

**Plainfield Town Meeting**  
**March 7, 2017**  
**Draft Minutes**

**Town Moderator Charlie Barasch called the meeting to order at 10:07am.**

Moderator Barasch began by reviewing Robert's Rules of Order and noting guidelines regarding voting eligibility and instructions for those wishing to speak. He announced the sale of pies to raise funds to purchase padded chairs for the Plainfield Town Hall Opera House, the Fireman's Club chili sale, coffee and donuts, and primroses for sale to benefit the Friends of the Cutler Library. He then read aloud a David Budbill poem entitled, "The Woodcutter Changes His Mind."

State Representative Janel Ancel was present to speak to those in attendance. She stating that she had brought copies of Senator William Doyle's questionnaire, her Town Meeting report, and noted her new email address. Ancel provided an overview of opportunities and challenges with regard to new leadership in both Washington and the State. Before taking questions, she thanked everyone for keeping in touch with her and for giving her a few minutes to speak at today's meeting. Ancel responded to questions about the status of various bills currently under consideration in the State legislature.

Town Clerk/Treasurer Linda Wells noted her appreciation for the six years that Select Board chair Bram Towbin, who is stepping down, has served the community. She presented him with a canvas bag. Select Board member Ross Sneyd gave a tribute to Towbin, thanking him for his many contributions to the Town during his tenure. Select Board member Betsy Ziegler presented Towbin with a pen and small "soapbox," noting that she knows this is not his last political venture. Towbin thanked everyone, and read aloud a tribute to Town Clerk/Treasurer Linda Wells and Assistant Town Clerk/Treasurer Carol Smith. He presented them with "Sons of Anarchy"-style vests in tribute to their "Daughters of Civility" manner in managing the Town's business.

Wells presented certificates of appreciation and boutonnieres to the following people who are stepping down after serving on various community boards: Bill Benko (Listers); Rob Bridges (Development Review Board and Emergency Management Director); Neil Hogan (Development Review Board); Jim Jamele (Water/Wastewater Commission); Kate Harper (Conservation Commission); Dave Strong (Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission); Laura Ziesel (Central Vermont Solid Waste Management District, and her oversight of donations to the Food Shelf); and Dan Towner (School Board). Wells also presented boutonnieres to volunteers who have served on boards for more than 10 years: Lorraine Cappetta (Auditor, 26 years); Mary Etta Chase (Auditor, 32 years); Sarah Albert (Conservation Commission, 20 years); Charlie Cogbill (Conservation Commission, 18 years); Julie Hackbarth (Conservation Commission, 20 years); Jan Waterman (Conservation Commission, 14 years); Becky Atchinson (Conservation Commission, 12 years); Sandy Ross (Lister, 26 years); Fred Pope (Lister, 10 years); Dale Bartlett (Justice of the Peace, 27 years); Pat Boyle (Justice of the Peace, 29 years); Steve Farnham (Justice of the Peace, 19 years); Alice Merrill (Justice of the Peace, 11 years); Peter Youngbaer (Justice of the Peace, 17 years); Will Colgan (Planning Commission, 27 years); Karen Storey (Planning

Commission, 14 years); Mary Lane (Water/Wastewater Commission, 13 years); Carol Smith (Assistant Clerk/Treasurer, 23 years); and Charlie Barasch (Town Moderator, 38 years).

**ARTICLE 2:** Shall the Town of Plainfield bond an amount not to exceed \$200,000 to be used for the purchase of a new fire truck?

- Moderator Barasch noted that he recently learned that Australian ballot issues can be discussed at Town Meeting, but does not include the election of officers. Plainfield Fire Chief Pat Martin asked for permission to speak as a non-resident of Plainfield. Hearing no objection from the floor, Moderator Barasch granted permission. Martin offered to provide information on what the Fire Department is requesting. He explained that this vote is not a vote on the truck itself, but merely means that the Town will bond the requested amount should the Australian ballot item pass. He noted that the current fire truck is 17 years old, and by the time a new truck is built and arrives, which takes about one year, it will be 18-19 years old. Steve Farnham asked if a new truck was needed. Select Board Chair Bram Towbin noted that once a front-line pumper truck reaches 15 years in age, insurance companies classify the town as having no truck at all and rates are adjusted accordingly. Martin added that as trucks age, the number of needed repairs increases. In response to Michael Billingsley's question regarding what would be done with the old truck, Martin stated that if a new truck were to be purchased, they could not keep it due to space limitations at the Fire Station, but rather sell it on the open market. He noted that used fire trucks are often purchased by used fire truck sales people or other communities that might want one as a secondary back-up truck.

