



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

PLAISTOW BOARD OF SELECTMEN MINUTES:

DATE: September 9, 2013

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER: 6:37 PM

SELECTMEN:

Chairman, Robert Gray

Selectman, Michelle Curran

Selectman, Daniel Poliquin

Vice Chairman, John Sherman

Selectman, Joyce Ingerson

Town Manager, Sean Fitzgerald

D. Poliquin – excused, arrived 6:40 pm.

AGENDA:

GIRL SCOUTS OF TROOP 13975 TO LEAD THE PLEDGE OF ALLEGIENCE:

Lindsay Fuller, Jacqueline Fuller, Eve Moranville, Lea Moranville, Libby Wagnitz, Lexi Wagnitz, Josie Beaulieu, Maggie O'Connor.

M. Curran – This troop was responsible for donating during the Festival of Trees last year. They did a wonderful job.

J. Ingerson – S. Fitzgerald should issue a citation recognizing each girl scout for their contributions.

S. Fitzgerald – Yes.

Motion by J. Ingerson to issue citations to the Girl Scouts present at the meeting.

2nd by: M. Curran

Vote: 5-0-0

Motion carries.

MINUTES:

Motion by John Sherman to approve the Minutes of August 26, 2013 with one correction, name spelling on page 8 of 10.

2nd by: Dan Poliquin

Vote: 5-0-0

Motion carries.

PUBLIC COMMENT: NONE

INTRODUCTION OF SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS – DR. EARL METZLER

Dr. Metzler – Looking forward to building relationships and would like to share upcoming plans for moving forward. Concerning the best use of facilities and the town fields, there are tremendous opportunities, especially around the Pollard School, High School and Middle school campuses. The opportunity of a YMCA, is also something to look forward to , will be a great place for kids to access.

For the last year, he's taken a very hard look at the current programs that are working well, integrating them into the school action plans in order to move the district forward.

J. Sherman – What is the re-organization of the administration at the Middle and High School?

E. Metzler – We continue to expand our offerings and to do so we are taking a look at the High School and the organizational structure of the high school to work smartly with the budget that we have without additional spending. We are re-organizing to get to the teaching and learning component. An example; there were 5 Principal assistants, we now have 3. They have specific roles: One assistant would take care of students who need special education, specifically services for families and students. The second assistant will be designated to focus on curriculum, specifically on grades 6-12. The curriculum should be fluid when students move on to higher grade levels. In the past those two buildings operated more separately, now have more co-ordination as the students move to higher grade levels. The third will focus on assets, operations, and facilities/grounds. We welcome feedback, and focus on accountability, therefore holding them to a high standard which is integrated into the action plan.

D. Poliquin – I receive a weekly update from the fire department, it mentioned that there is no longer a school resource officer?

S. Fitzgerald – I will provide Board with more information after discussion with chief. There have been some changes that have taken place.

E. Metzler – There have been changes in the department. We will have an SRO. The SRO office vacancy will be filled, the timetable is still being determined. Drills, such as, lockdowns and fire, are still taking place. We will be moving forward with that position in the near future.

J. Ingerson – If enrollment is down why does the budget keep doing up?

E. Metzler - Everything cost more money, we are statistically stable. The classroom size may drop by 2-3 students but the class is still in need of same the service. This situation is across the district. We would like to see an increase in offerings. For example, Latin added to the curriculum would help SAT scores. Teacher staffing has remained the same or has gone slightly up.

J. Ingerson – How much has the decrease in enrollment been in the last 2-3 years?

E. Metzler – The last year has been about 100 kids. The October 1st enrollment, where you have kids moving in, it has probably gone down 5- 10%. We did reduce staff this budget season. I pledged to the budget committee to review the budget line by line.

R. Gray – What is the number 1 driver of the school budget costs? What is the one area of budget costs what keeps rising?

E. Metzler - Health care costs continue to rise. Our negotiations with the PTA are ongoing. Budget based on the maximum potential that the expenses will be. You don't know what plans people will choose. We are looking at a buyout plans for some and for spouses if they have available coverage through their owns employers. Personnel and special education are the highest challenges. Students with particular needs are difficult to anticipate cost wise. We made some aggressive reductions last year and will continue to look for more areas where the budget can be reduced.

R. Gray – The Eagle Tribune article, printed a salute your leadership, reflecting accountability and also the bringing back of testing, which preps the student before going on to college.

