

**Town of Plainfield Select Board Special Meeting**  
**April 4, 2024**  
**Via Zoom**  
**Minutes - Approved**

**Agenda:**

- Changes to Agenda
- Announcements
- Public Comment
- Review and Approve Amendments to Town Budget for FY 2024/2025
- Adjourn

**Present:** Select Board members Jim Volz (Chair), Tim Davis, and Patti Jamele. Also present were Town Clerk/Treasurer Bram Towbin, former Town Clerk/Treasurer Linda Wells, Town Administrative Assistant Kristin Brosky, Sarah Goldfine, and Eric Blaisdell of the Times Argus.

**Chair Volz called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm.**

**Changes to Agenda:**

There were no changes to the agenda.

**Announcements:**

There were no announcements.

**Public Comment:**

There was no public comment.

**Review and Approve Amendments to Town Budget for FY 2024/2025:**

Town Clerk/Treasurer Bram Towbin explained that in the previously approved budget there were a number of areas that were not included. He shared that he has been working with former Town Clerk/Treasurer Linda Wells on a revised version which he will seek Select Board approval for prior to finalizing the Town Meeting warning. Towbin shared that he proposes fully funding the Town Administrative Assistant position as well as the addition of funding for Wells to continue her Clerk/Treasurer transition support work for at least another month. He suggested that the Constable position be reconsidered at a later date. He stated that he will still need to add revised figures for Highway Department truck maintenance. He explained that overall the proposed revisions are a 6.8% increase over what was spent in FY 22/23 and a 7.43% increase over what was budgeted in FY22/23.

Towbin explained that the Town Annual Meeting must be warned 40 days before the date of the meeting and encouraged the Select Board to approve the revised budget in a timely manner so the meeting date can be set. Towbin questioned whether Town Meeting could be warned prior to final Select Board approval of the budget.

Twelve minutes after the start of the meeting, Volz announced that Select Board member Davis had joined the meeting.

Volz pointed out that the warning for Town Meeting contains articles for approval which includes the total budget amount. He explained that for this reason the meeting cannot be warned prior to final approval of the Town budget. Wells agreed with this and shared her opinion that the Select Board could approve the proposed budget amendments which Towbin can then add to the budget prior to posting the Town Meeting warning.

Towbin reviewed the first page of the budget. He shared that the Administrative Assistant position is budgeted at about \$29,000, hiring Wells who will likely stay on for another month is budgeted at about \$14,000, and the Select Board, Assistant Town Clerk/Treasurer, and Town Clerk/Treasurer positions will be level funded. He shared that the Childcare Payroll Tax will be added to payroll at a total for the year of about \$1,760. He stated that \$4,000 was budgeted for the Constable position but noted that the Select board had discussed reassessing the necessity of that position and pointed out that the money could be reallocated to cover street line painting in the village.

Towbin reviewed the second page of the budget. Volz asked about the increase in legal fees from \$2,000 to \$6,000. Towbin stated that this increase had been made due to potential need to address ongoing zoning violations at properties on Brook Rd. and Bean Rd. Towbin shared that the Recreation and Public Arts budget of \$4,000 does not include the proposed water fountain. He stated that Town Grant Administrator had suggested that the balance of the ARPA funds be considered for the Main St./Rte. 2. intersection project for which the Town could be responsible for about \$500,000 for the placement of new water pipes. Wells stated that there is \$292,760 left in the ARPA fund account.

Towbin reviewed the third page of the budget. He expressed his belief that budgeting for basic functions of the Town should be considered a priority, and pointed out that \$50,000 for the Cutler Library was a \$5,000 increase from the previous year. Davis expressed his support for budgeting \$50,000 for the library. Towbin briefly backtracked to the first page of the budget to discuss budgeting for the Maintenance Person position stating that after re-advertising for the position he has received five inquiries. He stated he had budgeted \$4,500 for the position.

Towbin reviewed the fourth page of the budget. He shared that Road Foreman Bingham had asked for the backhoe to be budgeted at \$1,000 which is level funding from the previous year, and \$2,500 budgeted for the 2005 Mac truck. He shared that the 2007 Mac truck should be removed from the budget and the 2024 Mac truck added. He stated that the 2024 Mac truck's first payment is due in July and stated that \$1,000 had been added to the budget for any repairs that aren't covered under warranty. He shared that Bingham had requested \$5,000 be budgeted for the 2015 Ford just in case it can't be replaced before it needs repair and \$3,500 for the 2019 Mac truck. He stated that the GMC is budgeted at \$1,000. Jamele asked for clarification about the need to replace the 2015 Ford. Towbin stated that Bingham has shared that the truck needs to be replaced and noted that the cost of a replacement is close to \$70,000 for the truck and another \$70,000 for the needed upgrades to the truck. He shared that there is a round of funding that opens in June 2024 that may help pay for 30% of the cost of the truck. Volz pointed out that replacement of the truck is not in the budget for the coming year. Towbin pointed out that the Highway Department Equipment Fund is being budgeted at \$80,000, up from \$50,000. He shared that Bingham has requested an increase in the gravel budget from \$100,000 to \$110,000. He suggested a decrease in the sand budget from \$55,000 to \$50,000. Volz asked for Wells' opinion about the Highway Department budget. Wells expressed concern about the idea of taking out another loan for replacement of the 2015 Ford, noting that the Town is already carrying a lot of debt, and stated her opinion that the truck should be considered for replacement in FY 25/26. Volz asked if the street line painting could be added to the budget noting that in FY20/21 this had been budgeted at \$4,560. He suggested adding \$4,500 for line painting.

Towbin noted that \$16,000 had been approved by the Select Board for a Revolving Loan request by Laurie Veatch to be paid back in a balloon payment. He asked if interest payments would need to be made by the Town during the loan period. Volz questioned the need to include this in budget as the Town has the funds already. Towbin stated he will have a discussion with the bank. Wells and Volz agreed that this should not be in the budget.

Volz suggested that the Select Board approve the budget subject to the adjustments that were discussed in this meeting. He suggested that then the date of Town Meeting could be decided at the next Select Board meeting on April 11, 2024. Volz asked Towbin to bring a draft of the Town Meeting warning to the next Select Board meeting for approval. Towbin agreed.

Adjourn:

**Jamele moved to adjourn at 7:03 pm. The motion carried unanimously.**

Minutes respectfully submitted by Kristin Brosky, Plainfield Town Administrative Assistant.