



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

SELECTMEN MEETING MINUTES

DATE: 12/27/2007

CALL TO ORDER: 6:35

PRESENT: Michelle L. Curran, *Chairman*; Charles L. Blinn, Jr. (6:57pm); Daniel J. Poliquin; John A. Sherman

ABSENT: Lawrence W. Gil, *Vice Chairman*

PUBLIC HEARING – 2006 FEMA REIMBURSEMENT:

M. Curran opens the Public Hearing at 6:36PM

J. Hoch states that we received state reimbursement for the 2006 flooding. Since the books are closed for 2006 we will add this to the general fund.

J. Sherman asks if this was expected.

J. Hoch states that this was unexpected. He was not here in 2006 and was not aware we would be receiving any funds/

► Motion by J. Sherman and second by D. Poliquin to accept the 2006 FEMA Reimbursement of \$526.13.

VOTE: 3-0-0

MINUTES:

► Motion by J. Sherman and second by D. Poliquin to approve the minutes of December 17, 2007, as amended.

D. Poliquin change page 4 from operating to offering.

VOTE: 3-0-0

► Motion by J. Sherman and second by D. Poliquin to approve the minutes of December 10, 2007.

VOTE: 3-0-0

BUDGET REVIEW:

Financial Administration:

J. Hoch states that on December 18, 2007 the Budget Committee made 2 changes to the budget. The Budget Committee restored \$5,000 to the Deed Research line.

J. Sherman agrees this is a good thing to do. If we do not continue this project we will fall behind. He asks how many deeds this amount will research.

J. Hoch states that it will be somewhere between 8 and 12.

D. Poliquin asks if this will complete the project. He would like to see this money allotted to specific parcels.

J. Hoch states that we have not done any research in 2007 because the postage line was running significantly over.

J. Sherman suggests compromising and splitting the \$5,000.

M. Curran would not be opposed to splitting the difference.

► Motion by J. Sherman and second by D. Poliquin to approve the Financial Administration Budget of \$25,766.

VOTE: 3-0-0

Highway:

J. Hoch states that due to a miscalculation the Highway Department budget needs to be reduced to \$488,700.

► Motion by J. Sherman and second by D. Poliquin to approve the Highway Department Budget of \$488,700.

VOTE: 3-0-0

ENCUMBRANCES:

J. Hoch states that encumbrances reflect goods and services used in 2007 for which bills have not been received and projects initiated in 2007 but are incomplete at year end. All unneeded balance for purpose of goods and services used in 2007 for which bills have not yet been received will lapse to fund balance by early February. All items carried forward for the purpose of projects initiated in 2007, but incomplete at year end, will be spent during 2008, re-encumbered at the end of 2008 or unspent funds will lapse to fund balance.

M. Curran states that she has a question on summer recreation. She thought this line was overspent.

J. Hoch states that their equipment line is not overspent.

J. Hoch states that half of this list is due to outstanding bills from Waste Management.

J. Sherman asks about street lighting.

J. Hoch states that street lighting is the same situation as Waste Management; we are one billing cycle behind.

► Motion by J. Sherman and second by D. Poliquin to approve the proposed encumbrances as proposed by the Town Manager and presented in the memo dated December 27, 2007.

VOTE: 3-0-0

WARRANT ARTICLES:

J. Hoch states that the new document dated December 17, 2007 reflects the changes suggested by the Selectmen and Budget Committee.

P-08-03 Highway Equipment Trust Fund:

J. Hoch states that the changes in Article P-08-03 are intended to clarify the intent.

► Motion by J. Sherman and second by D. Poliquin to recommend article P-08-03 as written on draft dated December 17, 2007.

VOTE: 3-0-0

P-08-04 Highway Garage Office Trailer:

J. Sherman states that he is in favor but he would like to report some of the concerns that the Budget Committee expressed. They are concerned that methane may be trapped by the apron of the trailer.

J. Hoch states that we will locate this trailer in an area that is clean. We will put the apron around the plumbing and lattice around the rest.

► Motion by J. Sherman and second by D. Poliquin to recommend article P-08-04 with the change from bathroom to restroom in the wording. Insert the term "note:" in the last sentence of the intent.

M. Curran asks if this trailer will be propane heated.

J. Hoch states most likely, but he has not gotten this far.

M. Curran states that we will be closing off the office and bathroom in the garage.

J. Hoch states that this is correct.

VOTE: 3-0-0

P-08-05 Building Capital Reserve:

C. Blinn arrives at 6:57pm.

J. Hoch presents a list of items that he is suggesting are eligible for withdrawal from the fund. They are repairs to the Safety Complex generator, replacement of fire alarm panel at the safety complex that failed earlier this year and the last item is the failure of the phone system at the safety complex. The total is \$7762.84.

