



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

PLAISTOW BOARD OF SELECTMEN MINUTES:

DATE: October 30, 2017

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER: 6:32pm

SELECTMEN:

Selectman, John Sherman, Chairman
Selectman, Steve Ranlett – Excused
Selectman, Peter Bracci

Selectman, Tammy Bergeron, Vice Chair
Selectman, Julian Kiszka
Town Manager, Mark Pearson

MINUTES

T. Bergeron motions to approve the minutes of October 23, 2017. Seconded by P. Bracci. A change is needed to page 5 under Patriotic/Cultural, first sentence replace “recommended reducing” to “vote to reduce”. T. Bergeron and P. Bracci agree with the change.

Vote: 4-0-0

Motion passes

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

PUBLIC HEARING #2 – SALE OF TOWN OWNED LAND

J. Sherman opens the Public Hearing at 6:35pm.

Jill Senter, Chair of the Conservation Committee speaks. She states the Conservation Committee would like the Board to reconsider selling parcel 53-027, Hale Spring Road. It is a large open space with wetlands. The Conservation Committee would like to retain the property. The opinion of the Fire Chief and Health Officer are that the water on this parcel would not be used as a water source for the Town. The last water test was positive e-coli. After much discussion J. Sherman states we have three options:

- Keep the parcel on the sale list
- Vote tonight to remove it from the sale list
- Vote on November 6

J. Kiszka states it would take a lot to make this a buildable lot.

J. Senter replies not necessarily as the Zoning Board can grant waivers. The Conservation Committee is trying to be proactive and stop the property from being sold.

T. Bergeron motions to remove parcel 53-027 from the sale list. Seconded by J. Sherman.

Vote: 2-1-1 (J. Kiszka not, P. Bracci abstain)

Motion passes

J. Senter states the Conservation Committee is also against selling parcels 30-065 and 31-068. At one time the Army Core of Engineers looked at the land and determined it to be wetland. Kelly Brook runs along the property and feeds into Little River.

BOS 10/30/2017

T. Bergeron motions to remove from the sale of Town Owned Property list parcels 30-065 and 31-068.

Vote: 1-3-0 (J. Sherman, J. Kiszka & P. Bracci no)

Motion fails

J. Senter discusses parcel 38-020, 7 Massassoit Blvd. This land is a continuation of open space and connects to other wooded areas. It has been debated for several years whether it should be kept or sold. The Conservation Committee wants to keep it.

T. Bergeron motions to remove parcel 38-020 off the Property to sell list. Seconded by J. Sherman.

Vote: 1-3-0 (J. Sherman, J. Kiszka & P. Bracci no)

Motion fails

J. Sherman closes the Public Hearing at 6:58pm.

REVIEW CONSERVATION BUDGET

At the last Budget Committee Meeting the Conservation Budget was reduced. The changes are pointed out by G. Colby and discussed.

J. Senter states the supplies line item was cut from \$2000 to \$1500 however a lot of the expenses are in the fourth quarter and have not come in yet. She believes the 2017-line item for supplies will be over \$2000. One new item is a Pollard School field trip.

J. Senter is concerned with cutting \$2700 from the forest maintenance line item. The Budget Committee wants any maintenance funding to come from the capital reserve account. J. Senter states the capital reserve account never came from taxpayer money. It was raised from Timber cutting. The total was \$33,000 and the current balance is about \$23,000. They have used the fund very carefully. Once it is gone it will not be replaced. They have used it for special projects. This fund is outside the normal budget and is not meant to be used as a regular budgeted line item.

According to the RSA it is a special forest maintenance fund not meant for normal maintenance. Some of this money will be used in conjunction with other Towns to improve safety. For example, new signs, maps and apps. Sometimes it has been used to help a Boy Scout with an Eagle Scout Project. Money from this fund can also be used to match grant money. J. Senter states the regular forest maintenance fund is still needed to maintain benches, observation decks and picnic tables.

J. Sherman suggests the Board take no action tonight, instead wait for the Town Managers proposed budget.

J. Senter thanks the Board for the opportunity to come to tonight's meeting to present the Conservation Committee's opinion of some of the properties.

DISCUSS POSSIBLE FUNDING SOURCES FOR TOWN HALL DOOR REPLACEMENT

Paul Lucia, Maintenance Supervisor states the four doors to Town Hall are all in poor condition. He worked on a CIP (Capital Improvements Plan) request to replace the doors. The front door must be compatible with the keyless lock system and the automated handicapped door opener. It is possible the double doors could be replaced with a single 42-inch-wide door. P. Lucia has a quote of \$28,000. for all the doors.

