couple of years as water lines were upgraded and meters were installed, cautioned about the rising costs resulting in dealing with undesirable items entering the wastewater stream, and the need for planning for the next generation of the Town's wastewater system. He invited members of the community to share their ideas. Peter Youngbaer questioned the figures in the report stating 16 million gallons of consumption versus 48 million gallons being processed. Discussion followed on sources of infiltration problems and plans to rectify the problem. **The Water/Wastewater Commissioner's Report was accepted.**
- **CONSERVATION COMMISSION REPORT: Tim Phillips made a motion to accept the Conservation Commission Report. Steve Farnham seconded the motion.** Conservation Commission member Jan Waterman announced a public forum to report on the town-wide inventory of Significant Natural Communities. Waterman noted the Conservation Commission's plant sale and the recently completed street tree inventory, inviting those interested to become tree wardens to help monitor the trees. **The Conservation Commission's Report was accepted.**
- **FLOOD MANAGEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORT: Tim Phillips made a motion to accept the Flood Management Advisory Committee Report. Merrill Carpenter seconded the motion.** David Strong noted that the Flood Management Advisory Committee had been disbanded and replaced by the Hazard Mitigation Committee with an increased scope. Strong thanked Charlie Cogbill and Scottie Harrison for their service on the Flood Management Advisory Committee, noting that they would not be serving on the new committee, whose membership includes: Chair Dan Gadd, Secretary Michael Billingsley, George Springston, Theresa Bienz, Yoko Kishishita, and Bram Towbin. There is one open seat. The new mission has been expanded to include other hazard events and prevent long-term risks. Strong noted the current process to hire a Community Resiliency Project Coordinator to help with communications and tree plantings along the Great Brook. Alex Thayer commented on the amazing nature of the community, and mentioned George Springston in particular, who had suffered a broken leg as a result of his involvement. Robert Barasch noted the amount of fallen trees currently in the Great Brook with the potential of causing problems in the Village and asked about the legality of removing them. Bram Towbin noted state regulations

preventing the removal of anything over a certain amount and outlined current ideas to lessen risks, such as widening the bridge first bridge on Brook Road. Steve Farnham asked if this would result in more problem to next bridge downstream and if there was a way to capture the materials upstream before they reached the Village. Bram Towbin noted a current engineering study that explores bridge alternatives and costs and the hazards and maintenance issues of trapping woody debris upstream. Dave Strong responded to Amos Meacham's question about how the Community Resiliency Coordinator position was being advertised. **The Flood Management Advisory Committee's Report was accepted.**

- **PLAINFIELD E-911 REPORT: Mary Lane made a motion to accept the Plainfield E-911 Report. Tim Phillips seconded the motion.** There was no discussion. **The Plainfield E-911 Report was accepted.**
- **RESCUE REPORT: Tim Phillips made a motion to accept the Rescue Report. Glenda Bissex seconded the motion.** There was no discussion. **The Rescue Report was accepted.**
- **EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT DIRECTOR REPORT: Mary Lane made a motion to accept the Emergency Management Director Report. Tim Phillips seconded the motion.** There was no discussion. **The Emergency Management Director Report was accepted.**
- **RECREATION COMMITTEE REPORT: Mary Lane a motion to accept the Recreation Committee Report. Tim Phillips seconded the motion.** Dave Strong noted that a grant submitted by the Town to replace the current shelter at the Recreation Field was denied due to the Town not having the required 50% matching funds in hand. Due to the unsafe conditions of the shelter, Strong called for volunteers to help remove the shelter. Bram Towbin noted that Plainfield's Old Home Days event would be held on 9/17/16 and would include a carnival-type operation. With both the expected increase in attendance and the Town's receipt of a percentage of the carnival operator's earnings that day, that money might go toward raising the Town's match when it reapplies for funding. In response to a question from Peter Youngbaer, Strong noted that the Town's match was about \$9,000 and outlined a few amenities, a concrete pad and lighting, included in the proposed shelter design. Betsy Ziegler thanked Dan Gadd for his work in the Recreation Field and keeping the various options available to the public and called for volunteers to help him in his efforts. **The Recreation Committee Report was accepted.**
- **CEMETERY COMMISSION REPORT: Mary Lane made a motion to accept the Cemetery Commission Report. Tim Phillips seconded the motion.** There was no discussion. **The Cemetery Commission Report was accepted.**
- **ENERGY COORDINATOR REPORT: Bram Towbin made a motion to accept the Energy Coordinator Report. Steve Farnham seconded the motion.** Energy Coordinator Bob Atchinson noted fellow Energy Team member Ed Hutchinson and gave updates on the Municipal Photovoltaic Project, which has produced 3,620 kilowatt hours since 9/10/15 and is on track to produce 11,000 kilowatt hours for the year. He mentioned the grant-funded electric car charging station in the Village, the photovoltaic unit at the shelter at the Park and Ride, savings of 37.2 or \$2,175 in energy costs for the Town Hall Opera House over the past year, and plans to replace three lamps of municipal lighting in the Town. He suggested that while fuel prices are low, residents should do weatherization using current funding opportunities and urged support of the carbon pollution tax currently being considered by the State. Alex Thayer expressed her appreciation to Ben Graham for the shelter at the Park and Ride. Linda Wells mentioned that the structure has to be repaired due to being vandalized. She asked that residents keep an eye out so that it doesn't happen again. Brenda Lindemann thanked the Energy Team for its work and asked if the electric car charger was