M. Curran states that when we established this fund she thought this would be used for larger items like boilers and large emergency repairs. She thinks some of the items presented are minor and can be absorbed by the budgets. She thought this was more for emergency uses.

J. Hoch states this is a fair question. He looked at large expenses that were system based and unexpected. We have room globally in the budget to absorb the costs. However, the definition of these events allows the Selectmen use this fund for the costs.

D. Poliquin does not have a problem using the money. He believes these are part of the building, they were unexpected difficulties and we could not operate without these repairs.

M. Curran states that she thought this was for more unexpected concerns. Her concern is that we would be raising taxes to reimburse the fund. She believes we are re-raising funds that are covered in the budget.

D. Poliquin asks if this puts the budget over.

J. Hoch states that it may throw a line over but not a budget. He asks what the benchmark the Selectmen want to set is.

J. Sherman states that he does not have strong feelings one way or another. He asks if we do not use the money for these expenses would we withdraw the article.

J. Hoch states that we need to look at what the big ticket item is that we would use the fund for. He suggests working on this in the Capital Improvement Plan.

M. Curran does not want to impact the tax payers for something that can be absorbed into the budget. She would be in favor of removing this.

D. Poliquin asks if this is a way to enhance the capital reserve number.

J. Hoch states that if you take this money from the Building Capital Reserve Fund than you are not using the General Fund. By taking this from the reserve you do not take this from the fund balance.

J. Sherman states that \$20,000 was an arbitrary number. He would like to leave the money in the fund this year and not recommend the article. He would like to have more conversation and thought put into the number before presenting it to the voters.

► Motion by J. Sherman and second by C. Blinn to withdraw article P-08-05.

M. Curran asks how this affects the encumbrances.

J. Hoch states not at all.

C. Blinn states that this is not something we have a real plan in place for. He thinks \$20,000 gives us an opportunity to look at what we need in 2008. He feels that the tax situation is tough for all of us. We have this fund in place and we have not abused it. He believes we need support money for the hidden problems. He would like to see this go another year.

J. Hoch states that this is a good theory. He thinks that we can look at this through the CIP next year. He states that it is his job to identify and bring the information to the Selectmen. If we were running close to the vest you would want to use this money, but that is not the current situation.

M. Curran agrees and feels that the Town Manager did his due diligence.

VOTE: 4-0-0

P-08-06 Fire Capital Reserve:

► Motion by J. Sherman and second by D. Poliquin to approve article P-08-06.

J. Sherman states that the numbers used tonight in the motions reflect the draft document dated December 17, 2007 and the article numbers will change in the future.

VOTE: 4-0-0

P-08-07 Water Capital Reserve:

D. Poliquin leaves the room.

► Motion by J. Sherman and second by C. Blinn to recommend article P-08-07.

VOTE: 3-0-0

P-08-08 Conservation Fund:

► Motion by J. Sherman and second by C. Blinn to recommend article P-08-08.

VOTE: 3-0-0

P-08-09 Town Clerk Salary & P-08-10 Tax Collector Salary:

J. Hoch states that the Town Clerk/Tax Collector salary increases reflect the numbers in the nonunion employee budget. The Cost of Living is applied April 1st and then adjustments are made throughout the year.

M. Curran states that the merit and performance is not a guaranteed raise. She is not comfortable applying the 2% with the justification of merit. No staff member was guaranteed a 2% increase.

D. Poliquin returns to the room.

M. Curran would like a recommendation from the Town Manager.

J. Hoch states that the positions are elected and they are not part of his review process.

J. Sherman states the 3.2% should be number representing three quarters of the year.

J. Hoch states that this may be the answer. The Town employees receive the COLA April 1st and the elected positions would be effective all 4 quarters.

J. Sherman states this should be 2.4%.

J. Hoch states that we moved the January 1st date to April 1st for nonunion employees. We did not catch this last year.

J. Sherman states that the 2% for employees is meant to cover adjustments needed to be made to salaries. He understands that they would like to get what the average nonunion employee gets. However, the average nonunion employee does not receive the 2%. He asks the Town Manager if there is a more appropriate number.

J. Hoch states that we allocate this number across positions and he would need to research this before suggesting a number.

