Notes from the Plainfield Town Office

As part of our local government outreach, details will be posted each week on social media about upcoming meetings and opportunities for resident input.

Thursday April 9th 2020: Social distancing (my wife Melissa likes to point out it is not social distancing, it is physical distancing) has become the norm. We are thankful here at the town office for all the efforts to limit foot traffic into the office. We continue to offer our full range of services, just from a distance. So, before you head to town hall, give us a call and we can figure out the best way to help you (469-3201).

Meriden Covered Bridge Update: The equipment is here to clean and paint the bridge steel; the company is having trouble finding hotel housing for their crew. Therefore, we are temporarily on hold, but first on their list once we can get them into an area hotel.

In our home, cooking skills are at a real premium. We can steam vegetables and cook chicken, fish and other meats on the grill, but beyond that things get dicey quick. I do make what we affectionately call Steve’s super dry tunanoodle casserole. It has some issues; best served with a glass of McNamara milk. So, with Nana stuck in the sunshine state, Thom’s Tavern closed up, we have used up our standard four weekly meals, over and over and over again. Enter stage right, the Singing Hills meal program! Very nice, the food is both good and plentiful; the suggested donation is reasonable and can even be made with a credit card or PayPal. Singing Hills has a long history of being an active member of our community, always willing to help in a pinch. In this case, it’s a two way street, they are helping us with good healthy affordable food and we can help them keep their kitchen staff employed. Check it out online or give them a call 469-3236. Just another example of why we call this place home.

The town office is trying to get our spring projects done. By example, assessing updates for properties with projects underway or new building permits will, to the extent that is possible, occur on schedule beginning in late April. Town Assessor George Hildum will not be entering any homes, but he will be out measuring and listing improvements and will try to garner necessary information by speaking to owners via phone or using physical distancing.

The Selectmen meet again next week, Wednesday April 15th. Zoom meeting details will be posted on their webpage on Monday or Tuesday. Our Planning Board will be having one April meeting, on the 20th also using Zoom. This meeting has to do with the Landmark Properties wishing to use their Route 12A property as a place of business. They received Zoning Board approval back in 2018 and are now ready to start the Planning Board process. Details may be found on the Planning Board’s webpage.

From the Plainfield School: The State of NH has applied and been approved a waiver to allow schools with less than 50% free or reduced price enrollment the ability to be area eligible or act as though they have a free and reduced level of 50% or higher even though the school does not. This waiver is only for the period of the public health emergency. What does this mean for Plainfield? Plainfield will be providing free meals for ALL
children 18 and younger beginning April 20th. In order to prepare for this we are asking families to please complete the survey below before Tuesday, April 14th. Our food service program will produce meals based on this information.

Link to survey:  [https://forms.gle/u4Db1G2Gh5FkDL839](https://forms.gle/u4Db1G2Gh5FkDL839)

Finally, a brief rant, to the group that decided to drink some beer up on top of French’s Ledges earlier this week, which by the way is not a bad idea. If you are tough enough to haul that liquid up there, you are tough enough to bring the empties back down. Likewise, if you place Fido’s waste in a cute little plastic bag, leaving the bag beside the trail is really not the point. No one from the recreation or public works department is coming along collecting blue bags filled with dog crap. Come on.

To all those who have taken the time this Spring to pick up trash along our roadsides and trails, thank you. Your efforts have not gone unnoticed and the efforts help a great deal.

We are going to make it people, April is not much of month anyway. Stay resilient and we can still enjoy a great New England summer together.

Steve Halleran
Office 469-3201/Home 675-9974/Cell 252-4272

**Thursday April 1st 2020:** The Selectmen held their meeting on Wednesday night. At this meeting they interacted with both the town’s Human Service Director and the Town’s Emergency Management Director. Both updated the Selectboard on their efforts in dealing with the COVID 19 pandemic. While we continue to hope that our area will not be hit as hard as more densely populated places, we continue to plan for how we will deal with the worst case scenario. The Selectboard, all town employees and volunteers, stand ready to assist residents and our EMS providers as needed.

In a related matter, the Selectboard is actively looking for ways to soften the town property tax burden for 2020. Concepts under consideration include reducing capital reserve contributions for this year, and the use of fund balance. Bottom line, at this time, is that all town officials and employees are fully aware how difficult a year 2020 is shaping up to be for individuals and businesses a like. Our job is to get the town through this difficult time.

A word of thanks to both of our convenience stores, each has worked diligently to keep their shelves stocked and to provide as much access to good local prepared food as possible. This allows us all to reduce our person to person contact and to minimize the amount of trips necessary outside of Plainfield for supplies. We are very lucky to have both stores in our town. Buy what you can locally, its good for them and good for us all.

The next Selectboard meeting is April 15th, the agenda and Zoom meeting information is posted on the town’s website well in advance of the meeting. If you haven’t tried Zoom
video conferencing, it’s very easy to use. You can even participate by phone, no computer needed. We have enjoyed a higher level of resident participation with Zoom than without. My guess is that it is here to stay, so give it ago.

The planned work to preserve the steel under the Meriden Covered Bridge is going to begin early next week. The company doing the work has been doing this since 1967. This isn’t their first bridge. Their work will be isolated to that one location using very specialized equipment. Once closed, the bridge will likely be shutdown for four to five weeks. Once completed, the steel will have been repaired and encapsulated in a zinc based compound to prevent further corrosion. The bridge will also receive a new wooden deck and should be able to continue to serve our town for decades to come.

As a final thought, let’s use this unfortunate set of circumstances related to COVID 19 to show the best in ourselves. We leave no one behind and we get through this together. No one person has to do it all, we all just need to do a little.

Steve Halleran
Office 469-3201/Home 675-9974/Cell 252-4272

**Thursday March 26**th **2020:** Well, like you, town government is hunkered down for what we expect will be some little time as we try and do our part to get through COVID 19 with as little damage as possible. All town departments continue to function and provide services. Foot traffic here at town hall is limited to those things that must be done in person, but otherwise we continue to offer the full range of options via our drop off box, US mail, and of course electronically whenever we are able. Hand washing and disinfecting occurs hourly.

The Highway Department is doing its normal work routine, thankfully mud season has been minimal this year, we of course could have done without Monday’s snow storm. Plowing that storm was not good on roads or equipment. We continue to be optimistic about our chances of getting the steel structure of the Meriden Covered Bridge painted this season.

The Police Department is also fully staffed and running its standard daily schedule of shifts. Our Chief and his officers are here to help each of us with whatever is needed.

Our Fire Department is anticipating an active brush fire season. Chief Taylor is preparing for an extended time of bare brown ground before green up starts. Please, make sure you contact a Fire Warden before doing any outside burning! A brush fire means having to pull together a large group of fire personnel, a gathering we’d like to avoid for any number of good reasons.
Here is a brief review of the Town of Plainfield’s COVID 19 preparedness plans thus far: The town office is in daily communication with the state’s office of emergency management, the Selectmen have met with the town’s Emergency Management Director and each of them checks in regularly at town hall. We have obtained personal protective equipment for our EMS folks. Human Services Director Stephanie Schell is checking in regularly with the town’s elderly and special needs population. Our Police Department is making daily welfare checks to those that are most at risk and perhaps feeling isolated. We even have a municipal strategic reserve of toilet paper. It’s true, we do, contact Stephanie if you need a roll. Its institutional quality is such that a month ago you would have passed on it, but now through the current lens it looks pretty darn soft. Finally, we have a strong contingent of volunteers ready and willing to help at a moments notice.

The Plainfield Business community has offered its assistance as needed. Our institutional partners have also pledged help. In particular, as it has done so many times, Singing Hills has once again offered its facilities to help with housing and meals should they be needed. In short, Plainfield stands strong and ready to help anyone from our community that needs it. Beyond this readiness, most of us are trying our personal best to not help the spread of COVID 19. Our medical professionals need all the resources and supplies that they can get to treat those that have and will come down with it.

As far as public meetings go, we are trying to limit them to as few as possible. The Planning and Zoning Boards are effectively shut down for the month of April. The Selectboard is meeting using a combination of town hall and Zoom resources. Meeting schedules and ID# to join can be found on our website.

Stay safe and if you need your town government there are bunch of us here ready to help.

Steve Halleran
Office 469-3201/Home 675-9974/Cell 252-4272

Thursday March 19th 2020: Like the entire world, your local government is dealing daily with the COVID 19 pandemic. Discussions are occurring on a regular basis with the State of NH Office of Emergency Management. Your Selectboard is in regular contact with the town office, Emergency Management Director, Police Chief and Fire Chief and our Human Services Director. We have made sure that our EMS folks have the necessary personal protective gear that they might need in responding to calls. We are all practicing social distancing; this includes closing the town office to all unnecessary traffic. Car renewals, inventory forms can all be done over the phone or by mail. We have a drop box out front. Visit www.plainfieldnh.org for more details on town office operations. We are also moving toward a video meeting platform, in our case Zoom. The Thursday March 26th Selectboard meeting will be the first attempt using Zoom. The physical location of that meeting has moved back to the Meriden Town Hall, our libraries are now closed. For any meeting that has a Zoom component I will post the meeting ID# on the town’s website for anyone who wishes to video conference in to the session. You can use
a free app for audio and video or a regular phone line to listen in. It’s all a work in progress, so we will need a little slack in the early going as we get used to this new format.

Anyone that needs assistance, please contact us here at the town office during business hours and we will get you the help you need. We are developing a network of people that can deliver meals, run basic errands, etc. The town office will be staffed daily. Nights and weekends residents that need assistance may call my home 675-9974 or cell phone 252-4272.

Our community is deep in public and private resources and if we just take the time to help one and another we will all get through this thing and we will be a stronger community for having done so.

Steve Halleran- Town Administrator

**Thursday March 12th 2020:** This week’s update is from Moderator Paul Franklin and concerns Saturday’s business portion of Town Meeting.

Given the concerns of holding the business session of Plainfield’s Town Meeting this Saturday due to the coronavirus, I have conferred with a number of state and local officials and determined the best option is to proceed with the meeting as scheduled. Let me explain why and what we plan to do to mitigate, to the extent possible, the concerns.

**Basis for Postponement**

First, RSA 40,II-a provides for the moderator to postpone town meeting if it is determined the meeting location is unsafe due to “accident, natural disaster, or other emergency” and confer with local officials and appropriate health/safety officials in determining so. The statute also requires that, if postponement occurs, the meeting’s future date and place be identified.

I have spoken twice with the NH Attorney General representative at the Sec. of State’s office. He noted the Governor has determined from his March 11 conference call with various health officials that there is not a state of emergency in NH at this time due to the coronavirus. The individuals that have tested positive in NH have been from individual traceable contact and not a community spread. I also reviewed the NH Dept. of Health and Human Services Department’s website and the federal health officials (CDC and others) recommendations for guidance. I then conferred as required with the town clerk and select board. We agree that the risk now is low and does not render the “meeting location unsafe”. Also, if we were to postpone the meeting, identifying a “safer” future date is difficult, especially as most health experts predict the situation will likely be worse for a period of time before hopefully getting better.

**Mitigation of Concerns**
Recognizing that some folks, especially those who have underlying health issues, may be hesitant to attend, you should be aware of several things at Town Meeting that will be different:

1) The statutes do not provide for absentee or written ballot voting at the business session portion of the town meeting. However, for Article 2, the library article, I will keep the ballot box open for an hour after discussion concludes. While not required, it will allow for voters who do not want to congregate during the discussion but wish to vote, to have family or friends call them at home and be able to come, register, vote and return home.

2) All the chairs, tables, etc. will be cleaned and sanitized the evening before the meeting and hand cleaner will be available during the meeting. Voting and microphone use will be done in such a way as to eliminate any contact.

3) The regular school entrance will be locked, nor will there be any 8th grade food buffet, babysitting or other displays in that area. You will enter the side gym door as you did for voting on Tuesday. Hopefully the 8th grade will have some donation “help your self” food in the gym, but you may want to bring your own drink and food.

4) To minimize the time we are assembled, I will try to stream-line where we can without inhibiting discussion.

Last, this is a meeting amongst neighbors. Please try to do your part in making this meeting happen as safely as possible, balancing your important right to participate and vote with caring for each other’s health.

Paul Franklin, Town Moderator

Thursday March 5th 2020: As we start a new month, much of our attention has turned to a new nemesis COVID-19. The town receives daily briefings from various local public health agencies and from the State of New Hampshire. At this time, since no vaccine exists, our main job is make sure that we share preventative care information as it becomes available and that we all try to maintain our perspective. Good hygiene and old fashioned Yankee common sense will get us a long way. Its seems the same rules that help us stay healthy during cold and flu season will in large part take care of us through this new challenge.

The sap is running a sure sign of town meeting season. We now turn to the remainder of the town meeting warrant, Article 5. “All Veterans Tax Credit” (RSA 72:28-b) is an opportunity for voters to extend to anyone who has served in the US military for more than 90 days a tax credit. The law requires that if adopted, the relief be the same as the standard tax credit, which in Plainfield is $500 per year. Currently, we raise an additional $52,500 at tax rate setting to offset the 105 Veterans Credits that we issue to qualifying service men and women and their spouses.
Article 6. This article seeks to continue the KUA Study group. A report from this group may be found each year in the annual report. In my view, the group provides a necessary linkage between the town and school.

Article 7. This article seeks to continue the Finance Committee. A report from this group may be found each year in the annual report. This group plays a vital role in our annual budgeting process.

Article 8. Acceptance of reports as they appear in the annual report.

Article 9. By petition, asks voters to send a message to our law makers to enact carbon pricing legislation.

So that is it, in articles the warrant is very small; in substance it is very robust. As most of us have experienced our home mail boxes have been filled with all sorts of “information” these last few days. If you have any questions about things on the warrant or how the town does its business, please stop in at the town office or call and we can discuss them directly. Plainfield has a long history of a well informed and educated legislative body that is pretty good at determining the wheat from the chaff.

Please plan to vote on Tuesday, we do have contested races for Selectman and Library Trustees, and plan to attend the Saturday Business portion of Town Meeting.

