



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

**Plaistow Board of Selectmen Minutes**

**Date:** October 4, 2021

**Meeting Called to Order:** 6:30 p.m.

**Note:** D. Britton states J. Blinn is excused from tonight's meeting. He states B. Coye is participating remotely. He asks B. Coye why he cannot participate in person. B. Coye states he had close contact with a person who tested positive for Covid, and he is alone.

**Roll Call:**

Select Chairman, Darrell Britton

Select Vice Chairman, John A. Blinn, Sr. - Excused

Selectman, Greg Taillon

Selectman, Jay DeRoche

Selectman, Bill Coye – Remote Participant

Interim Town Manager, Greg Colby

Also present: Interim Police Chief R. Kane, Sgt. J. Mazza, Lucia Cusimano, Communications Supervisor, L. Sadewicz, Personnel Director, Fire Chief C. Knutsen and Beth Hossack, Recording Secretary.

**Minutes**

***J. DeRoche motions to approve the September 27, 2021, minutes. Seconded by G. Taillon. There was no discussion on the motion.***

***Roll call vote: D. Britton = yes, G. Taillon = yes, J. DeRoche = yes, B. Coye = yes.***

***Motion carries.***

**Public Comment**

None

**Budget Review**

The Police Department is the first budget reviewed. Interim Police Chief Kane thanks the Board for having him. He is joined by Sgt. Jason Mazza and Communications Supervisor Lucia Cusimano. Combined they have over fifty (50) years of police experience. Interim Chief Kane states all police department employees have been very helpful as well as Fire Chief Knutsen, and many other Town employees. Everyone has acted professionally, and he is proud of the Plaistow Police Department. D. Britton states, we concur.

Interim Chief Kane states the proposed 2022 budget is very vanilla, in that they are just asking for what they need to get by. There is no one in the police department with experience in developing a budget. None of the current employees have ever been asked to assist or asked what their needs may be. This budget is only up 1.44% from 2021 and the increase is mostly contract related items which

are out of their control. There are three (3) major outstanding projects for the police department. They are:

1. Finish the public safety communications infrastructure.
2. Finish the phone system upgrade.
3. Install a computer-aided dispatch system. The system has been paid for. It needs to be implemented. The current system is antiquated.

The next two (2) items for budget consideration are the addition of a full-time dispatcher and filling the open Victim Witness Advocate position. Interim Chief Kane asks for questions.

G. Taillon states the first line item looks low. It is for administrative permanent positions and is about \$24,000 lower than 2021. He notices the Executive Assistant position is lower and the Victim Witness Advocate position is lower. Also, it is his understanding that Plaistow funds the Victim Witness Advocate position, yet other communities use the service.

Interim Chief Kane states it is true that Plaistow pays the Victim Witness Advocate and other towns do use the service. The position is partially covered by a grant of \$30,000. Both the Executive Assistant and Victim Witness Advocate will cost less when the positions are filled since new people will start with a lower salary.

G. Taillon asks if other communities can chip in on the costs of the Victim Witness Advocate.

G. Colby states with roll up costs the Victim Witness Advocate position is approximately \$71,000. The balance after the grant is \$41,000.

G. Taillon is concerned that the executive department may not be staffed enough and may not be funded enough.

Interim Chief Kane states there are different ways to approach staffing. The chain of command is important. The department should have a Deputy Chief and a Captain. He states Plaistow has plenty of Sergeants and we can promote from within. A salary increase from a Sergeant to a Captain would range from \$20,000 - \$30,000.

G. Taillon states, would it be prudent to add that amount to the budget.

Interim Chief Kane replies, yes if the Town Manager and Board want to include it.

J. DeRoche asks G. Colby if it should be added in.

G. Colby replies, yes.

J. DeRoche asks if the rates being offered for the Executive Assistant and Victim Witness Advocate are competitive.

Interim Chief Kane replies, the Executive Assistant should not be lowered. It is the starting salary listed in the CBA. He is not sure if the Victim Witness Advocate salary is competitive. Many towns do not have this position.

J. DeRoche asks how many other towns use the Plaistow Victim Witness Advocate.

Interim Chief Kane replies, five (5).

J. DeRoche thinks we should reach out to other towns to see if they will help financially support the position.

G. Taillon agrees.

D. Britton asks what happens if the position is not filled.

Interim Chief Kane states it will be handled by the Prosecutor and/or the district court. If the charge involves a felony the superior court has their own victim witness advocate.

There is agreement that Interim Chief Kane will reach out to other towns and see if they are interested in cost sharing.

B. Coye asks if most towns do not have a Victim Witness Advocate.

Interim Chief Kane replies, yes. Big towns like Nashua have one yet Exeter does not.