compatible with all electric cars. Atchinson responded that it is a standard plug-in, which should work with most electric vehicles. **The Energy Coordinator Report was accepted.**

ARTICLE 3: Shall the Town establish a Flood Mitigation reserve fund for future flood repair and mitigation costs?

- **Tim Phillips made a motion to approve Article 3. Bob Atchinson seconded the motion.** In response to Peter Youngbaer's question on why a special fund was needed, Dave Strong explained that it would allow for the Select Board to put certain monies not used in the year into a reserve fund for similar purposes rather than going into the general surplus account. Amos Meacham asked for clarification that the vote was not about putting a specific amount aside annually to which Strong responded that an annual appropriation would have to be voted on at Town Meeting while this just sets up the fund. **The motion to accept Article 3 was approved.**

ARTICLE 4: Shall the Town appropriate the sum of \$8,333.00 as its share of the seventh 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.

- **Steve Farnham made a motion to approve Article 4. Glenda Bissex seconded the motion.** Amos Meacham asked what other towns are contributing. Bob Atchinson explained that the amount of \$25,000 is split three ways among the towns of East Montpelier, Plainfield, and Marshfield. **The motion to accept Article 4 was approved.**

ARTICLE 5: Shall the Town establish a reserve fund for street plantings and other environmental improvement projects using funds raised by the Plainfield Conservation Commission?

- **Mary Lane made a motion to approve Article 5. Tim Phillips seconded the motion.** Conservation Commission member Charlie Cogbill noted that the Conservation Commission raises funds through grants and tree sales and that the intent of the Article is to ensure that these funds are carried over from year to year to be used for the purposes intended by the Conservation Commission through the establishment of a reserve fund. Stating that the Conservation Commission had decided to change the wording of the Article from that which is on the Warning, he proposed an amendment to replace the original Warning language with the following:

Shall a reserve fund be established for projects determined by the Plainfield Conservation Commission using funds raised by them for that purpose? If the Conservation Commission ceases to exist, these funds will be transferred to the Town's Conservation Fund.

Charlie Cogbill made a motion to approve the amendment to Article 5. Sarah Albert seconded the motion. Discussion followed resulting from questions from the floor from Peter Youngbaer and others regarding the need for two separate funds rather than amending the use of one fund. Members from the Conservation Commission, Charlie Cogbill, Sarah Albert, and Jan Waterman, spoke to clarify the different uses of the Town's Conservation Fund, which is Town money allocated by the Select Board for conservation easements and related activity, and the Conservation Commission's proposed reserve fund, which would allow unused funds raised by the Conservation Commission through grants and tree sales to be carried over from year to year and be used

specifically by the Conservation Commission for work such as street tree plantings and other projects. **The motion to approve the amendment was approved.** Hearing no further discussion on Article 5 as amended, **the motion to approve Article 5 as amended was approved.**

ARTICLE 6: 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	\$ 525.00
Central VT Home Health Hospice	\$ 2,700.00
Family Center of Wash County	\$ 475.00
Friends of the Winooski River	\$ 250.00
Good Beginnings of Central VT	\$ 300.00
Green Mountain Transit Agency	\$ 786.00
Home Share Now	\$ 300.00
Onion River Foodshelf	\$ 1,000.00
People's Health and Wellness	\$ 750.00
Sexual Assault Crisis Team	\$ 50.00
Twinfield Learning Center	\$ 400.00
Twinfield Together Mentoring	\$ 250.00
Twin Valley Senior Center	\$ 2,000.00
VT Center for Independent Living	\$ 225.00
Washington Cty Court Diversion	\$ 250.00
Washington Cty Youth Service Bureau	\$ 325.00
Total	\$11,586.00

