



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

PLAISTOW BOARD OF SELECTMEN MINUTES:

DATE: October 7, 2019

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER: 6:32 p.m.

SELECTMEN:

Selectwoman, Francine Hart, Chairman

Selectman, Steve Ranlett

Selectman, Greg Taillon

Greg Colby, Finance Director/Asst. Town Manager

Selectman, Julian Kiszka, Vice Chairman

Selectman, John A. Blinn, Sr. - Excused

Mark Pearson, Town Manager

A moment of silence is held in memory of Roy Jeffrey. Roy was very involved in the community and will be deeply missed.

MINUTES

S. Ranlett motions to approve the minutes of September 30, 2019. Seconded by G. Taillon.

Vote: 3-0-1 (abstain S. Ranlett)

Motion carries.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

APPROVAL TOWN FOREST EXPENDITURES

Jill Senter, Conservation Commission Chair and Tim Moore Vice Chair are asking for approval to spend money to improve conditions in the Town Forest. The work has been recommended by SELT (Southeast Land Trust) and SnowHawk, LLC will be hired to do the work. The work will access current conditions and locations for existing trails, determine trails that should be closed or rerouted, determine locations where stream crossings should be installed, and recommend gates to control unauthorized OHRV use. Locations for parking and for new trails will also be provided. Money will come from the Conservation Commission Fund. The Conservation Commission received several positive recommendations from other who have hired SnowHawk, LLC.

F. Hart asks if redundant trails will be identified.

J. Senter replies, yes.

M. Pearson states he reviewed the information with J. Senter and feels this is a good fit.

S. Ranlett motions to direct the Town Manager to enter into a contract with SnowHawk, LLC in the amount of \$4,125.00 to be paid out of the Conservation Commission Fund. Seconded by G. Taillon.

Vote: 4-0-0

Motion carries.

FORESTRY SERVICES AND PROJECT MANAGEMENT FOR THE TOWN FOREST

It is time for a maintenance cut in the Town Forest. Conservation Commission has received a quote from Charles Moreno, LPF (Licensed Professional Forester) and they would like the Boards approval to hire him. Some of the planning for the project is already done. The Conservation Commission is willing to spend up to \$9,500.00 for the maintenance cut. A thin cut (not a clear cut) will help the health of the forest by improved growth, regeneration, and habitat enhancement.

J. Kiszka asks where the timber that is cut will go.

J. Senter replies, it will be sold to loggers.

If approved, the work will not begin until sometime in Spring.

S. Ranlett motions to direct the Town Manager to enter into a contract with Charles Moreno, LPF not to exceed \$9,500.00 out of the Conservation Commission Fund. Seconded by G. Taillon.

J. Kiszka asks if the logging will be in the same area as the trails for the Mount Misery area of P.A.R.C. (Plaistow Area Recreation Complex).

J. Senter replies, no. They are on opposite sides of the street and do not touch each other.

J. Senter states she recommends closing the Town Forest for the two (2) weeks it will take to complete the project.

Vote: 4-0-0

Motion carries.

BUDGET PRESENTATION

M. Pearson thanks Greg Colby and Lori Sadewicz for all the assistance they provided in this budgeting process. G. Colby did the lions share of the work. The goal given to M. Pearson was to reduce the 2019 budget by 2.5%. This was a difficult task because you must take the 2019 budget and increase it by costs that you cannot control (contractual obligations & collective bargaining) so the delta to come up with a 2.5% decrease is actually \$500,000. The operating budget presented tonight excludes the Library Budget. It also excludes the water and outside detail budgets as those are enterprise funds. M. Pearson reviews the highlights. Some of the savings are due to hiring a Police Chief with an average of 38 hours a week, reducing two (2) Police Captains to two (2) Police Officers. This also allows for more officers on street patrol. An opening for a Police Secretary and Records Clerk was combine into one (1) position. We hired an in-house Police Prosecution Firm and decreased the Police vehicle fleet by two (2) vehicles. Other savings include outsourcing payroll, adding accounts payable to the current Finance Department staff and reducing a full time Recreation Director to part time. Despite all these changes it was still not enough. M. Pearson looked at departments that have more than one (1) employee. If the Building Inspector's position is reduced from full time to part time and the Administrative Assistant is reduced from 40 hours to 36 hours, we can get to a \$500,000 reduction. Another savings is recognized by extending out the life of vehicles in the CIP (Capital Improvement Plan). Vehicles will be kept much longer, and we will need to fund additional maintenance costs however it will save money in the long run.