M. Curran – I have spoken to many people in the community who are very happy that testing is coming back.

E. Metzler – We will continue to make smart choices, keeping things that work and holding ourselves accountable. We encourage feedback through student scoring on AP tests. The work of the past will help with future successes.

D. Poliquin - Anything coming forward as far as facilities or infrastructure?

E. Metzler - Taking a look at that this year, portables, the trailers needed replacement. This past winter reduced the lifespan of the portables. Options are to buy, lease or lease to own for new ones. Lease to own, the least expensive route, have a typical 5 year lifespan. We are working smart with the money. A couple of years ago we looked at the facilities at the high school there maybe a Warrant article, but that is a future discussion.

J. Sherman - Enrollment is not stable until the end of September. Many students moved out and it never gets reported. Enrollment numbers can be off until October. Fields behind Pollard school can be improved on. The land behind Pollard school, behind the fields, has potential to be looked at. Is there value there? There is a sizable piece of property behind the fields which may have future use potential. I am not sure if it is wetlands, but should be part of long range planning.

J. Ingerson - How many teachers will be needed to replace Sue?

E. Metzler – She is irreplaceable.

S. Fitzgerald - We appreciate the leadership, public safety is very important, investments are a priority in security and safety.

E. Metzler - Recommendations and increase in funding for those purposes (security and safety) are a priority.

R. Gray- I invite any of the school board members to speak; Peter Bealo, Rick Blair and Sue Sherman as new member of the board.

P. Bealo – Introduced newest members: Rick Blair and Sue Sherman, It has really been a pleasure working with Dr. Metzler. The SAU feels the positive change. The joining of the middle school and high schools, bringing them closer together especially in the guidance area along with the technology area. Grades 6-12 is especially better, there is no disconnect between middle and high school transitions. In January it was mentioned to have a college fair. We are having 2, we have 115 colleges signed up, things are changing and there is a different focus for the future.

M. Curran – That is great to hear.

REVIEW OF BOARD OF SELECTMEN GOALS

R. Gray – Review of Board of Selectmen Goals

R. Gray – GOAL #1 CONTINUE TO COORDINATE THE RESOLUTION FOR ANY OUTSTANDING ISSUES RELATED ON THE THE TOWN HALL GENERATOR AND MAKE A RECOMMENDATION REGARDING THE POSSIBLE REPLACEMENT OF THE SAFETY COMPLEX GENERATOR.

S. Fitzgerald – This year we were able to successfully resolve the issues with the town hall generator. There was a point failure that kept the generator from ensuring the town hall elevator would function properly. I am happy to report that the issue has been rectified and am confident that the elevator will work properly under a power failure. We were successful in getting the Dept. of Logistics Administration (DLA) to obtain a military surplus generator that has been reconditioned and is operating. It does not have an automatic function. It will power the Safety Complex during an emergency, power the library or other location. It may not be deemed the right generator for the building based on multiple conversations with electrical experts. I have asked the Emergency Management director and the police chief to investigate whether a grant may be available for the Safety Complex. I believe we can get a grant, similar to the Highway Garage. At this point the generator will be sufficient for the next few years. It is a challenge we need to stay on. The current generator is under a maintenance contract and will be serviced until another option is available.

R. Gray – That will be a goal that can continue on into the future.

S. Fitzgerald – We can revise it as we continue to co-ordinate efforts to replace the Safety Complex generator. If we are unsuccessful in getting a grant for the Safety Complex, in 3 years we can get a warrant article and ask the tax payers to fund it.

R. Gray – You would like to reword the goal, to seek the opportunity for a grant to replace the Safety Complex generator with a permanent type rather than a portable.

S. Fitzgerald – I would simply leave it as to continue to co-ordinate strategy to replace the Safety Complex generator.

J. Sherman – Would that generator, at time of replacement, be passed on to say the library?

S. Fitzgerald – I have spoken with the Building Inspector and the Chief, ideally we would want one with the feature of sustainability. It could be used at the school district in the event of an emergency where a shelter would be needed.

J. Sherman – Are there other buildings we should be looking at, the courthouse, the historical society, just other examples.

S. Fitzgerald – Given the frequency of power losses just in the last few years it seems like a responsible thing to do. I have asked the staff at the Police Dept. to see if we can acquire additional generators.

J. Sherman – I am suggesting that we can add that language into the revised goal.

R. Gray – I am not fully ready to commit to having more generators for every town building, I agree with John that for some buildings more than others, it may be more critical.

This goal can be revised.

