



***Town of Plaistow ♦ Board of Selectmen***  
*145 Main Street ♦ Plaistow ♦ NH ♦ 03865*

**Plaistow Board of Selectmen Minutes**

**Date:** October 30, 2023

**Meeting Called to Order:** 6:01 P.M.

**Roll Call:**

Select Chairman, Bill Coye – Present

Select Vice Chairman, Jay DeRoche – Present

Selectman, Darrell Britton – Excused

Selectman, Jonathan Gifford – Present

Selectwoman, Tammy Bergeron – Present

Also present: Town Manager, Greg Colby, Special Projects Coordinator Dee Voss, and Administrative Specialist, Beth Hossack.

**Public Comment**

None

**Plaistow Community Power Project Presentation**

Special Projects Coordinator D. Voss and Ryan Polson from Standard Power are present to discuss the Plaistow Community Power Program. The goal of the program is to offer low-cost options and variety for electricity costs through aggregation. A draft copy of the plan has been provided to the Board. If the Board votes in favor of moving forward with the plan, the draft will be sent to the Public Utilities Commission (PUC ) for their approval. The process of allowing power aggregation started in the legislature in 2019 and was not finalized until October of 2022. Mr. Polson has been working with the community power subcommittee of the energy committee to develop the plan. Community power is when a municipality procures an electricity supply for its' residents and small businesses, however ownership remains with the utility company which is Unitil. Unitil will provide the delivery, billing and handling of emergency outages. The customers have competitive rates, consumer protections and program choices. Customers are not locked into the program. They may opt out or opt in at any time. There are four (4) options within the program. The first option is Plaistow Basic. It provides the lowest possible rate. The next option is Plaistow Default. This option offers a competitive rate with 5-10% of additional renewable energy. The next option is Plaistow 50%. This rate is a little more costly, yet it targets 50% renewal energy. The last option is Plaistow 100%. This option is at market rate and targets 100% renewable energy.

*Selectman DeRoche motions to accept the plan for Plaistow Community Power the Energy Committee has recommended. Seconded by Selectman Gifford.*

*Discussion: Nolan Pelletier, 24 North Ave does not agree with the model of all residents being part of the program and choosing to opt out if they want. That is like the Board making a blanket decision for the town. The model should be to opt in if residents are interested.*

*Special Projects Coordinator D. Voss states the state legislature made the decision to include all residents with the option of opting out. The Board cannot change the model.*

*Selectwoman Bergeron would like to get more information out to the public. Perhaps information can be brought to the Library and the Vic Geary Center.*

*Chair Coye calls for a vote on the motion.*

*Vote: 4-0-0*

*Motion carries.*

### **Updated Permitting Policy & Procedures – Building Department**

Town Manager G. Colby states due to recent events at a public meeting it was decided to update and memorialize the permitting policy and procedures. The updated policy and procedures were worked on with assistance from the Town's Attorney. There is consensus amongst the Board to defer this to the next meeting. They want to see the original policy & procedures to compare with the proposed changes.

### **DISH Wireless Contract Discussion**

Town Manager G. Colby states he has been working on negotiations with DISH Wireless. They are interested in leasing space on the old water tower for their cellular equipment. The agreement is similar to the other three (3) companies currently renting space on the tower. The agreement is for a five (5) year lease with four (4) renewable five (5) year options. The base rent for year one (1) is \$3,500 with a 3% increase per year. We will receive \$30,000 within the thirty (30) days of signing to offset expenses to finalize the agreement. This has been reviewed by our Town Attorney and approved by Primex, our insurance carrier.

*Selectwoman Bergeron motions to adopt the DISH Wireless Contract as presented and to authorize Town Manager G. Colby to sign all documents pertaining to the agreement on behalf of the Town. Seconded by Selectman DeRoche.*

*Vote: 4-0-0*

*Motion carries.*

### **Review the Historical Society Budget**

Town Manager G. Colby states the Historical Society is looking for a 2024 budget in the amount of \$8,036. The Town pays for their electricity, heat, water, and some maintenance and repairs which are all included in the general government buildings budget. Internet and alarm expenses are also included in the general government buildings budget. Discussion ensues including reviewing some 2022 utility expenses. The Historical Society used to get money from the fees charged to Vendors participating in Old Home Day. However, that policy changed.

Select Chair Coye asks how this will be incorporated into the budget.

Town Manager G. Colby replies, it will be included in the Patriotic/Cultural budget.

***Selectwoman Bergeron motions to approve the Historical Society Budget in the amount of \$8,036. Seconded by Selectman Gifford.***

***Vote: 4-0-0***

***Motion carries.***

### **General Budget Review**

Chair Coye asks if anyone has any questions or wants to revisit a specific department budget. Selectman DeRoche states the budget is tough. A large increase is coming from the ambulance service, however we must provide the service. He asks what the overall budget increase is.

Town Manager G. Colby replies, the budget is up 10.63%. If the ambulance service was not included the increase would be 4.58%. He states there will be revenue incurred from the service and that revenue can be used to offset the tax rate next year.

Selectman DeRoche states he has carefully reviewed the whole budget and there is nowhere to cut that will make a significant difference in the budget.