J. Senter reviewed capital reserve accounts to see if money was available for the project. She contacted the legal department of NHMA (New Hampshire Municipal Association) to verify her recommendation. There is a Town Hall Capital Reserve Account with a balance of \$7,755.92. She states this was for Town Hall Renovations and should be dissolved. We do have a Building Capital Reserve Account in the amount of \$26,187.29. This could be used for new doors. G. Colby states the balance of the account is only about \$20,000. The amount of \$6232.00 must come out of this fund. It should have been done long ago and was not. M. Pearson states his suggestion is to proceed with getting three quotes for the doors. The complete the work that can be done for the \$20,000 this year and add to next year's budget the remaining amount needed to complete the project. J. Sherman directs the Town Manager and Paul Lucia to get three quotes and come back to the Board with the information.

REVIEW AGENTS TO EXPEND CAPITAL RESERVE FUNDS

M. Pearson states there are two types of agents to spend. One is the Board of Selectmen and the other is by the vote of the people. Conservation Funds are held by the Treasurer and require a vote by both the Conservation Committee and the Board of Selectmen. He notes there are some accounts the Board of Selectmen should be the agents to spend but are not. One is the Highway Department Equipment Capital Reserve Fund and another is the Fire Department Capital Reserve Fund for Apparatus. M. Pearson anticipates in 2018 there will be a warrant article to dissolve the Pump House Capital Reserve account and add a new water account. The Board of Selectmen will be the agents to spend. This could be done in one of three ways:

- Warrant Article to dissolve the account to the operating fund
- Warrant Article to change the intent of the original warrant article
- Warrant Article to dissolve the account and have a second warrant article to repurpose it

DISCUSS CAPITAL RESERVE FUNDS FOR DISSOLUTION

The following capital reserve funds were agreed upon by the Board to dissolve:

- 2002 Fire Suppression – balance \$73,578.33
- 2002 Recreation Commission – balance \$4.28
- Pumphouse – balance \$345,485.82
- 2002 Internet – balance \$12,066.58
- 2003 Town Hall – balance \$7,764.37

The following accounts were discussed. G. Colby will research the intent and how the funds can be used and report back to the Board.

- 2004 Accrued leave expendable – balance \$12,993.57
- PEG (Public Educational Government) Cable Access – balance \$2,352.03

DISCUSS MOVING HIGHWAY BLOCK GRANT TO OPERATING BUDGET

If the Highway Block Grant is left as a Warrant Article it has the possibility of not passing. It would be like saying no to free money. The money comes from the State of New Hampshire not through taxes.

J. Kiszka agrees, why take the chance of it being voted down?

J. Sherman asks for t G. Colby's opinion.

G. Colby states most towns do not have a separate warrant article for the acceptance of the Highway Block grant. He mentions the letter in the packets tonight from the NHDRA (New Hampshire Department of Revenue Administration) dated 10/26/17.

BOS 10/30/2017

DISCUSS CABLE EQUIPMENT PURCHASE

G. Colby refers to the handout in the packets. In December 2016 a proposal to upgrade the second floor meeting room was made. It was presented to the Board on December 19, 2016 with a power point presentation. The Town Manager noted the use of encumbered funds along with a capital reserve account to fund the project. The Board by consensus stated, "to allow the Town Manger to move forward with upgrading equipment and local originations, and to enter into a contract using operating funds to purchase equipment." The current issue is the funds for the upgrades were never encumbered at the end of 2016. The 2017 budget for cable equipment is \$1,000. The cost to upgrade the equipment was \$15,536.63. Tonight, the Finance Director and Town Manager are asking the Board for this purchase to be subsequently approved to come from the capital reserve fund for cable equipment purchases, as no other funds exist.

J. Kiszka motions to withdraw \$15,536.63 out of the cable capital reserve fund to pay the said bills for the budgeting of the cable equipment that was installed in January of 2017. Seconded by P. Bracci.

Vote: 4-0-0

Motion passes

FINAL APPROVAL OF INVESTMENT PLAN

J. Kiszka motions to adopt the new investment policy of the Town of Plaistow, NH dated today. Seconded by T. Bergeron.

Vote: 4-0-0

Motion passes

DISCUSSION ON THE TAX RATE

G. Colby discusses the chart which shows various scenarios. It is time to set the tax rate. The local school, state school and county amounts have already been determined. The Town has no control over these rates. The Board must decide how much money, if any to use from the fund balance to lower the Town portion of the tax rate. We are in a bit of a cash crunch. We have already postponed the November 1st payment of \$700,000 due to the school district. If a decision is made tonight we anticipate mailing tax bills on November 9th.

