



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

**PLAISTOW BOARD OF SELECTMEN**

**MINUTES:**

**DATE:** Monday, March 16, 2009

**MEETING CALLED TO ORDER:** 6:32 pm

**SELECTMEN PRESENT:**

Chairman, John Sherman  
Vice Chairman, Daniel Poliquin  
Selectman, Charles Blinn  
Selectman, Michelle Curran  
Selectman, Robert Gray  
Sean Fitzgerald – Town Manager

**MINUTES:**

J. Sherman notes the review of the Minutes from Monday, March 9, 2009 will be postponed.

Maryellen Pelletier, Town Clerk, calls all newly elected officials to podium to have them read the oath for elected officials. All approach and read oath.

**AGENDA:**

**Public Hearing – Todd Black – VP of Unitil**

Todd Black, Vice President of Unitil, and Raymond A. Letourneau Jr., Director of Electric Operations for Unitil are here to discuss the magnitude of the December Ice Storm.

T. Black thanks all the volunteers and workers for their help during the storm. He discusses the devastation of the storm noting 30,000 customers were without power; this storm exceeded the previous four storms combined; significant event; effected transmission systems (which were in the woods) were affected by the weight of ice on the trees, which is why people did not see many utility crews around the streets. He compares this storm to the Kentucky storm noting enormous destruction as opposed to typical repair to both however the difference between Kentucky and here was the temperatures; Kentucky's temperatures were up in the 50's. He discusses what they are doing: met with manager and staff for strategic levels, operational management regarding how things work in towns, and coming back to meet with manager and staff. He discusses the director level position to head up their emergency staff; crews coming from various locations to

help in this area; call center; work order management; safety officials; people wanting more answers; longer conversations being had; dropped calls; excessive calls; morning and evening conference calls; gaps found; communication process; direct emergency line; expected enhancements noting they have done a lot of work in the Town and there has been an internal self assessment done which will be made public.

J. Sherman notes this is a public hearing, any member is welcome to speak and he will open the meeting up to the BOS, Manager and then the Public. He inquires about the 1.2 million customers mentioned and asks if they are residents.

T. Black notes they look at it as meters.

J. Sherman inquires about Service Level Agreement (SLA).

R. Letourneau discusses NH not having SLA; they have mandates (reliable service) and discusses MA versus NH.

J. Sherman inquires how many crews they have.

R. Letourneau notes 7 bucket crews work out of the Seacoast area which has 14 towns.

J. Sherman inquires if they rely on contactors.

R. Letourneau discusses contractor work and work load.

J. Sherman and Ray hold a discussion regarding tree trimming and low hanging limbs.

J. Sherman discusses department heads working during the storm, noting what is incredibly important to them is credibility and he discusses not being able to get accurate information.

T. Black discusses area of communication has been discussed with department heads and speaks on difficulty in getting information out and enhancing that area.

J. Sherman inquires as to what they did well.

T. Black discusses operation staff and efforts they put forward noting they had no model of this however they will do better in future storms.

M. Curran discusses call center not recognizing cell phone numbers and the disconnecting issues.

T. Black discusses calling in from home noting the system recognizes your number, however when you call from a phone not at your home you are able to put in your home number. He discusses the break down in their system noting it was an infrastructure issue that is being addressed and they are working this issue to better themselves.

M. Curran notes the crews did a fabulous job, however she ran into a crew that was waiting to get cleared and inquires for details.

R. Letourneau discusses multiple crews working on the transmission system and waiting for clearance of a line to be switched and energizing areas.

C. Blinn discusses the availability of 7 bucket trucks and inquires if that is efficient.

R. Letourneau notes no, however you do not staff up for storms, you have a base staff.

R. Gray discusses communication topic noting that it is frustrating that the information they were getting regarding the estimate of Plaistow having a certain percentage of power back up was incorrect and getting accurate information out to the public is very important. He discusses the events that took place this week regarding his personal electric bill that he received: kilowatts billed for, history, and calling the call center noting the answer he received was that it was an estimated charge related to the ice storm. He discusses actual and estimates and the conversation he had with Mr. Black on Saturday.

T. Black addresses statements regarding meter system, communication device that sends reads via lines, actual reads, surcharge relative to the storm which is not the case, distribution and energy piece of the bill, not paying for power they did not use, best estimated bills during December's ice storm, estimated reads for January and February and not going more than two months with estimated reads.

