



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

**PLAISTOW BOARD OF SELECTMEN MINUTES:**

**DATE:** October 21, 2019

**MEETING CALLED TO ORDER:** 6:30 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.

Mark Pearson, Town Manager

**MINUTES**

*J. Kiszka motions to approve the minutes of October 7, 2019. Seconded by G. Taillon.*

*Vote: 4-0-1 (abstain J. Blinn)*

*Motion carries.*

**INTRODUCTION OF NEW EMPLOYEES**

M. Pearson introduces Christopher Iacozzi as a new Police Officer. He was sworn in a few weeks ago and is present tonight to meet the Board.

Christopher lives in Atkinson and is a graduate of Timberlane Regional High School. He received a Bachelor of Science degree in Conservation Law Enforcement from Unity College. Christopher is a fully trained and certified officer. He has worked for Kingston, NH Police Department for the past three (3) years and states he is happy to now be working in Plaistow. The Board welcomes him.

M. Pearson introduces Elias Chaya. Elias is officially sworn into office by Martha Fowler, Town Clerk.

Elias lives in Methuen. His father owns a business in Plaistow, and he has spent a lot of time in Plaistow and is excited to work here. Elias is a graduate of Central Catholic High School and is currently attending Northern Essex Community College working towards an associate degree in Criminal Justice. He worked as a dispatcher for the Tewksbury Police Department prior to starting in Plaistow on October 16, 2019. He will attend the Police Academy in January. The Board welcomes him.

M. Pearson introduces Alexander Shields. He has been hired as a Highway Seasonal Worker and will also help the Maintenance Department in the winter. Alexander lives in Plaistow and is a graduate of Timberlane Regional High School. He is happy to be working for the Town. Alexander is welcomed by the Board.

### **AMERICAN LEGION PRESENTATION – DAVE MEANEY**

Dave Meaney, Department Adjutant of the American Legion thanks the Town of Plaistow for allowing them to hold a 24-hour Vigil for The Spirit of the Eagle. Dave explains the program is held to honor those that have not come home from war. Plaistow has a Vietnam Veteran whose remains are still missing. In the State of New Hampshire six (6) Veterans are still missing from the Vietnam War. During the vigil people stand watch for fifteen-minute shifts throughout the full twenty-four (24) hours. Dave thanks the Plaistow residents who visited, stood watch or brought coffee and food to the American Legion members. A four (4) year old girl stood watch with her parents, two grandparents brought their 20-month-old grandson to stand watch. Julian and Barbara Kiszka stood watch multiple times. Francine Hart attended the Opening Ceremony. It was a very nice event and he thanks everyone who played a role. To show thanks the American Legion awards Certificates of Appreciation to Francine Hart, Chair of the Board of Selectmen, Mark Pearson, Town Manager and Beth Hossack, Administrative Assistant.

### **POLICE OFFICER RECOGNITION**

Mark Pearson calls Detective Ed Lukas to the podium. M. Pearson states Detective Lukas contacted the Department of Justice and went above and beyond his job duties to make sure Plaistow is in compliance for asset forfeiture funds. It was recently discovered that Plaistow was not compliant and was in jeopardy of being ineligible of asset forfeiture funds going back a few years. Detective Lukas worked hard to correct the issue.

### **BUDGET REVIEW**

Cab Vinton, Library Director and Jim Peck, Library Trustees, Chair are here to discuss the proposed 2020 Library Budget. J. Peck states two other Trustees, Jen Kiarsis and Cathy Willis are in the audience. They begin with a power point presentation. The Plaistow Public Library is governed by NH RSA 202-A:6 and 202-A:11. These RSA's define the custody and management including appropriations and the powers and duties including expenditure of all moneys raised and income from trust funds. The initial budget developed by the Trustees had a slight increase of 0.2% over 2019. They received direction from the Board of Selectmen to reduce the budget by 2.5%. After reviewing the budget again, it has been determined that the custodial line item is increasing 12.5% due to the CBA (Collective Bargaining Agreement). The Property and Liability Insurance line item is increasing by 6.1% and the Trustees had estimated an increase of 4% when they were developing the budget. Despite these uncontrollable increases the Library is presenting a level funded budget tonight. Many core lines in their budget have been level funded for years. The repairs and maintenance line have been level funded since 2011, books & materials has been level funded since 2012 and online resources has been level funded since 2013. Since 2016 ¾ of non-personnel line items which the Library has control over have been level funded or decreased. The Library Trustees feel this is the best budget they can put forward.