T. Bergeron states she wants to give the taxpayers a break. We just did the Safety Complex.

M. Pearson states his recommendation to the Board is to use \$500,000 of the unreserved fund balance towards the tax rate. We just discussed dissolving some capital reserve accounts allowing about \$100,000 to go back to the operating account. That would leave enough money in the unreserved fund balance to use about \$750,000 towards a Highway Garage. We would also use about \$300,000 from water suppression. A Highway Garage has been discussed several times in the past. The money left in the unreserved fund balance would still be a good ratio according to DRA's (Department of Revenue Administration) recommended guideline of 7%. The Town portion of the tax rate would be \$6.03 saving 50 cents per thousand to help taxpayers. It would allow the Town to do everything it has discussed.

T. Bergeron wants to reduce the burden on the taxpayers as much as possible.

J. Sherman states the tax rate must go up because we did not do a statistical update this year.

P. Bracci does not agree. He states it is better to increase the tax rate rather than increase the assessments. Discussion continues.

P. Bracci states there are lots of numbers on the chart. He does not feel he is smart enough or has the ability to make a decision tonight. He wants time to study the chart.

J. Kiszka states the recommendation from the Town Manager and Finance Director is very good. It is logical to use \$500,000 from the fund balance towards lowering the tax rate. If we use too much money towards taxes we are putting the Towns finances at risk.

G. Colby states it will be beneficial to set the tax rate tonight. Delaying one week will delay the printing of the tax bills, the mailing of the bills the due date and when we will start to see money come in. If we delay we will need to take a TAN (tax anticipation note) to pay our bills through the end of the year. The interest will be anywhere from about \$35000. to \$7500.

P. Bracci states he is not going to vote on this tonight.

M. Pearson states the delay was not caused by anyone in Plaistow. The school district consists of four towns and one of the towns did not have their information to the DRA timely. Tonight, is the first time all the information was available.

P. Bracci states he does not know what the best option is.

M. Pearson states there really is no best option. We must balance how much we keep in our reserves and how much do we put towards reducing the tax rate.

T. Bergeron motions that we accept the rate of \$5.78 a fund balance usage of \$750,000 to offset it. There is no second.

There is no vote.

P. Bracci inquires about a newspaper article he read in the Southern New Hampshire Regional Interconnection about Plaistow applying for a two million-dollar SRF Grant regarding MtBE contaminated drinking water. Is this coming up in the next year?

M. Pearson states we are looking to create an enterprise fund and thinking ahead he applied for a grant. There is no obligation to apply. He would come back to the Board stating there is an opportunity and would the Board like to borrow money up to two million for 2% for this enterprise fund. The money would be used as capital to create the enterprise or to do any work for it, if needed. Payments would be made from the water fund. It is a place holder. It is reserving an option. If the water system is established it is a good idea to have debt service. There is no change to the tax rate. It would be paid for strictly by the users. The PUC (Public Utilities Commission) does not allow utility bills to be more than 1% of the median income of the Town. In Plaistow that amount is \$782. per year. M. Pearson is trying to get that even lower with a yearly cost of about \$500. Again, it would not be paid for with taxpayer money. We were lucky we made the list for a possible grant as many other communities did not. We are under no obligation to borrow money but if we wanted to we could. If Plaistow is successful in a potable water system and residents chose to connect to it there would be a connection fee. The water system would be paid for by users.

P. Bracci motions to defer determining the tax rate until next week. Seconded by T. Bergeron.

J. Sherman reminds everyone this will have an impact on cash flow.

J. Kiszka inquires what the costs will be to borrow money.

M. Pearson states the lowest would be \$3500 and could be as high as \$7500.

G. Colby states there are also fees to apply and complete an application.

Vote: 2-1-1 (J. Sherman no, T. Bergeron abstain)

Motion passes.

TOWN MANAGERS REPORT

Second Public Hearing – Sale of Town Owned Land
Several Meetings
Potable Water Survey & Community Outreach Meeting
Willard Way Complaint
Safety Complex Update
Incident Command System (ICS) Training
COIC Letter

ACTION ITEMS REVIEW

Reviewed

SIGNATURE FOLDER

J. Sherman states the manifest and signature folders are going around.

SELECTMAN REPORTS & OTHER BUSINESS

P. Bracci

- Apologized for missing the meeting on Saturday
- Questions not getting the Town Manager report on Friday
- Apologize for missing Toddler Trick or Treat
- Elderly Affairs
- Conservation Committee will attend on Thursday

J. Kiszka

- Budget Committee
- ICS Training
- Planning Board on 11/15 may not have a Selectman due to the Water Meeting
- REDC

T. Bergeron

- Walton Rd, working with Chief Jones – meeting with residents
- Family Mediation – cyber bullying, truancy
- Will be collecting donations for Veterans for the Liberty House

J. Sherman

- ICS Training was very good – instructor was excellent
- Budget Committee

S. Ranlett - Excused

J. Sherman adjourned the meeting at 9:48pm

Respectfully submitted,

Beth Hossack, Recording Secretary