B. Coye asks if there is anything a Victim Witness Advocate does that someone else cannot do. Interim Chief Kane replies, yes, a victim witness advocate can offer a little more personal time to a victim, however, a prosecutor must reach out to victims and witnesses prior to going to court.

Sgt. Mazza states police officers handle part of it during times when the victim witness advocate is not available such as nights. There are local resources they can offer victims. The officers will also do follow up on these cases.

Interim Chief Kane will make calls to the other communities and find out their interest or lack of interest.

G. Taillon is concerned that the line item for MIS/Data Processing is low.

Interim Chief Kane replies, the MIS software is paid for and there is no maintenance charge for the first year and no charge for training. Training will have an associated cost due to overtime pay for dispatchers.

G. Taillon asks if there are any other needs for the police department.

Interim Chief Kane states the new communications software allows for laptops in cruisers. He would like to get four (4) laptops for cruisers. It was not part of the scope of work in the beginning. He will reach out to the vendor for pricing.

G. Taillon states pre-employment looks low. Is it low because we are trying to reduce the budget?

Interim Chief Kane states the line item is level funded from 2021.

G. Taillon states we need a fully staffed police force.

D. Britton states, he understands G. Taillon's point of view, yet no one has a crystal ball.

G. Taillon states he is just expressing his opinion.

J. DeRoche would like to leave it as is.

B. Coye is fine with the amount of \$2000.

J. DeRoche asks about uniforms. The 2021 budget amount is \$27,000 yet only \$4,052 has been spent. Is this typically spent in the last quarter of the year.

Interim Chief Kane replies, yes. Most of the uniforms are purchased in October.

G. Taillon asks for an explanation of why the equipment purchase line is lower.

Interim Chief Kane replies there was a lease agreement that expired causing the reduction.

J. DeRoche states the only decision to be made is what to do about the victim witness advocate.

There are no other questions regarding the police budget in his opinion.

D. Britton asks Interim Chief Kane to get back to the Board on what he finds out from other towns regarding the victim witness advocate.

G. Colby states the only other consideration is a sixth (6<sup>th</sup>) dispatcher.

G. Taillon asks if it will be needed in 2022.

G. Colby states the dispatch supervisor is here and will answer questions.

D. Britton asks if it must be handled via warrant article.

G. Colby replies, it has been past practice however it is not a written rule.

L. Cusimano states the dispatch center provides services to both police and fire for Plaistow and Atkinson. We have five (5) full time dispatchers and one (1) part time dispatcher. Calls for service take time and the dispatchers are always rushed. Hiring another dispatcher will provide better quality service. It will allow for double coverage during busy times, and it will help reduce overtime hours.

B. Coye asks if it is better to hire one (1) full time dispatcher or two (2) part time dispatchers.

L. Cusimano replies, full time. It is hard to find part time dispatchers who are willing to work many hours. Full time is better for job retention too.

Interim Chief Kane states hiring another dispatcher will allow L. Cusimano to do her job which is supervising. She is too busy to do that now.

G. Colby states, some overtime costs will be reduced, and some funds can be reallocated.

Chief Knutsen, agrees another dispatcher is needed. They are the heart of the whole operation.

J. DeRoche asks what a typical day is like now.

L. Cusimano replies we have one (1) person on an eight (8) hour shift. With another person, two (2) dispatchers will be scheduled on Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays.

D. Britton asks the Board how they want to proceed.

The Board is in favor of another dispatcher. They want to look at numbers. The overtime costs may be reduced, and the position of victim witness advocate may change allowing for part of the salary to be reallocated.

The police budget will be reviewed again on 10/18/21.

The fire department budget is reviewed.

G. Taillon compliments Chief Knutsen on the 2022 proposed budget with all the explanations.

G. Taillon reviewed the budget, and he agrees with everything.

D. Britton states, it is a miracle that it is level funded.

Chief Knutsen states he acted conservatively and responsibly with taxpayer money. He also states the new model with 24/7 coverage has been very helpful. This model has decreased the costs of call firefighters. Chief Knutsen is a trainer. The department has undergone a lot of training this year.

D. Britton asks how gas and vehicle maintenance supplies was kept level funded especially with the increase in gas prices.

Chief Knutsen replies, he felt keeping it level funded was reasonable. Gas is only consumed for calls. It is not like the police department when they are patrolling on a regular basis. Some of the maintenance such as oil changes are being done in house as well.

B. Coye asks how the 24/7 staff is working out.

Chief Knutsen replies great, it has reduced response times.

G. Taillon asks how a new urgent care facility in Plaistow will affect the fire department.

Chief Knutsen replies, there will probably be more calls to respond to the facility however it does not change the pay of firefighters.