**ARTICLE 3:** 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:** Mary Lane 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:** George Cushing made a motion to accept the Town Treasurer's Report. Scott Stewart seconded the motion. There was no discussion. **The Town Treasurer's Report was accepted.**
- **DELINQUENT TAX COLLECTOR'S REPORT:** Scott Stewart made a motion to accept the Delinquent Tax Collector's Report. Tim Phillips seconded the motion. There was no discussion. **The Delinquent Tax Collector's Report was accepted.**
- **LISTERS REPORT:** Mary Lane made a motion to accept the Listers Report. Scott Stewart seconded the motion. There was no discussion. **The Listers Report was accepted.**
- **PLANNING COMMISSION REPORT:** Mary Lane made a motion to accept the Planning Commission Report. Tim Phillips seconded the motion. There was no discussion. **The Planning Commission Report was accepted.**
- **DEVELOPMENT REVIEW BOARD REPORT:** Scott Stewart made a motion to accept the Development Review Board Report. Tim Phillips seconded the motion. Development Review Board Chair Janice Walrafen stated the need for two or three new members due to the resignation of two members. She asked anyone interested to contact either her or the Select Board. Moderator Barasch noted that there is a volunteer form in the back of the Town Report for use if someone

would like to volunteer for one of the boards. **The Development Review Board Report was accepted.**

- **ZONING ADMINISTRATOR REPORT: George Cushing made a motion to accept the Zoning Administrator's Report. Tim Phillips seconded the motion.** Zoning Administrator Karen Storey reminded those who wish to do something this summer to submit their permit requests. **The Zoning Administrator Report was accepted.**
- **SELECT BOARD REPORT: Scott Stewart made a motion to accept the Select Board report. Tim Phillips seconded the motion.** Bram Towbin recognized the Twinfield Basketball team for its achievement as State champions. Referring to a recent article in the *Times Argus*, Towbin briefly explained the issue regarding the house on Cameron Road that is about to fall into the Great Brook. He noted that funding to purchase the house will come from outside and that the Town's involvement is both to save the municipal taxpayer money and prevent endangering the lives of first responders if it were to fall into the stream. Towbin also noted that the website is not listed correctly in the Select Board report, and that the correct address ends in "dot us" not "dot com." Janice Walrafen stated that there are a number of empty buildings on Creamery Street and asked if the Town can do anything to move the process forward in order to reduce blight. Towbin explained that the limbo-like process of foreclosure does not serve the local community and that he is working with the State legislature to try to change the rules and speed up the process. Noting that the building at 13 Creamery Street has been sold, the property at 96 Creamery remains unsold and that he will continue to work to improve the process. Rick Pope asked a question regarding the difference in cost for hot mix. Moderator Barasch responded that the question would be considered during discussion of the budget. **The Select Board Report was accepted.**
- **PLAINFIELD TOWN HALL OPERA HOUSE REPORT: George Cushing made a motion to accept the Plainfield Town Hall Opera House Report. Scott Stewart seconded the motion.** Noting that the event coordinators' contract is expiring, Brenda Lindemann asked if there was a plan for marketing events once they are gone. Dave Strong explained that Event Coordinators Sarah Lowry and Jade Walker initially were hired to get the Town Hall Opera House back on its feet after being closed for years and to develop systems to manage it efficiently. The formation of the Friends of the Plainfield Town Hall Opera House and existence of a new website will make the management of the space less labor intensive. Strong thanked those who donated money to purchase a concert-quality grand piano and noted that a fund drive will begin this spring to build an addition on the back of the building, which is needed if they continue to grow the Opera House as a performance space. Chloe Budnick expressed her appreciation for the diversity of events held there. Steve Farnham noted that the venue is not only for public events, but also can be used for private events. **The Plainfield Town Hall Opera House Report was accepted.**
- **SOCIAL CONCERNS COMMITTEE REPORT: Tim Phillips made a motion to accept the Social Concerns Committee Report. Mary Lane seconded the motion.** Andy Robinson thanked the Social Concerns Committee for its work to filter the applications. **The Social Concerns Committee Report was accepted.**
- **WATER/WASTEWATER COMMISSION REPORT: Scott Stewart made a motion to accept the Water/Wastewater Commission Report. Tim Phillips seconded the motion.** There was no discussion. **The Water/Wastewater Commission Report was accepted.**
- **CONSERVATION COMMISSION REPORT: Mary Lane made a motion to accept the Conservation Commission Report. Tim Phillips seconded the motion.** Conservation Commission member Jan