F. Hart states she knows the Library has been prudent however she wants the Library Trustees to think outside the box as the budget committee may decrease their budget. Perhaps capital reserve items can be reduced. J. Peck states they would be willing to consider it however he is not prepared to discuss that this evening.

## **WATER BUDGET**

M. Pearson reviews the water budget. It is significantly higher than the 2019 budget since we are ramping up for the new potable water system. This is an enterprise fund and not funded by taxpayer dollars. Revenue comes into the water department. The largest line items are payroll and engineering. The Town of Plaistow will receive about 7.7 million dollars in grants which will increase. The Town has only spent small amounts of money on engineering costs so far. Legal costs are related to the creation of a potable water system. For example, we received legal advice before signing the agreement. We will need legal guidance for easements, creating a water ordinance and operator. Some items have been reduced. An example is telephone.

S. Ranlett asks what are telephone costs? Is it for a telephone line?

M. Pearson replies it is for the generator. When water is leaking, or someone is drawing from the system it starts the generator and automatically calls whoever is on-call.

This year and next year we will be purchasing some equipment for piping connections, saddles and curb stops. We will spend more than is currently coming in however revenue will catch up when people connect to the system. Operating costs and expenses will be built into the water rates. There are a lot of possibilities.

***G. Taillon motions to approve the water budget in the amount of \$157,444.00 seconded by S. Ranlett.***

***Vote: 5-0-0***

***Motion carries.***

## **POSSIBLE TAX RATE SETTING**

G. Colby states he had a lengthy conversation with DRA (Department of Revenue Administration) this morning. Only eleven (11) New Hampshire communities have set their tax rate to date.

Setting the tax rate has several components including:

- Voted Appropriations (March 2019 ballot)
- Estimated Revenues
- Voted and Planned Use of Fund Balance
- Assessed Value of All Property – this is a major component
- War Service Credits
- Overlay – discounts, abatements, refunds

The fund balance is cash on hand. It helps with cash flow, funding future projects and emergencies. The surplus fund balance voted on in March is \$464,167. According to the MS 1 recently completed by our Assessing Firm the total assessed valuation with utilities is \$1,181,910,822. Using these figures, the Town portion of the 2019 tax rate will be \$5.84 which is a decrease of -7.741% from 2018. This figure is without using any of the fund balance towards reducing taxes.

S. Ranlett asks for the current amount of the unassigned fund balance?

G. Colby replies approximately 2.2 million.

F. Hart asks G. Colby to explain what the fund balance is used for.

G. Colby replies, the fund balance is for cash flow, funding future projects and emergencies.

G. Colby recommends not using any of the unassigned fund balance to put towards reducing taxes. The more fund balance used the more precarious a situation you may be in. A fund balance of 2.2 million is healthy for Plaistow. If we do not use fund balance money to offset the tax rate,

the 2019 tax rate for the Town will be \$21.31 which is a decrease of -13.34% over the 2018 tax rate. At \$21.31 we will be the third lowest Town in the surrounding area.

G. Colby mentions that HB4 (House Bill #4) approved by State Legislature gives 40 million dollars in aid back to communities. The amount is based on the number of students in the community. Plaistow recently received a check for \$79,000 in State aid. Next year we will receive a similar amount. Both G. Colby and M. Pearson feel it should be used to offset taxes.

F. Hart states she does not agree. For every ten cents the tax rate is reduced it only results in a savings of about \$50. It is not a significant reduction in taxpayers overall tax bill.

J. Kiszka agrees. It would only save about \$60 per household.

G. Taillon asks if G. Colby can relate what some costs may be that are not in the budget which may be paid with the fund balance.

M. Pearson replies it could be a state of emergency or a major lawsuit the Town was forced to pay.

G. Colby states a microburst would fall into that category.

J. Kiszka states things have changed in the time he has been a Selectman. We are no longer overbudgeting to then give money back to reduce taxes.

F. Hart agrees. We are developing more realistic budgets and running the Town prudently.

G. Colby states if the tax rate is set tonight, he will contact DRA (Department of Revenue Administration) in the morning, get the information to the assessors, who will in turn complete the warrant. Once signed we can get the tax bills out and there will be no need to get a tax anticipation note.

