



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

PLAISTOW BOARD OF SELECTMEN MINUTES:

DATE: August 27, 2018

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER: 6:34pm

SELECTMEN:

Selectman, Julian Kiszka, Chairman
Selectman, John Sherman
Selectwoman, Francine Hart

Selectman, Peter Bracci, Vice Chairman
Selectman, Steve Ranlett - Excused
Town Manager, Mark Pearson

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

CEMETERY SEXTON

Mark Gilford applied for the Cemetery Sexton position. He was interviewed by the Town Manager and he is a very qualified candidate. Mr. Gilford is present tonight to meet the Board and answer questions.

Mr. Gilford was the Cemetery Sexton for Elmwood Cemetery in Bradford, MA for several years. He knows many Funeral Directors and monument dealers in the area. Mr. Gilford is currently working part time at Christian Academy and is very interested in taking on the job of Cemetery Sexton in Plaistow. He believes a good Cemetery Sexton is someone who can listen and is very patient. This important job involves dealing with people who are often very emotional.

M. Pearson states in 2004 the Town passed a warrant article eliminating the Board of Cemetery Trustees and giving their responsibility to the Board of Selectmen. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the Board to hire the next Cemetery Sexton.

Mr. Gilford states he is a hands-on worker and he really enjoys working on cemetery records. He finds it very interesting and it helps one to get to know the cemetery better. He is very willing to start computerizing the Plaistow cemetery records.

J. Sherman motions to hire Mr. Gilford as the Cemetery Sexton with the salary set by the Town Manager and he would be reporting daily activities to the Town Manager. Seconded by F. Hart.

P. Bracci wants the Board to set the salary.

J. Sherman does not want to discuss the salary in public.

J. Kiszka thinks the town is fortunate to have such a qualified candidate.

M. Pearson states Mr. Gilford will be hired at the current salary stipend. The salary will be reviewed during budget season.

Vote: 4-0-0
Motion passes

The Board welcomes Mr. Mark Gilford. He will start in early September.

MINUTES

J. Sherman motions to approve the minutes of August 20, 2018. Seconded by P. Bracci.

Vote: 4-0-0
Motion passes

DISCUSS THE PROCESS OF CHANGING THE SPEED LIMIT ON CLASS V ROADS

Chief Jones states the Police Department often receives complaints about speeding. The issue has been discussed at past Highway Safety Advisory Committee Meetings. The Committee reached out to William Lambert an engineer for NHDOT (New Hampshire Department of Transportation) and he spoke at one of their meetings. The speed limits of New Hampshire roads are controlled by RSA 265:60. The law is not very specific. Basically, it states no person shall drive a vehicle at a speed greater than is reasonable and prudent. It defines the speed limit for certain zones. A class V zone is considered rural residential and covers all roads in Plaistow that are not state roads. A select Board may change speed limits however the process is not easy. An engineering and/or traffic investigation must be done first. Findings must exist to prove the speed limit is not reasonable and safe under the conditions. The law does not define any details required to complete an engineering or traffic investigation. However, average speed and collision rates must be analyzed along with crash history and then compared to similar road segments. The cost for one roadway study ranges from five-thousand to ten-thousand (5,000 - 10,000) dollars. A town is not required to hire outside consultants to compete such studies if there is enough manpower available to do the study.

Chief Jones feels that just lowering a speed limit does not necessarily solve the problem. The geometry of a road plays a role in how people drive their vehicles. In short, the Board can change a speed limit but you must invest time and resources and prove a change is needed. She recommends we look at Town roadways to insure they are classified properly accordingly to State laws. Potential new roads should be carefully examined before they are built.

P. Bracci states there are several electronic radar signs in town. Is there a study that shows they help slow down traffic?

Chief Jones is not aware of a study but she feels they do help. She has seen cars break when an electronic sign is flashing. The effect might be psychological. Most agree they are beneficial. The signs do provide statistical data to the police department which is helpful.

F. Hart asks if there is any indication that our roads are not properly classified.

Chief Jones replies, no.

J. Kiszka mentions that we cannot change the speed limits of State Roads.

Chief Jones states, that is a true statement.

M. Pearson adds when he was a State Representative he learned the state criteria to change a speed limit is stringent. Even if several accidents have occurred at the same location.

Chief Jones states perception is also a factor. When someone sees a car driving, their perception is often that the car is going faster than it really is.