The town’s Zoning Board meets on Monday; the agenda is posted at www.plainfieldnh.org

The Selectmen are also meeting on Monday to set up the polling place at the Plainfield School and to meet with the owner of Modern Protective Coatings a company that they might use to clean and protect the steel under the Meriden Covered Bridge. This work, at least in theory, could happen as early as April of this year.

Thursday February 27th 2020: For obvious reasons, Plainfield’s gravel roads will be posted as of Monday March 2nd. Vehicles over six tons will need permission from the town’s Road Agent before travelling on town roads. Mud season used to be a late March, April thing, much like sugaring season, mud season is now a late February early March thing. If you live on a gravel road and you’re new to this mud season experience, things are going to get interesting for you. If you drive a low to the ground two wheel drive car and the road looks like it’s too muddy or the frozen ruts are two deep; they probably are and vehicle damage could result. Our highway department will do what it can, but frankly there are days some years when they can’t do anything until the frost drops out and the road begins to “dry.” I clearly remember years ago being in a town 4x4 truck hubs locked in (remember those) with Road Agent Albert Earle, unfiltered Camel cigarette clenched firmly in his teeth as he gave the gas to the truck, hard, in a failed attempt to climb to the top of True Road the town maintained portion. I am not sure why Albert had chosen to take me up there on that particular day, probably to show me it was muddy. He was right.
Back to our peek at town meeting, we have finished with Article 2 the Meriden Library replacement and enjoyed a nice lunch from this year’s 8th grade class. You have, by now, taken a few minutes to check on townsfolk, basically to see who is still with whom, or who might now be sparking with whom and of course the annual speculation on who might be adding to the future school age population of Plainfield. It is spring after all. Settling back into your seat its time for Articles 3 and 4.

**Article 3** is the town’s operating budget and it is proposed at $2,449,621 up 3.8%. The change is driven mostly by the cost of highway related winter expenses. Things like overtime, chains, salt, and diesel fuel. Highway is usually under spent and for 2019 their budget was over spent, a real concern as it the highway department that anchors the entire budget. It is where the most employees for the town work and where by far we have the greatest expenses.

The proposed operating budget has no new employees and essentially no new programs; basically the operating budget is a continuation of town operations as you have been accustomed to them. The trash/recycling program is unchanged, our new municipal fire department continues to serve the community extremely well in the same professional manner as when they were two separate fire companies, our Police Department is fully staffed, Human Service Director Stephanie Schell will be offering the same robust program that has had in place for many years. The town office even accepts credit cards now. It’s all very reasonable stuff that residents have clearly indicated they want provided; it just costs a pile of money when you add it all up.

**Article 4** This is the full slate of capital reserve articles that we have funded for many years. The request is to set aside $257,500 for future capital needs. There is no contribution this year to the Meriden Library Replacement fund, that issue having been dealt with in Article 2, but we have increased the fire equipment reserve fund allocation and the bridge fund allocation. We know that we have some substantial bridge work to be done in the near future on the Meriden Covered bridge and we are trying to get our arms around the magnitude of that project. The work is going to be expensive and we are behind in setting aside enough money. We did replaced two bridges recently, as a result the bridge fund has a current of $23,000.

Articles 2,3& 4 are the only articles with tax dollars attached to them. If everything is approved at town meeting they represent an additional $.87/$1,000 on the tax rate. To be clear though this does not mean our tax rate increases to $26.87/$1,000. For example, any increase in the town portion of the rate will be reduced by $.34 because we raised additional money at tax rate setting last year and will not be likely to do that again this year.

Town reports are now out, if you didn’t get one in the mail, contact us and we will try to get you one. The cover design has been well received. The full report is also available online. Please plan to vote on Tuesday, we do have contested races for Selectman and Library Trustees, and plan to attend the Saturday Business portion of Town Meeting.
Thursday February 20th 2020: Note to be outdone by the national stage, Plainfield’s own Finance Committee is bringing to you the **2020 Plainfield Candidates night on Thursday February 27**th **from 6:30pm to 8:00pm at the Plainfield Elementary School Music Room.** We do have three contested races in Plainfield, one for Selectman and two for Library Trustees. It’s not clear yet if CNN and FOX are covering the event, we will have a location established for parking of satellite trucks and the like just in case. Please plan to come, ask the tough questions and see if you can make the candidates squirm. If nothing else it sounds like you can have free light refreshments. What is not to like about that.

Lets turn our attention back to the 2020 Town Meeting warrant. At 7pm on Tuesday March 10**th** (traditional town meeting day) the voting on Article 1. (town officers) will close. The votes will be counted and the results known. The meeting will then be recessed until Saturday March 14**th** when at 10:00am in the morning we shall gather to dispense with the rest of the warrant. Article 2 concerns the proposed replacement of the Meriden Library building. The proposed building project is the same as last year’s offering, the difference is that there is not a request for long-term borrowing. Overall project cost is now at $1,046,000. For the current year publically funded portion of the project, a one time appropriation of $183,000 is proposed by our Board of Library Trustees. This equates to something like $.60 on our tax rate or $60 for each $100,000 in taxable property. The mythical average house in Plainfield has an assessed value of $250,000. In this mythical house lives two hard working adults and their .8 of a kid who we all know is above average in all things. Of course, the average house doesn’t really exist. Each voter will have to decide for herself or himself if the project has merit and should be approved or not. What no one can deny is that many Plainfield residents have, over the last twenty years, put their money where their hearts are, into our libraries. In 2002 the town approved a $762,019 addition to the Plainfield Library, including a loan for not more than $400,000. The balance of that project came from private fund raising. That loan was paid off two years ago. Along the way private efforts have completed the basement at PRML. Now comes the Meriden Library, a $1,046,000 project with a public ask of $183,000. In this case, a complete replacement of the existing facility is proposed. By easy math (including the Plainfield Library basement) that’s about $2 million dollars worth of library buildings for something like $600,000 in public tax dollars. Whether you approve or disapprove of these two projects, you can’t deny that a lot of private money has been put in the collection plate for both of these places of learning. In my book that makes Plainfield a pretty cool town to live in and to raise a family. The planning and preparation work is now done on his project, its up to the town’s legislative body to show up on Saturday March 14**th** (business portion of town meeting) and decide this issue.

Next week we shall cover articles 3&4, the town budget and reserve funding, after that it’s article 5 the All Veterans Tax Exemption and the rest of the warrant. The week after that, you guessed it Town Meeting week. Please plan to vote on Tuesday March 10**th** and attend the business session on Saturday March 14th, your voice is important. By definition, our town reflects the outcomes of these meetings. Those that show up and vote, decide the issues of the day.
Thursday February 13th 2020: Well, after the great Iowa Caucus Raucous, NH election officials were, going into Tuesday’s Primary, nervous as cats in a room full of rocking chairs. However, thanks to the work of Selectmen, Moderators and most importantly Town Clerks all over the state, the NH Primary was proof yet again that local government is best and gets the job done. Right here in our own home town, we organized helpers, set up polls, processed hundreds of votes, counted them using paper and pen, put all the election stuff away and were tucked into bed by 10pm with nearly all the state’s results known to the world. Good job New Hampshire and many thanks to all those who did their jobs! In the case of Plainfield, much of our day’s success was due to the extraordinary effort of Town Clerk Michelle Marsh. For Town Clerks weeks of work lead up to voting day and days of work follow it.

Next on our docket is Town Meeting. All the major pieces for that day are now in place. The Selectboard will be fine tuning their material to be presented at annual meeting. Each week between now and then I will try to push out a few facts about each of the nine substantive articles on the approved warrant. This week lets focus on Article #1 the Election of Town Officers. On **Tuesday March 10th (traditional town meeting day)** paper ballot voting will take place in the Plainfield School Gymnasium from 8am to 7pm. We have several contested races this year. Incumbent Selectman Ron Eberhardt has a challenge from Marc Morgan. Library Trustee Rosemary Mills and Bev Widger are running for a three year Library Trustee seat. John Hendrick and Adrienne Cedeno are running for a one year Library Trustee seat. The positions of Moderator, Cemetery Trustee, Trustee of Trust Funds and Supervisor of the Checklist each has the Incumbents running unopposed.

I have heard recent talk out of our Finance Committee of trying to organize a candidate’s night for our three contested races; an opportunity for voters to meet and ask questions of our candidates. No firm plans have yet been made, stay tuned on that one.

For those that will be away on voting day, you may vote absentee for Town and School Officers. Contact Town Clerk Michelle Marsh for the details. Essentially, it’s the same process as we just completed for the NH Primary. The easiest approach is to present yourself to the Clerk, request a ballot and vote right here in the office.

Next week, the Planning Board is in session on Monday evening at 7pm here at the Meriden Town Hall.

The Meriden Library Building Committee is meeting on Tuesday night at 7pm here at the Meriden Town Hall.

The Selectboard is in session on Wednesday evening at 6pm Plainfield Library. Agendas for these meetings can be viewed at [www.plainfieldnh.org](http://www.plainfieldnh.org)
**Thursday February 5th 2020:** The Selectboard completed their work last evening on the warrant and budget for voter consideration at this year’s town meeting. Both can be viewed by going to www.plainfieldnh.org.

Since we have not yet suffered enough to call it winter, the thought that town and school meetings are just a month away is hard to grasp. It is however true, small town’s all around the state are completing their warrants and sending raw materials off to their local print shops to be converted to town reports. The finished town report becomes the manual that all residents need to navigate town/school meetings. Everything you need is in that book, no computer or fancy mobile device required. The book includes financial reports, committee reports and most important of all, the warrants for town/school meetings. All business to be taken up at these meeting will be found in the warrant. Plainfield is a traditional town meeting town (RSA 39:1). By law, for all traditional towns, Town Meeting Day is the second Tuesday in March. In Cornish, the community conducts all of their business that day; the way town meeting was envisioned. In Plainfield, many decades ago, the town decided to do as others have done and move the “Business Portion” of the meeting to the Saturday next. The thought being more people would be able to attend on a Saturday than can on a weekday. If you read the warrant you will find this information clearly spelled out. We elect officers and vote on any zoning changes on Tuesday, the meeting is then recessed at 7pm Saturday next at 10:00am.

No chaotic caucus for us, just good old traditional discussion and debate. Everyone who wishes may speak and everyone who is registered to vote may do so. So, be on the look out for that town report, due in your mail box around February 27th and posted on the town website prior to that. Please don’t toss the town report into the Post Office recycling bin, take it home, and give it a read. Come to town meeting and participate. We all have a duty as a citizen to become educated to the issues of the day and to make our views known by voting. By definition, there is no wrong answer that comes from Town Meeting deliberations.

**Thursday January 30th 2020:** Where is winter, people seem to be asking as an icebreaker for their visit to town hall? Yesterday at my house we had full sun and two chipmunks running around on a stonewall like it was September 29th, not January 29th. However, as my favorite substitute teacher at PES used to say, kids lets not fold up our tents too early. We know very well that we are but one or two snow events and a blast of arctic air away from feeling and looking a lot like winter. April 15th is a long off just yet. None the less, given the current weather, the Highway Department is sharpening their chainsaws and putting on their safety chaps, we are headed back outside to do some tree trimming and brush clearing along town roads.
Last week we covered a portion of the zoning ordinance that dealt with the approval options for property owners to have businesses on their property. Something we have seen less of in recent years. This week, a few words on the sections of our zoning ordinance that are booming: **Solar energy systems (section 3.18)** is heavy hitter right now. Staying out of the weeds, essentially if you want a solar system on your roof to serve your home it’s a $50 building permit and off you go. If you want a ground mounted system to serve your house have at it, again just a building permit is required. If you want a ground mounted system of any kind and you live in the Village Residential zone (smallest lots, highest densities of houses) you need a special exception from the Zoning Board of Adjustment. This will cost you $150 or so and about thirty minutes of your life. You might have to hear from you neighbors, if they wish, and you might end up moving the location slightly or doing some extra landscaping, but again that’s it pretty simple and easy to do. Every proposed solar array has been approved.

**Accessory Dwelling Units (section 4.13C)** Plainfield has offered the ability for nearly all homeowners to add a single small “Accessory Apartment” in their homes or above an attached garage for several decades now. These units, in the early days, were known as “Mother-in-Law Apartments.” This nomenclature has sent a shiver of fear down the spine of many a Plainfield spouse. So, in the age of politically correct phrasing, the Mother-in-Law Apartment is dead and we now refer to these as Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU’s) a something that sounds more like a high end feature you can order on a new BMW.

The reality of the Upper Valley right now is that housing is at a premium and so providing property owners an opportunity add a second small unit makes good sense and helps reduce housing costs for the owner and the tenant. So, here too just about every property owner can now, with just a building permit, add a small one or two bedroom apartment to their home. If the unit is to be detached from the main house, an application to the Zoning Board is necessary. A decade ago the only way to add a second stand alone unit would have been to subdivide land make a new lot, a high bar for many. Now, that is no longer necessary. There are requirements that have to be met for a new ADU, but they are very reasonable and are designed only to ensure that the unit has proper access to utilities and can physically be located on the property. To learn more check out these sections of our Zoning Ordinance at [www.plainfieldnh.org](http://www.plainfieldnh.org). If either of these sections interests you, give the office a call.

Final town budget hearing is Wednesday night February 5th. The Selectboard meeting starts at 6pm at the Meriden Town Hall, the budget hearing is at 7pm. Draft warrant and budget are both posted at, you guessed it, [www.plainfieldnh.org](http://www.plainfieldnh.org).

**Thursday January 23rd 2020:** A little update on last week’s notes, there is now a 2020 Garage/Recycling Calendar posted on the town’s website. It can be viewed and printed right from the town’s website homepage [www.plainfieldnh.org](http://www.plainfieldnh.org). While future program changes are still possible, Casella was very accommodating and agreed to do up a new calendar, now, for 2020. Once printed copies are available, they will be placed at various locations around town.
The Selectmen will be completing their budget work on February 5th and will post the warrant for Town Meeting on February 19th. You can view the town’s proposed budget and warrant articles anytime by visiting the town’s website.