R. GRAY - GOAL #2 INVESTIGATE/RESEARCH PLANS FOR WATER TESTING AT OLD COUNTY ROAD WELLS. IMPLEMENT AGREEMENTS WITH PROPERTY OWNERS FOR WATER USAGE OF THE OLD COUNTY ROAD WELLS.

S. Fitzgerald – The important things that have happened over the last 6 months are that we have installed a state of the art Radon treatment system for the water that we have at PARC. We have made that investment. The specifics of the properties that we supply water to I would have to defer to Atty. Kalman.

Ongoing discussion.

R. GRAY- GOAL #3 WORK WITH THE PUBLIC SAFETY COMPLEX COMMITTEE TO ACCOMPLISH THEIR CHARGE FROM THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN.

S. Fitzgerald – We have been discussing this for a few years, there is frustration that it takes time to move forward with capital projects. The site collection process this past year, much to the boards credit we have been able to acquire abutting land to the Safety Complex and we now have sufficient property to allow for Public Safety expansions. We have the ability to footprint a stand alone Police Station. A recommendation, from the committee will be coming before the board, that would be to fill the frog pond.

D. Poliquin - Why aren't we being notified of these meetings?

S. Fitzgerald – Sara Gibbs sends out notices, if you have not received these notices, you will be notified.

R. Gray – What is the charge of this committee?

S. Fitzgerald – To advance the project to expand the Safety Complex. We have been working to address the challenges of the public Safety Complex expansion.

R. Gray – I would like to see a better job at defining the charge.

J. Sherman – I have it and will bring it to the next meeting. I have a copy.

R. Gray – I haven't heard anything about the frog pond. I know the top two issues facing the town is infrastructure and aging infrastructure. This is a pretty high priority. This is an ongoing goal.

J. Sherman – This is a recommendation then to fill in the frog pond?

S. Fitzgerald – You will have a recommendation in the next few weeks to move the project forward regarding the access road and cost estimates. The number that CIP has, has not been updated for some time.

Ongoing issue.

R. GRAY - GOAL #4 EXPLORE OPPORTUNITIES FOR REDUCING THE COSTS RELATED TO WASTE COLLECTION AND DISPOSAL, INCLUDING OPTIONS FOR IMPROVING THE LEVELS OF RECYCLING WITHIN THE TOWN.

S. Fitzgerald - We have reduced the number of barrels that residents can put out on the street. A number of citizens have been coordinating initiatives, getting information out to the public, school children participating in public education. We are continuing to enhance recycling. Plaistow has a two barrel limit, recycling containers have no limit. Some residents in Plaistow are still not recycling. I think with more encouragement we will see more participation. Nothing is currently mandatory but we can look at further strategies to make pick up conditional.

J. Ingerson - Some communities do have mandatory recycling, have you looked at those plans?

S. Fitzgerald – I have, it is not generally popular, that is not an easy decision to make. We can make some changes such as a cardboard ban. Which essentially means if someone is seen throwing cardboard out in their garbage they would receive a sticker indicating that we will not pick that barrel or bag up. That can make people more aware that we have an expectation as a community and that it does save the town money.

J. Sherman – Do we know where we rank in the state for recycling? Can we find that out?

S. Fitzgerald – I can look that up.

R. Gray – I think this goal is ongoing to reduce costs.

S. Fitzgerald – I believe the town and board did a good job negotiating the contract with JRM. We did save the town some additional money by going with the contract. We were able to add tires.

R. Gray – Ongoing goal.

R. GRAY – GOAL #5 PRESENT A PROPOSAL FOR A SOLUTION TO THE SALT STORAGE PROBLEM AT THE HIGHWAY GARAGE LOCATION THAT SATISFIES THE ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES WHILE PROVIDING A COST EFFECTIVE SOLUTION FOR SALT STORAGE.

S. Fitzgerald – For the last few years we have diligently evaluated properties around town that would support the relocation. The Plaistow First Committee has along with Normandeau Associates, have taken a hard look at the storage problem, the methane gas issue surrounding the garage. They have done the preliminary work reviewing designs that would infiltrate and intercept the Methane Gas at the highway garage. I have not be able to coordinate with the the Plaistow First Committee, I hope to do that over the next few weeks. The Committee has several recommendations for the board that we will present to the board over the next few weeks. There is one property that I am very hopeful to acquire. It would be ideal for the Highway Garage, the property has been encumbered. Discussions are continuing with the owner of the property.

R. Gray – Do you anticipate anything going before the town meeting this year?

S. Fitzgerald – There is one property that we could move forward, although it may be a short term solution, it may not be the most ideal solution. I would prefer a location for the highway garage that could last 200 years.