M. Pearson discusses the Fire Department next. We have coverage from 6:00am to 6:00pm. From 6:00pm to 6:00am coverage is done by on call firefighters who travel from their home to the station and then to the call location. Response times are longer than those on the day shift. It would cost

\$160,000.00 per year to man the Fire Station with 24/7 coverage. If the Board decides to add this coverage in 2020 the decrease in the budget changes to -0.83%.

G. Taillon asks how this would change the current way of doing things.

M. Pearson replies the day shift is staffed with one (1) Chief and four (4) full-time Firefighters. All the rest of the department are on call firefighters.

M. Pearson replies firefighters who sign up for on call shifts are paid \$50.00. They stay home and leave for the station if a call comes in. If we staff an overnight shift, they would be paid \$16.00/hour and stay at the station all night. The advantage is to reduce response time between 6:00pm and 6:00am.

G. Taillon asks if there have been complaints about response time.

M. Pearson replies, yes.

S. Ranlett asks if we would do away with per diem.

M. Pearson replies no; however, they would be paid for working all night instead of the \$50 stipend. Per diem hours in the Fire Department are not limited like the Police Department. The current on call fire fighters would sign up for the per diem shifts from 6:00pm to 6:00am.

M. Pearson states there is a contingency of \$25,000 for Human Resources since we do not get the rates until October for Health Insurance. We also increased assessing \$175,000 for values-a-new.

G. Taillon asks if there can be a second sheet added to show revenue coming into Town.

G. Colby states it will be available at the next meeting. He is working on the best way to show the revenue.

S. Ranlett wants to confirm the \$160,000 increase in the Fire Department budget is only if we decide to go to 24/7 coverage.

M. Pearson replies, yes.

F. Hart states all questions should be emailed to her and she will submit the questions to the Finance Department. She states she is hoping to have one-half of the budget approved at the October 21 meeting. Then the remaining half will be approved in early November to get the budget to the budget committee timely.

G. Taillon asks if the Budget Committee Chair received this budget.

M. Pearson replies, no. The Board of Selectmen get it first.

M. Pearson states the bulk of the budget decreases is in personnel.

F. Hart wants to make sure we do not impact critical services.

S. Ranlett states the Building Department provides critical services and with all the building in Town he is concerned cutting hours will have a negative impact.

F. Hart asks Cab Vinton, Library Director who is in the audience if the Library can present their budget on October 21.

C. Vinton replies, yes.

G. Taillon asks if the Budget Committee oversees the Library Budget.

M. Pearson replies, yes.

G. Taillon states the message should go to the Library Trustees to present a budget 2.5% lower than the 2019 budget.

C. Vinton states without the same attrition as the Town Hall it will be very hard to do, however he will bring the message to the Trustees.

J. Kiszka wants the Library Budget in the same format as the Town Budget.

C. Vinton states he is happy to comply.

M. Pearson states it was very hard to come up with a reduction of 2.5% especially when assessing went up by \$175,000. The Personnel budget was reduced by \$350,000, the Police budget was reduced by \$120,000, Recreation was reduced by \$50,000 and Highway was reduced by \$10,000.

F. Hart states she does not want critical services cut.

M. Pearson replies Police Service should improve as there will be more Officers on the streets. The Fire Department has not been cut. It will be funded at the same level as last year unless the suggestion to increase the level of service to 24/7 is chosen. As far as the Highway Department goes roads will still be plowed and maintained. There will be a reduction of hours in the Building Department however services will be maintained. As far as Recreation is concerned the Summer Recreation Program will not be cut, the summer concerts will not be cut and the fireworks for Old Home Day will not be cut. At the 2.5% reduction no services have been cut. However, if the budget is cut by a total of 5% it will mean layoffs.

F. Hart states M. Pearson used attrition and restructured personnel to come up with most of the cuts. The new Collective Bargaining package lowered health insurance costs.

S. Ranlett disagrees with the cuts to the Building Department. He believes it will cause a cut in services especially with all the building happening in Town.

M. Pearson states our request for inspections has gone down and so has revenue. That was a factor considered.

G. Taillon states last year there was a section for comments for each line item. He does not see it this year.

G. Colby states they will be added back. There was not enough time to have it done for tonight's presentation.

G. Taillon would like to see all revenue per line item on the budget worksheet.

F. Hart states revenue will be shown; however, it may not be per line item. It may be per department. The format will be up to the Finance Director, Greg Colby.

S. Ranlett makes a comment to C. Vinton. He hopes the Library will submit a budget with a 2.5% reduction and not a level funded budget.

C. Vinton states a \$15,000 cut will be hard to come up with.

J. Kiszka would like to have more information about Library donations listed in the Town Report. Are the donations required to be used for specific reasons or as the Library Trustees see fit?

