

**Town of Plainfield
Select Board Meeting
April 10, 2017
Draft Minutes**

PRESENT: Ross Sneyd (Select Board Member), Betsy Ziegler (Select Board Chair), Alexandra Thayer (Select Board Member), Keith Swann (Videographer), Cindy Wyckoff (Minutes Recorder), Eric Blaisdell (Times Argus), Mike Carriveau (Resident), Jean Hamilton (Resident), Donald Cain (Resident), Michael Billingsley (Resident, Emergency Management Director), Jan Waterman (Resident), Andy Robinson (Resident), and Laurie Veatch (Resident).

Betsy Ziegler called the Select Board meeting to order at 7:04pm.

AGENDA

- Review Agenda
- Review Procedures
- Announcements/Public Comment
- Town Clerk's Report
- Road Report
- Constable
- Website
- Update Ongoing Town Projects
- Sanctuary Town
- Approval of Minutes
- Other Business
- Adjournment

REVIEW AGENDA

Alexandra Thayer added discussion of process to the agenda. **Ross Sneyd made a motion to approve the agenda as amended. Thayer seconded the motion. The motion was approved.**

REVIEW PROCEDURES AND PROCESS

- Ziegler referred to the Plainfield Select Board Rules and Procedures that were originally adopted in 2014 for review and adoption. Thayer suggested that #9, which states that a rule can be changed by a unanimous vote by the Select Board, be amended by deleting the word "unanimous." After a brief discussion, **Thayer made a motion to adopt the Select Board Rules and Procedures as amended by deleting the word "unanimous" in #9. Sneyd seconded the motion. The motion was approved.** Ziegler read aloud other parts of the Rules and Procedures for the benefit of those in attendance, to which no other changes were made.
- Noting that the Select Board cannot discuss issues outside of meetings, Thayer inquired about how to efficiently utilize the time of Select Board members in gathering information on issues. Ziegler suggested discussing upcoming issues at the end of each meeting and assigning research to

designated members. Sneyd noted that documents can be shared via email among members outside of meetings, but not an individual's thoughts on issues. Ziegler suggested that special Select Board meetings can be held when needed. Thayer proposed considering an ethics policy to address conflicts of interest for the Select Board and anyone else acting as a Town officer. Thayer offered to gather model documents on the subject and Select Board members agreed to further discuss the issue at a future meeting.

ANNOUNCEMENTS/PUBLIC COMMENT

- Ziegler announced that there will be an Easter Egg Hunt at the Methodist Church at 10am on 4/15/17, sponsored by the Recreation Committee.
- Michael Billingsley announced that the Hazard Mitigation Committee is sponsoring a talk at 1pm on 6/3/17 at the Town Hall Opera House, the focus of which is understanding the dynamics of the Great Brook. The event will include a walk to the Great Brook.
- Billingsley also noted that on 6/10/17, a companion presentation will be held regarding the proper maintenance of private roads and driveways and ways to both stabilize them and have minimum impact on waterways.
- Ziegler announced that a tree planting is scheduled at the Recreation Field at 3pm on 4/26/17. Volunteers are needed.

TOWN CLERK'S REPORT

- Town Clerk/Treasurer Linda Wells noted the title change of Emergency Management Coordinator to Emergency Management Director and the need to reappointment Michael Billingsley to the position to reflect the correct title. Wells also noted that Billingsley was originally appointed to the position in October 2016 and reappointing him at this time will align the timing of his appointment to when other Town appointments are made, which occur following Town Meeting each year. **Sneyd made a motion to appoint Michael Billingsley as Emergency Management Director. Thayer seconded the motion. The motion was approved.**
- Wells also presented the following appointments for Select Board consideration:
 - Jean Hamilton: Planning Commission (three-year term)
Thayer made a motion to appoint Jean Hamilton to the Planning Commission for a three-year term. Sneyd seconded the motion. The motion was approved.
 - Bram Towbin: Alternate to the Central Vermont Solid Waste Management District and Alternate to the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission
Sneyd made a motion to appoint Bram Towbin as Alternate to the Central Vermont Solid Waste Management District and Alternate to the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission. Thayer seconded the motion. The motion was approved. Wells will put forth Towbin's name as Plainfield's primary representative to the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission in May when David Strong's term in that position expires.
 - Wells read aloud a letter of interest from Josh Pitts to serve as a Commissioner on the Water/Wastewater Commission. **Thayer made a motion to appoint Josh Pitts to the Water/Wastewater Commission for a three-year term. Sneyd seconded the motion. The motion was approved.**