Ongoing discussion.

R. GRAY - GOAL #7 DEVELOP A TECHNOLOGY PLAN THAT MAXIMIZES THE USE OF CURRENT TECHNOLOGY, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO THE CABLE STUDIO, EXISTING COMPUTER NETWORKS, GIS, AND THE TOWN WEBSITE, THE USE OF FACEBOOK, USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA AND THAT INCLUDES STRATEGIES FOR FUTURE TECHNOLOGY IMPROVEMENTS.

S. Fitzgerald – Microsoft 365, it was offered last year as a web based alternative. Instead of buying licenses for the next version of Microsoft we have access to the latest software upgrades for a fee and not get hit with relicensing for each version over time. License costs can be \$30,000 to \$40,000 for each upgrade of software, we will have annual, predictable costs that we can budget for.

J. Sherman – What about the financial aspect?

S. Fitzgerald – That is more of a challenge, it would require a big change, the current software is DOS based financial system. Hundreds of other municipalities use it. It does not integrate with Microsoft well and would be an ongoing challenge to convert. Under emergency management it would be ideal to be able to access and continue to operate without having to be at a specific location.

J. Sherman – Does that include the police?

S. Fitzgerald – That would include the police, they require very detailed redundancy and control over information. Their information is confidential which is managed by state and federal guidelines. The federal government is very concerned with how information is on the web. We cannot go completely server free at this point.

R. Gray – We as a board discussed the social media policy, keeping the library separate, do we allow departments within the town to use social media to utilize facebook? The Recreation department is already on it.

S. Fitzgerald – They are. Old Home Day is also on it.

R. Gray – That is part of the town. Do we allow that? Old Home Day is on there looking for volunteers.

M. Curran – That went up and we were not part of the discussion. The Old Home Day Committee hasn't even been formed yet.

S. Fitzgerald – There are some members who have served on the Old Home Day Committee that are looking to support initiatives. In terms of the big picture of the future of social media, I have discussed this with staff and believe the town can take the next steps regarding social media, we do need a policy and I have drafted some policies for social media that I can present back to the board regarding what we think we could support. Information is essential and it is a great tool to get information to the community regarding public safety. We need to make staff aware of the responsibilities and compliance with what we deem as essential and allowable.

Ongoing discussion.

R. GRAY - GOAL #8 WORK WITH TOWN STAFF AND THE ASSESSING AGENT TO DELIVER A PLAN FOR IMPROVING PUBLIC ACCESS TO THE PROPERTY TAX CARDS, INCLUDING COST OF IMPLEMENTATIONS.

S. Fitzgerald – This year we released an assessing data webpage. Many positive comments from users of the webpage. The release was for limited information to be available. We still have the assessing computer located at Town Hall. It has been a successful roll out, we can expand the offering providing people with more information specific to properties. We have met the goal and are ready to take the next step and release the entire information. Upon doing so if we receive any complaints regarding the content of information available on the website we can discuss it further.

M. Curran – Are you talking about showing the layout of the house online? I feel that is too much information online, I realize you can access that if you come into town hall.

S. Fitzgerald – I appreciate that concern. A password could be used for town residents. That could be an option.

J. Ingerson – Why does so much information have to be on the webpage?

R. Gray – It's a question of public information vs. private information.

S. Fitzgerald – This is all public information that we are talking about. I would like people to have the ability to be able to access it rather than have to come to town hall. We live in a 24/7 world and people should be able to access public records and information. It makes us more customer friendly.

M. Curran's point is well taken regarding security for residents.

J. Sherman – Is there a way for people to prevent their property details from being seen?

S. Fitzgerald – I don't believe so, there may be I will look into it. Public infrastructure information is also a concern for security reasons. We can discuss this further at a future meeting.

No further discussion at this time. It is an ongoing discussion.

R. GRAY – GOAL #9 WORK TO HELP FACILITATE A PLAISTOW MBTA STATION.

J. Sherman – It is in process and will continue to be in process.

Ongoing discussion.

R. GRAY – GOAL #11 SUCCESSFULLY NEGOTIATE LABOR CONTRACTS WITH BARGAINING UNITS IN TOWN.

J. Sherman – Also in process and will continue to be in process.

Ongoing discussion.

