



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

Plaistow Board of Selectmen Minutes

Date: January 10, 2022

Meeting Called to Order: 6:29 p.m.

Roll Call:

Select Chairman, Darrell Britton

Select Vice Chairman, John A. Blinn, Sr.

Selectman, Greg Taillon

Selectman, Jay DeRoche

Selectman, Bill Coye

Also present: Greg Colby, Town Manager and Dee Voss, Special Projects Coordinator.

Minutes

G. Taillon motions to approve the January 3, 2022, minutes. Seconded by J. DeRoche. There was no discussion on the motion. The vote was 5-0-0 U/A.

Public Comment

None.

Public Hearing -Bond Fire Truck

The Plaistow Board of Selectmen will hold a Public Hearing on Monday, January 10, 2022, at 6:30 p.m. to consider a bond issue of one million five hundred thousand dollars and 00/100 (\$1,500,000.00) for the replacement of the Fire Department's Tower 3 Fire Truck. The meeting will be held on the second floor of Town Hall, 145 Main St. Plaistow, NH. This is in accordance with the provisions of the Municipal Finance Act, NH RSA 33:8-d (a).

D. Britton opened the public hearing at 6:30 p.m.

Fire Chief Chris Knutsen was present for the public hearing.

C. Knutsen offered information on Tower 3 Truck, including current condition, recommended repairs and costs. He noted that the truck was unreliable and may not pass the State's inspection without a major investment in repairs. It was explained that Tower 3 had been out of service for forty-five (45) days in the past year. It was also noted that quality used trucks of this kind are a rare find and departments are not getting rid of them until they become too costly to repair.

C. Knutsen offered that the current Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) was not accurate as to the cost of a replacement truck, or the life expectancy of the current truck. He noted that leasing, while an option, would be expensive because of interest rates. He offered that a purchase of a new truck

would be, in his opinion, the best value for the taxpayers. He suggested that the Board of Selectmen and the Town support a Bond Warrant Article for the cost of a new truck (\$1.5M) in lieu of the CIP. He also suggested that no further deposits be made to the CIP and the current funds applied to the purchase of a new truck.

There was discussion regarding the current Municipal Bond process and terms.

There was also discussion about the CIP. D. Britton noted that if funds are not added to a Capital Reserve Fund (CRF) through the CIP process, then there wouldn't be money available for future apparatus purchases.

C. Knutsen was asked about lease-to-own possibilities. He noted those vehicles were tough to come by and that most departments are only getting rid of them because they have outlived their usefulness to them.

B. Coye asked if there were any value in the current Tower 3.

C. Knutsen offered that the only value would be as scrap. He noted that it was estimated to be between \$35,000-\$40,000 just to repair the pump, there would not be any guarantee associated with the repairs, and they would still have a 25-year old truck.

There was discussion about bonding the purchase of a new truck. It was noted that after the first year the bond payments would roll into the operating budget and that early payoff was not usually available. There was discussion about other financing options such as grants, but the Chief was not optimistic of that possibility and likened it to winning the lottery to get one. The possibility of using ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) funds for some, or all of the purchase.

G. Taillon asked what the department would do in the alternative if the bond didn't pass.

C. Knutsen replied that they would continue to use Tower 3 until it was unsafe to do so. He also noted that not having the ladder would impact the Town's ISO (Insurance Services Office) score.

There was discussion regarding the Town's need for a ladder truck. There was also discussion regarding mutual aid, where it was noted that there are usually mileage restrictions as to how far a truck can go into another community.

D. Britton offered that he could be in favor of making efforts to obtain a grant, even if it meant waiting another year to purchase a new truck.

There was discussion regarding the timelines for delivery of a truck once it is ordered, which can be as much as fourteen (14) months. It was also noted that some manufacturers require a pre-payment for a portion of the purchase price before they will begin to construct the truck. There was discussion of the pros and cons of waiting another year to explore grant and other financing opportunities instead of a \$1.5M bond.

C. Knutsen cautioned that many Federal grants cannot be used to supplant the budget.

There was discussion about the language of the Warrant Article and additional discussion on the possibility of using ARPA funds.

D. Britton offered that the first funding option should be to explore grants and ARPA funds, before a large bond.

D. Britton opened the public hearing to the gallery.

Julian Kiszka, 1 May Ray Ave noted the following:

- He is a former Selectman and familiar with the budget and CIP process
- He questioned why the pump on Tower 3 hasn't been fixed before now
- Most Plaistow household budgets will not be able to sustain the tax increase that this large a bond might create once the payments are incorporated into the operating budget
- Funds in the CIP should have been used for the repairs
- The Town can also rely on mutual aid from other communities and noted that Haverhill (MA) has a lot of equipment
- He didn't think that having this equipment would have an impact on individual insurance rates in reality

J. Kiszka also noted that he didn't feel the D. Britton got the answers to his questions of the Chief.

- The Fire Department has always taken outstanding maintenance care of their equipment
- A taxpayer bond will have a twenty (20) year impact on the budget, not just a one (1) time
- What funds will be available for other apparatus if no further contributions go into the CIP
- He wasn't comfortable with \$1.5M spending that binds future Boards
- He didn't think there was enough information available to voters to expect their support of a bond
- He has always supported the Police and Fire Departments in their budgetary requests, including the Safety Complex bond

There were no other members of the public wishing to speak to this matter and the public hearing was closed at 7:10 p.m.