Waterman noted that brochures were available for the current plant sale. She stated that it is not necessary to be a member of the Conservation Commission to participate in its efforts and mentioned the need for help with media and posting information about Conservation Commission activities to the Town website. Waterman announced that Green Up Day is coming, which the Conservation Commission helps to organize, stating that people should not put out their old tires for pick up. She noted that next to the copy of the Plainfield Ecological Inventory on the Conservation Commission's table were slips of paper showing where copies of it can be found online. **The Conservation Commission Report was accepted.**

- **HAZARD MITIGATION COMMITTEE REPORT: Scott Stewart made a motion to accept the Hazard Mitigation Committee Report. Tim Phillips seconded the motion.** Hazard Mitigation Committee member Michael Billingsley spoke for Committee Chair Dan Gadd, who was not present. He asked for continued public input and noted the Committee's work in studying the behavior of the Great Brook, its impact on the Brook Road bridge, and hazards presented by woody debris in the stream bed. Billingsley thanked former committee members Charlie Cogbill and Scottie Harrison for their years of service. Discussion followed regarding the expected time frame for replacement of the Brook Street bridge and concern about sediment formation areas in the stream bed. Bob Atchinson, who serves on the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission, noted that in the Washington County area, the priority for concern of the two bridges on the Great Brook in Plainfield was number four out of ten for the Brook Road bridge and number seven out of ten for the other. **The Hazard Mitigation Committee Report was accepted.**
- **FIRE AND RESCUE REPORT: Steve Farnham made a motion to accept the Fire and Rescue Report. Tim Phillips seconded the motion.** Alice Merrill asked about the plan for the pipes that go into the Winooski River from the Mill Street Park. Fire Chief Pat Martin stated that they are not in use due to freezing and cracking resulting from being incorrectly reinstalled. While grant money is currently not available to fix them, hopes are to replace them in the future further downstream. **The Fire and Rescue Report was accepted.**
- **E911 REPORT: George Cushing made a motion to accept the E911 Report. Tim Phillips seconded the motion.** There was no discussion. **The E911 Report was accepted.**
- **EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT DIRECTOR REPORT: Mary Lane made a motion to accept the Emergency Management Director Report. Scott Stewart seconded the motion.** Emergency Management Director Michael Billingsley stated that he had taken Rob Bridges' place and thanked Bridges for his work and the training he had given Billingsley over the past year. He urged people to take a brochure about dealing with emergency situations and offered to consult individually with anyone with concerns about their specific household. **The Emergency Management Director Report was accepted.**
- **RECREATION COMMITTEE REPORT: George Cushing made a motion to accept the Recreation Committee Report. Bob Atchinson seconded the motion.** Lisa Ryan asked if there was a plan to replace the picnic structure at the Recreation Field. Dave Strong stated that a grant that was applied for was not funded due to the Town not having the required matching funds, but they hope to reapply this year. He noted that the new structure would be built farther away from the river and include a concrete floor as well as a few other amenities. **The Recreation Committee Report was accepted.**

- **CEMETERY COMMISSION REPORT: Scott Stewart made a motion to accept the Cemetery Commission Report. Michele Clark seconded the motion.** There was no discussion. **The Cemetery Commission Report was accepted.**
- **ENERGY COORDINATOR REPORT: Mary Lane made a motion to accept the Energy Coordinator Report. Scott Stewart seconded the motion.** Energy Coordinator Bob Atchinson reported that the solar array at the Park and Ride has produced 12,450 kilowatt hours of electricity in the year and four months since it was put into service in 2015. He stated that two panels in the array had been stolen, which slowed down the output. The municipal building will be audited for its electrical load. Atchinson noted that people are being honest with the honor system in use at the electric vehicle (EV) charging station at the Mill Street park. Select Board Chair Bram Towbin addressed the concern of some people in the Town regarding the money spent to install the EV charging station, noting that only grant funding and volunteer effort had been used for it, that the electricity usage is being made up in donations by people using the station, and that Plainfield is now on electronic maps as having an EV charging station. Bob Barasch asked about the possibility of installing a surveillance camera by the solar array. Atchinson responded that he was open to suggestions on it. He noted that the 324 hours of electricity at the EV charging station is equivalent to 1,500 miles of fossil-fuel driving. He urged everyone to educate themselves about global warming and climate change, and have the topic foremost in everyone's minds and actions in terms of using less energy. He noted a new online resource, the Community Energy Dashboard, and other available literature. **The Energy Coordinator Report was accepted.**
- Sasha Thayer noted the immense amount of volunteer effort and great municipal employees that make Plainfield a great place.
- Steve Farnham asked if the Town Officers' reports were available online, to which Linda Wells responded the Town Report should be on the Town website.