J. Kiszka asks if there are any particular roads to consider changing right now.

Chief Jones replies, not right now.

If resident have concerns the procedure is to contact the Highway Safety Advisory Committee.

REVIEW FALL BOARD SCHEDULE

The fall schedule is reviewed. A few changes are made. The updated schedule will be available at the next meeting.

AVITAR SOFTWARE PRESENTATION

Josh Arend from Avitar Software is here to answer the Board's questions regarding Avitar's software. Avitar is a municipal services company providing many software applications including assessing, tax collector, building permits, utility billing, and motor vehicle registrations. About one hundred forty (140) towns are using Avitar software for their assessing department. Three (3) of those towns are close to Plaistow. They are Danville, East Kingston and Kingston.

J. Kiszka asks what are the advantages of using Avitar's tax software with their assessing application.

J. Arend replies, it can calculate the MS-1, then the tax warrant. It imports tax bills not values. Several exports can be provided. Some towns want values imported to their tax software so the software will calculate the tax. It works with BMSI based on a program that BMSI built to export to tax collections software. Avitar works with towns with small parcels of about thirty-five hundred (3500) up to larger ones with thirteen-thousand (13,000) parcels. The process of converting software is not simple. First, they will convert or bridge what they can from our current software but many attributes will have to be hand entered. A lot of field work will need to be done. Then everything needs to be scrubbed. They are going through this process now with the Town of Holderness.

J. Sherman asks if we switch software will commercial values be different?

J. Arend states the software is a tool. The assessor determines value based on the market. The assessor is the expert.

F. Hart asks if there is a good time to make a change since the process is so time consuming. Marybeth recommends after the Spring tax bills are sent. All permits will be input into both systems, values will be taken from the current system while you are building the new system. The full process from "A" to "Z" will take six (6) to eighteen (18) months. It is best to try to do the work in a calendar year.

J. Arend states once the information is in the new software it will be easy to use. The system is fairly intuitive, it is mouse driven and easy to use. It will integrate with the MS-1.

F. Hart asks what differentiates your system from others.

J. Arend states software, simplicity, cost, and training are the key features. Generally, they have been converting two (2) or three (3) towns every year. This year they are converting eight (8). The feedback they get from customers is that if both assessing and tax modules are used it is easier to work with the DRA (Department of Revenue Administration).

F. Hart asks what type of training and support is provided.

J. Arend states Avitar works remotely with the assessor. On day one (1) of training the assessing clerk, is able to start working. They offer a help line with a flat annual fee. Annual updates are included in the fee. The support is optional. The cost of the software and the support fee is driven by the number of parcels in town. For Plaistow the software cost is approximately eleven thousand (11,000) for just the assessing module and \$3400 for support. J. Arend will get a full list of pricing to us.

Tim Moore of the Planning Board is in the audience. He would like to ask a question. The Board agrees. He asks if Avitar provides software that records changes approved by the planning board such as lot line adjustments.

J. Arend states they provide a tracking document in a .pdf format that can be used with other applications. It is not an application by itself yet it will maintain information about parcels in the system which is a helpful tool.

ENERGY AUDIT FUNDING REQUEST

Tim Moore states the Energy Committee has proposed performing energy audits on town buildings. An RFP was sent out and two (2) responses were received. The RFP request a quote for completing energy audits on Town Hall, the District Courthouse, the Library and Historical Society. The Energy Committee has since decided to drop the District Courthouse from the audit since the energy costs are not paid for by the town. The Energy Committee recommends going with S.E.E.D.S. (Sustainable Energy Education & Demonstration Services). Two of their references were checked and both were positive. S.E.E.D.S. also works with Unitil and Unitil will share in the costs of the energy audits. They pay between 50-70% with a cap of eight thousand (8000) dollars. Some of the items included in the audit are thermal and electrical efficiency, HVAC and lighting.

J. Sherman asks if the concession stand at PARC was considered for an energy audit.

F. Hart states not at this time. Funding is limited so they want to start with larger buildings.

The goal of the energy audit is to reduce utility costs and save money. Information is needed to plan for the future. The Energy Committee feels spending seventy-seven hundred (7700) dollars is small compared to future energy savings.