Public Hearing – Potable Water Connection Assistance Bond

The Plaistow Board of Selectmen will hold a Public Hearing on Monday, January 10, 2022, at 6:40 p.m. to consider a bond issue of up to \$450,000. The meeting will be held on the second floor of Town Hall, 145 Main St. Plaistow, NH. The funds from the bond issue will allow residents who want to borrow money to hook up to the potable water system to pay the loan back over time through their water bill. This is in accordance with the provisions of the Municipal Finance Act, NH RSA 33:8-d (a).

D. Britton opened the public hearing at 7:10 p.m.

J. DeRoche read the current language of the Warrant Article and expressed concerns that the "betterment" language was concerning as that was what caused it to fail last year. He added that he wanted to make it clear to all voters that the water system is not supported by the taxpayers. The

bond will be paid by those to take advantage of the assistance and will not impact taxes. He added that the water will not impact their assessed values by the mere fact that the main line runs by their house. The bond is intended as an incentive to those who would like to connect but find it a financial hardship. The incentive will lead to more connections, which will help to increase the subscribers and make it a better system.

There was discussion about whether the access to the funds would be based on need or the ability to pay. It was noted that funds would be available on a first come, first served basis and would not be available to commercial customers. It was noted that the Board would be the ones to set the policies regarding the distribution of any approved funds. It was also noted that a lot of commercial customers will already be connected to the potable system by the fact that they are connected to the Fire Suppression System. It will be difficult to just the need until the connection application process begins.

There was discussion about the bond and terms. It was noted that the entire bond would not have to be utilized if it is not necessary.

D. Britton opened the comment to the gallery.

Nancy Atwater, 16 Rustic Lane, asked what the connection process would look like and potential costs.

D. Britton explained that the property owner would be responsible for the costs connected with bringing the waterline from the street into their home and any connections to their existing plumbing.

D. Voss explained that the fee schedule for connection costs is located on the website but is subject to updating. It was also noted that the intent is to extend the system over time, but it wasn't possible to state at this time where any potential expansion might be.

D. Britton closed the public hearing at 7:31 p.m.

BOS Meeting Schedule

G. Colby noted that Deliberative Session was scheduled for February 5, 2022, at the Public Works Garage.

It was noted that January 17, was a holiday and decided that the Board would start meeting every other Monday beginning January 24.

Budget Committee Quorum

It was noted that there had been some concern and discussion at to how the Budget Committee quorum is defined. G. Taillon has been obtaining information from NHMA (New Hampshire Municipal Association) that notes the quorum to be based on how the charter for the committee is written.

D. Britton suggested that the Budget Committee membership should be reduced to a total of five voting members, which would also reduce their quorum requirements.

It was noted that there was a proposal to increase the Budget Committee membership by one to make the voting members an odd number and lessen the possibility of an even-split vote.

It was noted that Bob Hamilton had resigned from the Budget Committee. Thanks were offered for his years of service to the committee.

Other Business – Old Home Day Committee

B. Coye noted that the Old Home Day Committee was going to begin meeting and new members were welcome to attend.

There was discussion on the funding of the committee. It was also asked if the Plaistow Historical Society would continue to benefit from the sale of vendor spaces. It was suggested that an employee needed to be assigned to the committee and there needs to be accountability by the committee to the Town.

Other Business – Recreation Warrant Article

G. Taillon noted that the wording of the Recreation Warrant Article does provide an explanation of the specific spending. He suggested that the last two lines be removed from the voter guide explanation. Consensus agreement of the Board.

Other Business – Election Filing Period

J. DeRoche noted that the filing period for those wishing to run for open board and committee positions is from January 19 through the 28th, in the Town Clerk's Office. The Town Clerk's office will be open the last Friday of the filing period.

Other Business – Energy Committee

J. DeRoche noted that he attended that last Energy Committee meeting where there was a discussion with Encore Energy regarding the possibility of a solar array on the Town's capped landfill.

Other Business – Trash/Recycling Contract

G. Colby noted that 99% of the trash and recycling carts have been distributed. The cardboard-only dumpsters would be delayed 1-6 weeks.

D. Voss praised the Highway Department for their assistance in getting the final carts distributed.

Other Business – Water Master Plan

G. Colby noted that there could be a 100% grant available to develop a Master Plan for the Water Project and that Underwood Engineers was working on the submission.

Other Business – Salt and Salt Shed Solar

It was noted that the salt shed was stocked to the max and that Dan Garlington, Highway Supervisor, was comfortable with the quantity available. It was also noted that the solar array on the salt shed was now functioning.

Other Business – Police and Fire

It was noted that the Fire and Police Departments have been very busy lately with calls and the increase of COVID positive tests was impacting the departments.

As there is no further business before the Board, D. Britton adjourned the meeting at 7:52 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Dee Voss
Special Project Coordinator