***J. Kiszka motions to set a tax rate of \$21.31 for the year 2019. Seconded by G. Taillon.***

***Vote: 5-0-0***

***Motion carries.***

G. Colby states he will contact DRA (Department of Revenue Administration) tomorrow morning.

F. Hart thanks G. Colby for his work. The Board begins reviewing the department budgets.

G. Colby leaves the meeting at 8:15 p.m.

***G. Taillon motions to approve the Executive budget in the amount of \$293,722. Seconded by S. Ranlett.***

***Vote: 5-0-0***

***Motion carries.***

***S. Ranlett motions to approve the Town Clerk's budget in the amount of \$130,081. Seconded by G. Taillon.***

***Discussion: M. Pearson states there is an increase over last year of almost 9,000. This is due to salaries and to retain a part time person.***

***Vote: 5-0-0***

***Motion carries.***

***S. Ranlett motions to approve the Elections budget in the amount of \$22,662. Seconded by G. Taillon.***

***Discussion: the increase is due to the fact there are four (4) elections in 2020.***

***Vote: 5-0-0***

*Motion carries.*

*G. Taillon motions to approve the Finance budget in the amount of \$173,075. Seconded by S. Ranlett.*

*Discussion: G. Colby states he needs to adjust the amount to include the cost of outsourcing payroll. The new amount is \$181,575.*

*G. Taillon amends the motion to approve the Finance budget in the amount of \$181,575. S. Ranlett agrees to amend his second.*

*Vote: 5-0-0*

*Motion carries.*

*S. Ranlett motions to approve the Assessing budget in the amount of \$323,466. Seconded by G. Taillon.*

*Discussion: The Assessing budget includes a one-time fee of \$175,000 for values-a-new.*

*F. Hart states our current Assessing firm has agreed to help with an RFP and this will be discussed on November 4<sup>th</sup>, 2019.*

*Vote: 5-0-0*

*Motion carries.*

*G. Taillon motions to approve the Tax Collector budget in the amount of \$49,247. Seconded by S. Ranlett.*

*Vote: 5-0-0*

*Motion carries.*

*S. Ranlett motions to approve the Legal budget in the amount of \$75,000. Seconded by G. Taillon.*

*Vote: 5-0-0*

*Motion carries.*

*G. Taillon motions to approve the Human Resources budget in the amount of \$1,807,421. Seconded by S. Ranlett.*

*Discussion: this budget is significantly lower due to restructuring personnel, outsourcing and a reduction of insurance costs per the Town's CBA.*

*Vote: 5-0-0*

*Motion carries.*

*S. Ranlett motions to approve the Planning budget in the amount of \$92,507. Seconded by G. Taillon.*

*Vote: 5-0-0*

*Motion carries.*

*G. Taillon motions to approve the Zoning budget in the amount of \$3,550. Seconded by S. Ranlett.*

*Vote: 5-0-0*

*Motion carries.*

*S. Ranlett motions to approve the General Government Buildings budget in the amount of \$292,185. Seconded by G. Taillon.*

*Vote: 5-0-0*

*Motion carries.*

*G. Taillon motions to approve the Cemeteries budget in the amount of \$8,005. Seconded by S. Ranlett.*

*Vote: 5-0-0*

*Motion carries.*

*S. Ranlett motions to approve the Insurances budget in the amount of \$130,527.*

*G. Colby interjects, the new health insurance rates came in lower than expected. He adjusts the line item to \$128,230.*

*S. Ranlett changes the motion to approve the Insurances budget in the amount of \$128,230.*

*Seconded by G. Taillon.*

*Vote: 5-0-0*

*Motion carries.*

*G. Taillon motions to approve the Advertising/Regional Associations budget in the amount of \$25,500. Seconded by S. Ranlett.*

*Vote: 5-0-0*

*Motion carries.*

*S. Ranlett motions to approve the Cable budget in the amount of \$29,294. Seconded by G. Taillon.*

*Vote: 5-0-0*

*Motion carries.*

*G. Taillon motions to approve the Conflict of Interest budget in the amount of \$250. Seconded by S. Ranlett.*

*Vote: 5-0-0*

*Motion carries.*

*S. Ranlett motions to approve the Other General Government budget in the amount of \$145,000. Seconded by G. Taillon.*

*Vote: 5-0-0*

*Motion carries.*

*S. Ranlett motions to approve the Police/ACO budget in the amount of \$2,011,175. Seconded by G. Taillon.*

*Discussion: M. Pearson states this represents a reduction of almost \$120,000.*

*Vote: 5-0-0*

*Motion carries.*

G. Taillon states since the Fire Department budget has been discussed already can we have the Chief provide some information on this budget?

F. Hart agrees and states we will ask the Chief to come to the November 4<sup>th</sup> meeting to review the Fire Department budget.

