MINUTES OF THE SELECTMEN'S MEETING

Thursday January 2nd, 2020
Meriden Town Hall

Selectmen present:  Ron Eberhardt
                  Robert Taylor
                  Eric Brann

The meeting opened at 6pm

Public Comment:  Dennis Girouard asked about the responses to the “blue card” and asked when the Board would be discussing the results. He was given an electronic copy of the results. Chairman Eberhardt indicated that the Board would be discussing the results on a future meeting agenda.

Suzanne Spencer, accompanied by a 6-8 supporters of her requested presented the Selectboard with a letter asking to consider Nancy Liston for the Stephen H. Taylor Award for the 2020 Town Meeting. The Board agreed to take this matter up, possible as soon as the end of the meeting, but asked anyone in attendance at that time to keep the results of any decision to themselves.

Vern Braswell, noted he disagrees with the notion that the town needs two libraries. Further, he feels that the town’s Facility Manager is too involved in town committees and has conflicts of interest.

Highway:  Road Agent Collins reported that all of the town’s highway trucks are now back in service. Two breakdowns lead to a very slow response to the last storm. Rich was encouraged to seek out help from local contractors when breakdowns are going to significantly delay plowings.

Police Department: After updating the group on the department log. Chief Roberts and the Selectboard held a discussion about the department’s organizational structure and pay rates. Paul would like to promote one of his officers to Sargent. He was encouraged to put that proposal into a formal request including a proposed pay step for the promotion. Typically, town employees receive pay increases in April after town meeting.

Finance Committee/Solid Waste Group: In advance of a meeting in mid January with Jim Toher of Casella the group began to discuss various options for the town’s solid waste management program. The survey that was sent out had a 60% response rate and more than 80% wish to keep garbage collection and more than 90% wish to keep curbside recycling going. Options under consideration include the benefits of short or long term contracts, splitting the program into two facets recycling and garbage collection. There are other companies that could bid on garbage collection, it’s highly likely that only Casella can do the curbside recycling that we do now. There is an option for standardizing the recycling containers that would reduce the cost increase, but to take advantage of that, Casella wants a 5 year commitment. At the root of all this is that recycling markets are depressed and the town going forward will now be exposed to a recycling processing fee. Our now expired contract had no such fee. Sue Williams noted that Plainfield has had a recycling/trash collection program for decades and that, in her view, we should not eliminate any or all of the program based on short term market changes.

Facility Manager:  The Selectmen and Brad Atwater held a discussion about the balance the town would like to see with the facility manager. The manager is tasked with the upkeep of town buildings and planning for future capital projects including the Ready for 100 Initiative. Finding the balance between the planning portion of the job and the construction portion of the job is at issue. The board also discussed whether the position should be moved from a contracted service to a part time employment.

Other Business:  Town Administrator Halleran updated the board on financial year end activities. The town’s audit begins on 1/14. Plainfield was the recipient of some very generous year end giving. One resident provided more than $8,000 in donations, including $7,500 for the Schell Community Fund.
The Selectboard discussed the Stephen H. Taylor Award. The period for nominations remains open any recipient will not be announced until the 2020 Town Meeting.

Submitted,

Ron Eberhardt, Chair

Stephen Halleran

Robert Taylor

Eric Brann
Selectmen present:  Ron Eberhardt  
Eric Brann

The meeting opened at 6pm

Public Comment: Several members of the public spoke in opposition to the plans to replace the Meriden Library. Both Holly Braswell and Vern Braswell felt the project has not been well planned and is an unnecessary expense. They both asked the Selectmen to consider not supporting the article.

Dennis Girouard questioned the rate that Atwater Construction charges for project work as part of the Facility Manager position. Halleran noted that it was his decision to treat the position as an independent contractor rather than an employee. Essentially, Atwater Construction is providing services to the town, some planning some repair work. Dennis asked the Selectboard to take a close look at this going forward.

Viriginia Drye thanked the Highway Department for the work they are doing with the sidewalk in the Village. Mike Collins work with the snow blower has been, in her view, exceptional and very much appreciated.

Tim Toher Casella Waste: Building on earlier discussions Jim took the time to walk the Selectboard, Solid Waste Committee and Finance Committee through the pricing for any new contract. Essentially collection services have remained unchanged, but all town’s will now be asked to participate in the recycling costs and risks. This adds $30,000 to the contract. That number can be reduced by $11,000 if recycling is “Toterized” but for Casella to do so will require a five year contract. Jim also discussed the end markets for some of the recycling and explained what Plainfield can do to improve the quality of its products. Mainly, rinse materials, keep plastic bags out of the stream, and reduce or eliminate glass.