**ARTICLE 4:** Shall the Town establish a Personal Protection Equipment Reserve Fund to purchase equipment and gear for our volunteer firefighters?

- **John Monahan made a motion to approve Article 4. Tim Phillips seconded the motion.** Plainfield Fire Chief Pat Martin explained that Article 4 was to create a fund and Article 5 was to put money into that fund. He noted that the money being proposed to put into the fund was not new money, but rather from defunded line items in the previous budget as well as other monies that were in the Fire Department budget in the past. The rationale is that some of the equipment that they hope to replace is so expensive that it cannot be purchased within one budget year. If they are able to build up the fund, the equipment can be bought as a whole. He noted that some of the live-saving equipment they would like to replace is close to 20 years old. Jan Waterman expressed her support for Fire Department personnel that put themselves in harm's way to protect the community and urged others to support the motion. **The motion to accept Article 4 was approved.**

**ARTICLE 5:** Shall the Town appropriate \$12,500 annually to the Personal Protection Equipment Reserve Fund?

- **Steve Farnham made a motion to approve Article 5. Tim Phillips seconded the motion.** Peter Youngbaer asked if the wording of the motion binds the Town to contributing annually or would it have to be voted on every year. Select Board Chair Bram Towbin stated that it would become an automatic allocation every year. Towbin noted certification requirements that depend upon having

the proper equipment, thus the need to furnish the fund with monies due to the rising cost of this equipment. Charlie Cogbill raised a point of order to Moderator Barasch as to whether the town can vote on this article with this wording requesting funding in future years. Moderator Barasch stated that he believed they could commit to annual allocations. Pat Boyle stated her view that if they vote to allocate it annually, then it is taken off the table and becomes a line item in next year's budget. Discussion continued on the annual nature of the allocation, and **Select Board member Ross Sneyd made a motion to amend the article by deleting the word "annually" so as to determine each year what amount should go into the fund. George Cushing seconded the motion.** Discussion followed with several people opposing the amendment. Town Clerk/Treasurer Linda Wells clarified that this is a reserve fund that is being proposed, which would be funded every year similar to how reserve funds for other entities such as the Conservation Commission and Highway Department are funded with monies to be used only for that purpose. If it were to be a budget line item that is funded every year, monies not used in one year would go back into the general fund. **Bram Towbin moved to call the question. There was no second to the motion.** Discussion continued on the amendment, both in support and against deleting the word "annually." Ross Sneyd reiterated that deleting the word "annually" would merely allow for varying appropriation amounts as recommended by the needs of the Fire Department rather than fixing the amount at \$12,500 each year. Fire Chief Pat Martin voiced his support for the amendment. **Tim Phillips moved to call the question and stop debate on the amendment. Scott Stewart seconded the motion. The motion to call the question and stop debate on the amendment was approved.** Moderator Barasch called for a vote on the amendment to drop the word "annually." **The amendment to drop the word "annually" was approved.** Moderator Barasch called for a vote on Article 5 as amended. **The motion to accept Article 5 as amended was approved.** Moderator Barasch congratulated the Town of Plainfield for reaching the conclusion that everyone wanted without any acrimony.

**ARTICLE 6:** Shall the Town appropriate the sum of \$8,333.00 as its share of the eighth 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.

- **John Monahan made a motion to accept Article 6. Mary Lane seconded the motion.** Brenda Lindemann asked if it was correct to assume that the service means round-trip. Tim Phillips noted that he rides the commuter bus four or five days a week and can assure it is round trip. He added that the service goes out beyond Plainfield to as far as Saint Johnsbury. **The motion to accept Article 6 was approved.**

**ARTICLE 7:** Shall the Town voters authorize the expenditures for the following not-for-profit service agencies as recommended by the appointed Social Concerns Committee?