G. Taillon would like the Highway Supervisor to attend the next meeting.

S. Ranlett would like the Building Inspector to attend the next meeting.

***G. Taillon motions to approve the Emergency Management budget in the amount of \$17,600.***

***Seconded by S. Ranlett.***

***Vote: 5-0-0***

***Motion carries.***

***S. Ranlett motions to approve the Street Lighting budget in the amount of \$115,000. Seconded by G. Taillon.***

***Vote: 5-0-0***

***Motion carries.***

F. Hart would like to amend the Solid Waste Collection budget by reducing it \$25,000. She would like to reduce the sanitation/solid waste collection line item and keep the hazardous household line item as is.

***G. Taillon motions to approve the Solid Waste Collection budget in the amount of \$741,376.***

***Seconded by S. Ranlett.***

***Vote: 5-0-0***

***Motions carries***

***G. Colby interjects to state \$741,376 is a reduction of \$23,000. not \$25,000. He just wants to be clear.***

***F. Hart asks if the Board wants to change the total to \$739,376.***

***The Board agrees to leave the amount as \$741,376.***

***S. Ranlett motions to approve the Solid Waste Disposal/Landfill budget in the amount of \$78,000. Seconded by G. Taillon.***

***Discussion: F. Hart states she does not know if records are kept of how many people used the landfill however having it open on Wednesdays in the summer involves over-time costs.***

***M. Pearson suggests having the Highway Supervisor discuss it on November 4. The Board agrees.***

***S. Ranlett withdraws his motion.***

***G. Taillon withdraws his second.***

***G. Taillon motions to approve the Health budget in the amount of \$86,379. Seconded by S. Ranlett.***

***Vote: 5-0-0***

***Motion carries.***

***S. Ranlett motions to approve the Human Services budget in the amount of \$41,561. Seconded by G. Taillon.***

***Vote: 5-0-0***

***Motion carries.***

***G. Taillon motions to approve the Welfare budget in the amount of \$32,780. Seconded by J. Blinn.***

***Vote: 5-0-0***

***Motion carries.***

S. Ranlett would like to defer Recreation budget to the next meeting. The Board agrees.

***G. Taillon motions to approve the Patriotic Purposes budget in the amount of \$500. Seconded by J. Blinn.***

***Vote: 5-0-0***

***Motion carries.***

J. Kiszka asks why the cultural budget is higher than the 2019 figure.

G. Colby states the fireworks line item has been restored.

***J. Blinn motions to approve the Cultural budget in the amount of \$22,500. Seconded by G. Taillon.***

***Vote: 5-0-0***

***Motion carries.***

***J. Blinn motions to approve the Conservation Commission budget in the amount of \$10,259. Seconded by G. Taillon.***

***Vote: 5-0-0***

***Motion carries.***

***G. Taillon motions to approve the Debt Service budget in the amount of \$532,506. Seconded by J. Kiszka.***

***Vote: 5-0-0***

***Motion carries.***

F. Hart states the following budgets will be discussed at the November 4, 2019 meeting:

- Fire Department
- Building
- Recreation
- Highway - Solid Waste/Landfill

We will also vote on the Library budget at that meeting.

### **SELECT DATE FOR WATER RATE TRAINING**

F. Hart states a date will be selected at the water meeting on Monday, October 28, 2019.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

F. Hart states public comment will be limited to two (2) minutes per person.

Suzanne Bracci, 2 Balsam Way states at the Board meeting on October 7 F. Hart made false statements.



F. Hart interjects and states the subject will be on the November 4<sup>th</sup> agenda. She wants to wait until the scheduled time before allowing discussion on the matter.

S. Bracci states she cannot understand how she can change the policy.

F. Hart states it is not a policy and has been scheduled for the November 4<sup>th</sup> agenda.

Peter Bracci, 2 Balsam Way from the audience states, people have a right to speak during public comment.

F. Hart replies, this is her prerogative as Chair of the Board.

F. Hart states she will allow two (2) minutes per person.

S. Bracci states she will be back on November 4<sup>th</sup>.

Bob Hamilton, 3 Balsam Way states you are absurd and unbelievable. He feels they are being treated like crap by the Chair and states the Chair has been dishonest through all of this. Words cannot express his feelings. He further states we all know what non-public sessions are about. A meeting was held in his house a year and a half ago. It was not a non-public session. After leaving Bob's house, the Chair walked to Pete and Sue Bracci's house to review a letter and talk. When the Chair left, she was headed to J. Kiszka's house.