P. Bracci it depends on how much the saving add up to. He thinks we should do one (1) building not all three (3).

F. Hart states the rebates will expire at the end of the year. She recommends all three (3) buildings.

F. Hart motions for the Board to approve an amount not to exceed \$7700.00 be withdrawn from the Energy Capital Reserve Account for energy audits on Town Hall, the Library, and the Historical Society. Seconded by J. Sherman.

Vote 4-0-0

Motion passes.

P. Bracci states we had Avitar in tonight and Visions is scheduled for the next meeting he would like to have our current software company come in. After some discussion there is consensus to have Univers come to the September 10th meeting for a presentation.

FINALIZE TOWN MANAGER GOALS/DISCUSS PROJECTS & ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The updated list of goal is reviewed. Some changes are made. The final list will be provided to Town Manager, Mark Pearson.

TOWN MANAGERS REPORT

- The email regarding Wal-Mart's filing to the BTLA (Board of Tax & Land Appeals) is just informational.
- Recommends the training in Concord on October 3 for the Financial Management for Small Systems Workshop.
- Mentions the memo from the Assessor's Agent for the 2018 End of Year MS-1 Value Changes.
- A draft RFP (Request for Proposal) for assessing services has been prepared for the Board.
- Update on Town Projects
- Fireworks (will confirm that only \$3000 was paid)
- Public Safety Complex HVAC Issues
- Advertising for the Emergency Management Director's Position
- School District Emergency Operations Plan
- September 11th Ceremony
- Bridge Dedication in Honor of U.S.M.C. Lance Corporal Demetrios Gavriel
- Safe Routes to School Construction Update
- Public Works Garage Building Contract
- Water Tower Cellular Space
- Town Hall Doors Installation Schedule
- Generator for the Fire Department Status
- Outside Lighting at Public Safety Complex
- Phase III: 2018 Replace and Upgrade the Brains of the Police Dispatch Radio System
- Great Room Modifications for Cable and Electronics
- Cemetery Sexton Interview
- Fire Suppression Pump House Diesel Pump Fuel Problem
- Attended several meetings

NEW BUSINESS

None

SIGNATURE FOLDER

J. Kiszka states the manifest and signature folder are going around.

SELECTMEN'S REPORTS

J. Sherman

- Attended the CIP meeting – the final report might be done at the next meeting
- Will attend the Rec Com in September
- Follow up on Town Report Action Item List

F. Hart

- Working with Lori to set up a joint training session with the BOS and Bud Com to review Human Services.
- The Library is setting up a program to have citizen's write Christmas cards/letter to service members.
- The Historical Society is working on giving out citations to Vietnam Veterans.
- Attended the CIP meeting - the second draft is done.
- Will attend an election law seminar tomorrow evening.

P. Bracci

- Attended the CIP Meeting
- No other report tonight

J. Kiszka requests a moment of silence for the passing of Senator John McCain.

J. Kiszka

- Will attend the Energy Committee
- States there was a question if the Town had money to help residents pay for well water testing. The money was taken out of the budget last year. Perhaps it can be added back for 2019.
- Employee/Board & Committee flu shots will be available on 9/20/18.

J. Sherman motions to enter non-public session under RSA 91-A:3 II (a) Personnel; (b) Hiring of a Public Employee; (c) Matters of Reputation; (d) Negotiations; and/or (e) Legal. Seconded by P. Bracci.

Board Polled: J. Kiszka = yes, P. Bracci = yes, J. Sherman = yes, F. Hart = yes.

Public session ended at 9:52pm

Public session reconvened at 10:05pm

J. Sherman states during the non-public session a discussion was held regarding a leasing option. The Board gave the Town Manager direction on how to proceed. No decisions were made.

J. Sherman motions to enter non-public session under RSA 91-A:3 II (a) Personnel; (b) Hiring of a Public Employee; (c) Matters of Reputation; (d) Negotiations; and/or (e) Legal. Seconded by P. Bracci.

Board Polled: J. Kiszka = yes, P. Bracci = yes, J. Sherman = yes, F. Hart = yes.

Public session ended at 10:06pm

Public session reconvened at 10:15pm

J. Sherman states during the non-public session the Town Manager updated the Board on the status of Union negotiations for Town Employees.

BOS 08/27/2018

No decisions were made.

J. Kiszka adjourned the meeting at 10:15pm

Respectfully submitted,

Beth Hossack,
Recording Secretary