American Red Cross	\$ 100.00
Central VT Adult Basic Education	\$ 400.00
Capstone (Central VT) Comm. Action	\$ 500.00
Central VT Council on Aging	\$ 1,500.00
Central VT Home Health Hospice	\$ 2,500.00
Family Center of Wash County	\$ 475.00
Friends of the Winooski River	\$ 300.00

Good Beginnings of Central VT	\$ 300.00
Green Mountain Transit Agency	\$ 786.00
Home Share Now	\$ 350.00
Onion River Foodshelf	\$ 1,000.00
People's Health and Wellness	\$ 650.00
Sexual Assault Crisis Team	\$ 50.00
Twinfield Learning Center	\$ 400.00
Twinfield Together Mentoring	\$ 250.00
Twin Valley Senior Center	\$ 2,200.00
VT Center for Independent Living	\$ 225.00
Washington CTY Court Diversion	\$ 250.00
Washington CTY Mental Health	\$ 500.00
Washington CTY Youth Service Bureau	\$ 325.00
Total	\$13,061.00

- John Monahan made a motion to approve Article 7. Mary Lane seconded the motion.** George Cushing stated that Central Vermont Home Health Hospice, with a proposed \$2,500 donation, is not a non-profit, whereas the Twin Valley Senior Center, which serves hundreds of people in the community, including the Meals on Wheels program, has an appropriation of \$2,200. Cushing voiced that he thought this was unfair. Select Board Chair Bram Towbin noted the criteria used by the Social Concerns Committee is the amount of people that are served in the community. Towbin has suggested that the means of the organization itself be considered. Bob Barasch noted that Central Vermont Home Health and Hospice is a non-profit with a large endowment; however, with its tremendous annual budget, if it did not receive outside funding the endowment would disappear quickly. He added that the organization is devoted to serving people and not making money. Towbin clarified that he was merely suggesting additional criteria be used so that a higher level of support is given to struggling local organizations than to those that benefit from large endowments. Discussion followed regarding looking also at salary levels within organizations. **Brenda Lindemann moved to amend the amount appropriated to Washington County Mental Health from \$500 to its original requested amount of \$1,500. Nicola Morris seconded the motion.** Towbin expressed his support for the hard work of the Social Concerns Committee in reviewing applications and recommending funding levels, and noted that he is against the amendment. Mary Niebling from the Social Concerns Committee noted that it has refined its processes over the years in response to community feedback. Washington County Mental Health was a new organization seeking funding this year, and it was decided to fund them at a lower level than what was requested until a track record with them was established. **Amy Lester made a motion to call the question and stop debate on the amendment. Tim Phillips seconded the motion. The motion to stop debate on the amendment was approved.** Moderator Barasch called for a vote on the amendment to change the amount appropriated for Washington County Mental Health from \$500 to \$1,500. **The motion to amend Article 7 was defeated.** Moderator Barasch called for a vote on Article 7 as written. **The motion to accept Article 7 was approved.**

**ARTICLE 8:** Shall the Town voters authorize an appropriation of \$37,500 to the Cutler Memorial Library to pay for the librarian and the purchase of books and materials to support the mission of the library?

- **Tim Phillips made a motion to accept Article 8. Michele Clark seconded the motion.** Cutler Memorial Librarian Loona Brogan thanked the Friends of the Library for their fundraising efforts and believing in the cause and importance of libraries, noting that the group is inviting new members to help support the library. She asked the community for input regarding any specific books that individuals would like to see at the library. Brogan read her original poem, "What Is It We're After." **Bram Towbin moved to amend the appropriation to the library from \$37,500 to \$36,000,** explaining that his concern was one of process and that at no time during lengthy discussions between the Select Board and library personnel did the library mention the \$1,500 increase in its appropriation request. **Brenda Lindemann seconded the motion.** Discussion ensued regarding what the increased appropriation request would fund, involving the Select Board in the library's annual budget discussions in the future, why the library appropriation is not included in the Social Concerns Committee's considerations, opinions for and against the amendment, and the reason for unused library funds in previous budgets. **Deb Stolleroff made a motion to stop debate on the amendment. Mary Lane seconded the motion. The motion to stop debate on the amendment was approved.** Moderator Barasch called for a vote on the amendment. **The motion to amend Article 8 was defeated. Michele Clark made a motion to call the question and stop debate on the original motion on Article 8. Mary Lane seconded the motion. The motion to call the question and stop debate on Article 8 was approved.** Moderator Barasch called for a vote on the original motion on Article 8 as written. **The motion to accept Article 8 was approved.**

**ARTICLE 9:** Shall the Town of Plainfield appropriate the sum of \$1,243.00 (one dollar per resident) to the Cross Vermont Trail Association, a Vermont nonprofit organization, to help pay for a 200 foot long pedestrian and bicycle bridge over the Winooski River in the Town of East Montpelier to complete a vital link in the statewide Cross Vermont Trail, and thereby helping to secure matching funds from the City of Montpelier and other local towns?

