



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

**PLAISTOW BOARD OF SELECTMEN MINUTES**

**DATE:** August 10, 2020

**MEETING CALLED TO ORDER:** 6:30 p.m.

**SELECTMEN:**

Selectwoman, Francine Hart, Chairman

Selectman, Julian Kiszka - Absent

Selectman, Jay DeRoche

Greg Colby, Finance Dir./Asst. Town Manager - Remotely

Selectman, Greg Taillon, Vice Chairman

Selectman, John A. Blinn, Sr. - Remotely

F. Hart calls the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

J. Kiszka arrived at 6:31 p.m.

F. Hart asks both remote participants, G. Colby, and J. Blinn if they are alone or with others. Both reply they are in a room alone.

F. Hart states all votes will be done by roll call tonight.

*G. Taillon motions to approve the minutes of July 27, 2020. Seconded by J. Kiszka.*

*F. Hart = yes, G. Taillon = yes, J. Kiszka = yes, J. Blinn = yes, J. DeRoche = yes*

*Vote: 5-0-0*

*Motion carries*

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

A question emailed by Laurie Milette, 27 Smith Corner Road asks, when will the 2020 revaluation be done and publicized?

F. Hart reached out to Steve Whalen, our Project Manager from Visions Software. They are 90% done with residential exteriors and about 75% done with commercial exteriors. They are still waiting for some income and expense information from commercial properties. The data mailers will be sent out in a week or two. They are on track with the process. By October 21 they expect to be finished with all assessments. If a resident disagrees with their assessment an appointment can be made with an assessor during the week of October 26 – November 6. The final values will be released the week of November 6 -13.

**ASSISTANCE TO FIREFIGHTERS GRANT PROGRAM COVID-19 SUPPLEMENTAL AFG**

Chief Knutsen states he is proud to bring more good news to the taxpayers of our community. The federal government has several different grant programs for 2020 totaling 1.7 billion in funds for Fire, Emergency Management and Police. He applied for another grant and recently found out we were awarded an amount of \$18,017.14. The grant requires a 5% match of \$900.86 totaling \$18,918.00. The match of \$900.86 will come from the GOFERR (Governor's Office For Emergency Relief & Recovery) Grant, therefore the taxpayers will pay zero and gain \$18,918.00. The grant will provide funds for PPE and related supplies to prevent, prepare for, and respond to coronavirus for the next twelve (12) to eighteen (18) months. At our next meeting, the Board will approve the grant and appoint Chief Knutsen as the point of contact person for the grant. G. Taillon asks if the Board needs to do anything to expend funds from the GOFERR Grant. G. Colby replies, no. It has already been done. F. Hart states Chief Knutsen has brought close to \$150,000 in grant money to Plaistow. Chief Knutsen states he plans to continue to work hard and apply for more grants.

### **MARK GILFORD - CEMETERY SEXTON**

M. Gilford is happy to be here tonight. He has some concerns and would like to have Town Code rules regarding the cemetery enforced. One issue is the amount of stuff being put on graves including fencing, barriers, flowers, and plants. These items are in the way for mowing the grass and the placing of gravestones.

J. DeRoche recommends putting the guidelines on the website. Currently we do not have guidelines listed.

M. Gilford agrees. He would also like a new sign at the cemetery entrance.

J. Kiszka states most cemeteries have a nice, respectable sign at the entrance. A sign should consist of the rules (do's and don'ts) and hours.

F. Hart asks M. Gilford to put information together for the sign. Then it can be ordered.

Another concern is granite benches. There is only supposed to be one (1) monument per lot. A bench is a second monument. Benches often need to be moved to dig a grave because they are in the way. They are too heavy to be easily moved. They usually must be moved by a monument company. If a grave digger needs to get something done quickly there is often not enough time to get a monument company to move a bench. Moving benches involves time and money.