R. GRAY – GOAL # 12 PRESENT A RECOMMENDATION TO THE BOARD FOR THE NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT OF THE PAST DUE WATER LINE FEES OWED BY TESTA BY AUGUST 5, 2013

S. Fitzgerald – Working diligently with the owner of Testa Corp. to come up with a recommendation to the Board and continue to meet temporary commitments. This is an ongoing process and hope to negotiate a settlement.

Ongoing discussion.

R. GRAY – GOAL #13 WORK WITH THE CABLE COMMISSION TO OUTLINE TENANTS OF NEW COMCAST CABLE CONTRACT WHICH WILL EXPIRE IN 2015. COORDINATE A JOINT MEETING OF THE CABLE COMMISSION AND THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN BY AUGUST 2013 WITH RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE SELECTMEN BY JANUARY 2014.

S. Fitzgerald – Over the last few months I have communicated with Jay Somers of Comcast. Jay is the point person renewing licensing agreements throughout New Hampshire. I am in process of scheduling that meeting.

Ongoing discussion.

R. GRAY – GOAL #14 TOWN MANAGER TO SCHEDULE MONTHLY UPDATES WITH THE BOARD REGARDING (2) TOWN UNIONS.

Ongoing discussion.

R. GRAY - GOAL #15 IMPLEMENT THE NEW TOWN PERSONNEL PLAN WITH THE CONVERSION OF THE ANNUAL “SICK TIME BUY BACK” TO AN EARNED TIME OFF POLICY BY AUGUST 5TH 2013.

S. Fitzgerald – Would like to discuss that in NON-PUBLIC.

D. Poliquin – I believe you are working on a presentation for the town staff, why haven't you brought it to us?

S. Fitzgerald – I can give you the report. I have given you the information in the past.

R. Gray – This will be discussed in NON PUBLIC.

R. GRAY - GOAL #16 COORDINATE A WATER RESOURCE SYMPOSIUM TO EVALUATE AND DISCUSS THE TOWN OF PLAISTOW'S WATER RESOURCES CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES BY SEPTEMBER 13, 2013.

Happening this week. We will return to this following the symposium with an update.

Ongoing discussion.

R. GRAY - GOAL #17 HAVE TOWN MANAGER WORK WITH PLAISTOW FIRST TO DEVELOP RECOMMENDATIONS FOR A NEW SITE FOR SALT SHED AND HIGHWAY GARAGE.

S. Fitzgerald - Waiting to hear back from the Plaistow First for recommendations

Ongoing discussion.

R. GRAY - GOAL #18 COORDINATE A LAND USE SUMMIT BETWEEN LAND USE BOARDS AND TO WORK WITH TOWN MANAGER TO NARROW PERIMETERS TO WHAT IS TO BE DISCUSSED AT THE SUMMIT BY SEPTEMBER 16, 2013.

S. Fitzgerald - That has happened. Is this goal complete?

J. Sherman – We should do it again in a few months.

S. Fitzgerald – If we meet after March elections, can do earlier.

M. Curran – Budget and planning have a busy schedule right now.

J. Sherman – Can wait until January.

R. Gray – The goal can continue.

Ongoing discussion.

R. GRAY - GOAL #19 MAINTENANCE PLAN FOR TOWN BUILDINGS (ONE, TWO & FIVE YEAR). TOWN STAFF TO COORDINATE BY MAY 2013.

S. Fitzgerald – I have asked David Bowles and Mike Dorman to tour all of the town properties. They have a check list of building systems and the information is being put into a draft. The information consists of month to month activities concerning maintenance. Looking to standardize the reporting of work.

R. Gray – This is an ongoing goal.

Ongoing discussion.

R. GRAY - GOAL – #20 TOWN REPORT TO BE TURNED IN TO PRINTER (EVANS PRINTING) BY FEBRUARY 17, 2014, FOR EARLIER DISTRIBUTION (10 DAYS LATER)

That is an ongoing discussion

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R. Gray – Are there any new goals.

J. Sherman – No.

R. Gray – After budget season we will discuss these goals again. We will set the date later on.

S. Fitzgerald – I will update the board on continuing progress.

R. Gray – We will forego the Town Manager report, the board has a written copy to review.

SIGNATURE FOLDER AND MANIFEST

*Motion by M. Curran to go into nonpublic session under (a) Personnel, (c) Matters of Reputation, (d) Negotiations, (e) Legal
2nd by J. Sherman*

Roll call

R. Gray – Yes, J. Sherman – Yes, J. Ingerson – Yes, M. Curran – Yes, D. Poliquin – Yes

Public Meeting adjourned at 8:16 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Kerry Lee Noel