- **Dave Strong made a motion to approve Article 9. Bob Atchinson seconded the motion.** Rose Paul, member of the Cross Vermont Trail Association, explained that the idea of requesting funding from the Town of Plainfield arose from a challenge match from the City of Montpelier to make it fair by asking surrounding towns to also contribute one dollar per resident for the bridge project that will serve multiple towns. Paul detailed the project specifics, why the bridge was needed, and the amounts being requested from surrounding towns. **The motion to accept Article 9 was approved.**

**ARTICLE 10:** To see what amount of money the Town will vote to pay for Water and Wastewater Departments for the period of July 1, 2017 to June 30, 2018.

- The article was presented in two separate motions: one for Water and one for Wastewater.
- **Water and Wastewater Commissioner Jim Jamele made a motion to expend \$191,187 for the operation of the Town of Plainfield's Water system to be paid for by the users of the system for the period of July 1, 2017 to June 30, 2018. Scott Stewart seconded the motion.** George Cushing asked why residents outside the Village who do not use or pay for the system have a right to vote. Jamele explained that the users of the water system pay for its use similar to those who are not on the system pay for their wells, but that the Town is ultimately responsible for the system. Mary Lane added that the Town also uses the water system. Energy Coordinator Bob Atchinson suggested a fairer process by charging users by the gallon via calibrating the water meters rather than charging a flat rate, and offered water-saving recommendations to anyone feeling pinched by any higher



usage costs. **The motion to expend \$191,187 for the operation of the Town of Plainfield's Water system was approved.**

- **Jamele made a motion to expend \$264,565 for the operation of the Town of Plainfield's Wastewater system to be paid for by the users of the system for the period of July 1, 2017 to June 30, 2018. Scott Stewart seconded the motion.** There was no discussion. **The motion to expend \$264,565 for the operation of the Town of Plainfield's Wastewater system was approved.**
- Water and Wastewater Chairperson Mary Lane presented outgoing Water and Wastewater Commissioner James Jamele with a plaque of appreciation for his nine years of dedicated service.

**ARTICLE 11:** 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, 2017 to June 30, 2018.

- **Dave Strong made a motion to accept the figure of \$926,067.71 to pay for highways, bridges, fire department, and administrative operations of the Town of Plainfield for the period of July 1, 2017 to June 30, 2018 for Article 11. John Monahan seconded the motion.** Responding to a question raised earlier in the meeting, Select Board Chair Bram Towbin explained the reason for the increased cost for hot mix in the Highway Department's budget. Michael Billingsley commended the work of the Highway Department in repairing roads after flood events. Steve Pappas asked where cuts had been made to the budget as indicated previously by Select Board member Ross Sneyd. Select Board members cited decreased funding for the Town website, Emergency Preparedness, Old Home Days, and creative budgeting for medical insurance, adding up to approximately \$2,000. Dave Strong commended the good work in formulating a budget this year that came in \$1,500 less than last year with no cuts to essential services. **The motion to accept the figure of \$926,067.71 for Article 11 was approved.**

**ARTICLE 12:** 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?

- **John Monahan made a motion to accept Article 12. Peter Youngbaer seconded the motion.** There was no discussion. **The motion to accept Article 12 was approved.**

**ARTICLE 13:** 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, 2017 and collect school taxes on November 8, 2017 and February 14, 2018, collecting half of the total school taxes on each of those dates?

- **John Monahan made a motion to accept Article 13. Michele Clark seconded the motion.** In response to a question regarding the dates in the article, Town Clerk/Treasurer Linda Wells explained taxes are not collected each year on the same dates due to calendar changes, but rather on the second Wednesdays of the months they are due. Bob Atchinson suggested making the due dates the same each year to make it easier to remember. **The motion to accept Article 13 was approved.**

Select Board member Betsy Ziegler referred those in attendance to two large maps on the wall: one showing the site of the new pathway that will start across Route 2 from the Town Hall Opera House and go across the new Pedestrian Bridge, scheduled for construction this year, to the Mill Street park. The

other map is an aerial photograph showing where the proposed new sidewalk might go in the Lower Village. She noted that the sidewalk design is merely a plan and creates the basis for the next step if the project moves forward. Ziegler also stated that this year there was childcare available at Town Meeting, which she hopes will continue next year for people with children who want to attend. She thanked Bruno John and Kelyn Farnham for volunteering for child care this year.