M. Curran states that we have added additional hours to support these positions and lighten the work load.

J. Hoch states that another approach is to pick a fixed number.

M. Curran states that this could be a bonus or a flat rate. She has concerns with the flexibility they do have in the work environment and considers this a benefit that other employees do not have.

J. Sherman asks what last years warrant article number was.

J. Hoch states that they only asked for the COLA.

C. Blinn suggests a straight 3%. He feels they are stuck in a hard place. They are responsible for making a portion of the Town tick. They do have to go before the Town for a decision.

M. Curran states that no member of the staff is guaranteed the 2%. There are benefits to being elected officials.

► Motion by J. Sherman and second by C. Blinn to recommend P-08-09 amending the increase to 2.4%.

J. Sherman states his logic is that this is the COLA effective April 1st. This is a tricky subject every year. This is an elected position and you are creating an amount of money whoever is in the position. He feels this is difficult to consider merit. This is a warrant article to pay for a position not who is in the position.

VOTE: 4-0-0

► Motion by J. Sherman and second by C. Blinn to recommend P-08-10 amending the increase to 2.4%.

J. Sherman states that the same discussion applies.

VOTE: 4-0-0

P-08-11 A, B, C & D Water Study Options:

J. Hoch reviews option a-d in the types of water system articles. The original theory was that he looked at \$15,000 for the modification and \$5,000 in the Tower and "C" was a combination of both. He does not have a good feel of a solid number for "D".

J. Sherman states that the water study is a good thing to do but he is not in favor of doing it this year. He would like to spend some time coming up with the type of study we need. He is not in favor of "A, "C" or "D".

M. Curran suggests starting with "A" and reviewing each section.

J. Sherman states that a Budget Committee member raised a good point when he stated that the perception may be that the connection is commercial not residential. He states he is in favor of this for the long range planning.

D. Poliquin states that a large portion of the system is in residential areas. He does not believe the system is expanded to the point of discussing this.

M. Curran states that we should look at this in a different approach.

D. Poliquin states that we need to look at supply. We need to look at a direction and follow through with a plan.

J. Sherman states that before we present something in the future we want to be in a position to clearly answer the questions that will arise.

J. Hoch states that he was looking at this in the beginning as a narrow approach of how residents could connect in. He states that it then expanded. He believes that when we start a study we need to focus on a scope. This is not time sensitive but it would be a good idea to kick start discussion.

J. Sherman asks if we have the water line mapped and if it is available for residents.

J. Hoch states this will be done with the new GIS system.

M. Curran states that map is being worked on and she believes that the technology is expanding.

J. Sherman states that we need to have a map available for a presentation. This supports his concern That we are not ready for this discussion.

► Motion by J. Sherman and second by D. Poliquin to withdraw article P-08-11A.

M. Curran suggests an internship to get ideas and the ball rolling.

VOTE: 4-0-0

M. Curran states it is important to look into the worth of the water tower because it is an asset right now that brings in revenue and offsets taxes.

J. Sherman states that the assessment only looked at this from a fire suppression point of view. He states that we need to look at what other uses we have for the tower.

C. Blinn states that the water tower is a historic item in Town.

J. Sherman suggests that in the intent we should insert that this was a fire suppression study and we should mention the estimated annual revenue of the cell phone vendors.

M. Curran agrees and states that we should include the revenue.

J. Sherman states that he wants to clarify that the suggestion of removing the water tower came from someone looking at the system strictly from a water suppression point of view.

► Motion by J. Sherman and second by C. Blinn to recommend article P-08-11B as amended.

D. Poliquin states that he thinks that the part about the assessment should be removed because it is confusing.

J. Sherman states this speaks to why it should be removed.

M. Curran agrees this is confusing.

J. Hoch suggests wording that would clarify the issue.

Consensus of the Board is to use the wording suggested by the Town Manager.

VOTE: 4-0-0

J. Sherman states if "C" is a marriage of "A" and "B" then it is no longer applicable.

► Motion by J. Sherman and second by D. Poliquin to withdraw P-08-11c.

VOTE: 4-0-0

J. Sherman states that while he thinks this is a good idea he believes that this is going to generate more questions than we can answer at this time. He believes that we need to have more discussion into the topic.

► Motion by J. Sherman and second by D. Poliquin to withdraw Article P-08-11d.

VOTE: 4-0-0

P-08-12 Meals on Wheels:

► Motion by J. Sherman and second by D. Poliquin to recommend article P-08-12.

VOTE: 4-0-0

J. Sherman suggests adding into the intent that if approved the funds may appear in the operating budget in future years.