Plainfield Business Uses: There are no proposed zoning changes on the 2020 warrant. However, in recent months abutting property owners, to proposed business uses, have expressed surprise at how many opportunities there are in the Zoning Ordinance for business uses to be located in Plainfield. Essentially, every home owner, with Zoning Board approval, has the right to a business of their design that employs seven or fewer employees. The ordinance terms this a Cottage Business Use. The applicant must demonstrate that they can operate the business without adversely impacting their neighbors; the devil of course dwells in the details. For property on state maintained roads larger business uses are allowed and the owner does not need to live on site. This is termed an “Approved Business Project.” Having worked with both our Planning and Zoning Board for several decades now, I know from experience that both boards work very hard to allow private landowners every opportunity to use their property as they wish. The reality of the Upper Valley right now is Plainfield property is not highly valued for business uses; it is highly valued for residential uses. Our reputation for a high quality school system and our proximity to the DHMC economic engine of the area, makes Plainfield a very desirable place to buy a home and raise a family. Case in point, in the last two years the zoning board has heard four cases for the creation of new businesses in town, three of them have been located on the Route 12A corridor near the Lebanon line. So, if you have not done so, take some time and familiarize yourself with the Plainfield Zoning ordinance. The document is intended to reflect the values of our community. If you have questions or strong feelings on how business uses should be handled in town our Planning Board is the place to direct those comments. The board’s web page is updated weekly and has current meeting times posted. Public comment, either in person or written is always welcomed. All changes to the ordinance must be approved by a vote of Town Meeting. The Plainfield Zoning Ordinance may be viewed anytime, by visiting www.plainfieldnh.org. Go to the documents tab. Hard copies available at the town office and our two libraries.

The Kimball Union Study Committee meets next Tuesday at 6:30pm here at the Meriden Town Hall. Make it a great week. Enjoy the winter weather, its not all bad.

Thursday January 16th 2020: The holiday season now pleasantly behind us we have our sleeves rolled up and it’s all Town Meeting preparation from now till mid February. If you want a sneak a peek at the proposed warrant, it can be viewed anytime on the town’s website. Town Reports will, of course, be out in late February.

It’s been gratifying to have so many people in the last two weeks stop in the office and ask us “where the hell is the new trash/recycling calendar is?” I sincerely mean it, it makes us feel worthy. Often we push out a lot of information that we are quite certain almost no one ever reads or looks at. The fact that a bunch of people have noticed that the refuse collection schedule has run out means it’s a thing worth having. So, where is
it! Currently, we are operating without a contract our very good deal as it turns out expired 12/31/19. The Selectmen, the Solid Waste Committee and Cassella are all working on a “new deal” that reflects the changes to recyclable material and markets. By example, glass right now is just a heavy burden for us. It costs a lot of money to get rid of glass. Seriously, start buying beer in aluminum cans, pour it into a class and put the aluminum can in the recycling and we all have something to celebrate. You get a cold tavern style beer, we get a commodity that has a positive cash flow, what is not to like about that. Come on beer drinkers of Plainfield, do your part! The good news is that based on the overwhelming support for the curbside program expressed in last falls “trash survey” the goal is to; if at all possible, continue to the curbside program for both trash and recycling. Like most things in our lives it comes down to dollars, more dollars. So, for the next couple of months as we work all this out, the current program is continuing as is, no changes. For the rest of January the week of the 20th is the next collection cycle (collection will occur on Monday, Martin Luther King Day), Tuesday and Wednesday just like any other week. In February, collection are the week of the 3rd and the 17th, March its the weeks of the 2nd, 16th and the 30th, again no holiday changes. Take out a sharpie and mark your home calendar or conjure up your personal assistant Siri and ask her nicely to add these important dates to your calendar. By April, we should have any changes to the program hammered out and a new schedule out, suitable of course for refrigerators all over town.

Bare with us on our gravel roads, the January thaw these days is nothing to take lightly and frankly we don’t have a good “January Mud Season” plan. Many residents love a warm winter. Highway Departments to do not, we have already purchased a winters worth of road salt, warm winters are icy, and if you think driving on a mud rutted road is tough, try plowing it. Its really very hard on the drivers and their equipment. Road Agent Collins and his crew are out patching roads the best we can. These are not the winters of our youth. I clearly remember snow banks in Plainfield Village taller than us bundled up kids. While that amount of snow could still occur, this winter has not started out in that direction.

The town’s final budget hearing is February 5th at the Meriden Town Hall, 7pm. As previously stated you can always view the latest budget proposal on our website; both the home page and the Selectmen’s page have links to it. Call the town office with any questions or if we can help in anyway.

Steve

Thursday December 19th 2019: The Plainfield Community Holiday Celebration held last Sunday at the Plainfield Town Hall never fails to get us all in the spirit. As a young child I have fond memories of the event. Each year, for a few hours, families would come together and celebrate community and the holiday season. All of us kids had a chance to see Santa Clause (whose weight and height seemed to vary greatly from one year to the next) and receive a gift. We were all truly equal at this event and no one was left out. Ability to pay made no difference. At some point the event ran its course and stopped.
Some years ago I was talking with resident Joy Hutchins about these experiences and she out of the goodness of her heart has brought that magic back to our community for the last seven years. All are welcome and all are equal. You cannot leave this event without a warm feeling in your heart as kids young and old run around dancing, playing games, receiving gifts and door prizes. This year we had a $2^{nd}$ grader win a bear stuffed animal that was literally twice as big as she. How much fun is that? Each year David Cassidy assists Dan Falcone with the Master of Ceremony duties in away that only David can. His gifts bring us all joy. Thank you Joy Hutchins, for another well done event that has brought us all closer together.

Budget season is upon us hard right now and is not nearly as much fun as a Holiday party. If we are going to be ready for a well thought out Town Meeting, the work must be done. Here are some key dates to keep in mind:

January 15$^{th}$ is the Town’s first budget hearing, 7pm at the Plainfield Library.
February 4$^{th}$ last day to petition the Selectmen to place something on the warrant.
February 5$^{th}$ is the Town’s final budget hearing, 7pm at the Meriden Town Hall
February 19$^{th}$ the Selectboard will post the Town Warrant setting the agenda for the 2020 Town Meeting.

For more key dates visit [www.plainfieldnh.org](http://www.plainfieldnh.org)

From the Town Office best wishes to all. Thanks to all the volunteers that make our local governments here in the Upper Valley work. If you watch any national news at all, it’s not hard right now to make the case that local governance is best. None of it happens without volunteers being willing to serve.

These updates will return in mid January. For the next couple of weeks we shall focus solely on closing out 2019 and getting 2020 off to a great start. As always, if you have a question call or stop in at town hall. Also check the town website, it is updated nearly every day.

**Thursday December 12$^{th}$ 2019:** Last week we discussed projects that we would not be doing in the next five years, this week let’s turn our attention to one that we will do in the next five years. The Mill Bridge (aka the Meriden Covered Bridge) is like French’s Ledges, the Connecticut River, Burnhaps Island, the Plainfield Town Hall its one of those cornerstone icons of our town. The bridge was built by James Tasker of Cornish NH in 1880 for $693. Tasker was paid $492, the other $200 went to Levi Sanderson for the site work and abutments.

For decades now motorists have been tearing off portions of the bridge with all manner of vehicles, tractors, dump trucks, delivery vans have all struck it and mostly all before distracted driving became the rage. Whiskey may have played a role, but no one is saying. I particularly enjoyed learning that in 1935 the Selectmen purchased tin to replace the wood shingled roof on the bridge. The woman of Plainfield banded together and quickly got that decision reversed. I can vividly remember in 1991 when our team had a
public hearing to replace that shingled roof with standing seam. Apparently, we didn’t check our history; we confidently entered the hearing and were promptly run out of the room on a rail. We ordered cedar shingles the next day. Those singles remain on the roof to this day.

In 1962 the town paid $10,000 of the $20,000 cost to have the state bridge crew lift the bridge up, placing steel I beams under it. The approaches to the bridge were softened at that time as well. In the late 1980’s the town again paid the state bridge crew $25,000 of the $50,000 cost to repair the abutments and existing steel work. We fast forward now to the current day. Sometime in the next three to five years, maybe sooner, we are going to have to sandblast and paint those steel beams under the covered bridge. The bill for that month of work will likely be north of $150,000 maybe as high as $250,000. Not surprisingly we will again be looking to use some state funding for this project. One hundred forty years later, James Tasker’s and Levi Sanderson’s invoices to build the bridge won’t cover the paperwork cost to permit us even to paint its belly.

Next week the Selectmen meet on Wednesday evening at the Plainfield Library at 6pm. The Finance Committee and the Solid Waste Committee will be in attendance. If you are going to attend one Selectboard meeting this entire year, this one would be a good choice. Lots of current day issues will be discussed. Budgets, Meriden Library replacement, solid waste collection, future road work all to be discussed. It doesn’t get much more exciting in our world than that.

The KUA Study Committee is also in session on Thursday at 7pm here at the Meriden Town Hall. This is their second meeting, all are of course welcome.

Steve

**Thursday December 5th 2019:** Despite falling temperatures and an increasing wind more than fifty hearty souls completed the 2019 Turkey Trot. Ellen Abrahamson Bonner took home the pie and will host the Golden Turkey for a year. It is fun to see the Turkey Trot grow in popularity. Thank you to all the participants.

Next time you travel Stage Road, take a good look at the Highway Garage, the fire escape has now been installed as part of the employees break room upgrade project. I appreciate Road Agent Collin’s school pride, the jet black escape with orange ladder rungs is good for safety and matches PES colors, go Black Hawks! The lounge has received new flooring, fresh paint and a general cleaning out. Earlier in the year we installed new vinyl siding (turns out vinyl is not final) on the Stage Road side of the building. Yes there are ongoing discussions about a future replacement of the facility, but the reality is that change is years away. The facility is meeting our current needs and with a little love can continue to do so. It is paid for and we are frugal New Englanders after all. The
Selectboard is committed to insuring a safe workplace for our employees. In the last few years the facility has received a new well, an emergency generator, new floor drain system, siding and now an updated break room. All of which are significant improvements which will extend the life of this key facility.

The same story is true for the Town Offices and Police Department. The Meriden Town Hall building is more than 100 years old and has the same issues that all old buildings experience. Yes, it has some punky wood and a crack or two in the foundation. At 53 years old I have those same conditions, but I get by the best I can. While we did have some issues back during the 1995 conversion of the space to town and police offices, the group that drove the project home took extra care to add air sealing and lots of insulation to the facility. Good thinking. The building’s slate roof has been well maintained with annual inspections and slate repair as needed. So, here too the building could be replaced and will be some day, but for right now we are planning to reside in it for many years to come. Proof of this commitment can be found in that at the moment our facility manager is working with local suppliers investigating a conversion from fossil fuel to heat pumps for the facility. No idea yet if it can be done in a cost effective manner, but we are going to find out. As a “Ready for 100” town, the Selectboard has made it clear that replacing the 25 year old boiler with another dinosaur burner is not our first or even second choice.

Next week the Finance Committee meets on Monday night at the Plainfield Library. Don’t forget next Wednesday is the Energy Committee’s Electricity 101 session also at the Plainfield Library starting at 7pm. It promises to be a shockingly informative presentation. The proposed 2020 town budget will soon be posted on our website. It of course remains a work in progress right up until it’s voted on.

Steve

**Wednesday November 27th 2019:** First and foremost from the Plainfield Town Office, best wishes to everyone for a safe and happy Thanksgiving holiday. The Selectboard’s week started off with one of their favorite activities as Selectboard members, the presentation of the Boston Post Cane to our oldest resident. Having sat in on a number of these over the years, I can attest to the fact that you always come away feeling richer and thankful for our community and its members who come from all walks of life. Without exception the recipients are always someone that you can learn from and have a meaning experience as you visit. In the current case, the Selectboard presented the cane to Elizabeth “Libby” Backofen. Libby and her late husband Walter moved to Plainfield in the 1960’s, restoring an old farmhouse and returning fallow fields to apple orchards, Christmas trees and blue berry bushes, surrounded by well cared for hard and softwood woodland. Now well into her 95th year, you always know exactly where you stand with Libby and how she feels about a subject. The cane presentation was a great way to start the holiday week.

The Plainfield School Board is in search of a new member to fill a vacancy created by the resignation of Michael Buttons. The appointment will be until the School Officer
elections in March. Interested persons should immediately contact the school’s administrative office (469-3250) to get an application or visit www.plainfieldnh.org where the application is also available on the home page under News and Current Events. The School Board hopes to fill the vacancy at their December 5th meeting. So, if you have interest in getting involved in your local school here is an opportunity. Meeting resident expectations for road maintenance and garbage collection are complex enough, transforming a child into a thoughtful functioning member of society seems like work that could keep one fully engaged and be worth contributing some time to. After all, we can never have too many functioning members of society.

The Town Office will be closed Thursday and Friday of this week, we reopen on Monday December 2nd. Property taxes are due that day, so it will be a lively day here at the office. Tax day always reminds me of the time, some years back, when the rate had risen sharply. An unnamed resident slammed down his hard earned check on the desk, said that was it, he was selling his Meriden home, moving to Plainfield where he had heard taxes were much lower! You can’t make this stuff up. We got him slowed down on his home sale and have been great friends ever sense.

Library Trustees meet Monday December 2nd at the Town Offices, the Selectboard meets next Wednesday December 4th also here at the Town Offices.

**Thursday November 21st 2019:** The Selectboard is now fully involved in developing the 2020 town budget and warrant articles that will create the agenda for next March’s town meeting. Visit the town’s website www.plainfieldnh.org for a list of all the key dates for our budgeting process. Shortly after December 1st we will post on the website a draft budget and warrant for all to review. In a nutshell, if you have an issue that you would like to see included in this year’s warrant, you have until February 4th to either convince the Selectboard to put it on the warrant or to get at least 25 registered voters to sign a petition and present it to your Selectboard. Remember, in our governance you are a legislator, with just a little support you can champion any cause you wish (as long as it’s allowed by state law). On town meeting day you can stand before your fellow townspeople and make the case why it should be approved. Almost no where else in the world but in New England, do individual residents have such power! In short words, Town Meeting rocks and if you’re not participating you are missing it.