M. Curran inquires if the bill indicates estimate or actual on the main part of the bill.

T. Black believes it should however he suggests calling the call center which will be able to indicate whether it is an actual or an estimate read.

J. Sherman opens it up to the Public at 7:39 pm.

#### **PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Mark Harding, 1 Elm Street approaches podium and discusses price of generator, time from work, loss of food, late fee on electric bill and questions different charges on bill which is owed from previous electric company.

T. Black notes he is not familiar with previous electric company costs. He discusses deregulation, storm being natural disaster, act of God and notes charges have to be approved by the Public Utility Commission.

J. Sherman asks Mark if he has submitted these losses to his homeowner's insurance.

M. Harding indicates that he has not.

J. Sherman inquires about the clean-up costs being passed on to the customers.

T. Black notes if a cost is to be passed on to the public they have to be approved by the Public Utility Commission. He notes the storm cost 10 million dollars and discusses insurance on infrastructure and not on poles and wires.

Dave Rumore, 19 Wildbrook Drive discusses power outages for his neighborhood from 2000 to present and his meeting with Scott Wade and Mark Lambert.

S. Fitzgerald notes he has passed that information on already to Mr. Black. He discusses public safety concerns and thanks Mr. Black for being here and listening to our concerns noting they will address many of these outstanding issues.

R. Letourneau notes they are trying to meet with some of the customers.

J. Sherman suggests putting on the agenda for two weeks, getting solid information and reporting back to the Board.

Jill Rumore, 19 Wilbrook Drive discusses five days into the storm her neighbors all had power. She is one of four houses and they had power whereas she did not have power for three more days and had to abandon her home. She notes she was worried about her home and this length of time was not acceptable. She noted a crew from TN appeared on the 8th day and fixed the issue within 10 minutes.

Bill Coyle, 7 Johnson Drive inquires about vegetation maintenance and cycle.

R. Letourneau notes it varies by voltage class and discusses 3 and 5 year cycle, trim zone and land owner having say in trimming.

B. Coyle inquires if Unitil is regulated or deregulated.

R. Letourneau notes regulated.

B. Coyle and Ray hold a discussion on AMR meters and AMI meters.

S. Fitzgerald discusses that 80% of the trees that caused the outage were outside of the trim zone.

Larry Gil, 83 Forrest Street discusses charges going forward from the time of the ice storm noting he was told that the outages in December would be reflected in his following bill and notes he did not see such. He discusses history of kilowatt hours used and challenging the meters not accurately working.

T. Black discusses estimate reads and actual reads that were earlier discussed.

S. Fitzgerald inquires as to how Unitil would test a meter.

R. Letourneau notes every resident can have a meter tested by calling the call center however, he notes there may be a charge if it is an accurate meter.

L. Gil inquires as to how this would be reflected in the bill and notes the call center indicated it would show as a credit.

J. Sherman suggests for them (Unitil) to look into this matter and get back to them.

Steve Savage, 25 Partridge Lane notes he has the same issue as Larry and notes he did not see a credit but when he called the call center he was told it was due to a power surge and discusses the lack of information noting as a homeowner he got a runaround.

Kate Vavra, Kingston Road discusses communication issue, not being able to leave home due to elderly dog and work issue, pipes bursting and customer service center being closed.

T. Black discusses call center is open 24-7, communication issue, going forward issues, and automated outage management.

D. Poliquin discusses internal overview and being skeptical of their changes by Unitil.

S. Fitzgerald discusses public utility helping them through a crisis, work by restoring credibility and first of many discussions sharing responsibilities. He discusses the Public Utility Review for December Ice Storm on March 24 at 7pm at Exeter Town Hall, March 31 in Raymond and April 1st in Salem.

Bill Scully, 5 Sweet Hill Road discusses prior history issues with public utility company (Exeter Hampton) starting in 1991 regarding communication issues. He notes he still had communication issues 17 ½ years later. He asks BOS if they want a copy of the letter.

J. Sherman notes to give to Audrey to copy for all BOS members. He also suggests to Sean to confirm date regarding Public Utility and put on cable scroll.

Public portion of Unitil discussion closed at 8:40 pm.

J. Sherman notes citizens of Plaistow were very upset. He notes this was a huge inconvenience and discusses resources, health issues and safety issues. He discusses Police Chief and his department, Fire Chief John McArdle and his department, Highway Supervisor, Dan Garlington and his department, Health Officer, Dennise Horrocks and Recreation Director, Carli Malette jumped through hoops for nine days. He discusses pet issues and people not leaving their home because of them. He notes that we need to get issues resolved and appreciates whatever they (Unitil) could do and thanks both gentlemen from Unitil for coming.