F. Hart reminds B. Hamilton this subject will be discussed on November 4<sup>th</sup>.

Peter Bracci, 2 Balsam Way states he received a certified letter from the Board dated October 7, 2019 which he signed for on October 9<sup>th</sup>. Then he sent an email to each Board member requesting to be put on tonight's agenda. He was turned down as the agenda was full leaving his reputation dangling. He does not think it is fair to wait until the November 4<sup>th</sup> meeting to discuss this. He states Bob Hamilton's reputation was smeared at a prior Board meeting. B. Hamilton asked to be put on the next agenda and was turned down. Finally, he was put on an agenda two weeks later and he was not notified. B. Hamilton was accused of not showing up. The last item on tonight's agenda is naming a street that goes nowhere yet his reputation is left dangling for two more weeks. He is a member of the budget committee, a past Selectman and a past Vice Chair of Selectmen. The Board is sending a message to residents that they can say anything about you, and you have no right to a speedy rebuttal. In his letter to all Board members he stated he would hand out two (2) letters. He has since changed his mind. He will hand the letter to their authors and the Board can request their own copies.

F. Hart asks if anyone else is here for public comment.

### **NAMING OF ROAD NEXT TO THE SAFETY COMPLEX**

F. Hart asks for recommendations for naming the Road beside the Safety Complex.

S. Ranlett states the three (3) proposed names that he is aware of are:

- Stephen C. Savage Way
- Justice Way
- John W. Colby Drive

J. Blinn states he received a request from a resident suggesting Savage Way.

S. Ranlett states John W. Colby was the first full-time Police Chief in Plaistow.

S. Ranlett states he personally is not in favor of Justice Way. He believes Justice Way would be better suited for a road leading to a court of law.

J. Kiszka asks what the difference between Way and Drive is.

No one is sure.

F. Hart likes Justice Way as she feels it transcends people, time and place.

S. Ranlett states two of the names represent two prior outstanding Police Chief's.

***G. Taillon motions to name the road Stephen C. Savage Way.***

***Before the motion is seconded J. Blinn states Chief Savage's, efforts played a big role in the new Public Safety Complex and feels he should be recognized.***

***S. Ranlett motions to name the road Stephen C. Savage Way. Seconded by J. Blinn.***

***Vote: 4-0-1 (abstain J. Kiszka)***

***Motion carries.***

## **TOWN MANAGERS REPORT**

- Attended Several Meetings
- Town Ordinance Hearing Rescheduled – Reminder
- Southern New Hampshire Regional Water Interconnection Project Meeting – Workshop
- New Highway Garage – Update
- Proposed Salt Shed Meeting – Waiting for Response
- Recreation Commission – Update
- Town Hall (Pollard Park) Sidewalk Construction – Reminder
- Town Hall flooring Replacement
- Route 125 Islands and Sidewalks Maintenance
- Westville Road Bridge Reconstruction Project – Guardrail Installation Pending
- Atkinson Meeting about an Easement
- Public Safety Complex Road and Cemetery Expansion Projects – Update
- Landfill Closure Meeting – Pending
- Elder Affairs Winter Preparedness Event Reminder
- NH DES Stormwater permit
- Received final approval for the culvert repair on Smith Corner Road

## **ACTION ITEMS**

Reviewed and updated

## **OTHER BUSINESS**

The Planning Board request the Board to consider changing the policy for adjustments for zoning determinations. They should be in writing and further notices should be mailed to abutters. She checked with legal counsel and notifying abutters is not a good idea. If an abutter is missed it could lead to a lawsuit. She recommends we follow the law.

The Trash & Recycling Advisory Committee would like to know if the Board is interested in a ban on plastic bags at large commercial businesses such as Market Basket and Walmart. Please think about it.

## **OTHER FOLDERS**

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

## **SELECTMEN'S REPORTS**

John Blinn

- Attended the Conservation Commission meeting – trails and mapping were discussed. Prime wetlands should be identified.
- He missed the Recreation Commission Meeting.
- Will attend the winter preparedness meeting on Wednesday.

Julian Kiszka

- Attended the Beede Open House
- Received an email from a resident however the bottom was cut off so he cannot respond. It the resident is listening, please reach out again.

Greg Taillon

- Attended the Budget Committee Meeting.
- Will attend the NHMA Conference – there is information in the folders contact, Beth if you want to attend.

Steve Ranlett

- Attended the Planning Board Meeting – they need alternates.

Francine Hart

- Attended TRAC.
- Attended the Recreation Commission Meeting.
- Attended the Beede Open House.
- Reminder the Pumpkin Lightening will be held Saturday. The judges are Maxann Dobson, John Blinn and Francine Hart.

F. Hart adjourned the meeting at 9:25p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Beth Hossack,  
Recording Secretary