Don’t forget that next Thursday morning (Thanksgiving) the Plainfield Turkey Trot kicks off in the morning with the en masse finish at 11:00am at the Plainfield Town Hall. At stake is the coveted Golden Turkey and one fine pumpkin pie. Details are posted on the town website.

Mark your calendars for Wednesday December 11th at 7pm Plainfield Elementary School for a program on electricity brought to use by the Plainfield and Cornish Energy Committees. https://www.plainfieldnh.org/energy/energy.htm If you are like me and can’t figure out how the same wall outlet that powers your energy hogging vacuum cleaner can also charge your cell phone without blowing it to pieces, or if you think
AC/DC is only a rock band from the 1980s, this event is for us and could, in pinch, save our bacon from being fried some one day.

Have a great Thanksgiving with family and friends.

Steve

**Thursday November 14\textsuperscript{th} 2019:** I have just returned from a quick trip to the sunshine state to visit my in laws winter retreat located in the town of New Smyrna. Now I’ll admit, the warm sunshine was nice, particularly in view of the weather around here the last week. If one wishes to fill well about the place you call home, spend an hour on I-4 near Orlando. In that hour you will move about one mile and wonder why anyone would choose to go through that hell on a regular basis. The Upper Valley will suddenly look pretty desolate and the DHMC traffic will be pretty much a nonissue. A trip away, while nice, always at least for me puts into perspective why we call this place home.

Unfortunately, highway did get the opportunity to take out their winter toys early this year. I, as the chief bean counter, strongly prefer to make it through Thanksgiving without our first salt application and early December is even better. Not the case this year, the early cold blast caught many a on the roads with worn summer tires. It is always a tough start to winter if you have wrecked the family car before cranberry sauce and dry turkey. From a budget perspective each of those events costs the town something like $3,000 to $7,000 depending on over time and the need for salt. Not great anyway you count it.

If opportunity allows for it give some thought this year to participating in the annual Town of Plainfield Turkey Trot. This fun family friendly event goes from the Plainfield School to the Plainfield Town Hall, nearly 7 miles all down hill. The joy of the turkey trot is you start any time you wish, seriously it’s true, and the winner is the person who arrives at the Plainfield Town closest to 11:00am. Hint, those super fit runners always finish way too early. The prize, a local baked pumpkin pie and the right to bring home the golden turkey trophy for a year, bragging rights if you will. This event dates back to at least Malcome Grobe then Jay Waldner. For the last twenty years I have held “the turkey trot folder” at my house. Melissa and I changed to the pie prize from a box of chocolate covered cherries and added the Golden Turkey. The en masse finish is what makes it unique. It’s all in fun, but no matter how you choose to get across town (run, walk, bike, ski) you can then spend the afternoon enjoying guilt free turkey and football. I think the people that get the most out of the event are family and friends who walk together, catching up on news and the like. Check out the town report, we always put a picture in there of the participants, its tradition. Some years we are in shorts, others we are wearing winter gear. Turkey trot details are posted on the town website and at the libraries. The sign up sheet is at PES no later than 7:30am on Thanksgiving Day.

The Solid Waste Group meets Monday night (11/18) at the Plainfield Library to go start tabulating surveys. Selectmen meet next Wednesday (11/20) to continue their budget
work also over at the Plainfield Library at 6pm. The Library Policy Group meets on Thursday (11/21) at 11:30am at the Meriden Library.

Don’t forget to send in the two postage paid surveys, response rate seems to be closing in on 60%. It’s not too late to cast your votes.

Steve

**Thursday November 7th 2019:** Thursday evening last into Sunday morning last was not a great time to be in the northeast. Unusually warm weather and cold air from Canada crashed into each other as seems to happen in late fall these days, the results were damaging winds and power outages for many. Plainfield is covered by three utility companies, Eversource on the west side, NH Electric Coop in the middle and Liberty on the East side. The NH Coop covers much of Plainfield that was electrified under the old rural electrification program. As Dan Poor taught us in 8th grade the shortest distance between two points is a straight line. Well that was great when Plainfield/Cornish where one big sheep pasture and you were going farm house to farm house, but not so good now that we are basically one large forest with a whole lot more customers sprinkled around. Consequently, if we have extended power outages it’s often in the NH Coop area. This was the case last week with some of our residents being out of power for three days. If your home is in the Liberty Utility coverage area chances are you can’t remember an outage of more than a few hours. It is pretty hard to enjoy a candle light dinner with that special someone under those conditions. In the NH Coop coverage areas, where my home is located, we get to practice those types of dinners several times each year. Many of us have, in the last twenty years added generators or back up battery systems to our homes. Our own little proactive climate change initiative. As always, if you are out of power please make the effort to contact the utility that serves you directly, don’t assume even with the “smart meters” that they know you are out. The Town Office does monitor outage maps for all three utilities during a storm. We also have assigned contacts for each company. The reality is though we aren’t much help at restoring power for the first few days after a big storm. We do constantly forward information to the utilities about downed trees, lines and broken poles, but again it’s often an overwhelming situation for them that can take 48 hours or more to sort out and make real progress. In the case of ice storms, the worst of all storms, it can easily be days, a week or more. Consequently, all of us need to be prepared for a three or more day outage should “the big one” hit. We have had several 100 year storm events in the last ten years. I know that doesn’t sound statistically possible, but it’s true. Be prepared.

2020 Budgeting is fully underway now, the Selectmen held their initial meeting with the Finance Committee on Wednesday. The first cut of the new town budget is scheduled to be ready for review on December 4th. The first budget hearing is planned for January 15th. If you have any questions or ideas for consideration please seek stop by town hall
or contact one or more of your selectmen, share your views. The Finance Committee is focused on trying to better understand the town and school district’s capital needs over the next decade. We have been pretty good at timing out equipment purchases, but have admittedly spent far less time trying to predict with any certainty when we will need a new highway garage or town office or school addition. The truth is there are no absolute answers to these questions, but we have committed to try and provide some improved information to the group.

The Zoning Board has the rare Thursday night meeting next week. Once case on the docket, ground mounted solar in the Village Residential zone (VR), which due to typically small lot sizes in the VR, requires ZBA review. Details can be found on the ZBA webpage. The next Selectboard meeting is November 20th at the Plainfield Library.

**Thursday October 31st 2019:** The brilliant colors of fall have all faded to gray and with it our annual pumpkin friends have begun to recede as well. It’s so much fun to see the creativity side of our residents. Leaf peepers stopping to take photos or calling the town office in search of a particular pumpkin person they saw on the World Wide Web or Facebook. It’s all good stuff for Plainfield. Thank you to all the families that hosted this year!

The changing of the landscape to grayscale also means the arrival of the blue and brown tarps around town, covering boats, campers, lawn furniture and other items being protected from the winter to come. Nothing says I care like a blue plastic tarp. If you look close you might catch the first snow birds packing their cars in the dark of night so that neighbors won’t see them as they are planning their escape to warm sun and shorts. The rest of us left scrambling to find hats and glove that match or to start those well intended projects for the summer, still mostly still undone. This same thing happens with town government. Most obvious in highway, Road Agent Collins and his crew spend their late October days preparing for the change in seasons. Putting gravel shoulders on the newly paved roads, getting road markings down for the dark season that is now upon us. Winter sand has to be hauled, the salt shed filled, plows and sanders taken out of storage and made operational. Plow frames installed, etc. No Road Agent worth his/her salt will go very deep into October without at least one or two trucks ready for winter action. Road side mowing, this year a little late for us, is being completed. Culverts have to be checked and where needed flushed so that they are ready for the fall rains and spring snow melt. It’s a lot of work to be done and its all underway right now.

The blue and green surveys that were included in the tax bills are pouring into the town office at a good clip. Don’t wait for yours to finds its way back behind the desk, fill them out and drop them in a mail box, postage paid.

Finally, and most importantly as we transition to late fall/early winter give some thought to getting involved in your local government. We are always searching for committee members for one project or another. Often the Planning Board, Zoning Board or Conservation Commission has vacancies. Each year the Finance Committee and KUA Study Committee has to get appointed. We have plenty of projects that volunteer help is
necessary. All of these are great places to make a contribution to your town. If you have an interest, give the town office a call or e-mail your contact information to Plainfield.ta@plainfieldnh.org we can always benefit from the help and your life experience.

Next week, Library Trustees meet Monday at the Plainfield Library, the Selectboard meets on Wednesday at the Town Office here in Meriden Village.

**Thursday October 24th 2019:** Rosemary Mills of Whitaker Road fame was sworn in as a Library Trustee on Wednesday October 23rd. She will be serving until at least March town meeting, filling Nancy Liston’s spot on the board. Rosemary lived for many years on Whitaker Road before moving to a warmer climate for a few years. We have all had that thought once or twice. She has now returned to Plainfield, living again on Whitaker Road and suffering through the annual character building experience we call wintah. Rosemary brings with her a lot of public board procedural experience having served on the Plainfield School Board at a time when school enrollment was high and uncertainty about class size and building capacity both at the elementary school and Lebanon High were significant. Welcome to Rosemary Mills.

Tax bills left the Town Office this morning; payment is due Monday December 2nd. As previously discussed, please take the time to complete the two enclosed surveys and return them to the town office (postage paid).

As you open those tax bills here are a few random thoughts to consider. We have $303 million dollars in taxable property in the town. So, every time we spend $303,000 its one dollar on the tax rate. Conversely, if we receive $303,000 it reduces the tax rate one dollar. Our highest taxpayer is Kimball Union Academy with an annual tax bill in excess of $227,000. Our lowest taxpayer has a bill of $0 (exemptions earned are greater than the property valuation). If you want to make the top ten highest taxpayer list you have to be willing to pay at least $37,000 per year. If your bill exceeds $23,000 per year, not to worry, you still make the top 25 highest. The average home in Plainfield has an annual bill of something like $6,000 to $7,000.

Plainfield institutions, businesses and homes will provide through property taxes $7,826,021 to pay for town, county and school expenditures for 2019. That is not gross expenditures that is net of all other revenues. Property taxes making up the difference if you will. In round numbers $1.7 million for town services, $.8 million for the County and $5.3 million for School services.

Keep in mind that all taxpayers, each year, have until March 1st following receipt of the fall bill to appeal their assessment. “My tax bill is too high” does not make a good abatement application. However, “Here are three similar properties to mine, all in Plainfield, which all have a smaller assessed value than mine is a darn good start to a credible abatement application. Plainfield assessment data is online and can be viewed
by interacting with our GIS system found under the document tab on the town’s website. We also have a public terminal here at the town offices where you can spend as much time as you like comparing and contracting your assessment to your neighbors. By design the system is intended to be open and available to all. There is no charge for copies if you are working on your own project.

Next week is a quiet week, in our little hamlet, for board meetings. A nice week to watch the World Series! Thursday October 31st is Halloween, please be extra careful if you are out driving. Ghosts and goblins will be out all sugared up and not paying much attention to traffic.

**Thursday October 17th 2019:** We begin this week by recognizing a Plainfield high school student for her strong sense of environmental stewardship. This spring, Caroline Sheehan noticed a distressed snapping turtle nest along the road side. She took the time to collect the 34 eggs, bringing them home, taking care of them from mid June until they finally hatched on October 1st. As a result, 25 young turtles were released into the Penniman swamp. Now, I know it is always best to leave wildlife alone; those baby deer will be fine their only defense is to curl up and not move. The doe runs away to take the danger with her. She will be back. However, in this case I think its pretty cool that a young person took the time to do the heavy lifting to save turtle eggs and eventually the turtles themselves. I can’t get a dozen chicken eggs from Hannafords to home without breaking at least one. As we see each early summer, those big snappers always nest in that well drained uniform gravel on the shoulders of Stage Road. The result is easy pickings for predators and cars. Many of the nests do not make it. Now, I am sure no one was happier than her parents to see those baby turtles heading into the swamp. Great job Caroline. In my view, Plainfield is a richer community when our residents young and old show this kind of caring.

The Town Office is pleased to report that the Board of Selectmen has with the State of New Hampshire Department of Revenue Administration established the 2019 tax rate at $26/$1,000 of taxable property down from last year’s rate of $26.90. This will save the average taxpayer $200 to $300 on their property taxes over the previous year. At the same time the Selectboard added more than $100,000 to the town’s undesignated fund balance. This money will be available to “soften the rate” should it increase more than anticipated in a future year. Some years you spend fund balance other years you accumulate it that is just the reality of tax rate management. I will acknowledge it takes courage to slow the descent of a New Hampshire property tax rate, but if you are going to live here for the long-term you, again in my view, thank your Board of Selectmen for showing this kind of leadership. The reasons for the decrease this year can be found with the school tax rate. Give credit where it is due. Still plenty of things to complain about, we are New Englanders after all, but the reason your tax bill is less is that the school is the bulk of the overall tax rate and they needed less local tax dollars as compared to the previous year.
Paving work was completed this week, literally hours before Thursday’s rain/wind storm. Mill Village, Daniels Road and Hell Hollow Road all received fresh pavement. This work cost $128,000. Paving roads is not an inexpensive endeavor. Drivers beware; yellow lines are scheduled for Monday. Nothing sticks to a car like road marking paint. Pretty hard to say you don’t drive in the middle of the road when your wheel wells and rocker panels look as though you drove through a mustard factory. Take Stage Road, let that paint set up!

Next week the town’s Finance Committee meets to get started with their work, that meeting is Tuesday evening at 6:30pm here at the Meriden Town Hall.