BOS takes a 7 minute break at 8:45 pm - BOS returns at 8:52 pm.

### **Reorganization**

J. Sherman discusses the process of selecting Chairman and Vice Chairman, appointing and the handouts: Reorganization – Liaisons – 2008 – 2009 & Reorganization – Liaisons - 2009-2010.

Chairman

*Motion by M. Curran to nominate Dan Poliquin for Chairman.*

*2nd by C. Blinn.*

*Vote 4-0-1.*

*Abstain: D. Poliquin.*

*Motion passes.*

Vice Chairman

*Motion by C. Blinn to nominate R. Gray for Vice Chairman.*

*2nd by M. Curran.*

*Vote 4-0-1.*

*Abstain: R. Gray.*

*Motion carries.*

Liaisons to various committees:

J. Sherman notes typically it is a consensus not nominations.

Budget Committee

*Representative: J. Sherman*

*Alternate: M. Curran*

Planning Board

*Representative: R. Gray*

*Alternate: M. Curran*

Capital Improvement Program

*Representative: J. Sherman*

*Representative: C. Blinn*

*Alternate: D. Poliquin*

Highway Safety Committee

*Representative: D. Poliquin.*

*Alternate: C. Blinn.*

Cable TV Advisory

*Representative: C. Blinn*

*Alternate: M. Curran*

Family Mediation

*Representative: D. Poliquin*

*Alternate: M. Curran*

Recreation Commission

*Representative: J. Sherman*

*Alternate: D. Poliquin*

### HAZMAT

*Representative: D. Poliquin*

*Alternate: M. Curran*

### Conservation Commission

*Representative: C. Blinn*

*Alternate: M. Curran*

*She notes that her husband is on the Conservation Commission.*

### Rockingham Planning Commission (RPC) Representative

Tim Moore discusses that he and Marilyn Senter were appointed for 4 year terms last year by the Planning Board and approved by the Selectmen with the Alternate being Larry Gil. He discusses the number of representatives being based upon population noting that Plaistow has two, he and Marilyn with Larry as the Alternate. He discusses the RPC meeting on April 8th at 7pm at the Library and invites BOS to attend.

### SPW TAC (Salem Plaistow Windham Transportation Advisory Commission)

*Representative: Marilyn Senter who was appointed by the Board of Selectmen.*

*Alternate: Larry Gil.*

J. Sherman suggests for Sean to confirm the Larry and the Marilyn appointments

### Old Home Day

*Representative: C. Blinn*

*Alternate: J. Sherman*

### Town Report

*Representative: J. Sherman*

*Representative: R. Gray*

### Route 125 Task Force Committee

*Representative: Marilyn Senter*

*Alternate: Larry Gil.*

### Plaistow Source Water Source

*Representative: L. Gil*

*Alternate: C. Blinn*

T. Moore notes this committee was formed a number of years ago, and Larry did participate, however after the initial work was done, CONCOM picked up and the Plaistow Source Water Committee really hasn't been meeting.

J. Sherman suggests removing from list.

### Beede Reuse

*Representative: R. Gray*

*Alternate: M. Curran.*

#### Elderly Affairs Committee Representative

J. Sherman notes there isn't one.

M. Curran notes this committee hasn't been active since she was a board member.

C. Blinn notes this may be a good one to get going.

J. Sherman notes that this committee was active 6 or 7 years ago.

*Representative: C. Blinn*

*Alternate: J. Sherman*

#### Open Space, Town Land & Building Committee Representative

J. Sherman notes that this committee has not been active but it should be.

D. Poliquin notes they haven't met as a stand alone committee but has met with Safety Complex Committee combining the two. D. Poliquin volunteers.