**ARTICLE 14:** To transact any other business that may properly come before the meeting.

**Will the Voters of Plainfield, Vermont pass the following resolution:**

**Whereas** nearly 60 million people worldwide are displaced by violence, political strife, or natural disaster and forced to become refugees; and

**Whereas** millions of additional people worldwide are driven to seek out immigration opportunities for better lives and well being for their families; and

**Whereas** the Town of Plainfield recognizes that the federal government and federal agencies have no legal authority to require local enforcement of immigration policy; and

**Whereas** Plainfield has no formal existing agreements to enforce immigration policy; and

**Whereas** the Town of Plainfield does not inquire about a resident's immigration status in providing municipal services or in the course of law enforcement; and

**Whereas** federal funding may not be withheld based on a municipality's willingness to enter into agreements regarding the enforcement of immigration policy.

**Now, Therefore, Be It Resolved** by the Plainfield, Vermont select board the following:

The Town of Plainfield formally announces its intention to be a designated sanctuary town; and

As a sanctuary town, the Town of Plainfield, Vermont will have policies that direct employees to refuse the application of any request from a state or federal agency that requires the identification of a resident's immigration status; and

The Town of Plainfield, Vermont shall refuse any request to be an extension of any federal immigration policy enforcement actions and shall not enter into any agreement to carry out such enforcement; and

The Town of Plainfield, Vermont calls on Vermont's congressional representatives in the U.S. House and Senate to work vigorously for just immigration reform that protects the most vulnerable residents in our nation.

• **Andrew Robinson made a motion to accept the resolution. Nicola Morris seconded the motion.**

Andrew Robinson presented background on how the issue came to be in front of those in attendance at Town Meeting and where municipalities stand legally in terms of declaring sanctuary status. He stated that town employees cannot be prohibited from voluntarily sharing immigration information, but a town can prohibit them from collecting immigration information. Robinson also noted the illegality of the federal government retaliating by cutting off funding to municipalities that declare sanctuary status, which is a concern of many. Noting the State's policy of Fair and Impartial Policing that prohibits racial profiling, Robinson stated that if that policy were to be fully implemented, a lot of what is being discussed today would be resolved. He concluded by saying that because the Select Board had opted to put the issue under other business, the gesture is non-binding and purely symbolic. Discussion followed both for against the measure. Meg Davis asked what a non-binding resolution actually means in terms of actions by Town employees and how to make it binding. Aldo Gray asked if this non-binding vote, if passed, could open the door to stronger

action. Select Board Chair Bram Towbin explained the rationale for the Select Board's decision to place the issue under non-binding business, noting the potential implications for federally funded projects and school funding if the measure were to be a binding vote. Select Board member Ross Sneyd explained that when the decision was made by the Select Board to make the measure non-binding, neither the State legislature nor the Governor had yet acted and the idea was to give the issue some time to play out. Towbin and Moderator Barasch reviewed the process of holding a special Town Meeting as a means to petition for a binding vote. Michael Billingsley related his experience of intimidation from federal border officers as an immigrant from Canada. Liz Perreault noted the potentially detrimental consequences of declaring sanctuary status, especially as a purely symbolic gesture that would not make any difference, and her fears regarding publicly speaking one's mind when opposing this and other issues because of a difference in opinion. Dana Woodruff detailed the dilemma of migrant workers who cannot get year-round documentation. Michael Carriveau spoke about the danger posed by non-vetted immigrants, the fact that non-documented workers do not pay taxes, and that we cannot pick and choose what laws to follow. Sandra Ross stated that the measure should be passed because it is morally right. Nicola Morris recalled her fears as a non-citizen living in the United States between visas and noted that she in fact had paid taxes at the time. Sasha Thayer questioned if the Sheriff's Department, which the Town pays to patrol it, practices Fair and Impartial policing. She noted the general prohibition of warrantless search and seizure in the US Constitution, and recalled the historical consequences of imposing an official registry. Aldo Gray asked if the vote could be taken by paper ballot. Moderator Barasch responded that it could if seven people request it, adding that it could be considered when the time comes for voting. Amy Lester stated that she just learned that George Cushing is stepping down as Town Constable and, if this resolution passes, she hopes that when the Select Board appoints his replacement, educating that person on what actions are acceptable is part of the conversation. Select Board Chair Bram Towbin publicly thanked Cushing for his service and stated that there is currently a candidate for his replacement. Towbin noted that the Select Board is considering expanding the duties of the Constable. Brenda Lindemann raised the issue of the new Constable possibly carrying a gun. Moderator Barasch requested that that issue be addressed after the sanctuary discussion. Stating his opposition to the scapegoating of migrant workers, Eric Gillard noted that migrant workers pay both sales taxes and into Social Security, the latter of which they will not reap the benefits from, and that banks, corporations, and the one percent are who are truly responsible for siphoning off resources. **Aldo Gray made a motion to call the question and stop debate. Liz Perreault seconded the motion. The motion to stop debate was defeated: 45 no to 24 yes.** Following the vote, **Andrew Robinson made a motion to amend the resolution in the second paragraph following "Now, Therefore, Be It Resolved" to read: "As a sanctuary town, the Town of Plainfield, Vermont will have policies that *encourage* employees to refuse the application of any request from a state or federal agency that requires the identification of a resident's immigration status;" which changed the word "direct" to "encourage."** **Betsy Ziegler seconded the motion.** Sasha Thayer noted the validity of employers being allowed to direct employees, and stated her opposition to the amendment. Bob Barasch stated that the word "direct" violates the First Amendment. Michael Billingsley supported Thayer's point, noting that an employee can be directed to do something by an employer under a contractual obligation and that it is not a First Amendment issue. Meg Davis also agreed that it was not a First Amendment issue, citing that as part of her job as a nurse, her employer rightly directs her not to talk about her patients. **Lucinda Garthewaite**