Steve

Thursday October 10th 2019: Thank you to William Daugherty for all the Facebook page updates on the status of the NHDOT Route 12A river bank slide. William is a licensed drone pilot who lives here in Plainfield and has been regularly flying over the site. This has allowed many of us to watch as the Knox Excavating crew has done their work. Personally, I have been anticipating the arrival of a small portable chapel, a little white church if you will. This so the truck drivers and equipment operators can, on a daily basis, square with their god before heading down over that bank in trucks or excavators! The down slope work is now complete and has been covered with organic material and seeded. Up slope work to insure proper drainage, guardrail and new pavement just before the first snow flake is the plan. FYI, the access road to the bottom is not remaining to serve as a Plainfield boat launch as some have suggested. Have you every watched couples launch boats at nice flat access ramps? For the average husband and wife team to back a boat down that steep road would in fact require an act of God and the divorce rate in Plainfield would sky rocket. Nope, the road is not staying, fact is its gone now. The NHDOT has been good to their word; the work has been entirely completed without a road closure. For that Plainfield businesses and commuters are very grateful.

Plainfield Pumpkin People have arrived for the season in great numbers. It’s a lot of fun to view the creative skills that our residents display. From East Plainfield where this annual event originated to the Connecticut River we have wonderful examples of what families can do with a fall weekend and some props. So, if you haven’t gotten into the game yet, it’s not too late, this holiday weekend would be a great opportunity. Thank you to our Pumpkin Person Director, resident John Austin, for all his work getting these visitors into town.

Next week is a real transition week for town government. We begin in earnest the fall business season. Tax rate setting, budgeting, initial town report work, its all here now. Tuesday the 15th the Meriden Library Building Committee meets here at the Town Offices at 7pm. The Selectboard meets Wednesday at 6pm at the Plainfield Library. Thursday evening the town’s Solid Waste Group (recycling/trash collection) meets at
7pm at the Meriden Library. So, there are plenty of opportunities to make your views known.

At the request of one of our residents, I will end this week with a very brief Meriden Library replacement update. The main group working on this met with the Selectboard on October 2nd. At this moment in time the Building Committee’s plan is to bring forward for town meeting action essentially the same project that received 56% approval last year. What has changed is that fund raising arm of the project now has $740,000 in gifts, reserve funds, and pledges. Consequently, the group working on the project now hopes to be able to avoid the costs of long term borrowing by making a one time appropriation request of something like $150,000 or less to bridge any remaining gap. Fund raising efforts continue as the group is also dealing with a 5%-7% increase in labor and material costs. So, much work remains. Also in the last year, at the request of several residents, the Building Committee has taken a second look at an alternative site for the new library, the Town owned lot at the corner of School Street and Bonner Road. Our School Board when asked about this came back with a neutral response. Not in favor, not opposed. The Meriden Building Committee mostly favors the existing site on Bean Road. In the end, Plainfield voters will have the final say on where if anywhere this project is built. So, if you feel strongly that you like the Meriden Library where it is or would prefer it adjacent to the elementary school please let your opinion be known. You can do this by attending a Building Committee meeting or a Library Trustee meeting. Like when the power goes out, don’t assume someone else has done the work of calling it in, you call it in. Same principle here, don’t assume your views are known, bend an ear or two of the elected and appointed officials responsible for this project.

Have a great weekend, peak color is now. Take a moment and enjoy, lots of grays and white is in our immediate future.

**Thursday October 3rd 2019:** Our town government family is saddened by the sudden loss of Library Trustee Nancy Liston. One of the great joys of this job is the people that you get to work with on a daily basis. I first got to know Ron and Nancy Liston when they built their home on Freeman Road. Ron Liston served for many years on our Planning Board. We both shared a common interest in sailing and through that connection developed a great relationship. I was fortunate to get to know Nancy Liston through her work in our library system. You always knew exactly where you stood with Nancy and if you made a commitment to her, you darn well should be planning to complete the task. By example, for two years now I had been promising her that town forces would remove an old storage shed from the library property. Now when Town Administrators make these promises, often they mean highway department will do it. Road Agents, in addition to road work, always have a long list of these projects on their plate. So time does pass. Well, two weeks ago Nancy called me to inquire about that shed; it was not lost on her that it remained. I went time certain on her, that shed would be off the library grounds no later than September 30th. I am pleased to report it happened. As Mary King and I discussed Nancy’s unexpected passing, I asked her if Nancy was aware that the shed was moved. Mary assured me she was aware and
thankful for the Highway Department’s effort. It made us both smile and gave us a moment of peace as we thought of the loss of one of our group. Thank you to the Liston Family for letting our community benefit from some of both Ron and Nancy’s time.

Next week’s meetings include the Planning Board on Monday evening at 6pm Meriden Town Hall. The Selectboard meets next on October 16th at the Plainfield Library also at 6pm.

If you are interested in owning an old Sierra pick up truck, color two tone white and rust, 2006 vintage, corrosion holes through out, the Town of Plainfield has the truck you are seeking. The vehicle is on display at the highway garage, bids are due next Wednesday 10/9 here at the town office no later than 4:00pm. It would make a nice homestead plow truck or wood mover or maybe a decorative planter.

Finally, with budget and town meeting season growing closer the Selectmen now needs to appoint a new Library Trustee to take Nancy Liston’s spot and serve at least until town meeting elections. The board hopes to make an appointment in time for the trustees November 4th meeting. Anyone interested in serving should let the town office know by Wednesday October 16th. While not required, the Selectmen would appreciate if candidates would submit a brief written statement explaining who they are and why they would like to serve.

**Thursday September 26th 2019:** It’s been a fun a week here at the town office, the credit card reader has been chirping like a song bird in the spring. We Americans just can’t line up fast enough to give Master Card or Visa their 2.95%. Hey, if residents are happy we are happy. I am thinking next month big “Final Sale” banners on Town Hall windows and maybe one of those flashing blue lights from the K-Mart days, car registrations on sale aisle #2, get them while they last.

The town’s Zoning Board of Adjustment had a long night on Monday. In the end, the Board did not grant the BART warehouse the hours they had requested. The Board’s position was that 10pm at night is just too late in a residential setting for business activity. The Board did, however, give the applicant an additional two hour window (till 8pm) to receive one tractor trailer truck and the operation is now allowed to do their work seven days per week. The intent is that this allows the owner of the property fair and reasonable use of their property and provides their neighbors a significant period of time each day 8pm to 5am that they can count on no activity at the site. Like most compromises, folks on both sides of the issue went home with less than they wanted, but hopefully enough of what they needed.

Now, let us journey back to those thick tax bills that are coming to a mail box near you in a couple of weeks. Inside you will find two postage paid opportunities to participate in your local government. No need to attend a meeting, you don’t even have to pay for return postage (well you kind of did, but we put the stamp on it for you). One is a postcard asking simply how you prefer to get information about town affairs like board meetings and news. The second is a remake of a past survey from our Solid Waste Study
group. How we manage solid waste in the future and what programs we offer are in play. This short survey provides you an opportunity to tell us what you like and don’t like about the current program. So, that’s it, open that bill (hopefully it will be asking for a little less than you were expecting) take out the bill set it in the “to be paid bin” so you don’t lose it and before you do anything else, complete those two surveys and place them in the “out going mail” bin. That’s it, you have now made your voice heard and provided valuable information as we move forward with the business of the Town of Plainfield, a place that we all have a stake in and call home. FYI we’d still love you to come to a meeting. On sale today at the Plainfield Town Offices, tickets to the upcoming Selectboard meeting trio sonata October 2nd, 6pm at the Meriden Town Hall. Following that, we have a nice Planning Board ensemble on October 7th, again right here at the Meriden Town Hall beginning at 7pm. Both performances feature the operation of your local government. Detailed information at www.plainfieldnh.org Cost for these tickets is $0.00. Credit cards accepted.

Thursday September 19th 2019: Swipe, baby swipe. It may seem a small thing but it has been a long time coming, the Plainfield Town Office for the first time in its history now accepts debit and credit cards for payments. What took so long you might say? Good lord, the 18 year old selling jewelry from a street cart has a card reader on his Iphone which allows acceptance of credit card payments. Well that may be true, but that person is not a municipality working under the laws of the State of New Hampshire with at least three software vendors in the mix. However, thanks to the efforts of Town Clerk/Tax Collector Michelle Marsh our card reader is now good to go. Be aware, there is a cost to this convenience. You will be charged a minimum of $1.95 or 2.95% whichever is greater for the pleasure of that swipe. The taxpayers of Plainfield will be covering the cost of the software and hardware, but unlike the clothing store, the town doesn’t get hit with a percentage charge, you do. A $500 car registration will cost you $514.75. A $5,000 tax payment will set you back $5147.50. Enjoy, but buyer beware!

We are inching closer to the establishment of the 2019 tax rate. If you remember back to town and school meetings the discussions suggested that the new tax rate would likely be lower than the current rate of $26.90. All indications continue to support that the rate will in fact be lower for 2020. There are still some state and county numbers that we don’t yet know, but the town and school numbers we do know and they are in line with our spring discussions. Now, I wouldn’t book a trip to Vegas just yet with the savings, but wouldn’t it be nice to open that envelope and find a lower amount due for the year than you paid last. Yes, of course it would.

Speaking of tax bills, when it comes in the mail next month, the envelop is going to be fatter than previous years. Kind of like those college acceptance letters. The thin ones mean bad news, the thick one is good news for junior and bad news for your bank account. Well, in this case, the thicker tax bill is also good news. There will be two opportunities for you to participate in your local government. More details on these opportunities will follow next week.

Pumpkin people have started to arrive, keep your eyes out.
Also, as we enjoy this crazy good stretch of weather, please watch out for others while driving. Runners, dog walkers, cyclists are all out and we have had a couple of close calls in the last week or so. Please give them plenty of extra space. Let's all get home safely so we can enjoy these last warm days.

**Thursday September 12th 2019:** The least fun thing we do is enforcement actions. The Selectboard’s office tries enormously hard, some times to a fault, to avoid legal action against property owners. To the extent that we can, if you are not hurting someone or polluting the environment we prefer to live and let live. It is also true that we have no commercial zone in town, so when you want to do a business you have to be approved by our Zoning Board of Adjustment and as part of that process you make representations on how you will operate and the Zoning board might establish conditions that are intended to insure that adjacent property owners are not adversely affected by the business. We have worked for over one and half years to try and get the new warehouse on Route 12A into compliance. The new facility is, in my view, a good use of the former “brown field” Berwick barrels trucking site. When I was a kid, twenty five or more over the road tractor trailer trucks worked out of that site coming and going at all hours. For that time, it was big business. The operation burned down in or around 1995 and until recently was mostly an eyesore. If the new warehouse can be operated in a manner that provides a predictable period of quiet for the residences in the neighborhood they are welcome here in Plainfield. The owners of the warehouse have been working with their tenant, Frito Lay, to reduce night time activity and have a new application before our Zoning Board that comes much closer to the quiet hours at night requirement. A hearing is planned for Monday evening September 23rd at 7pm here at the Meriden Town Hall. All are welcomed to attend. Our goal is to find an answer that is reasonable and fair to all. Unfortunately, in the early going the warehouse and its activity has been a bit of a moving target and the town has had no choice but to enforce the decision of Zoning Board.

On a more positive note, if you have been through Plainfield Village this week you may have noticed a new permanent sign for advertising events at the Plainfield Town Hall. The credit for this sign goes to residents Sally Rub and Nancy Norwalk who obtained Selectboard approval on August 7th for funding of the project. An anonymous donor has since agreed to fund half of the of sign’s $3,500 cost.

Plainfield Pumpkin People should, anytime now, begin arriving for the fall season. Their annual visit has become a great community event. It’s always a lot of fun to see them around town. They are always an active group, not afraid of a little good natured mischief. They help us all to remember not to take ourselves or the daily grind too seriously.

The next Selectboard meeting is September 18th at the Plainfield Library beginning at 6pm.
**Thursday September 5th 2019:** First order of business is to thank Recreation Director Dan Cantlin for what was an outstanding Spirit Evening (okay the Town Meeting article said Spirit Day, but let’s be honest, 5pm to 10pm is really an evening). Who would have guessed, provide corn, music, a canine demonstration, free ice cream and professional fire works and people come out in grand numbers. The Plainfield School was rocking; we had kids running everywhere just being kids, neighbors talking to neighbors, liberals and conservatives dripping corn butter on their shirts as they joked and talked with each other. Some dancing even broke out toward the end of the final band set. How cool was that Plainfield Fire ladder truck with the red white and blue flying 100’ above the field? NorthStar Fireworks always give us a great firework show in a compact period of time. It was by all measures an end of summer mini festival. In short words, it was five hours of what small town life is all about. The credit goes to two places, one the taxpayers of Plainfield who support the idea and pay the bill as part of the Selectboard’s budget each year and Dan Cantlin. That’s why we have Spirit Eve each year.

The Selectboard held a hearing Wednesday night for residents to express concern about the NHDOT’s plans to “normalize” speed limits on Route 120. The NHDOT has a tough job to do, as the area expands we have more cars on our main commuting roads. Residents living close to NH 120 were rightly concerned that excessive vehicular speeds are a huge issue for them. It was an informative session and I think the DOT engineers heard very clearly the concerns. The Selectboard does not support the speed limit increases for Route 120.

September means time to turn our attention to budgets and town meeting 2020. If you have an idea to save money, to improve service, now is the time to bring those thoughts forward to your Selectboard. You will soon be getting some opportunities to chime in on the town’s solid waste management plan. A lot of the next town meeting will be focused on whether or not we continue/modify/eliminate the curbside service for trash and recycling. Make sure your views are known. Fill out the survey, come to a meeting. We need to hear from you. If you don’t participate, you didn’t get your complaint card validated if things don’t go the way you would prefer. The next Selectboard meeting is September 18th at 6pm Plainfield Library.

**Thursday August 21st 2019:** This week has all been about the kids returning to school next week. By example college students stopping in to see if it is possible to cast an absentee ballot. Love that enthusiasm, but we don’t even know who the candidates all are yet or what all the issues might be for 2020. Best to check back in with us later in the fall on that one. Moms getting the minivans registered, secretly trying to clear the “to do list” so that come next Thursday when the house is quiet a good book can be enjoyed or perhaps a lunch, with maybe even a glass of wine, out with another mom who is also wicked psyched that a new school year is upon us.
Remember, this is the time of year when our young kids are cycling or walking to school, use extra caution around the Plainfield School. Often the backpack and bicycle are bigger than the kid and it can all be kind of wobbly as they race down Bonner Road.