Town Manager G. Colby replies, the Town budget is lean.

Selectman Gifford states it is better to have our own ambulance service. We have control over it and it must be provided either way.

### **Tax Rate Setting**

Town Manager G. Colby has been working with the Department of Revenue Administration (DRA) to get the tax rate set. The county portion is up as well as both the local school portion and the State school portion. We cannot control the county rate, the local school rate or the State school rate. We only control about 25% of the budget. The estimated difference between the 2022 and 2023 tax rate on a \$400,000 home is an increase of \$1420. Of that \$1420, the Town portion is \$168, the county portion is \$24, the school portion is \$1,228 (local & State school portions combined).

Selectman DeRoche states new commercial business will bring in more revenue.

Selectwoman Bergeron asks what is in the general fund.

Town Manager G. Colby replies, about 2 million. He states when June tax bills are sent out, they are based on 50% of the prior year's taxes. Often times the Board uses some fund balance towards the tax rate to lower it. If the selectmen use \$300,000 towards lowering the tax rate the impact will only lower the Town portion of the rate. In the example of a \$400,000 house the difference in the tax bill is \$84.00.

***Selectman DeRoche motions to direct the Town Manager to use \$300,000 in surplus to offset the 2023 Town portion of the tax rate. Seconded by Selectman Gifford.***

***Vote: 4-0-0***

***Motion carries.***

The tax rate is approximately \$22.35/\$1000 of valuation.

## **Approve Consent Agenda**

### **Item Description**

1. Accounts Payable Manifest week of October 12<sup>th</sup>, & 19<sup>th</sup>, 2023.
2. BOS Draft Minutes October 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2023.
3. One Veterans Tax Credit Application.

***Selectman DeRoche motions to approve the consent agenda as written. Seconded by Selectwoman Bergeron.***

***Vote: 4-0-0***

***Motion carries.***

## **Town Managers Report**

- The leach field at the Public Safety Complex has failed. It is thirty-six (36) years old and was built for ½ the capacity it now has. He is working with an engineer and when the test pits are done the project will go out to bid. Hopefully it will be fixed before winter. In the meantime, it will be pumped frequently.
- There was another house fire this week.
- Water bills will be mailed out this week with the quarterly notice.
- The Highway Department is busy with the cemetery expansion. The new truck has arrived.
- Snowplowing contractors are in place.
- Catch basin clearing is in que.
- A drainage project from last year will be started soon.
- The tax rate has been set.

Selectman DeRoche asks where we are putting the new leach field for the Safety Complex.

Town Manager G. Colby replies, in the left back area of the complex.

Select Chair Coye asks what we have left for ARPA funding.

Town Manager Colby replies, he will have an analysis prepared for the next meeting.

Selectman DeRoche asks if the driveway at the Safety Complex will need to be dug up for the leach field.

Town Manager G. Colby replies, he does not know. He will come back to the Board in the future with a total cost and a recommendation to pay for it. Some funding will come from both the Trust Fund and the Contingency fund. All ARPA funds must be earmarked by the end of 2024.

## **Selectmen's Reports**

### **Selectwoman Bergeron**

- Attended the Conservation Meeting. They will hold a public hearing on 11/9 for prime wetlands.
- Attended the Elder Affairs Committee Meeting.
- Attended the Toddler Trick or Treat Event.
- Attended the Senior Movie at the Library.

- Attended the Pumpkin Lighting. It was a very nice event, and she thanks the Recreation Department.

#### Selectman DeRoche

- Attended the Budget Committee Meeting. The committee approved several budgets.
- Attended the Pumpkin Lighting. It was a fun event and Recreation did a great job.

#### Selectman Gifford

- Attended the Old Home Day Committee Meeting. Some committee members will come to the next BOS meeting to discuss their budget.
- Attended the Energy Committee Meeting.

#### Select Chair Coye

- Attended the Planning Board Meeting. There will be a meeting at the Library on Wednesday to discuss housing needs.
- Attended the Pumpkin Lighting.

Select Chair asks what dates the Board is available to visit the Littlefield Solar site in Wells Maine. The consensus is November 19.

### **Events**

1. Regular Trick or Treat – tomorrow evening, 10/31/23 from 5:00P.M. – 7:00P.M.
2. Veterans Day Program – Saturday, 11/11/23 at the Vic Geary Center, 18 Greenough Rd from 8:30 A.M. – 10:30 A.M.
3. Wreath Making – 11/28/23, Pollard School, register with the recreation department.
4. Senior Wreath Making – 11/29/23, Vic Geary Center
5. Tree Lightening – 12/3/23, Town Green at 5:00P.M.
6. Show us your lights – email [recreation@plaistow.com](mailto:recreation@plaistow.com) to get on the list. Lists will be available at Town Hall, the Library & the Annex by Dec. 13.

Selectwoman Bergeron mentions there is a transportation survey on the website. She encourages people to participate in the survey.

As there is no further business before the Board, Chair Coye adjourned the meeting at 8:01 P.M.  
Respectfully submitted,

Beth Hossack,  
Administrative Specialist