

## Minutes of the Select Board Meeting, March 9, 2021

Hilary Weeks, Rebecca Coletta, and Patrick Williamson were present. Also in attendance were Paula King, Greg Lily, Jamie and Roberta Wooldridge, Bob Baker, Ed Morann, and Matt Stowell. The meeting, held via conference call in accordance with Governor Baker's temporary modifications to the Open Meeting Law, was called to order at 7:00 p.m. The minutes of February 23, 2021 were accepted as submitted: Hilary, yes; Rebecca, yes; Patrick, yes.

### MTRSD Proposed Capital Plan

Greg Lily, member of the MTRSD Capital Projects Working Group, approached the Board with a proposed plan for much needed improvements to district schools. He noted that in an effort to keep district assessments low, the MTRSD has deferred dealing with infrastructure issues in district school buildings. The COVID-19 pandemic has revealed critical examples of the deferred action. Projects have been organized into two sets: maintenance and capital. Capital projects were organized into following criteria: Health & Safety, Operational Necessity, and Long-Term Cost of Delay and/or Savings Efficiencies. Plainfield's obligation, if approved by Town Meeting, would be for the Mohawk Middle School/High School building and Sanderson Academy building as follows: FY'22 projects only \$42,132 for Mohawk (6.33%) plus \$75,726 for Sanderson (25.54%) for a total of \$117,859. With an estimated interest rate of 2% capital assessments were estimated over 5, 7, and 10 years. For all FY'22-FY'28 projects Plainfield's obligation is estimated at: \$90,548 for Mohawk (6.33%) plus \$90,412 for Sanderson (25.54%) for a total of \$180,960. With an estimated interest rate of 2% capital assessments were projected over 5,10, and 15 years.

The Board agrees the Finance Committee and the Treasurer need to be involved. The \$117,859 is a significant amount to pay up-front in lieu of borrowing. Greg indicated each district town might take out their own loans. Paula stated this is unprecedented; town meeting articles, if approved, have always authorized the district to borrow and towns have been assessed accordingly over the term of the loans.

## Class II License Renewal

Hilary moved to renew the Class II License for Jamie Wooldridge for 2021 approving the transfer of location from 63 South Central Street to 1 Pleasant Street. The motion, seconded by Patrick, was approved as follows: Hilary, yes; Rebecca, yes; Patrick; yes. The transfer of location will be noted on the license.

## Caucus

Both Chief Alvord and Board of Health Chair Ellen Dupont are OK with caucus being held at the Public Safety Complex on March 17<sup>th</sup> as long as masks are worn, social distancing is practiced, and the conference room and bathrooms are sanitized afterward.

## Ad Hoc Plainfield Police Working Group

Rebecca posed the question, “Who is the supervising authority for the police?” Over the past two or three years a member of the Select Board has acted as the liaison to the police department. The chief is hired by the Select Board. Plainfield does have a Strong Chief which gives the chief the authority to run his/her own department. The Board is not in a position to know training requirements and other aspects of running the department. Information on how the 92 hours per week are spent will help the ad hoc group to understand the police salary budget. The group is aware \$16.78 per hour is not enough.

Patrick questioned whether regionalizing the PPD with Hawley should be pursued in the short run or as a long run project. Information gathering from other towns that have regionalized is being sought to discover what works and what doesn't. The Board agreed this may not be the right time to move forward with regionalization as the cost of POST legislation requirements has not yet been determined. Hilary stated data gathering takes time and expressed budget concerns and the low rate of officer pay. How much data does the ad hoc group need? Some larger towns do not have 92 hours per week. The 4-hour minimum for calls was mentioned. A compromise of an increase in the hourly rate over a couple of years was also brought up. Hilary added the Police Chief's attendance at the 2<sup>nd</sup> monthly Select Board meeting is to promote transparency in departmental doings. When Justin was hired, he “started from scratch” to get the department up to compliance. Are other towns in compliance? Justin will be asked to discuss the FY'22 budget, POST, regionalization with Hawley, and the status of the magnet software system at the next meeting.

