

Town of Plainfield Select Board Meeting
April 22, 2024
149 Main St. 2nd floor and Via Zoom
Minutes - Approved

Agenda:

- Changes to Agenda
- Announcements
- Public Comment
- Road Foreman's Report (Michael Bingham)
- Town Clerk's Report (Bram Towbin)
 - Minor budget adjustments
 - Discussion of ARPA funds
- Public Comment related to Goddard closing
- Approve PACT to apply to the Village Trust Initiative
- Approve Casken Access Permit
- Approval of Warrants and Fleet Permits:
 - Accounts Payable - April 19, 2024
 - Payroll - April 17, 2024
 - Fleet Permits - Agrimark dba Cabot, Cardinal Logistics Management Corporation, Evans Group, Fred Vance Trucking, Harrison Redi-mix, Kelley-View Farm, Structural Wood, Sun Common, Vermont Well & Pump
- Approval of Draft Minutes: March 4, 2024
- Adjourn

Present: Select Board members Jim Volz (Chair), Tim Davis, and Patti Jamele. Also present were Town Clerk/Treasurer Bram Towbin, Town Grant Administrator and member of the board of Plainfield Area Community Trust (PACT) Alice Merrill, Road Foreman Michael Bingham, Secretary of Plainfield Area Community Trust (PACT) Kirstie Grant, Vice President and Treasurer of Plainfield Area Community Trust (PACT) Betsy Ziegler, Goddard College graduate Elle Stanforth of East Montpelier, Emergency Management Director Michael Billingsley, Goddard College alumnus Charles Scott, and Eric Blaisdell of the Times Argus.

Chair Volz called the meeting to order at 6:07 pm.

Changes to Agenda:

Volz suggested the addition of discussion of muddy sidewalks. Davis stated that he has attempted to reach VTrans District 6 by phone with no response and encouraged residents to also

call. Volz suggested the addition of a progress update on addressing the zoning violations at 79 Bean Rd. He also suggested the addition, after the Town Clerk's Report, of discussion and planning for an informational pre-Town Meeting to be held ahead of Town Meeting.

Announcements:

There were no announcements.

Public Comment:

Volz opened the floor to public comment. There was no public comment.

Road Foreman's Report (Michael Bingham):

Bingham reported that the road crew has been working to grade the unpaved roads and has completed all but the dead-end roads. He suggested that when the street sweeper is hired in mid-May the sidewalks along Rte. 2 may also be able to be cleared. He reported that he's been meeting with FEMA to continue work on reimbursement for the July 2023 flood damage repairs. He estimated the reimbursement would be around \$350,000.

Town Clerk's Report (Bram Towbin):

Towbin stated that, after consulting with the bank and former Town Clerk/Treasurer Linda Wells, he feels the Revolving Loan Fund loan to Laurie Veatch should be taken directly from the Town's Revolving Loan Fund rather than arranging a loan through the bank. He asked the Select Board to authorize the Revolving Loan Fund and himself to speak to the Town attorney to create a promissory note. **Volz moved to authorize Town Clerk Towbin to speak with the Town attorney about putting in place a loan to Laurie Veatch.** Davis encouraged Towbin to consult with Karl Bissex of the Revolving Loan Fund regarding the agreed upon terms of the loan. **The motion carried unanimously.**

Minor budget adjustments – This agenda item was not discussed.

Discussion of ARPA funds – Towbin stated that the Town has about \$85,000 in undesignated ARPA funds. He requested that this amount be placed in the Town's General Fund temporarily to help cover short-term cash flow needs until the Town receives the FEMA reimbursement. **Volz moved to authorize Town Clerk/Treasurer Towbin to transfer \$85,000 from the ARPA account into the General Fund temporarily as a solution to a short-term cash flow problem with the expectation that the money will be paid back to the ARPA Fund at a future date. The motion carried unanimously.**

Towbin shared that the Town Office continues to make progress on updating infrastructure needs with new computers. He stated that the final draft of the Town Report will be ready to be signed off on in the upcoming days.

At this point in the meeting, Volz stated that agenda items would be discussed out of order, moving the PACT discussion ahead of the discussion about an informational pre-Town meeting and public comment related to Goddard closing.