SET DATE FOR THE NEXT WATER MEETING/LETTERS TO MtBE SITES

F. Hart asks if anyone has any recommendations regarding the draft letter to be sent to property owners effected by MtBE contamination.

The Board likes the letter as written.

F. Hart will contact Gene Forbes at Underwood Engineering and have the letters sent out. The meeting will be held on Monday, October 28th at 7:00pm in the Great Hall.

At the next meeting the Board will look into dates for training on the rate setting process. We cannot set the rate yet as we do not know all the costs.

DISCUSS OATH OF OFFICE FOR ELECTED OFFICIALS

G. Taillon states at the Board meeting on August 26 an elected official violated RSA 42:1-a. He feels this should be addressed. This is a serious violation. All elected officials are bound by State Law. If the individual violates the law again it should be taken up in court.

G. Taillon composed a letter he feels should be sent to the elected official. The letter is informative not punitive. He believes the letter should remain confidential and if the Board agrees it should be

mailed to Mr. Bracci. There are two (2) aspects to RSA 42:1-a

1) A public body vote to keep information confidential.

2) The elected official knew or should have known that the information was exempt from disclosure.

F. Hart states the letter discussed was written over a year ago. It was just recently brought to light due to the breach of confidentiality. There must be zero tolerance for this. This is a violation of a Statue. The letter written by G. Taillon is an appropriate way to handle the situation.

G. Taillon states as Selectmen we are responsible to make sure members on all committees follow the law. The letter is putting Mr. Bracci on notice that his behavior was not acceptable.

There is agreement amongst the board to have the letter sent by certified mail.

TOWN MANAGER REPORT

- Attended Several Meetings
- Pollard Road Replacement Culvert ARM Grant Committee Site Visit
- Town Ordinance Hearing Rescheduled – Reminder
- Southern New Hampshire Regional Water Interconnection Project Meeting – Workshop
- New Highway Garage
- Proposed Salt Shed Meeting
- Recreation Commission Update
- Town Hall (Pollard Park) Sidewalk Construction
- Westville Road Bridge Reconstruction Project – Guardrail
- 2020 Budget Planning
- Atkinson Meeting about an Easement
- Public Safety Complex Road and Cemetery Expansion Projects
- Budget Committee Meeting
- Energy Committee Meeting
- Elder Affairs Winter Preparedness Event - reminder
- Personnel
- Landfill Closure Cap – NHDES
- Department of Justice – The Asset Forfeiture Account has been out of compliance since 2013. It has since been corrected and we are now compliant.
- Received Notification Today – regarding the Garden Road Property. The Town is the owner as of 7/1/19 and taxes are owed. Also \$1200 of condo fees are past due. Perhaps we should just sell it.

S. Ranlett motions to direct the Town Manager to contact St. Jeans Auctioneer's to auction 38 Garden Road Unit A8 as soon as possible. Seconded by J. Kiszka.

Vote: 4-0-0

Motion carries.

- Received Notification from NH DOT they are ready to enforce cleaning the islands on Rte. 125. Chief Mullin arranged with Rockingham County Correctional Facility to have the inmates come and start cleaning the islands.

S. Ranlett states the islands at Pollard School look awful.

M. Pearson replies D. Voss put out an RFP to clean the islands. No responses were received.

ACTION ITEMS

Reviewed and updated

OTHER BUSINESS

J. Kiszka mentions a letter from NH DOT (New Hampshire Department of Transportation) regarding work to be done on Route 125. There will be a public meeting on Thursday, October 17, 2019 at 7:00pm in Kingston Town Hall located at 163 Main Street. He asks that the notice be posted on the website.

OTHER FOLDERS

The Accounts Payable, Signature Folder and FYI folders are being passed around.

SELECTMEN'S REPORTS

S. Ranlett

- Attended Roy Jeffrey's wake.
- Planned on attending the Highway Garage Meeting however there was confusion as to whether the meeting was to be rescheduled.

G. Taillon

- Attended the Budget Committee Workshop.
- Mentions the contact sheet has been posted to the website. He is still looking at things to be cleaned up. He recommends archiving some of the older information.

J. Kiszka

- Attended Roy Jeffrey's wake.
- Attended the Energy Committee – also attended a conference on electric vehicles.
- Attended the Pollard Road Culvert Meeting - ARM Grant.
- If anyone has any suggestions or wants to help preserve the stump on the Town Green, please contact him.

F. Hart

- Attended the Pollard Road Culvert Meeting - ARM Grant.
- Attended the Planning Board – zoning changes were reviewed.
- Had a brief discussion on warrant articles.
- Attended the Water Meeting.
- Attended the Energy Committee Meeting.

F. Hart adjourned the meeting at 8:32 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Beth Hossack,
Recording Secretary