Minutes and meeting notes from the Ad Hoc Plainfield Police Working Group were received.

## Town By-Law Warrant Articles

Attorney David Doneski's opinion on the proposed revisions to Section 6 of Article IX of the Town's by-laws, Control of Domestic Animals, should be included as part of a more comprehensive revision of that article to coordinate terminology throughout the article. Attorney Doneski will be contacted about a complete revision of the article.

Discussion of the proposed "Jake Brake" by-law was discussed. Patrick stated this is a noise issue; Hilary sees it as a safety concern and doesn't think it is a good idea for the town to trade safety for quiet. Ed Morann, also citing safety concerns, is not in favor of this type of by-law. Rebecca asked if such a by-law would result in truckers seeking alternate routes. Hilary stated brakes are not loud when speeds are controlled. Matt Stowell, who seeks the by-law, said Route 116 is not the problem; Trucks loaded with logs from the Eversource North Central Street storage area coming to a stop at the North Central Street intersection with Rte. 116 is the problem. Patrick prefers taking the issue up with Eversource asking them to address the issue with truck drivers. Rebecca moved to place the proposed "Jake Brake" by-law on the town meeting warrant. The motion, seconded by Patrick, was approved: Hilary, no; Rebecca, yes; Patrick, yes.

Attorney Doneski wrote that other towns have enacted such a by-law and suggested the word result at the end of line 5 be changed to results. He offered to provide a clean version with a correction of typos and the form items noted. Rebecca moved to place an article on the Town Meeting Warrant to support a special act of the legislature to change the name of the Plainfield Board of Selectmen to the Plainfield Select Board. The motion, seconded by Patrick, was approved: Hilary, yes; Rebecca, yes; Patrick, yes.

## Appointments

Hilary moved to appoint Dan Lachance to the Board of Assessors through June 30, 2021 to fill the vacancy created by the late Helene Tamarin's resignation per vote of the two remaining assessors on March 2, 2021. The motion, seconded by Rebecca, was approved: Hilary, yes; Rebecca, yes; Patrick, yes.

Hilary moved to appoint Kate Nevins as Inspector of Animals for the term beginning May 1, 2021 through April 30, 2022. The motion, seconded by Rebecca, was approved: Hilary, yes; Rebecca, yes; Patrick, yes.

IT Grant: Three laptops purchased with CARES Act funds and one desk top computer purchased with town funds were set up by Danzel Esnard of NOVUS. An updated proposal for the IT Grant will be discussed on Thursday. In answer to Rebecca's inquiry, Google no longer offers free recording of meetings.

MLP: A letter to the Department of Telecommunications and Cable was submitted

to the Board for signature by MLP Manager Kimberly Longey. The letter opposes Charter Communications/Time Warner's petition to become an eligible telecommunications carrier in our town (and several other towns) that have built and are building their own fiber optic networks.

#### Other Business

The Board agreed to sign the updated contract with PVPC accepting additional COVID-19 funds for the Board of Health.

The Buy Recycled Policy will also be signed.

The Board will meet with Representative Natalie Blais and Senator Adam Hinds Wednesday morning at 9:00 a.m. The Board hopes to address the financial impact of POST on small towns, the budgetary issue of MTRSD's proposed capital plan, the letter to DTC regarding Charter's request to become a telecommunications carrier in area towns as mentioned above, and the trend of changing the title of Board of Selectmen to Select Board.

Both Mert, Jr. and Paula are working on estimates for gas, diesel, and #2 heating oil estimates for FY'22. FRCOG is now requiring the Board to sign a participation agreement.

#### Correspondence

The Board received notice of Municipal Hearing Officer Training.

A KP Law eUpdate entitled "Transitioning to Phase III, Step 2 and Phase IV of the Reopening Plan for All Communities" was received.

ABCC issued an advisory concerning lifting the 40% cap on seating capacity.

Other mail was reviewed.

A motion to adjourn was entertained at 9:02 p.m.: Hilary, yes; Rebecca, yes; Patrick, yes.

Respectfully submitted,

Paula J. King  
Administrative Secretary