F. Hart recommends sending letters to all bench owners. Perhaps they could be moved to a specific area.

M. Gilford agrees and states another option is for the family to buy a second lot for the bench.

F. Hart asks the Board if they agree with M. Gilford. They do.

F. Hart states she will take responsibility for ordering the sign once M. Gilford gets her the verbiage. She asks M. Gilford to craft a letter to bench owners.

M. Gilford states he was hoping the new section of the cemetery would have been cleared by now and the road in place. He does understand things have been delayed due to COVID-19.

J. Kiszka states there was no motion to accept the changes to the Town Code for Chapter 33 Cemetery at the last meeting.

G. Taillon asks if the rates are high enough.

M. Gilford states they are still very low.

F. Hart asks G. Colby to clarify what we can spend from the Cemetery Special Maintenance Expendable Trust Fund.

G. Colby replies, it can be used for maintenance and projects. The account does not have a lot of money in it.

J. Kiszka agrees, stating it is new money and can be used going forward.  
G. Taillon asks M. Gilford to propose better rates.  
M. Gilford will check other area towns.  
F. Hart states we may need a warrant article to fund perpetual care.  
J. DeRoche asks how someone would go about purchasing a lot.  
M. Gilford replies leave him a voice message or email him. He will return all calls and emails.  
J. DeRoche asks if M. Gilford's information is on the website.  
M. Gilford replies it is.

### **IT PROJECT – SELECTMEN G. TAILLON & J. DEROCHE**

J. DeRoche states they are working to help solve some issues regarding remote meetings. G. Taillon created a document outlining the issues and J. DeRoche met with vendors to discuss solutions. Dean Zanello, Cable Coordinator has also made progress with remote meetings. The goal is to reuse as much of our own equipment as we can and improve our current capabilities. J. DeRoche asked the vendors to reach out directly to Greg Colby, Finance Director with proof of contract (POC). It should happen this week.

G. Taillon states the other piece is to provide a reasonable WIFI signal in Town Hall. Part of the original problem is that we were trying to video conference without being directly connected to the network by a cable. We also had a weak WIFI signal and the signal often dropped. It is a telecommunications issue. He would like our IT group to come to a Board meeting and explain the status of the project. There is no reason we cannot have reasonable WIFI in the building.

F. Hart asks them to continue working on it and bring updates to the Board. She thanks them for taking on this project.

J. Kiszka states he is concerned other committees/commissions have been unable to successfully run remote meetings. It must be addressed going forward to have this capability for all meetings.

G. Taillon states the new phone system will allow for video conferencing capabilities.

J. Kiszka wants to get it right. Some people cannot come to meetings due to their work schedules. With the ability for remote meetings we may get more people involved in Town government.

J. DeRoche states we can use "Go To Meetings" for now.

J. Kiszka states maybe we should offer training sessions for Chairs/Vice Chairs.

G. Taillon agrees and states it is one of the goals.

### **ELECTION PROTOCOLS**

Recently a meeting was held with the Fire Chief, Police Chief, Health Officer, Town Clerk, Town Moderator, Facilities Manager and Selectmen. There was consensus to hold voting at the Public Works Facility. Methuen Construction will allow voters to park in their lot. M. Pearson will have a binder coat of pavement put around the garage. There will be a dedicated area for PPE. It is a good plan. In September we expect to have about 900 voters.

F. Hart asks the Board to let her know what hours each Selectman will be at the polls. For the November election more people will be needed to help. If anyone is willing to be sworn in and deputized it will be appreciated.