**made a motion to call the question and stop debate on the amendment. Nicola Morris seconded the motion. The motion to stop debate on the amendment was approved.** Moderator Barasch called for a vote on the amendment. **The amendment to change the word “direct” to “encourage” was defeated.** Moderator Barasch noted that discussion was back to the original motion. **Eric Gillard made a motion to amend the original motion to insert before the final paragraph the following sentence: “The Town of Plainfield shall uphold the entirety of the State’s Fair and Impartial policing policy.” Janice Walrafen seconded the motion. Nicko Rubin made a motion to stop debate on the amendment. Nicola Morris seconded the motion.** Moderator Barasch called for a standing vote from the floor. **The amendment was approved: 57 in favor to 6 opposed.** Moderator Barasch noted that discussion was back to the main amended motion. **Bob Barasch made a motion to call the question and stop debate on the motion. Meg Davis seconded the motion. The motion to stop debate on the motion as amended was approved.** Moderator Barasch called for a vote on the motion as amended. Seeing that at least seven people were requesting to vote by paper ballot, Moderator Barasch read aloud the amended resolution prior to the paper ballot vote on the amended motion:

**Will the Voters of Plainfield, Vermont pass the following resolution:**

**Whereas** nearly 60 million people worldwide are displaced by violence, political strife, or natural disaster and forced to become refugees; and

**Whereas** millions of additional people worldwide are driven to seek out immigration opportunities for better lives and well being for their families; and

**Whereas** the Town of Plainfield recognizes that the federal government and federal agencies have no legal authority to require local enforcement of immigration policy; and

**Whereas** Plainfield has no formal existing agreements to enforce immigration policy; and

**Whereas** the Town of Plainfield does not inquire about a resident’s immigration status in providing municipal services or in the course of law enforcement; and

**Whereas** federal funding may not be withheld based on a municipality’s willingness to enter into agreements regarding the enforcement of immigration policy.

**Now, Therefore, Be It Resolved** by the Plainfield, Vermont select board the following:

The Town of Plainfield formally announces its intention to be a designated sanctuary town; and

As a sanctuary town, the Town of Plainfield, Vermont will have policies that direct employees to refuse the application of any request from a state or federal agency that requires the identification of a resident’s immigration status; and

The Town of Plainfield, Vermont shall refuse any request to be an extension of any federal immigration policy enforcement actions and shall not enter into any agreement to carry out such enforcement;

***The Town of Plainfield shall uphold the entirety of the State’s Fair and Impartial policing policy;***  
and

The Town of Plainfield, Vermont calls on Vermont’s congressional representatives in the U.S. House and Senate to work vigorously for just immigration reform that protects the most vulnerable residents in our nation.

- Moderator Barasch and Town Clerk/Treasurer Linda Wells provided instructions, and the process of casting the paper ballots began. At the conclusion of the paper ballot vote, Moderator Barasch called the meeting back to order and announced the result of the vote: 67 in favor and 13 opposed, with a total of 80 ballots cast, which matched the total number of people who signed in on the checklist. **The motion was approved.**

Moderator Barasch asked if there was any other business. Steve Farnham asked for an update on the Route 2/Main Street intersection. Select Board Chair Bram Towbin stated that the project is on the radar of VTRANS with an estimated time of six years out. Towbin noted some minor snags in the Pedestrian Bridge project, but once that project gets going, hopefully the intersection project will happen.

**At 3:00pm, Bob Atchinson made a motion to adjourn Town Meeting. Janice Walrafen seconded the motion. The motion to adjourn was approved.**

Respectfully submitted by Cindy Wyckoff