- Sneyd presented the following list of Fleet permits for approval:
 - Blue Flame Gas
 - Camp Precast Concrete
 - Connecticut Valley Trucking
 - GK Bisson Trucking
 - GW Tatro Construction
 - Darrell Mathews/Mathews Excavating
 - Gillespie Fuels & Propane
 - Harrison Redi-Mix
 - Marlin Environment dba Hartigan
 - Newton Construction
 - Walker Construction

Sneyd made a motion to approve the above list of Fleet Permit requests. Thayer seconded the motion. A brief discussion ensued on what the Town is granting when approving permits. **The motion was approved.**

- Sneyd presented the following Single Vehicle permits for approval:
 - Fred Vance Trucking
 - Haskins and Associates Concrete

Sneyd made a motion to approve the above list of Single Vehicle permit requests. Thayer seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

- Sneyd read aloud a request from Chris Weir and Sarah Dillon, who are renting the Town Hall Opera House for a wedding and reception in July 2017. The couple is requesting approval from the Select Board for their licensed caterer, Positive Pie, to serve a responsible amount of alcohol at the event. **Sneyd made a motion to approve the request for Positive Pie to serve alcohol at the event. Thayer seconded the motion.** A brief discussion followed regarding the Town Hall Opera House’s policy on alcohol at events, the timing for filing the catering permit, and other issues surrounding use of the Town Hall Opera House. Sneyd will contact David Strong to discuss sending an approval letter along with other pertinent information. **The motion was approved.**

ROAD REPORT

- Road Foreman Mike Nolan reported on the Road Crew’s work fighting mud and snow over the last few months. He noted that with the roads finally drying out, the Crew can do needed grading. Recently installed culverts have been beneficial to road conditions in many areas.
- Ziegler noted the receipt of four bids for the Bean Road box culvert project, which the Town hopes to have done this summer. The bids were as follows:
 - Hebert Excavation Corporation in Williamstown, Vermont for \$195,800
 - DuBois Construction in Middlesex, Vermont for \$165,685
 - Kirk Fenoff and Son Excavating in Danville, Vermont for \$113,000
 - Darrell Mathews Excavating in Waterford, Vermont for \$99,637

Discussion followed on the project duration times of each contractor and the percentage of the Town’s share of the State-funded grant for the project, believed to be either 10% or 20%. Road

Foreman Mike Nolan reviewed the contractors' bids, noting the project engineer's favorable opinion of the lowest-bid contractor, Darrell Mathews Excavating. **Sneyd made a motion to approve Darrell Mathews/Mathews Excavating as the winning bid for Bean Road Town Highway #38 over Mskaskek Brook for \$99,637. Thayer seconded the motion. The motion was approved.** Wells asked for a Select Board member to be appointed to sign the grant if needed. **Sneyd made a motion that Betsy Ziegler be appointed to sign the grant. Ziegler seconded the motion. The motion was approved.**

WEBSITE

- Sneyd reviewed the idea that the Select Board has been considering of creating a webmaster position and developing a new website for the Town. He has researched an outfit that specializes in municipal websites called GovOffice, and noted the advantages in avoiding a custom-designed site that requires a custom solution every time there is a problem. Sneyd proposed creating a webmaster position and asking the person who fills the position to either work with GovOffice in the development of a site or make a recommendation for a different provider. Discussion ensued regarding the cost involved for the position, the cost for creating and maintaining the website, the available budget, and the possibility of tailoring the site to Plainfield. Sneyd agreed to draft a job description for the webmaster position.

CONSTABLE

- Both Thayer and Ziegler detailed research they had done on the various issues involved in appointing a Town Constable with law-enforcement authority. Thayer noted that the first step is for the Select Board to decide if the Town's Constable should have law-enforcement authority and, if so, what is involved regarding certification training, financial incentives to thoroughly pre-vet candidates prior to training, supervision requisites, data collection requirements, misconception regarding revenues from ticketing, and the Town's higher insurance costs and liability, and the time involved in getting someone on board. Ziegler noted that she had spoken with various individuals in and around Plainfield knowledgeable in the role of constable and consulted websites of surrounding communities to learn what they are currently doing. She has received feedback from Plainfield residents who do not want the Town's Constable to carry a firearms as well as from others who feel less safe now than they did previously and are concerned about the number of recent break-ins. Ziegler detailed options from the League of Cities and Towns to get a law-enforcement officer in Plainfield as well as insurance costs. Sneyd noted the need to keep the Washington County Sheriff's Department involved and to continue to invite them to Select Board meetings. Mike Cariveau suggested tapping into the law-enforcement experience of retired police officers looking for part-time work. Andy Robinson suggested contracting with Washington County Sheriff's Department for more hours to avoid the liability issues present with an individual working explicitly for the Town. Thayer suggested inviting State Representative Janet Ancel to discuss possible solutions to similar issues that other towns are experiencing. Sneyd noted that he has heard from residents that they are satisfied with the system of moral authority that the current Constable now has and suggested drafting and posting a job description to seek applicants sooner than later to respect current Constable George Cushing's desire to step down from the position. Jean Hamilton stated that she hopes that input can be gathered from the community at large and that the issue not be considered in the abstract based on only the experiences of a few. Laurie Veatch related an instance where an