***J. Kiszka motions to use the Public Works Garage for future elections. Seconded by G. Taillon.***

***Discussion: J. DeRoche ask if he means all future elections or will we go back to the school.***

***J. Kiszka states the Board can change the location as needed.***

*F. Hart states pens, placemats, and masks will be disposable. The cost will be covered by one of the COVID grants.*

*J. DeRoche states voting day is September 8 and it the Tuesday after a long weekend. He will reach out to Bob Harb to see how he can help.*

*G. Taillon asks what the current guidelines are for people who do not want to wear a mask.*

*J. DeRoche states there will be a separate area for those who do not wear masks. Masks will be encouraged.*

*F. Hart calls for a vote.*

*F. Hart = yes, G. Taillon = yes, J. Kiszka = yes, J. Blinn = yes, J. DeRoche = yes*

*Vote: 5-0-0*

*Motion carries*

### **AUDITOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

At the last meeting, a discussion was held regarding removing elected auditors from the town. A motion was on the floor and tabled. Since that meeting F. Hart and G. Taillon met with Town Counsel and reviewed the RSA's. Town Counsel recommended checking with the Department of Revenue Administration (DRA). Jamie Dow, our DRA Representative stated the Board can remove the position from the ballot.

G. Taillon makes the following statement:

**Whereas**, RSA 41:31-B states that "Any municipality that has not hired an auditor under RSA 21-J:19 shall, at the annual meeting, under an article in the warrant, choose one or more auditors., and"

**Whereas**, RSA 21-J:19 states that " Any town, may hire a certified public accountant or a public accountant licensed by the state under RSA 309-A:8 to conduct such an audit within one year after the close of the municipality's fiscal year., and"

**Whereas**, The Town of Plaistow has employed a Certified Public Accountant Firm, Plodzik & Sanderson, for many, many years, it was incorrect and in violation of RSA 41:31-B to have two auditors elected on the ballot in March of 2020, and"

**Whereas**, it would be incorrect to put a warrant to the voters which gives them the option to follow a NH RSA statute or choose to be in violation of it,"

*Therefore, I make a motion to cancel the terms of both elected auditors at the end of the Town fiscal year and to direct the Town Clerk to comply with RSA 41:31-B and remove these two positions from the ballot for the 2021 Town Election." Seconded by F. Hart.*

*Discussion: J. DeRoche states he will vote no because the word "shall" in RSA 21:J 9 seems to mean we can or cannot have elected auditors. He also thinks another set of eyes looking over things is helpful. Maybe it should be put to the voters. We have had a CPA firm since 1992 and still had elected auditors.*

*G. Taillon states the DRA requires elected auditors to complete the MS-60 each year. The rule has never been complied with. An elected auditor may not be experienced/certified to make good recommendations. In the past some elected auditors have written a brief statement in the town report basically stating the town is using acceptable accounting standards. The second issue is the*

*intent of the statute is that every municipality has some type of auditor to confirm the town is following generally accepted accounting practices/principals. A small town may not be able to afford a professional accounting firm and may go with an elected auditor.*

*J. Kiszka states he cannot argue with all this logic so to speak. The word "shall" when used to do something does not always mean the negative applies.*

*The first time we had a paid auditor was in 1992. In 1993 there was a petition to remove elected auditor/s, but no one knows what happened to it. In 1994 the question to remove elected auditor/s was on the ballot and failed. That was 26 years ago but what about the no means no rule.*

*F. Hart states it is violating a statute if we let voters vote on the issue. If the position were an appointed position the town would require experience. She agrees with the opinion of the DRA. We should only have one or the other. She asks G. Colby, Finance Director for his opinion.*

*G. Colby states he has been contacted several times by DRA asking why Plaistow has both. If we keep elected auditors, the MS-60 should be completed.*

*J. DeRoche states G. Colby is a Certified Public Accountant(CPA) however that is not a requirement.*

*F. Hart calls for a vote.*

*F. Hart = yes, , G. Taillon = yes, J. Kiszka = no, J. Blinn = no, J. DeRoche = no*

*Vote: 2-3-0*

*Motion fails*

F. Hart states elected auditors must file an MS-60.

J. Kiszka states there should be staggered terms. One should be a one-year term and one should be a two-year term.

F. Hart states one of the elected auditors, Peter Bracci sent her several emails. The first issue P. Bracci inquired about is the payment of stipends. There is a stipend of \$100 each in the budget for elected auditors. She asks G. Colby how this is paid.