The Selectmen, as a precursor to our upcoming budget season, have been giving some thought to Plainfield’s employee wages and benefits. We all know that there is, at this moment, a very tight labor market in the Upper Valley. Therefore making sure that our wages and benefits are competitive and that we offer incentives for employees to stay for extended periods of time is important to the board. As the Selectboard looks at employment issues, they naturally look across the aisle to the various strategies that our school district has used to hire and retain highly qualified employees.

The first action item in this work has been to increase the wages substantially for our part-time police officer positions. This in hopes of enticing certified officers to consider working for us a few shifts each week. The jury is still out on whether or not this effort will be successful. Police work is a very specific skill with a limited pool of candidates that are certified.

Don’t forget that Sunday is Spirit Day, we gathering at the Plainfield School after 5pm and enjoy an end of the summer picnic and fireworks with neighbors and friends.

The Supervisors of the checklist are in session next Monday evening at the Town Offices starting at 7pm. No Planning Board, Zoning Board or Selectboard meetings again until September.

There will be no Town Office notes next week; we will pick up the thread again the week after Labor Day.

Finally, on **Wednesday September 4th** at 6:30pm here at the Meriden Town Hall the Selectboard is going to hold a public hearing on the NHDOT’s plans for speed limit changes on NH Route 120. Several sections in Plainfield could see a speed limit increase. Most of our interaction with residents has to do with requests to slow traffic speeds down on Route 120. More information on the hearing is posted on the town’s website.

**Thursday August 15th 2019:** Imagine my surprise this morning at 6:30am as I pounded my way up the last climb to the summit of French’s Ledges and encountered, perched on the very summit of the ledges, a two person dome tent, flaps down! Giggles and whispers from inside made it clear that the campers where aware of my approach. My first instinct was to play the Town Administrator card and provide a stern lecture about camping on town trails. As I surveyed the surroundings, no trash, no empty spray cans of paint, my attitude softened and even turned to slight envy. Never in my life had I been fortunate enough to have a tent mate who was willing to sleep on solid rock in exchange for quality time with me. My thoughts then went to, at 53, what my condition might be after a full night in a tent on French’s ledges. It was not hard to imagine the need for a
paramedic or even a DART helicopter to get me off that perch. In the end, I tipped my cap to the tent, and finished by middle aged workout heading home for granola and fruit, not nearly as certain as I had been that youth is wasted on the young.

Pretty quiet week here at the town office, at least compared to the ledges. It seems like our young campers, many folks are away or at least trying to squeeze in a little late summer fun before the new school year begins.

The Hell Hollow Road project is progressing nicely, road base improvement is now complete, tree removal and ditch work is next. The road should be ready for new pavement in a couple of weeks. Plans remain to pave Hell Hollow to Kenyon, Daniels in its entirety and Mill Village Road in its entirety. The cost about $128,000 for pavement alone.

The Selectboard made some adjustments to pay rates in the police department and at least initially we are trying to fill some shifts with certified police officers who, for an increased wage, might be interested in working for us. Based on responses to our advertisements for part-time help, the Selectmen will determine at their next meeting how to proceed with the full time benefited position that is vacant right now.

Recreation Director Dan Cantlin is hard at work on final plans for the 2019 Spirit Day. Lets all gather at the Plainfield School on Sunday August 25th, starting at 5pm, to enjoy community spirit, good conversation, some activities for the kids, Mac’s Maple ice cream and fireworks at dark. Donations are accepted, but essentially this is an open community event for all to enjoy. Note: We do understand that fireworks can be terrifying to animals. We hope that the location and relatively short duration of the show keeps it in the reasonable range for all of our community.

The Selectboard meets next on Wednesday August 21st at 6pm at the Plainfield Library. The Planning and Zoning Boards both are scheduled to meet again in September.

Don’t forget to check out the Cornish Fair this weekend and at least give some passing consideration to dusting off that old tent stored in the basement.

Enjoy the week and if the town office can help, let us know.

Steve H.

**Thursday August 8th 2019:** Thanks are due two Plainfield organizations with one common denominator. In the last year or so the then private Meriden Volunteer Fire Department and the public Meriden Village Water District have brought into this community more than $700,000 in grant money. The team at Meriden Fire was able to essentially fully fund a new fire truck for the community with federal grant money. This new truck will serve our community for decades to come and was approved because in writing the grant proposal Chief Taylor and his team recognized that putting together a unique grant application was the key to any hope for success. Everyone has old trucks
that need replacing. Meriden took a different approach and geared their grant application toward providing a truck that is easier and safer to drive, one with an automatic transmission, rather than a manual one.

Likewise, Water District Operator Bill Taylor and the Commissioners of the Meriden Village Water District (Jeff Allbright, Murray Dewdney and Nate Pierson) put together and submitted a grant application that will essentially fund a discharge water quality upgrade for the waste water plant. The district is facing new regulations on how it returns the water from the waste water plant back into the environment. Currently, the treated water returns directly to Bloods Brook as surface water. To continue this requires significant upgrades to the plant itself. Another option is to reintroduce the water to the aquifer via the ground. Both options are very expensive. Despite guidance that their application was unlikely to be successful, the group at MVWD forged ahead, again grafting an application that was unique. It worked; the now approved grant will save the District more than $350,000 and will fund a large portion of the upgrade.

Both of these projects add significantly to our community. Whether a private fire district or a public water district serving Plainfield Plain or Meriden Village, these successes make our Town of Plainfield a better place to live. Thank you to all that were involved in doing the heavy lifting on these projects.

Next week there are no Selectboard or land use board meetings. The next Selectboard meeting is August 21st at the Plainfield Library. The Solid Waste Committee meets at 7pm at the Plainfield Library.

**Thursday August 1st 2019:** Several of us have independently started the process of cleaning the graffiti off the French’s Ledges summit. Its not easy work, but a wire brush and some paint thinner or tar remover does begin to age it some. Imagine my surprise when we found “graffiti remover” at one of UV box stores. I had to have a can of that to try. Kind of disappointing that such a product exists, but it does. Most likely just real expensive paint thinner in a fancy can, but you never know, maybe it’s just the ticket.

The Route 12A River bank project has run into several unyielding drivers. These folks seem to feel that the flagger holding the stop paddle does not apply to them. A bunch of folks worked very hard to convince the State of NH DOT to keep the road open during construction. Needless to say Chief Roberts and his officers are spending some time over at the site, ticket book in hand. Fines are doubled in construction sites. Its 90+ degrees outside with nearly 100% humidity and some can’t be bothered to sit for five minutes in their air conditioned SUVs. Good Lord, I say rather than a ticket let them stand out there for an afternoon.

Since last week we have received several strong positions of support for keeping the wooden road signs around town. They have a real nice small town feel, no argument there, we love them too. Maybe we can find some middle ground. The biggest obstacle to them is their visibility at night, when your relative from out of town can’t find your house. On second thought maybe they are just fine.
Unfortunately, we have continued to experience significant turnover in our Police Department. We are down two officers at the moment, a full time position and a part time position. The Selectboard is taking this opportunity to take a very close look at the Police Department and has asked Chief Roberts and I to investigate some other staffing options for our coverage. The 2020 budget season is just around the corner and in this very tight labor market finding certified police officers is difficult.

Stop in the town office or an upcoming Selectboard meeting and share your thoughts on these or any other town issues with us. The office is open daily and the Selectmen meet next on Wednesday August 7th right here at the Meriden Town Hall.

**Thursday July 25th 2019:** A couple of quick updates, no one has come forward to take responsibility for the French’s Ledges graffiti. No real surprise there, but it would have been nice to think the person upon reflection might have wanted to come forward and make amends. Our search for the person(s) continues. Anyone who has a magic potion that would remove the paint from the ledge, I’d be happy to hike up and take a stab at cleaning the bulk of it off. Maybe a work party, many hands make quick work and all that, with a picnic lunch? For many of us those ledges are a very special place.

Plainfield beavers do appear to be slightly above average; however, Skip Lisle owner of the Beaver Deceiver Company has a PhD in beaver deception. So, after one minor adjustment we think we have it done. Certainly, highway is not visiting the site weekly anymore to remove debris. This is a huge savings. We will let the device sit the fall and winter and if it remains intact and functioning we will expand our deceptive ways to other locations in town.

**New material:** If you have noticed we have NHDOT work going on both ends of town. On the west side of town the Route 12A river bank slide is now being repaired at a cost of $1.2 million dollars. All of us appreciate the DOT’s efforts to keep Route 12A open during the repair. The work is going to take some time, final paving may not be completed in this season.

On the east side of town, work has started on the Route 120 bridge between Stage Road and Bonner Road. This is not a bridge replacement; the contractor has been hired to install scour protection (think blasted ledge) at the bottom of the abutments to prevent high water during storm events from undermining the abutments. This work should be done or nearly done by the time school opens up for the year.

Our own plate, the reconstruction of the paved portion of Hell Hollow Road is now underway. The old pavement is gone and highway is now improving the base under the road. The project should be done, with new pavement by October 1st. Road side mowing has also been started. Besides keeping the right of way open and brushed back for maintenance this work at least gives us a chance to see the deer before they leap into the roadway in front of our vehicles.

The Selectboard is considering options for the standardization of Plainfield road name signs. This is a project we have avoided for a long time, preferring the hand routed wooden “Ira Townsend” signs to the green and while any town USA signs. We might try and add the town logo to the sign as a way of differentiating them and making them our own. We can keep the wooden signs for a while longer, but they are expensive to make
and they do not meet Federal DOT standards for visibility and orientation. We have made some double sided ones and tried to improve their reflectivity. We can spend a $100 on one hand made sign or purchase three machine stamped green on white ones for that same hundred dollars. If you have a strong opinion on this topic let us hear from you. Silence will be interpreted as okay with green on while metal signs with maybe a town logo in the upper right corner.

**Next week:** Planning Board meets next week on Monday (7/29) see their page on our website for meeting details. The Selectboard meets next on Wednesday August 7th.

**Thursday July 18th 2019:** Last Monday the Plainfield Zoning Board approved a four residential unit project for the former Tariki Pottery property located at #12 Bean Road. This is one of two likely projects in the near future that will bring some rental housing into our villages. As we know, there is a real housing shortage in the Upper Valley. This property was a relatively easy fit as the lot, 3.6 acres, is large for the zone (VR) and has access to both public water and sewer. The project has two local approval steps remaining, but is well on its way.

After a very rough winter, the town’s operating budget is pretty much on target. At the half way mark we had 55% of our operating appropriation remaining, but that includes the lion share of our paving work that has not yet been done.

Highway is about to start work on the Hell Hollow road reconstruction project. It’s a short stretch of paved road, but will take time to complete. The Selectboard walked the project with neighbors back in June.

There are no land use board meetings next week. The next one is Monday July 29th when the Planning Board will have two projects to review. A site plan for the #12 Bean Road apartments and an annexation of land from one lot to a neighboring one all the details can be found on the town’s website.

Stay cool this next week, the dog days of summer have definitely arrived.

**Thursday July 11th 2019:** Thank you to all who participated in yet another wonderful Plainfield 4th of July celebration. Recreation Director Dan Cantlin and Parade Coordinator Elizabeth McNamara once again got the job done!

I am happy to report that the great deception of 2019 is back on track. The Hedgehog Road “beaver deceiver” is installed and seems to be doing its job. If you have never seen this wonderful wetland area, swing down the Plainfield end of Old County Rd, take your first right onto Hedgehog Road and the culvert in question is just a 100 yards or so down the road. It’s a very nice spot. Further, we have no evidence of beavers swimming in endless circles confused and dazed, but rather mostly what you have is nothing happening. The water level is stable and the furry engineers seem to be getting no alarm signals that their dam is not working. For highway it means they don’t have to run the backhoe across town once a week to remove debris. Now, we assume the Plainfield beavers are above average, so we do worry they will catch on to the deception. For the
moment we wait and watch. Thank you to our local Conservation Commission for being willing to partner with the Highway Department on this project.

We were disappointed to learn this week that someone who made the effort to hike to one of Plainfield’s cornerstone locations, French’s Ledges, and while enjoying the place added some colorful spray painted artwork to the ledges. Is it the crime of the century, no it is not? However, for those that visit this spot for its scenic natural beauty it’s disappointing. Therefore, the town is making this offer, if the person(s) comes forward within the next week and owns up to it and agrees to clean it up, or just goes up and cleans it up that will be the end of it. However, if we have to find you, and we will, people talk criminal charges will result and if convicted will stay with the person for some little time. Not the kind of thing that makes for a strong college application or job resume. So there you have it. If you know the responsible party, help them out let’s keep French’s ledges a place to enjoy nature and avoid making it look like an urban underpass.

Depending on how you are viewing this message, to see photos of the deceiver or the artwork in question visit the town’s Facebook page. Everyone is in full summer mode now, so if we can help stop in the town office. The Selectboard meets next on Wednesday July 17th at 6pm Plainfield Library.

Wednesday June 26th 2019: This week we are trying to carry out a great deception, and not having much success. The Conservation Commission has partnered with the Selectboard and we are trying to install a “beaver deceiver” on Hedgehog Road. You got to love living in a place where you have a beaver deceiver on Hedgehog Road, that’s just too much fun. In any case, Skip Lisle owner of the beaver deceiver company has, so far, not been able to install his miracle deception device as the water is too high at our location. Highway is gentle trying to lower the water level, without washing out Route 12A which is the next stop after the water leaves the culvert/dam on its way to the Connecticut River. In any case, Skip assures us he has not met his match, and the great deception will occur, just a few days later than anticipated. Stay tuned.