***J. DeRoche motions to approve the fire departments budget in the amount of \$918,285. Seconded by G. Taillon. There was no discussion on the motion.***

***Roll call vote: D. Britton = yes, G. Taillon = yes, J. DeRoche = yes, B. Coye = yes.***

***Motion carries.***

The emergency management budget is reviewed.

Chief Knutsen states there is a new item in dues/subscriptions called Code Red Emergency Notification. This is similar to a reverse 911 system. The system can be used to send alerts for delayed trash, traffic situations, a road closure or anything else of importance. It gives the Town the ability to send out emergency notification to people quickly.

D. Britton asks if the Chief has access to the library sign.

Chief Knutsen replies, he does not have access to use it however any time he needs something posted the library is happy to help.

***G. Taillon motions to approve the emergency management budget in the amount of \$20,100. Seconded by J. DeRoche.***

***Discussion: J. DeRoche states, great job looking into Code Red. It is a good feature for the Town.***

***Roll call vote: D. Britton = yes, G. Taillon = yes, J. DeRoche = yes, B. Coye = yes.***

***Motion carries.***

D. Britton asks if the Board members read the So. Rock information and if they want to add it to the ballot as a warrant article. There is consensus to do so.

D. Britton mentions the email from the Kingston Selectmen regarding property lines. According to RSA 51:2 it should be completed every seven years. It has been neglected for some time. There is consensus to have G. Colby reach out to Kingston to see if they have a cost estimate.

The Executive budget is discussed.

G. Colby states there is a slight increase in this budget over 2021.

J. DeRoche states not much was spent in 2020 in the office equipment/maintenance line item.

G. Colby replies, many items were reimbursed in 2020 due to Covid funding from the federal government. You need to look at pre-covid years to get a better sense of office equipment costs.

***G. Taillon motions to approve the executive budget in the amount of \$291,490. Seconded by B. Coye. There was no discussion on the motion.***

***Roll call vote: D. Britton = yes, G. Taillon = yes, J. DeRoche = yes, B. Coye = yes.***

***Motion carries.***

The Town Clerk budget is discussed. It is up about \$22,000. The reason is to restore part time hours for the department. The department is understaffed and very busy. The Town Clerk's office brings in about 1.4 – 1.5 million of revenue per year for vehicle registrations.

***G. Taillon motions to approve the Town Clerk budget in the amount of \$130,244. Seconded by J. DeRoche. There was no discussion on the motion.***

***Roll call vote: D. Britton = yes, G. Taillon = yes, J. DeRoche = yes, B. Coye = yes.***

***Motion carries.***

The human resources/personnel budget is discussed.

G. Colby states the human resources budget includes training for all staff except police and fire. This budget also contains health insurance and NH retirement. The health insurance expense is an estimate. We do not have the actual figures yet. Both health insurance and NH retirement typically increase every year. The State of NH used to pay a much higher contribution to retirement.

D. Britton ask if any Covid funding can be used to pay for retirement.

G. Colby replies, no.

***G. Taillon motions to approve the human resources/personnel budget in the amount of \$2,085,517. Seconded by J. DeRoche. There was no discussion on the motion.***

***Roll call vote: D. Britton = yes, G. Taillon = yes, J. DeRoche = yes, B. Coye = yes.***

***Motion carries.***

The general government buildings budget is discussed.

G. Colby states this budget covers maintenance and utilities for all Town buildings. The proposed 2022 budget shows two (2) years of increases. Last year the budget committee level funded this budget even with two (2) new buildings, the Town Hall Annex, and the new Public Works Garage.

D. Britton asks when the solar panels will be installed on the salt shed.

G. Colby replies, the work should start in October and finish in November.

J. DeRoche states the Town Hall has LED lights. Is it worth putting them into the Annex?

G. Colby states we could do that however it is a small building. We would have to determine if it is cost effective.

G. Taillon asks if maintenance is higher due to the two (2) new buildings.

G. Colby replies, no. However, two (2) years of raises are included based on the CBA.

***G. Taillon motions to approve the general government buildings budget in the amount of \$338,126. Seconded by J. DeRoche. There was no discussion on the motion.***

***Roll call vote: D. Britton = yes, G. Taillon = yes, J. DeRoche = yes, B. Coye = yes.***

***Motion carries.***

The Cable budget is discussed.

G. Colby states the increase is for well-deserved salaries.

***G. Taillon motions to approve the cable department budget in the amount of \$37,203. Seconded by J. DeRoche. There was no discussion on the motion.***

***Roll call vote: D. Britton = yes, G. Taillon = yes, J. DeRoche = yes, B. Coye = yes.***

***Motion carries.***

The other general government budget is discussed.