G. Colby states stipends are usually paid quarterly at \$25 per quarter. In September they can be paid for 3 quarters. He will confirm the stipend. It is either \$100 or \$200 per year for each of them.

F. Hart states P. Bracci's second request is for B. Hamilton to be paid the 2019 stipend with interest.

J. Blinn asks why it was not paid in 2019.

F. Hart replies the paperwork was not filled out. She also feels it is not P. Bracci's job to ask for B. Hamilton to be paid for 2019. The stipend for 2019 was not encumbered to be paid in 2020 therefore the funds have lapsed and cannot be paid.

J. Kiszka states the Town should pay what it owes.

G. Taillon states every year a budget is created. If money is not spent it goes back to the general fund. We did not encumber the funds. It is too late for a 2019 stipend.

F. Hart agrees, you cannot have a double standard.

J. DeRoche states if the paperwork was not filled out in 2019, it is lost. The funds are gone.

F. Hart states she will personally email P. Bracci and B. Hamilton and tell them to meet with Human Resources and complete the paperwork.

*J. Kiszka motions to pay the 2019 stipend to the elected town auditor, B. Hamilton.*

*F. Hart = no, G. Taillon = no, J. Kiszka = yes, J. Blinn = yes, J. DeRoche = no*

*Vote: 2-3-0*

*Motion fails*

F. Hart states P. Bracci's last request was to have a town email address. The current cost is \$200 per year per email address. With two elected auditors the cost is \$400.

G. Taillon does not recommend this. Other committee members use their personal email for town business. He suggests using a domain such as Google and have some generic emails such as planningchair@..., budgetchair@... etc. As officials/people change the email can remain the same. The cost for a google email account is \$50 per address. He states the fact the elected auditors do not have a town email address does not prevent them from completing the MS-60.

J. DeRoche suggest we check with our new IT vendor to see how many email addresses we are allowed.

J. Kiszka states he has asked that in the past and now that we have a new IT provider, the answer may be different.

F. Hart thinks we have maxed the number of email accounts.

J. Kiszka thinks it would be cheaper to buy another domain if need be.

G. Taillon states the Towns emails are on our server. If we buy another domain those email accounts will be on the providers server such as Google.

J. DeRoche asks about Right To Know requests with people using persona; email accounts.

F. Hart states yes, they could be subject to a Right To Know Request.

F. Hart states both elected auditors are also members of the Budget Committee and they want to spend taxpayer money appropriately.

G. Taillon states we should come up with the number of email addresses needed and a price. Then add it to the budget.

F. Hart asks G. Taillon to do the research.

J. DeRoche asks who he can contact to find out how many current email accounts we are allowed.

G. Colby offers to get the information.

### **DISCUSS 9/11 CEREMONY**

F. Hart states we will plan on having the 9/11 Ceremony on Friday, September 11. We will socially distance. It may be canceled if COVID resurges in town. As the date becomes closer, we will check with our Health Officer and the Fire and Police Chiefs. We should have one selectman speak. She asks J. DeRoche to consider being the speaker as he is the newest Selectman.

J. Kiszka would like organizations from neighboring towns invited.

### **ACQUISITION AND DISPOSAL OF REAL ESTATE**

F. Hart states the State of NH wants to dispose of the Park & Ride on Westville Road. She asks G. Colby to speak about the possibility of the Town purchasing it.

G. Colby states we have \$113,000 in the Expendable Trust Fund and money can be used from the contingency fund if needed.

F. Hart asks if the piece of property is something the Town could utilize.

G. Colby replies, that is a loaded question.

J. DeRoche asks if the Town may want to purchase it and then sell it. Perhaps the tire place beside the Park & Ride would be interested.