attempt was made to break into her house and Cushing was instrumental in stopping the perpetrators from forcefully entering. Thayer noted that Cushing was planning to move out of town soon, therefore steps should be taken as soon as possible to get someone in the position as it now stands. Thayer agreed to draft a job description.

UPDATE ONGOING TOWN PROJECTS

- Sneyd suggested tabling the discussion of ongoing Town projects until the next meeting when David Strong would be present.

SANCTUARY TOWN

- Thayer read aloud a draft of a letter from the Plainfield Select Board to Vermont's Congressional Delegation noting the passage of a warned article regarding Plainfield declaring itself a Sanctuary Town at Town Meeting. The letter called for the Vermont Delegation to work vigorously for just immigration reform and requested that from time to time it keep the Town informed regarding the matter. **Thayer made a motion to approve the letter to be sent to the Vermont Congressional Delegation. Sneyd seconded the motion. The motion was approved.**
- Thayer presented draft language detailing how the Town might incorporate the intent of the resolution into policy without using the term "sanctuary," which she considered a trigger word. Discussion followed, including adding sexual orientation and immigration status to the list of groups; whether the Town can direct the behavior of non-employees, i.e., elected and appointed officials; and asking the State's Attorney General and the American Civil Liberties Union to review the draft policy. Resident Mike Carriveau made a statement that he and other residents opposed to Plainfield's Sanctuary Town status declare that they will not be liable nor culpable for any civil or criminal actions taken by the Town or State in violation of Federal immigration laws. In addition, any funding that may be rescinded as a consequence of not complying with Federal law will be borne only by municipal officials and residents who support of sanctuary status. Michael Billingsley noted the distinction between "undocumented" and "illegal" immigrants and related his past experience as an undocumented immigrant who might not have reported a crime for fear of deportation. Sneyd suggested softening the proposed policy by replacing some of the "shall not" terminology with more toned-down language as well as removing the section that deals with retaining individuals, noting that no one has the power to do that now anyway. In response to Carriveau's statement, and citing the example of Federal wetlands regulations, Thayer noted that there is a lot of Federal law that is not complied with and the question is how to use our limited Town's resources most efficiently. Stating that she was not quite ready to sign the draft policy document, Ziegler noted her discomfort with asking Town employees to do something that they might feel is in violation of the law. Thayer asserted that there was nothing in the draft policy in violation of State or Federal law. It was decided to continue the discussion at the next meeting.

MINUTES

- After noting a misspelled name in the 3/7/17 Town Meeting minutes, **Sneyd made a motion to approve the minutes from the 3/7/17 Town Meeting as amended. Ziegler seconded the motion. The motion was approved.**
- **Sneyd made a motion to approve the minutes from the 3/27/17 Select Board meeting as written. Thayer seconded the motion. The motion was approved.**

OTHER BUSINESS

- Emergency Management Director Michael Billingsley noted the State statute requiring that there be an emergency management plan to deal with hazards, including allocation of resources and responsibilities. Billingsley stated that he has partially addressed this requirement each year by creating the Town's Local Emergency Operational Plan, but is proposing that he draft an emergency management plan that can be part of the Town ordinance. The Select Board authorized Billingsley to draft an Emergency Management and Health Ordinance for the Select Board to review prior to taking the next step of the Town Attorney's review the draft document.
- The agenda for the next meeting will include consideration of the following: a job description for the Town Constable position, which Thayer will draft; discussion with David Strong regarding ongoing Town projects; and a proposal for the Town website and a job description for a Town webmaster, both of which Sneyd will draft. Ziegler will forward final Select Board agendas to Thayer and Thayer will post them to both Front Porch Forum and Plainfield People on the Friday preceding each meeting. Thayer will work on drafting an ethics policy and inquire about the Town's abandoned building and car ordinance for consideration at a future meeting, possibly in early May.

The meeting adjourned at 9:14pm on a motion by Sneyd. Thayer seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

Respectfully submitted by Cindy Wyckoff