- **Mary Lane made a motion to approve Article 6. Tim Phillips seconded the motion.** Jan Waterman thanked the Social Concerns Committee for all its work in putting together the list. **Select Board member Betsy Ziegler made a motion to amend Article 6 to add an expenditure of \$1,500 to the Central Vermont Council on Aging. Loona Brogan seconded the motion to amend Article 6.** Social Concerns Committee member Mary Niebling was unable to respond to a question on the number of Plainfield residents who are served due to no paperwork received from the agency. Bram Towbin noted that selecting agencies for funding is a process and that this was not the first time the Council on Aging had not gone through proper channels. Betsy Ziegler reviewed the variety of services the organization provides to the community. Town Clerk Linda Wells noted that both she and Assistant Town Clerk Carol Smith had had conversations with the organization during both the Social Concerns Committee process and the petition process so the organization was aware of deadlines but unfortunately did not act. Deborah Stoleroff spoke of her support for the Council on Aging's work and suggested perhaps sending a reminder next year noting the process and that the organization may not receive funding unless that process is followed. Mary Lane added that the organization works also with people with disabilities. Emily Rappold noted that the Twin Valley Senior Center receives support from the Council on Aging for its Meals on Wheels program with Plainfield residents being served 50 meals per week. She supported the idea of sending a letter advising the organization that this would be the last time funding would be provided unless the process is followed. Ryan Gillard, noting having the same conversation at Town Meeting last year

and suggested that it be communicated to the organization that funding will be allowed this last time but going forward the process will need to be followed. Bram Towbin clarified that last year it was a different organization, but that the speaker's point was well taken. Moderator Barasch reread the amendment and called for a vote. **The motion to amend was approved.** Steve Farnham questioned why there is an appropriation both in Article 4 for Green Mountain Transit Agency bus service and in Article 6 through the Social Concerns Committee. Bob Atchinson stated that he believed that the additional funding was for such things as studies and bus surveys. Laura Zeisel asked for clarification on why the Social Concerns Committee report states a Twin Valley Senior Center request of \$2,000 with the Social Concerns Committee recommending \$1,600, yet the figure that is being voted on is \$2,000. Bram Towbin explained that when the Social Concerns Committee allocates funding, it uses a metric based on the number of individuals served in the community, however, changes will be considered over the next year on evaluating an organization in terms of its economic need compared to other agencies that may have additional sources of funding. Given that consideration, the Select Board had decided to increase the amount to the original request. Mary Niebling stated that last year the Social Concerns Committee gave the Twin Valley Senior Center more than it had requested due to its new facility and this year felt that the funding should go back to the previous level. Niebling added that the allocation amount is up to the Select Board and that the Social Concerns Committee is purely advisory. In response to an earlier question on two separate allocations for funding for Green Mountain Transit Agency Dave Strong clarified that the \$786 allocated by the Social Concerns Committee was for special transportation provided to 25 Plainfield residents in 1,457 trips outside the bus service. Bram Towbin added that the allocation to the Twin Valley Senior Center had been increased before another organization had gotten its funding in. He commended the Social Concerns Committee for its tremendous amount of work in putting forward its recommendations. Betsy Ziegler added that the Twin Valley Senior Center had requested a much higher amount that it hoped would cover its rent of \$2,000 per month, adding that every little bit helps the agency. Hearing no further discussion, Moderator Barasch read the amended Article, which included a \$1,500 allocation for the Central Vermont Council on Aging, for a new total of \$13,086. **The motion to approve Article 6 as amended was approved.**

ARTICLE 7: Shall the Town voters authorize an appropriation of \$36,000.00 to the Cutler Memorial Library to pay for the librarian and the purchase of books and materials to support the mission of the library?