Approve PACT to apply to the Village Trust Initiative:

Alice Merrill shared that Plainfield Area Community Trust (PACT) is a group made up of herself, PACT President Jane Bradley, PACT Vice President and Treasurer Betsy Ziegler, and PACT Secretary Kirstie Grant which was awarded \$3,000 in Town ARPA funds to become incorporated into a nonprofit organization with federal tax exempt status. She shared that the organization is working under a temporary board and continues to work on their bylaws. She stated that the mission of the group is to foster community, support sustainable economic growth and development, and maintain the historic integrity of the Plainfield area. Ziegler stated that the organization has spent about \$400 to apply for nonprofit status and to become incorporated in the State of Vermont, so \$2,600 remains of the original funding. Merrill stated that PACT is looking into applying to a new program, the Village Trust Initiative, which involves the Vermont Community Foundation, the Preservation Trust of Vermont, and the Vermont Council on Rural Development. She shared that the Village Trust Initiative was formed to help small rural towns manifest their ideas for village center revitalization and a robust economy and hopes to help small communities form community trusts. She shared that PACT is working with Central Vermont Regional Planning to learn more about applying to the Village Trust Initiative. Volz clarified that no approval is requested today from PACT, but that in the future PACT will bring a letter of support to the Select Board for approval. Merrill shared that an online informational meeting will be held on April 30, 2024 by the Vermont Council on Rural Development; she encouraged the Select Board to attend to learn more about the program.

Discussion and planning for an informational pre-Town Meeting to be held ahead of Town Meeting:

Merrill shared that the Vermont Community Foundation has expressed interest in assisting Plainfield in boosting morale and gathering as a community. She shared that, with the changes in local government and Town Meeting approaching, it feels like a good time to have an informational meeting to go over the warning. She stated that she has spoken with the Vermont League of Cities and Towns who encouraged the Select Board to reach out to them to understand the laws that need to be followed to hold an informational meeting ahead of Town Meeting. She further stated it was suggested that the Town hire a professional neutral facilitator for that meeting. She clarified that the informational meeting would not be for voting on warned items. She stated PACT would like to provide lunch to incentivize residents to attend the informational meeting and help organize the meeting. Volz stated he would reach out to Abby Freedman of Vermont League of Cities and Towns to discuss the informational meeting. Davis agreed to this. Zeigler voiced support for the informational meeting as an opportunity to discuss and provide

clarity on the proposed changes that were warned. Grant added that PACT needs to have further discussion about whether they agree to support the informational meeting.

Public Comment related to Goddard closing:

Volz recognized Goddard College graduate Elle Stanforth of East Montpelier. Stanforth asked if the Select Board had any further information regarding Goddard College's recent announcement that the college is closing. Towbin stated he has attempted to contact Goddard College board members as the Clerk's Office has fielded many calls regarding the issue from concerned residents, alumni, and people interested in investing. He further explained that the Goddard College campus is the Town's largest wastewater customer and explained that changes at Goddard College could have a great impact on that system. He stated he had spoken with the assistant of the Chairman of the Goddard College board who had shared that no deal had been made and the Goddard College board would make the final decision about what would happen with the campus and that the board is interested in something that will help the community. He shared that he was told that the Chief Financial Officer of Goddard College is the person who should be contacted by interested individuals.

Approve Casken Access Permit:

Volz shared that Damien and Silke Casken of 110 Center School Rd. in Plainfield are requesting approval to create an access approximately 500 feet and 345 feet from the intersection of this road with Middle Rd. and Upper Rd. Towbin stated Road Foremen Bingham has approved the request. **Volz moved to approve the Casken access permit. The motion carried unanimously.**

Approval of Warrants and Fleet Permits:

Accounts Payable - April 19, 2024

Volz moved to approve an accounts payable warrant dated April 19, 2024. The motion carried unanimously.

Payroll - April 17, 2024

Volz moved to approve payroll warrant dated April 17, 2024. The motion carried unanimously.

Fleet Permits –

Volz moved to approve fleet permits for Agrimark dba Cabot, Cardinal Logistics Management Corporation, Evans Group, Fred Vance Trucking, Harrison Redi-mix, Kelley-View Farm, Structural Wood, Sun Common, and Vermont Well & Pump. The motion carried unanimously.

Approval of Draft Minutes - March 4, 2024:

Volz moved to approve the draft minutes dated March 4, 2024. The motion carried unanimously.

Volz opened the floor to public comment. He recognized Emergency Management Director Michael Billingsley who asked if Towbin had shared information regarding Goddard College. Volz stated he had. Volz recognized Goddard College alumnus Charles Scott who asked if the Select Board or other town officials have comment on the possibility that some portion of Goddard College may be able to be maintained as an institution for post-secondary education. Towbin stated he didn't have a sense of the direction Goddard College may go in.

Adjourn:

Davis moved to adjourn at 6:48 pm. The motion carried unanimously.

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