G. Colby states the process appears to be cumbersome.

F. Hart suggests the Board think about any use for the property.

G. Taillon states there are costs associated with the property just to be in the running. One item is an appraisal.

J. Kiszka does not think the Town needs the property.  
J. DeRoche asks how we will come up with a dollar amount if we want to make an offer.  
F. Hart states she will check with our assessors.  
J. DeRoche asks if any of the land was originally taken by the State through eminent domain, will it be returned.  
G. Taillon replies, no. Once land is taken by eminent domain it is never returned.  
J. Blinn wants to pursue the land. It is a prime piece of property and he does not want to dismiss it.  
F. Hart asks J. Blinn if he is willing to invest \$1100 to see what it will cost.  
J. Blinn replies yes. He states we just broke ground on the water tank on property the Town has had for over forty (40) years.  
J. DeRoche states it might be good for a recreation area. It is close to apartments and condos.  
G. Colby states we will probably have to pay fair market value if we want it. We could put a warrant article on the 2021 ballot and let the voters decide. The process will take 1½ years. We can send in a deposit of \$500 to save a spot.  
F. Hart asks the Board if they are in favor of moving forward with this.  
J. Kiszka asks where the deposit money will come from.  
G. Coby replies it can come from the unanticipated or contingency fund.  
G. Taillon asks if we have some time before we need to send in \$500. He does not think we should be speculating on future need. It will be expensive.  
F. Hart states J. Blinn has a good point. The property might be good for the Town in the future. She thinks we should hold off on the deposit for now and get a value from assessing.  
G. Colby offers to contact New Hampshire Department of Transportation (NH DOT) to find out when the Board must decide.  
G. Taillon states the location will have access to potable water.

### **OTHER BUSINESS**

F. Hart states she was contacted by the Energy Committee Chair asking to reappoint Gerry Marchand and change Peter Bealo from an alternate member to a voting member. The Board agrees.

F. Hart states some trash vendors have asked for an extension to bid on the RFP. She has extended the date to August 31, 2020.

F. Hart states the Boston Post Cane Award will be presented to Verna Carbone on Thursday, August 13 at her home. Jim Peck has offered to put together a proclamation.

### **SELECTMEN'S REPORTS**

J. DeRoche

- Mentions the email regarding the great job both the recreation department and commission have done.
- Attended the Energy Committee Meeting. Both bids for solar panels have come in higher than what was allocated. They are asking each vendor to scale back on the scope and see what we can get for \$68,000.

G. Taillon – nothing to report.

J. Kiszka

- Attended the Energy Committee Meeting. He states the two proposals were hard to compare because they are unlike systems. The Chair will ask the same questions to both companies to try to get clarification. Currently there is no recommendation from the Energy Committee.

F. Hart – nothing to report.

J. Blinn – he has had a couple of eventful weeks however he has nothing to report.

### **APPROVAL OF PRIOR NON-PUBLIC SESSION MINUTES**

The non-public session minutes from July 13, 2020 are individually read.

G. Taillon asks if it is normal to release such information.

F. Hart replies, yes as it is public information.

***G. Taillon motions to unseal and approved the non-public session minutes of July 13, 2020.***

***Seconded by J. Kiszka.***

***F. Hart = yes, G. Taillon = yes, J. Kiszka = yes, J. Blinn = abstain, J. DeRoche = yes***

***Vote: 4-0-1***

***Motion carries***

J. Kiszka states the question he asked regarding the last sentence on page two (2) has still not been answered.

F. Hart asks G. Colby to confirm that any money paid to the Water Superintendent are paid from the Water fund including all associated benefits and retirement.

G. Colby confirms that is correct.

***G. Taillon motions to approve the non-public session minutes of July 27, 2020. Seconded by J. Kiszka.***

***F. Hart = yes, G. Taillon = yes, J. Kiszka = yes, J. Blinn = abstain, J. DeRoche = yes***

***Vote: 4-0-1***

***Motion carries***

F. Hart adjourned the meeting at 8:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Beth Hossack,  
Recording Secretary