- **Steve Farnham made a motion to approve Article 7. Julie Hackbarth seconded the motion.** Cutler Memorial Library Trustee Bob Rosenfeld, on behalf of the trustees and volunteers, thanked the community for its continued support and solicited for more volunteers and trustees. He noted that under the directorship of Library Director Loona Brogan, the use of the Library and variety of its offerings have continued to increase. Library Director Brogan thanked the Library's Board of Trustees, Friends of the Library, and all the volunteers for their work, in addition to those who donate to the Library and patrons who use it. She noted the sources of funding and the wide variety of services offered. Brogan welcomed additional donations beyond the appropriation being requested and announced several upcoming events. **The motion to approve Article 7 was approved.**

ARTICLE 8: To see what amount of money the Town will vote to pay for Water and Wastewater Departments for the period of July 1, 2016 to June 30, 2017.

- **Jim Jamele made the first of two motions: Shall the Town of Plainfield expend the amount of \$172,724 for the operation of the Town of Plainfield's Water System for the period of July 1, 2016 to June 30, 2017. Bram Towbin seconded the motion.** Bob Atchinson asked what percentage of that amount comes from the Town and what percentage comes from consumer fees. Jamele responded that the entire amount comes from users fees, however, because the Town is ultimately responsible for the system, the Town votes on it. Steve Farnham noted that in previous years, the motion included the phrase "to be paid for by the users fees," and offered an amendment to include that phrase in the motion. Jamele requested that the phrase be included in the motion rather than going through the amendment procedure. Hearing no objection from the floor, Moderator Barasch noted that the motion was changed with the added phrase "to be paid for by the users fees." **The motion was approved.** Jamele made a second motion: **Shall the Town of Plainfield expend the amount of \$252,633 to be paid by the users of the system for the operation of the Town of Plainfield Wastewater System from July 1, 2016 to June 30, 2017. Dave Strong seconded the motion.** There was no discussion. **The motion was approved.**

ARTICLE 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, 2016 to June 30, 2017.

- **Bram Towbin made a motion to approve the amount of \$927,446.54 to pay for highways, bridges, fire department, and administrative operations of the Town of Plainfield for the period of July 1, 2016 to June 30, 2017. Tim Phillips seconded the motion.** Towbin reviewed several items in the budget, including the need for a new fire truck due to an otherwise increase in insurance if the Town does not upgrade from its 15-year-old fire truck, adding Health Reimbursement Accounts to several Town departments to avoid considerable insurance premium increases for Town employees, and applying no-longer-needed funds for printing to enhance the Town's website. Glenda Bissex requested clarification on the Social Concerns line item, noting that it was considerably larger than the figure on which the Town had just voted. Linda Wells explained that it included the funding for the Cutler Library and the GMTA bus service that had been listed separately in the Warned Articles. Deborah Stoleroff questioned the need for the \$3,000 allocation for the Town's website. Bram Towbin noted complaints received regarding the lack of timely postings and difficult navigability. Stoleroff suggested the possibility of Twinfield students with whom she works helping with the site, which Towbin agreed was a good idea and one on which he would follow up with Stoleroff. Karen Storey noted how difficult it is for her as Zoning Administrator to get information onto the website for the public and hoped that the additional funding would make it more user friendly. Brenda Lindemann agreed. Dave Strong noted a list of expenses for the Town Hall Opera House and explained why the amount budgeted in FY2014-15 was over, stating that grants and revenue received, not taxpayer money, paid for a large percentage of the work done. Strong mentioned plans for purchasing padded chairs with the help of funds being raised today by Mary Niebling's pie sale. **Bob Atchinson made a motion to amend the budget by increasing the Municipal Lighting New Street Light budget by from \$2,000 to \$3,000 to purchase eight new LED lamps, whose efficiencies and reliability would result in cost savings. Mary Lane seconded the motion.** Bram Towbin raised the issue of process, stating the matter should be raised during the budget process

rather than adjusting funding levels from the floor at Town Meeting. Alex Thayer asked if the Select Board could make adjustments from one line item to another given that the streetlight electricity cost would decrease as a result of using the more efficient lamps. Noting other issues affecting the amounts in the Municipal Lighting line items, Linda Wells said that next year it might be easier to determine what the actual costs would be. **The motion to amend was defeated.** With regard to spending up to \$500,000 on a new firetruck once it actually needs to be purchased due to decisions made by the insurance industry, Steve Farnham asked if there were better options to enhance the Town's firefighting efforts. Sharing Farnham's frustration regarding the insurance issue, Towbin deferred to Fire Chief Martin, but added that it is not only insurance rates for the Town, but also home insurance rates based on the capabilities of the Town in terms of fire suppression. Second Assistant Fire Chief and Forest Fire Warden Andy Hebert noted that they currently participate in mutual aid assistance with surrounding towns, but that the first few minutes are critical and there is concern that the current truck could break down traveling to a fire or in the process of pumping water. Farnham did not want to go on record opposing a new firetruck, stating he raised the issue because it was said that the current truck was in good shape and only needed replacing for insurance purposes. Towbin noted the statistical challenges that municipalities face using an example of costly new requirements resulting from incidents in other areas that raise insurance rates. **The motion to approve Article 9 was approved.**