*Representative: D. Poliquin*

*Alternate: M. Curran*

#### Public Safety Complex Building Committee

*Representative: D. Poliquin*

*Alternate: J. Sherman*

#### Rockingham Economic Development Council

*Representative: J. Sherman*

#### NH CAFÉ

*Selectmen Representative: J. Sherman*

#### Highway Garage Committee Selectmen Representative

J. Sherman notes this committee has not met.

D. Poliquin notes they have alleviated the situation with the trailer and discusses keeping it on.

*Representative: D. Poliquin*

*Alternate: M. Curran.*

J. Sherman suggests to Sean to update above information as well as the contact info and give to Board of Selectmen.

C. Blinn leaves at 9:30 pm.

#### **Discuss Town Meeting vote**

J. Sherman asks if Board members want to discuss.

D. Poliquin notes he was pleased with turn out noting there was close to 1800 voters.

J. Sherman discusses Article 30 and the rezoning of the three pieces of land. He notes the Board handled this matter appropriately.

R. Gray discusses articles that the BOS approved but did not pass, Danville Road Sidewalk and Main Street Study.



J. Sherman notes they need to be careful not to spend money on the reclassification of Main Street. He notes we have to be careful not to spend any Town funds for the possible reclassification of that street. He notes they were told by the voters not to do that study, so they cannot spend money for that study.

S. Fitzgerald discusses looking at traffic or traffic calming through the Rockingham Planning Commission noting money has been budgeted for this.

J. Sherman notes this is similar issue that the school district is going to face with the Sandown School because it has been voted down so the school district should not be spending any money on that issue.

D. Poliquin discusses open positions for such committees and boards as the Planning Board, Conflict of Interest Committee and Auditor position noting this is a great way to get involved.

J. Sherman suggests to Sean to get a list together and ready for the cable scroll.

#### **TOWN MANAGER REPORT:**

S. Fitzgerald discusses: Beede site meeting and the important updating on the work conducted on the site for the last several months; Timberlane School District follow-up from last week's meeting regarding the payment schedule; Garden Road Bridge project as part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act and the Town possibly being eligible to have 100% of the design and construction cost funded through NHDOT; and phone call received from Union Leader Reporter who is going to run a story on unemployment rate for boarder communities and labor statistics. He notes he didn't see the trend that Plaistow is seeing a typically high unemployment, however he notes Plaistow has grown over the past year and discusses rates of 6.1% to 7.3 % today which is a direct result of retail base who have looked to downsize. He discusses PACE and Haverhill Chamber of Commerce, bringing business into 125 and discusses recession.

#### **OTHER BUSINESS:**

Board discusses holding a meeting next week or not and consensus is that there will be one.

#### **SIGNATURE FOLDER:**

J. Sherman notes there are items to sign in the Signature folder.

#### **SELECTMEN'S REPORTS:**

M. Curran discusses election and thanks all that came out and voted. She noted the numbers were amazing and commends the voters for that. She notes she is excited to be re-elected.

J. Sherman discusses Budget Committee meeting tomorrow night noting it will be for Re-organization and education discussion. He discusses the Rec Commission met last week and they are working on a few items: the charging for field usage at Old County Road, establishing rates noting it is almost finalized and this is in conjunction with the BOS and stated revenue. He

notes their next meeting is the 2nd Wednesday, which is April 8th. He discusses the Regional Selectman meeting which is here on April 2<sup>nd</sup>, noting he has notified the area selectmen.

S. Fitzgerald notes he received an email from a selectman suggesting adding Mosquito Control to the agenda.

J. Sherman suggests adding Warrant wording to the agenda also.

D. Poliquin discusses the meeting of the Safety Complex Committee noting it was basically rehashing and bringing everyone up to speed. His thought is that it is time to get this thing going and discusses time line, forthcoming to Planning Board and BOS with proposals, time frames and dollars. He discusses the Town Hall Generator noting they are still awaiting a report regarding electrical; the Highway Safety Committee meeting is tomorrow; Family Mediation is Wednesday night and he was at the polls all day and thanks everyone for supporting him during his re-election.

R. Gray discusses Thursday's meeting regarding Beede: communication being very important; review of PowerPoint presentation; pumping of water from aquifer; gaining access from abutters to monitor wells; Stacy Greendlinger briefing Board members; emerging contaminant found on site which is a new chemical stabilizer used in household chemicals and the lien on the property noting they are in the process of setting up an appointment with their attorneys.

J. Sherman notes the Board's position is that they expect payment in full for back taxes.

R. Gray notes he expects both back taxes and future taxes to be paid. He notes he has a Planning Board meeting Wednesday night and assumes it is a reorganization meeting.

J. Sherman notes that he just received information regarding the spring clean up which is scheduled for the week of April 13-17<sup>th</sup>. He suggests having it put on the cable scroll.

Meeting adjourned at 10:07 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Audrey Michaud