► Motion by J. Sherman and second by C. Blinn to add to the intent the sentence that states if approved money may appear in the operating budget in future years.

VOTE: 4-0-0

P-08-13 Patrol Police Officer Position 1:

J. Sherman asks about the start dates of both potential positions.

J. Hoch states that he initially thought of staggering the employment but it was arbitrary and did not coincide with the academy schedule.

C. Blinn asks if there is a chance that if we hire 2 new officers would this decrease the over-time line. He is hearing that some of the officers are putting in 60-80 hours a week. This is over-time and not details.

J. Hoch states no officer is working those hours on a regular basis but on some weeks it is true.

C. Blinn states that if the over-time offset the cost of 2 officers. There is more protection on the streets and there will be less over-time.

J. Sherman states there are 3 points. The Chief did state he wanted to reduce over-time, but you are not going to see this in 2008 due to training and if we reduce the over-time budget we will be caught short. He believes we will see a decrease in over-time in the budget in 2009.

J. Hoch states that you will reduce over-time, but warns the Selectmen not to be fooled into thinking that it will pay for itself. You may save 20% off the 2009 over-time. There will always be training and other needs for over-time.

C. Blinn states that this will affect the large number of those working extensive over-time. To take the strain off the department is a good idea. He had one person tell him that he arrested 11 people in 2 days. He states that we have a good force.

D. Poliquin states that putting 1 or 2 officers on is not going to change the fact that 1 guy made 11 arrests in 2 days. It is nice to have additional staff but he can not personally justify the expense. It is up to the people to vote.

► Motion by J. Sherman and second by C. Blinn to recommend Article P-08-13.

VOTE: 3-1-0 D. Poliquin votes no.

P-08-14 Patrol Police Officer Position 2:

J. Sherman is concerned with the start dates. He understands the reasoning but because they have the same start date he thinks it may confuse the voters. He believes that even a few weeks difference in start time so they do not look like the exact same article and confusing people.

M. Curran questions whether it is too much asking for 2 officers in 1 year. She does not want it to appear that by asking for 2 we only need 1.

J. Sherman states he does not vote using the theory that if you need 1 asks for 2. He votes by what he feels is right for the Town.

J. Hoch states that we could back 1 position off until July. If we find someone that is already certified then we are not bound to the academy date. The loss is that we raise a couple of weeks of pay to have the articles read differently.

C. Blinn thinks that asking for 1 has the best shot and returning next year for another officer. The Fire and Police have the right to come and ask for personnel.

► Motion by J. Sherman and second by D. Poliquin to withdraw article P-08-14.

J. Sherman states that he believes having 2 additional officers is a good idea but he is not ready to impact the budget. He states that there are inventive things out that we could do. He states that Budget Committee member Bob Gray has discussed the system Salem, NH uses. The businesses on

Route 28 in Salem, NH, pay into a system that support the police coverage needed. He believes more discussion on alternative methods of funding is needed.

M. Curran states that the Planning Board is discussing impact fees with their lawyer. She agrees that looking at inventive ways is a great idea.

J. Sherman asks what ideas the Town Manager is familiar with.

J. Hoch states that there is already one example in effect in Plaistow. Home Depot and Walmart fund an entry level position. He states that there are service districts that could be charged. He suggests bundling the services instead of solely charging for a water line assessment. He states that we need to insure that if people are being charged for districts that we will be able provide the service.

C. Blinn states that water line reduces insurance costs and maybe charging for other guaranteed services would do the same. He suggests tracking this for a year.

M. Curran suggests placing the discussion of alternative funding ideas on another agenda.

VOTE: 4-0-0

PETITIONED ARTICLES:

J. Hoch states that he had a request from Dan Johnson to revisit two previous road discontinuances that left unclear outcomes about disposition of underlying land. He would like the Selectmen to present this in a warrant article.

Consensus of the Board is that this should be a petitioned Warrant Article.

WESTVILLE ROAD/ROUTE 125:

J. Hoch states that NHDOT has granted the Town permission to put signals at Westville Road/125 on flash during inclement weather.

CART:

M. Curran states that CART will be discussed at a future meeting.

SANTA CLAUS:

D. Poliquin states he participated with other Fireman escorting Santa Claus around Town.

J. Sherman states that this is a great tradition in Plaistow and he feels the Fire Department deserves credit for the type of community service they participate in.

C. Blinn states that his vehicle was stolen on Christmas night and he commends the Plaistow Police on finding his vehicle.

ADJOURNMENT:

Meeting adjourned at 8:34pm.

Respectively submitted,
Nicole Carr
Recording Secretary