ARTICLE 10: Shall the Town of Plainfield authorize the Select Board to apply any surplus from the current fiscal year to reduce taxes in the next fiscal year?

- **Robert Barasch made a motion to approve Article 10. Loona Brogan seconded the motion.** There was no discussion. **The motion to approve Article 10 was approved.**

ARTICLE 11: 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, 2016 and collect school taxes on November 2, 2016 and February 8, 2017, collecting half of the total school taxes on each of those dates?

- **Mary Lane made a motion to approve Article 11. Tim Phillips seconded the motion.** There was no discussion. **The motion to approve Article 11 was approved.**

ARTICLE 12: Shall the Town of Plainfield approve the following article:

Whereas, the earth's temperature continues to increase at an unprecedented rate; polar ice is melting at an increasing rate; and we are experiencing unusual and extreme weather events at an increasing frequency; and

Whereas, scientists nearly unanimously agree that the increase in global temperature is the cause of the changing weather; that the increase is primarily caused by carbon dioxide emissions from the combustion of fossil fuels; and that unless these emissions are cut substantially, we will leave to future generations a much less desirable place to live; and

Whereas, the Plainfield town government and its various committees have the ability to affect the reduction of fossil fuel use through decisions about town infrastructure and operations, through education and assistance to residents to reduce fossil fuel use, and through the implementation of climate-sensitive requirements in land use regulations.

Be it resolved that the elected or appointed officials of Plainfield, acting collectively or individually, will take all responsible and legal actions within their respective subject areas, and/or in collaboration with others, in accord with the Plainfield Town Plan, to reduce fossil fuel use by the Town's operations, and encourage and assist residents to do the same.

Be it further resolved that the Select Board and its designees will report, in the 2016 Town report, on actions taken to slow climate change under the provisions of this article.

- **Merrill Carpenter made a motion to approve Article 12. Bob Atchinson seconded the motion.** Bob Barasch questioned why the language in the article was limited to fossil fuels and did not include anything that increases carbon dioxide such as burning wood. To reflect this, Henry Harris suggested adding in the phrase, "and other activities commonly held to cause climate change" to the "Be it resolved" section of the article. Steve Farnham asked who wrote the article and questioned if leaving out other sources of carbon dioxide was intentional. Bob Atchinson responded that it was co-authored by members of the Plainfield Energy Committee and the Marshfield Energy and Climate Change Commission with the purpose of having town officials model behavior to citizens by the way operations are carried out by the towns. **Bob Barasch made a motion to amend this paragraph** to "*Be it resolved* that the elected or appointed officials of Plainfield, acting collectively or individually, will take all responsible and legal actions within their respective subject areas, and/or in collaboration with others, in accord with the Plainfield Town Plan, to reduce fossil fuel use **and other activities commonly held to cause climate change** by the Town's operations, and encourage and assist residents to do the same. **Jan Waterman seconded the motion. The motion to amend was approved.** Rob Bridges questioned if the article was binding and in the "Be it resolved" section, the words "will take all responsible and legal action" asked if it would mean going back into Town documents and revising them to meet the standard. Linda Wells noted that it was a binding article. Bram Towbin, who stated he was in support of the goal of the article, noted that supporting it exposes the Town to legal action that could be costly. **Paula Emery proposed amending the language to removing the words "will" and "all" and adding "are encouraged to" to remove the legal liability.** Dave Strong felt that the amended language was satisfactory in that the Town would not be subject to legal action. **Loona Brogan seconded the motion. The motion to amend was approved.** Robert Bridges stated that while the amendment allayed some of his fears, but noted the negative effect it would have on attracting people to serve the Town by asking them to do yet more. Alex Thayer stated her involvement in Town boards and committees and felt it was not so much of a burden, but a matter of changing people's mental framework by having them factor in the effects on climate change when making decisions. **Henry Harris suggested a further amendment to the language to include that the Select Board provide tools to make reporting easier and Betsy Ziegler suggested in the "Be it further resolved" section, adding "are encouraged to" after the word "designees."** Glenda Bissex asked if there is no requirement to report, how will measures the Town takes to address climate change be tracked so citizens know what has been done in making a difference on the planet. **Bram Towbin seconded the motion.** Development Review Board Chair Janice Walrafen noted that the DRB and other Town entities already report annually thus do not need additional tools from the Select Board. Dave Strong agreed that the Town already provides reporting on these activities and that no further initiatives are necessary. Water/Wastewater Commission Chair Mary Lane noted her concern about the additional pressure that required reporting would put on volunteer Town officials who are already thinking in environmentally conscious ways. Bob Atchinson stated it was not intended as a burden, but to