G. Colby states this budget is for Town wide telephone, internet, and compute related items. It also includes MS4 Stormwater testing which affects several departments. It is up \$5,000 from 2021. The server was moved in 2021 and is in a secure location at the police department.

***G. Taillon motions to approve the other general government budget in the amount of \$195,000. Seconded by J. DeRoche. There was no discussion on the motion.***

***Roll call vote: D. Britton = yes, G. Taillon = yes, J. DeRoche = yes, B. Coye = yes.***

***Motion carries.***

The inspections budget is discussed.

The full time Inspector and administrative assistant salary line is slightly lower. We have an interim Inspector, and a permanent position will be posted soon.

***J. DeRoche motions to approve the inspections budget in the amount of \$119,822. Seconded by B. Coye. There was no discussion on the motion.***

***Roll call vote: D. Britton = yes, G. Taillon = yes, J. DeRoche = yes, B. Coye = yes.***

***Motion carries.***

The highway budget is discussed. This budget is up about \$40,000 to outsource landscaping. We were unable to fill the position of a temporary laborer. The highway department does not have time to do the landscaping and keep up with other responsibilities.

G. Taillon asks if we use the highway department to maintain the cemetery and if so, are we reimbursed by the Trustees of the Trust Fund for perpetual care.

G. Colby replies yes, the highway department does take care of the cemetery and we do get reimbursed from perpetual care. It should probably be listed as a separate line item.

G. Taillon wants to know if hours are tracked so we know how much time is spent on the cemetery.

G. Colby states, hours are tracked. It is too hard to try to track the use of the equipment for grounds keeping at different Town properties such as PARC, Town Hall, Cemetery, and the library. We also maintain the islands on Rte. 125 due to a contract with the State. Currently the islands are done on overtime.

***G. Taillon motions to approve the highway budget in the amount of \$848,959. Seconded by D. Britton. There was no discussion on the motion.***

***Roll call vote: D. Britton = yes, G. Taillon = yes, J. DeRoche = yes, B. Coye = yes.***

***Motion carries.***

The recreation budget is discussed. This budget is only up \$649. over 2021. There are two (2) fundamental changes. Summer counselors are paid extremely low. The hourly amount will be increased next summer to \$11 - \$12 per hour. We need to do this to retain and attract counselors. This past summer we only had sixty (60) children in the program because we could not hire enough counselors. There were forty (40) kids on a waiting list. The cost for a week of camp will increase from \$100. per week to \$125. per week.

J. DeRoche asks how much revenue the recreation department brings in.

G. Colby replies, this year it was in the range of \$50,000 - \$60,000. It was greater than that before Covid.

***B. Coye motions to approve the recreation budget in the amount of \$187,344. Seconded by J. DeRoche. There was no discussion on the motion.***

***Roll call vote: D. Britton = yes, G. Taillon = yes, J. DeRoche = yes, B. Coye = yes.***

***Motion carries.***

The Conservation budget is discussed. There is a slight increase for water testing and forest fund repair work. The repair work will be done to bridges and trails when the forest maintenance cut is complete.

***G. Taillon motions to approve the conservation budget in the amount of \$7,200. Seconded by J. DeRoche. There was no discussion on the motion.***

***Roll call vote: D. Britton = yes, G. Taillon = yes, J. DeRoche = yes, B. Coye = yes.***

***Motion carries.***

### **Town Managers Report**

- The sale of 13 Rose Avenue is complete.
- The land the Conservation Commission wants to buy abutting the Town forest will be done this week.
- Beavers are back behind the Historical Museum. Dan Garlington has already contacted the trapper.
- The first round of CBA negotiations has started.
- Interviews for the Emergency Management Deputy will occur tomorrow.
- Tax rate setting could be delayed. The school district will hold a special meeting to decide about spending \$991,000. of excess adequate aid. A public hearing will be held this week and the final decision must be made by October 21, 2021.

### **Selectmen's Reports**

J. DeRoche

- The TRAC committee will meet this week to work on recommendations, handouts, and best practices for recycling. They will bring their ideas to the Board.

G. Taillon asks if we have a date for the carts to be delivered.

J. DeRoche states delivery will occur in November. An exact date has not been set yet. They will be distributed to residents sometime in December.

D. Britton asks where the carts will be brought when they are delivered to the Town.

G. Colby replies, the old Highway Garage.

G. Taillon asks if anyone has reached out to JRM regarding the disposal of old barrels.

G. Colby replies, not yet.

As there is no further business before the Board, D. Britton adjourned the meeting at 8:33 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Beth Hossack

Recording Secretary