The Planning Board meets on Monday next week, one very simple case in front of the board. The application is to eliminate a previously approved lot, splitting it between two abutters who now own it jointly. The Selectboard meets on Tuesday night July 2nd, the meeting is here at Meriden Town Hall.

We are planning a great 4th of July celebration, visit www.plainfieldnh.org for more information.

Friday July 12th is the next Household Hazardous Waste Collection this one is at Lebanon High School 9am to noon. https://www.plainfieldnh.org/trash_recyc.htm

Thursday June 20th 2019: The Selectboard met last evening completing two site visits to summer road projects, Hell Hollow Road and Mill Village Road. The board met with abutting land owners at both locations. These two projects are slated for July and August
and are included in this year’s paving work which also includes resurfacing Daniels Road.

The Selectmen held their second meeting with the town’s newly minted Solid Waste Study Group. Preliminary data from the first of two trash recycling collection counts suggests that participation from for both has fallen to below 70% and perhaps as low as 60% in some areas of town. As a result, the study group is now working on a survey to be distributed to town residents to learn more about the reasons for this participation drop and reactions to possible changes to the program that might be part of next year’s town meeting. Again, if you feel strongly, make your views known early in our process.

Next week is a quiet week for town board meetings and of course the following week features Plainfield’s world famous 4th of July celebration. To learn more about planned events and how you can participate on the 4th visit www.plainfieldnh.org

**Thursday June 13th 2019:** This week we started the process of taking a very close look at our solid waste management plan here in Plainfield. The Selectboard has appointed a study group that they have met with once; a second meeting with the group is planned for June 19th. Plainfield has offered curbside collection of trash since 1973 and curbside recycling since 1991. At issue is cost and participation. This week we have been gathering data on program participation. I’ll share that information in the near future once we have tabulated and verified the results. We plan to do a second count the week of June 24th. Some sort of vote on our solid waste management plan is likely at the 2020 town meeting. One thing that has changed is that Plainfield residents now have full access to the Lebanon landfill and their recycling program. So, if you have ideas about changes you would like to see, or you have strong views on the current program now is the time to contact your Selectboard and express those views to them. The reality is that the decline in global markets for recycling will, at least in the short term, require some changes to our program.

The Selectboard meets next week, it being the 3rd Wednesday of the month the meeting is at the Plainfield library. We likely will get a late start 6:30ish, the Selectboard has two site visits prior to the business meeting. Hell Hollow Rd and Mill Village Rd to discuss planned road improvements with abutting landowners.

**Thursday June 6th 2019:** Our two new bridges now have paved approaches. Final seeding and mulching is all that is needed to call both of them done. These are both structures that will serve the town for years. We couldn’t afford the wooden guardrail that we would have liked, but within a year or two the “shine” will come off the new guardrail and the new pavement will have grayed up some and the entire package will be aesthetically more appealing. Time will take care of that. Each of them represents about $120,000 and that’s without substantial abutment work. Bridges are not cheap.
Daniels Road could, if the weather stays reasonable, see new pavement early next week. Highway has been checking culverts, mowing and ditching the roadsides in preparation of the new overlay. Road Agent Collins is meeting with the NHDOT to make sure that our road work eliminates the potential for standing water where Daniels and Route 12A meet.

Town Clerk Michelle Marsh continues to work with our various software vendors and hopes to have the town office accepting credit cards in the very near future. The town meeting, a few years back, and the Selectmen, early this year, have green lighted this project. As she often does, Michelle is working out the fine details to insure it is implemented smoothly. The person using the credit card will be paying all the charges related to the card’s use. So, it will be convenient, but it will not be inexpensive to use the plastic at town hall.

If you have something that we can help with please let us know.

**Thursday May 30th 2019:** It’s been a relatively quiet week here at town hall. Much attention is focused on graduations, and the end of the school year. The wreath laying ceremony last week was, as expected, humbling. Hearing Selectman Eberhardt’s trumpet while you look out over the cemetery with all those American flags waving in the breeze always raises the hair on your neck and sends a chill down your spine.

The highway department continues to monitor a section of River Road upstream of the outlet of Beaver brook. While unlikely to be a huge disaster, it does look more and more like some Connecticut River bank stabilization in this area is going to be necessary. Alternatively, we can look at moving the road away from the bank, but that solution has its own complexities.

The Police Department is putting a real push on to slow traffic down in both villages this late spring. Chief Roberts and his officers are committed to making sure that pedestrians and cyclist using our villages feel safe. Also, as good weather finally arrives, keep in mind that Plainfield has a dog ordinance that requires all dogs to be under the control of the owner. The “leash” does not need to be a physical tether, but Fido has to be under your control at all times. In no cases can the dog harass pedestrians, cyclist, other dogs or livestock. The owner, not the dog, receives the ticket and fine.

We hope you are enjoying the Town Services brochure (it’s likely more popular than the tax bills it accompanied). When next you see Jane Stephenson, Stephanie Schell or Michelle Marsh thank them for their efforts. The response to the brochure has been very positive.

The Selectboard has a meeting on Wednesday June 5th here at the Meriden Town Hall starting at 6pm. Visit [www.plainfieldnh.org](http://www.plainfieldnh.org) for all the details.
**Thursday May 23rd 2019:** Plainfield tax bills will likely be in the mail to taxpayers as early as this Friday. In the envelope will also be a copy of Plainfield resource guide put together by our Human Resources group. Jane Stephenson, Stephanie Schell and Michelle Marsh put a lot of effort into making sure this brochure is accurate. It’s a wealth of information about your community. The brochure is definitely refrigerator worthy!

At the conclusion of this week’s Senior Lunch the Selectboard will place a wreath at the Service Memorial on Route 12A. This annual event is one of the board’s favorite. The site is particularly beautiful at this time of the year. It is always humbling to take a moment and pause thanking those from Plainfield who have given to our country in so many ways.

From the Town Office, we hope everyone has an enjoyable and safe Memorial Day weekend. The town office will be closed Friday at noon thru next Monday, reopening Tuesday morning in full summer mode.

**Thursday May 16th 2019:** The Selectmen met last night with the NHDOT on the Route 12A slide. This is what we know. The DOT has committed to keeping the Route 12A corridor open during the repair. This is excellent news for all of us but in particular our businesses and for our residents living on Old County Road. The less good news is that the repair design and permitting process is complex and will take at least another 90 days. Once started the repair could take another 90 days. The result, the hope is to have the project completed by cold weather. The current one lane status is with us for a while.

The Selectmen also started discussions last night with our newly minted solid waste study group. The goal of this group is to take a look at our current solid waste management plan and see what, if any, changes might be in order. As we have discussed in the past, the collection portion of the plan has gotten very expensive, $170,000, and the recycling markets for zero sort products are at near record lows right now. We have also begun, based on Lebanon landfill coupon sales in our office, to question the program participation rate. A vote to change or affirm our solid waste management program will likely be part of the 2020 town meeting.

The only meeting next week is the Planning Board, which has one subdivision on the agenda. Clara and Kevin McNamara are proposing a two lot subdivision of property they own on Camp Road.

Remember, in June the Selectmen start their new meeting location schedule. 1st Wednesday (6/5) meeting of the month will be at the Meriden Town Hall the 3rd Wednesday of the month meeting will be at the Plainfield Library (6/19). This will be the new norm for Selectboard meetings going forward.

**Thursday May 9th 2019:** This week we are all about spring clean up. Highway continue to get the roads back in shape from a long hard winter. The town road grader is out daily working where and when conditions allow. The road crew is cutting bush and picking up
downed trees and limbs. As the highway crew works its way around town they will be straightening signs replacing damaged delineators, etc. Building on the past efforts of the Conservation Commission the Highway Department will assist anyone who is doing road side clean up this spring. They can provide access to dumpster for the waste (no charge) and if you have large objects or bags you can’t transport, highway will if called, pick up the items road side and get them to the Lebanon Landfill. Leave a message at the Highway Department 469-3240 or call the Town Office at 469-3201 and we do all that we can to assist you with helping to make our community a beautiful place to live.

From the Town Clerk’s Office: Some NH DMV locations will be open from 8-noon this Saturday, May 11, for REAL ID transactions only: Concord, Manchester, Nashua, Newport, Dover, and Twin Mountain. REAL ID transactions may also be conducted at all locations during regular weekdays. Additional documentation is required when applying for REAL ID and should be gathered prior to your visit to the DMV. Documentation related to name changes due to marriage, divorce, adoption, etc., must be presented at the time of the transaction. There is no additional fee for REAL ID, but if it is not time for renewal, there is a $3 replacement fee. For detailed documentation requirements and facts about REAL ID, visit [www.getREAL.nh.gov](http://www.getREAL.nh.gov).

Next week we have the Selectmen meeting on Wednesday evening. NHDOT will be in to update the Selectmen on the Route 12A slide and our ad hoc “Solid Waste Management group” will be meeting for the first time to discuss process for reviewing our curbside program. This meeting starts at 6pm at the town offices. On Thursday the Hazardous Mitigation group will be meeting for a third time as part of our efforts to update the town’s mitigation plan. This meeting starts at 6pm at the town offices.

Thursday May 2nd 2019: The main topic of discussion this week at the Town Office is the Route 12A bank slide just north of River Road. As the magnitude of the damage is being determined it looks more and more as though the repair will be costly and time consuming, at least weeks not days. This has wide ranging implications for some of our businesses who could see a significant drop in business and for many of our residents as Old County Road/Beauty Hill Road are the likely alternative that most drivers will choose. In any case, the NHDOT is still in a discovery phase on how to handle the repair, they have committed to coming to the Selectmen’s May 15th meeting when they hope they have more information. Your Selectboard is committed to doing all that that they can to minimize the impact of this project on all of our residents. It will be in our best interest to get the road repaired as quickly as it can be done. As a result of this week’s meeting the NHDOT has been asked to consider working around the clock to complete the repair and/or to temporarily widen the road enough to allow for traffic to continue to use the 12A corridor while the repair is being made.

As this very wet spring continues its Plainfield’s own River Road that keeps us up at night. We have experienced some slumping on the river bank adjacent to the road. At best it too will need to be repaired. At worst it could alter our entire summer work plan.
This Saturday is the first of several Household Hazardous Waste Day collections. From 9am to noon residents may bring materials up to the Lebanon High School parking lot for proper disposal. Visit https://www.plainfieldnh.org/trash_recyc.htm for all the details.

Planning Board is in session next week on Monday, Meriden Library Building Committee meets on Tuesday. Visit www.plainfieldnh.org to view the weekly calendar of events/meetings.

**Thursday April 25th 2019:** The town office has been notified that effective May 1st the Lebanon landfill will no longer accept construction and demolition (C&D) debris. C&D includes things like dimensional lumber, plywood, wood waste, railroad ties, roofing materials, sheetrock, brick, concrete flooring, insulation and siding. Alternative disposal locations include the Hartford Transfer Center, Casella Transfer station on Labombard Road Lebanon and Hammonds Grinding and Recycling in Canaan.

Road Agent Collins plans to remove the road posting limits on Monday April 29th. So all those summer projects can now be green lighted.

Town Assessor George Hildum is town this week working on updates. Most residents have met George, he always has identification with him and is very easy going. Be kind to George, he is doing the work that state law requires we do. He has many years of experience and frankly we feel luck to have him as our assessor.

The town’s energy committee meets next Tuesday evening Philip Read Library at 7pm. Selectmen meet next week, here at Meriden Town Hall 6pm on Wednesday. Cemetery Trustees meet here at MTH Friday morning May 3rd at 7:30am. Saturday May 4th is the first of five Household Hazardous Waste Day collection opportunities. This one is at the Lebanon High School parking lot 9am to noon. This is a pretty could opportunity to get rid of those old cleaners, paints, etc that are in the corner in the basement. See the flyer posted on the town’s website for more information.

Saturday 4/27/19 is the State of New Hampshire drug take back day. The Plainfield Police Department, 110 Main Street, will be accepting drugs for disposal from 10:00am to 2:00pm.

**Thursday April 18th 2019:** The Selectboard met Wednesday evening. Despite the very expensive winter that we all endured it does appear, based on current cost estimates, that we are going to be able to move forward with reconstruction of the paved section of Hell Hollow and put a pavement overlay on Daniels Road. If the road project gods look on us favorably we might even be able to do some paving work in the Mill Village area, a place in town that hasn’t seen new pavement in 50 years or more. See page 70 of the 2018 town report for more information on paving plans. In addition, right out of the Spring gate we plan to pave the approaches to our two new bridges, Camp Road and Houser Lane.
The Highway crew will spend a significant portion of the summer ditching roadsides and working on cutting back trees and vegetation. It’s a never ending battle.

We sold the old 1994 Chevrolet truck on one bid of $100. Spring cleaning continues all month long so if you missed that opportunity, don’t worry there may well be others just around the corner.

Beginning in June the Selectmen are changing their meeting schedule as follows: The first Wednesday meeting of each month will be held at the Meriden Town Hall. The 3rd Wednesday meeting of each month will be held at the Plainfield Library. Meetings start at 6:00pm.

There are no land use board meetings next week, it’s a nice quiet week for your local government. Good time for us all to break out the rakes and clean up the debris from the now finished winter of 2018/19.

Have you registered the family dog yet?

Your town office is here to help, give us call or e-mail, or better yet stop in if there is something we can do to assist you.

**Thursday April 11th 2019:** Despite several weather setbacks the town has spring fever this week. This is particularly true in the Highway Department where a spring cleaning project is underway. Do we have a deal for you?

**1994 Chevrolet Pick up truck**

**One ton single axle/ 6.5 diesel power plant**

This truck can be viewed at the Plainfield Highway Garage starting on **Friday April 12th.** This truck is being sold as is where is. The truck does not run. The Town reserves the right to reject any and all bids (but we won’t). Bids are due at the town office by **Wednesday April 17th at 6pm.** Bids will be opened on April 17th at 6:05pm. For detailed information see Road Agent Richard Collins. Mark the bid “Plainfield Truck Bid” This vehicle will be off our lot by May 1st!