celebrate the good things that are being done and provide a bit of documentation. After a voice vote from the floor was inconclusive, Moderator Barasch took a standing vote. **The motion to amend was approved by a 34-17 standing vote.** A voter asked if the language could be further amended to have the Energy Team work with Town committees. Bob Atchinson stated that healthy discussions were taking place in Plainfield and Marshfield, underscoring that the process already exists and does not need legislating. The amendment was withdrawn on the grounds that the cooperation was already occurring. Linda Wells read the entire amended article as written below:

Whereas, the earth's temperature continues to increase at an unprecedented rate; polar ice is melting at an increasing rate; and we are experiencing unusual and extreme weather events at an increasing frequency; and

Whereas, scientists nearly unanimously agree that the increase in global temperature is the cause of the changing weather; that the increase is primarily caused by carbon dioxide emissions from the combustion of fossil fuels; and that unless these emissions are cut substantially, we will leave to future generations a much less desirable place to live; and

Whereas, the Plainfield town government and its various committees have the ability to affect the reduction of fossil fuel use through decisions about town infrastructure and operations, through education and assistance to residents to reduce fossil fuel use, and through the implementation of climate-sensitive requirements in land use regulations.

Be it resolved that the elected or appointed officials of Plainfield, acting collectively or individually, are encouraged to take all responsible and legal actions within their respective subject areas, and/or in collaboration with others, in accord with the Plainfield Town Plan, to reduce fossil fuel use and other activities commonly held to cause climate change by the Town's operations, and encourage and assist residents to do the same.

Be it further resolved that the Select Board and its designees are encouraged to report, in the 2016 Town report, on actions taken to slow climate change under the provisions of this article.

The motion to approve Article 12 as amended was approved.

ARTICLE 13: To transact any other business that may properly come before the meeting.

- Bram Towbin congratulated the Twinfield Girls 5/6 Basketball Team on its recent tournament win in Hardwick. He also congratulated the Twinfield Boys Varsity Basketball Team that although it didn't win, got to the finals in a very close game.
- Deborah Stoleroff stated that great things are happening at Twinfield and noted the positive changes going on in education as well as things to be wary about such as school consolidation in terms of Act 46 and the effect that might have on local voices. She noted that no one was running for the School Board from the Town of Plainfield and encouraged those interested to consider running.
- Mary Niebling announced that she still has pie to sell.
- Laura Zeisel thanked those who contributed to the food donation effort.
- Betsy Ziegler noted that there is still room on the card for David Strong if anyone else wished to sign it.

- Brenda Lindemann asked if there had been progress on the Plainfield Historical Society building to protect it or find a new home for it. Dave Strong reported that the Town had received a Historic Preservation grant to do a thorough assessment of the building. The site has been so compromised by the building next door and its proximity to the river that the Town should consider moving it to another location and gave a rough estimate of moving it at between \$50,000 and \$60,000. Given the other issues that the Select Board is dealing with, it has not yet discussed it. Dan Gadd has put a temporary tarp on the roof to minimize further damage.
- Steve Farnham noted that it was the warmest, fuzziest, lovefest of a Town Meeting that he has ever attended. He thanked Bob Atchinson for his work on the carbon issue and the Energy Committee.
- Bob Atchinson noted that there were light bulbs on the Energy table and encouraged people to take them.

Steve Farnham made a motion to adjourn the Town Meeting at 1:40pm. Bob Barasch seconded the motion. Moderator Barasch thanked everyone for attending. **The motion to adjourn was approved.**

Respectfully submitted by Cindy Wyckoff