**Bids can be hand delivered to the town office at 110 Main Street Meriden Village or mailed to Town of Plainfield PO Box 380 Meriden NH 03770**

Next week’s meetings include the Selectboard at 6pm Wednesday at the Meriden Town Hall. In addition, the group working on updating the town’s Hazard Mitigation Plan will meet with Consultant Jane Hubbard on Thursday at 7pm here at the Meriden Town Hall. An updated plan is a prerequisite to receive Federal money. The plan update is at the direction of the Selectboard and is being paid for using a state of NH grant.
Thursday April 4th 2019: As is often the case the last and first week of a given month visitor traffic at the town office this week has been dominated by auto registrations. Note to self, arrive just before the end of the month or just at the start of a new one and odds are pretty good you’ll have an opportunity to get to know some of your fellow community members as you wait. Conversely, come to town hall between the 10th and the 25th of any month for your car registration and you can pretty much count on a quick in and out trip. Another little tip, if you have a new to you car that you plan to transfer your old plates to, bring the old registration with you. You will save yourself some time, you won’t have to drive home to get it, and/or you save yourself some money, both good things.

The amended zoning ordinance from town meeting is now posted up on the town’s website. Both changes this year were designed to make the ordinance easier to understand. If you’re not familiar with the zoning ordinance, it comes into play most often when someone wants to have a business that includes employees or onsite retail sales or when a homeowner wishes to add an Accessory Dwelling Unit that is not attached to the main home. Residential uses and agricultural related uses are all permitted by right. The town has had a zoning ordinance since 1973. Like most small NH town’s our ordinance is pretty basic and tries to mostly live and let live. There are of course exceptions and times when the town must play the role of spoiler and prevent someone from using their own property in a manner that is specifically not allowed by the ordinance.

Next week the Zoning Board will not be meeting on Monday, their next meeting will be in May. Library Trustees have a meeting on Monday at the Meriden Library at 7pm and on Tuesday evening the town’s employee safety committee meets at the Plainfield Plain Fire Station starting at 6pm.

If we can help, stop in at the office and we are glad to do so.

Thursday March 28th 2019: We are finally putting the finishing touches on the winter of 2018/19. It doesn’t mean it won’t snow, but you do get the idea that winter has broken and we have turned a corner. As we go head long into April remember that the annual inventory of taxable property, current use applications, and exemption applications are all due by April 15th. If you have any questions on any of these forms/applications, just give us a call. If you already enrolled in the current use program or are receiving an exemption you don’t have to do anything with those items, they continue from year to year.

Highway is working hard to keep roads passable, mud season is our least favorite time of the year, but again it signals the end of winter and the beginning of spring, a good thing.

As the weather improves the Police Department asks that you be extra attentive when driving around town, young children, bicyclist, and walkers will all be out on the roads. Please use extra caution on Bonner Road; kids will be once again walking to and from the school. You can expect to see our Police on Bonner Road before and just after school.
Next week the Planning Board meets on Monday April 1\textsuperscript{st} at MTH starting at 7pm. The Selectboard meet over at the Plainfield Library at 6pm Wednesday evening April 3\textsuperscript{rd}.

**Enjoy the spring weather.**

If we can help, stop in at the office and we are glad to do so.

**Friday March 22nd 2019:** A nasty little spring snow storm has the roads very slippery this morning, proceed with caution! It appears Mother Nature did not get the spring memo.

This past week in the town office we welcomed new Selectman Eric Brann. The Board held its first meeting of “the new year.” Ron Eberhardt will serve as the Chairman for 2019. The Selectboard also appointed its first municipal Fire Chief for our newly minted municipal fire department. William Taylor took the oath of office on Wednesday March 20\textsuperscript{th}.

Next week is a quiet meeting week, no land use boards, no Select Board meetings. The next Select Board meeting is Wednesday April 3\textsuperscript{rd} at the Plainfield Library. Think Spring!

**Thursday March 14\textsuperscript{th} 2019:** Town meeting is now open, on Tuesday new town officers were elected and zoning changes proposed by the Planning Board were approved. Congratulations to all those who were elected. We, here in the town office, look forward to working with you in the coming months. The business portion of town meeting picks up at 10:00am on Saturday March 16\textsuperscript{th} in the Plainfield Elementary School gymnasium. We begin with article 3, the proposed replacement of the Meriden Library.

As predicted last week, Plainfield roads are now posted with a 6 ton limit. If you need to have a large truck deliver something to your house, contact Road Agent Collins at 469-3240. The reality is that just about all the area towns have now posted. We are anticipating a tough mud season this year, a lot of cold weather and a lot of snow to melt.

The Board of Selectmen will meet next Wednesday March 20\textsuperscript{th} at 6pm here at the Meriden Town Hall. At this meeting the board will organize for 2019 and for the first time in our history will be appointing a municipal fire chief.

Next week is a garbage and recycling collection week, we anticipate a much smoother collection this go around, but keep in mind that material must be out by 7am and we will be encouraging Casella to get started early (colder temperatures) to minimize damage to gravel roads. Make sure your material is curbside early and try to make it clear, recycling versus garbage.
If we can help, stop in at the office and we are glad to do so.

**Thursday March 7th 2019:** One solid week into March and winter’s grip remains strong. Day length certainly helps, but a warm day wouldn’t hurt either. Road posting will be very soon, likely next week, plan accordingly. Once posted, Road Agent permission is required to operate vehicles whose gross weight exceeds 6 tons on town roads. Road Agents always try their best to work with everyone, typically permission can be obtained for early morning deliveries, assuming the night time temperature is below 25 degrees. The objective of the posting is to protect our gravel and paved roads from unnecessary damage during the freeze/thaw cycle of spring. Agricultural vehicles and essential services like heating oil delivery typically go on without interruption. Building construction projects and timber harvest operations are typically suspended until the postings are lifted.

We had a very tough week with garbage and recycling collection on the east side of town. It just did not go well right from the start and it carried over through the rest of the week. If your refuse is ever not collected on the day it should be please call the office (469-3201) or send me an e-mail plainfield.ta@plainfieldnh.org and leave it out. As long as we know about the problem we can usually get it corrected the next day, sometimes as we learned this week it takes a day after that.

Tuesday Voting includes two zoning questions that have not gotten a lot of attention. Both are intended as clarifications of existing regulations. The first simplifies the requirements for a zoning special exception by removing redundant language. The second clarifies the appeal process. Both changes come from the Planning Board and will make the zoning ordinance easier to understand.

**Friday night’s School District Meeting** begins at 6:30pm at PES and kicks off a very busy next week. Friday night school, Tuesday voting, Saturday next town meeting at 10:00am. If you need a town report, just stop over at the office, we have some extras.

The BART warehouse hearing resumes on Thursday March 14th at the Meriden Town Hall at 7pm with the ZBA. Last week I listed it as March 11th, that was incorrect. The correct day is the 14th I had forgotten about the date change.

Two weeks from now all of sugarhouses should be boiling, the roads will be muddy and apple tree pruning will be in full force. In other words, Spring.

If we can help, stop in at the office and we are glad to do so.

Steve Halleran- Plainfield Town Administrator

**Thursday February 28th 2019:** Town reports were mailed to residents as advertised on 2/27, should be in your mail box no later than Friday 3/1. Keep in mind these key dates
for annual meetings all events are in the school gym. Friday March 8th 6:30pm school meeting. Tuesday March 12th Official opening of town meeting, all day voting (8am to 7pm) for town officers, zoning changes and school district officers, Saturday March 16th 10am we deep dive into the town meeting warrant. Bring your town report, a curious mind and you’re good to go.

Your Selectboard meets next on Wednesday March 6th Meriden Town Hall at this meeting the board will be finalizing its preparations for town meeting and begin discussions about goals and objections for the coming summer season. We know that we have to pave the approaches on the two new bridges and the board’s current plan is to direct Highway to rebuild the paved section of Hell Hollow Road which has been in poor condition for several seasons now. A pavement overlay for Daniels Road is also in play.

The Zoning Board will be taking up the B-A-R-T warehouse located at #360 Route 12A on Monday March 11th 7pm here at the Meriden Town Hall. At issue is activity outside of approved hours.

We have just a few short weeks of winter left, if you haven’t taken the time to visit one of Plainfield’s many trails for a winter ski or snowshoe, there are some great days left. Highway has been plowing out trails head lots for the last couple of winters to make gaining access to the trails easy and stress free. Nothing clears the mind quite like a brisk hike to the top of French’s Ledges, Plainfield Plan is visible to the west in the shadow of Mount Ascutney, Meriden Village to the east, East Plainfield just beyond that. The lights and hustle and bustle of Lebanon can be seen to the north. It will make you feel good about this place we all call home.

If we can help, stop in at the office and we are glad to do so.

Steve Halleran- Plainfield Town Administrator

**Thursday February 21st 2019:** The Select Board at their February 20th meeting completed the property transfers from our two private fire departments to the Town of Plainfield things like land, buildings, trucks, equipment. The final step in the process will be the official appointment of a Chief and the Select Board acceptance of the roster of fire personnel as recommended by the Chief. This formality will be covered at the Selectboard’s March 20th meeting, one year after the authorizing vote of the legislative body (town meeting) as required by law. The Selectboard looks forward to working with Chief William Taylor and all of his officers and personnel to insure that the smooth transfer from two private to a single public fire departments continues. In short, we thank all the past, present and future members of the departments for their service to the Town of Plainfield and we look forward to working with them one and all.

As reported on the town’s Facebook page earlier this week, the 2018 Town of Plainfield annual report is now available online for viewing. Just visit [www.plainfieldnh.org](http://www.plainfieldnh.org) You cannot miss it. All of the credit for the quick availability of the finished report goes to
Webmaster Mike Sutherland. Printed books will be available at the Town Office on February 27th and books to residents should be in the mail that same day. All you need to be a well informed Plainfield citizen and to be ready for Annual Meetings is found in the book. Just open it up and read all about the last year, and plans for the coming year.

The library department put on a very nice open house Tuesday evening over at the Meriden library building. It was a great opportunity for all those that attended to learn about the details of the proposed library particularly the building construction details. It’s a very impressive building system for achieving high energy efficiency. If nothing else it will likely make you wish you had it in your own home!

Next week is a quiet week for town board’s, no Planning, Zoning or Select Board meetings are on the docket.

If we can help, stop in at the office and we are glad to do so.

Steve Halleran- Plainfield Town Administrator

Thursday February 14th 2019: Happy Valentines Day from the Town Office. Make sure you take time out today to do something nice for that special one!

The Zoning and Planning Board’s met in joint session on Monday evening to discuss a request by B-A-R-T industries to expand their approved hours of operation to line up with essentially their existing operational hours at the warehouse on Route 12A. Additional screening along with some changes to building lighting and dumpster location were proposed as an offset for approval of the added hours. No decision was reached in this difficult case; the Zoning Board will pick up the application again on March 14th at 7pm here at the Meriden Town Hall.

The Planning Board will meet next on Monday (2/18) at 7pm Meriden Town Hall one subdivision is on the agenda, a proposal by the Alice Hendrick Trust to subdivide one new lot on Stage Road. Details can be found at www.plainfieldnh.org/planning.htm

The Select Board meets next Wednesday (2/20) at 6pm at the Meriden Town Hall. The main agenda item is the completion of the property transfers from the private Plainfield and Meriden Volunteer Fire Departments to the Town of Plainfield. Essentially the Town of Plainfield is establishing a public fire department from the assets of the two private fire companies. This much discussed project is at the request of the two departments and was authorized with the passage of Article 3 at the 2018 town meeting.

Don’t forget to mail in your Inventory Forms and for goodness sake register the family dogs! The town office spends an enormous amount of time and energy each year reminding people to register their dogs. You picked Fido from the litter, with that decision came the responsibility of a daily walk, a rabies shot and a dog registration. Sorry, for the tough love on Valentines Day, but its true.
If we can help, stop in at the office and we are glad to do so.

**Thursday February 7th 2019:** The Selectboard, last evening, held its final budget hearing and a final hearing on the Meriden Library replacement project. The Town Report is now essentially complete and heads to the printer this Friday. The town report book will be mailed to residents on or about **February 27th**, one week before the school district meeting on **Friday night March 8th**.

If you feel as though your 2018 tax assessment is inaccurate (none of us likes our tax bill, but for this item stay focused on the assessed value) when compared to other similar Plainfield properties the deadline for filing for a tax abatement is **March 1st**. A good quality application need only be in writing and include the reasons why you feel the house is over assessed and maybe an example or two of a house in Plainfield that is similar to the subject but assessed for less. The town’s GIS system can help you find comparables [www.axisgis.com/PlainfieldNH](http://www.axisgis.com/PlainfieldNH)

**Monday evening February 11th** the Plainfield Zoning Board and Planning Board will be in session taking up a request by the new BART Industries warehouse at 360 Rte 12A to expand its approved hours of operation. For details visit [www.plainfieldnh.org/zba.htm](http://www.plainfieldnh.org/zba.htm)

If we can help stop in at the office and we are glad to do so.

**Thursday January 31st 2019:** The deadline for signing up to run for **Town or School offices is this Friday February 1st at 5:00pm**. Each year at a minimum we elected a Selectperson, School Board member and a Library Trustee or two. To get involved, you only have to present yourself to the Plainfield Town Clerk anytime between now and Friday afternoon and fill out a brief form.

Last day to petition a warrant article for 2019 town meeting is **Tuesday February 5th at 4pm here at the town office**. Petitions require at least 25 signatures from registered voters.

A second and final hearing on the Meriden Library replacement project is scheduled for **6:30pm on Wednesday night February 6th at the Plainfield Library**. A good opportunity to learn and get some of your early questions answered and to express an opinion on this project.

A second and final hearing on the town operating budget is scheduled for **7:00pm Wednesday night February 6th at the Plainfield Library**. The proposed budget and warrant are posted on the town’s website right off the home page.
So, as you can see there is a lot going on and there are plenty of good opportunities to get involved and make your opinions known. If we can help stop in at the office and we are glad to do so.

Steve Halleran, Plainfield Town Administrator