Budget Hearing: The first of two budget hearings was held, the second will be February 5th. Town Administrator Halleran first took the group through the proposed warrant which contains 10 article. Bev Widger offered some clarification wording for the Meriden Library article. Turing to the budget Halleran pointed out areas of greatest change. The spending plan asks for $90,000 more than the previous year. Most of this increase is tied to salaries and benefits, the recycling/garbage dispoal costs and winter maintenance costs. The proposed budget and special warrant articles including the Meriden Library replacement would add $.85 to the tax rate if all are approved. Bonnie Swift asked that at the February 5th hearing if a list of planned capital building expenditures could be made available.

Other Business: The Selectmen approved a promotion from Corporal to Sargent for Anthony Swett of the Police Department. The Board also abated $44 in interest charges for the new owners of the Plainfield Store. As a result of confusion at the closing the new owners where
unaware that the tax was due. Payment in full of the tax was made immediately once they became aware of the oversight.

The meeting adjourned at 9:45pm.

Submitted,

Stephen Halleran

Ron Eberhardt, Chair

Robert Taylor

Eric Brann
MINUTES OF THE SELECTMEN'S MEETING
Wednesday February 5th, 2020
Meriden Town Hall

Selectmen present: Ron Eberhardt
                    Robert Taylor
                    Eric Brann

The meeting opened at 6pm

Public Comment: As a point of information resident Diane Rogers indicated that she believes there is a Possum living under the Plainfield Town Hall.

Police: Chief Roberts and the Selectboard worked out the process to be followed for Paul to access the $20,000 encumbered last year from the Police Budget. The money has been earmarked for new radios. Paul will bring proposals to the Town Administrator.

Highway Department: Road Agent Collins that the town’s chipper may need replacement. The 1988 unit is not working at full power. A hydraulic pump problem is suspected. Previously, the town approved the purchase of a new chipper. Consensus could not be reached on a new unit and the project lapsed.

Fire Department: Chief Taylor updated the Selectmen on his department’s calls over the last two weeks. Station coverage for Lebanon and Enfield and assisting in Enfield at a the Chase Auto Salvage fire were mentioned.

Solid Waste Group (SWG): Mark Morgan delivered the group’s report to the Selectmen. The report will be in the Town Report and basically recommends continuing the existing program for another year while a detailed RFP can be developed. The SWG is willing to continue working on the project. The Selectmen accepted the recommendations voting to having the Town Administrator act upon them.

Facility Manager: Brad Atwater took the assembled group through a spreadsheet that he has been using to prioritize necessary work on all seven town buildings. The spreadsheet represents his work toward developing a capital improvements plan for the town’s buildings.

The hour being just after 7pm, the conference room being jammed full of interested residents Chairman Eberhardt opened the second and final budget hearing. The group began its review of all ten articles on the 2020 draft warrant.

Art1. Election of officers.

Art 2. Meriden Library Replacement: Public Comment received centered on concerns over process followed, mainly the decision to use Bensonwood a design build firm without a formal bid process. Some felt that two libraries are not necessary. Others felt that the project is warranted and at $183,000 for a $1,046,000 building represents a good deal for the town. Selectman Eberhardt noted while the process could always have been better, he will be supporting the article. Selectman Brann noted that he has listened to all sides and will be voting against the project. He shares concerns about process and whether or not the expenditure is necessary. Selectman Taylor moved that the Board recommend the appropriation, the motion was seconded and voted in the affirmative on a vote of 2-1.

Art 3. Operating Budget, no changes since the first budget hearing. Several expenditure questions were answered and the Selectboard approved recommending the appropriation on a vote of 3-0.

Art 4. Reserve Funding, no changes since the first budget hearing. Several investment questions were asked and answered. The Selectboard approved recommending the appropriation on a vote of 3-0.
Art 5. All Veteran’s Credit, the Selectboard approved recommending the appropriation on a vote of 3-0.

Art 6. KUA Study no change.

Art 7. Finance Committee no change.

Art 8. Accept town report, no change.


Art 10. Any other business, no change.

The final budget hearing was closed.

**Other Business:** As recommended by the energy committee the Selectmen agreed to appoint the town’s existing energy committee to serve as the Town’s Electric Aggregation Committee. The next stop is for this group to develop a plan that will be presented at a future town meeting.

The Selectmen spent the rest of the meeting signing orders and reviewing correspondence. The meeting adjourned at 9:45pm.

Submitted,

Ron Eberhardt, Chair

Stephen Halleran

Robert Taylor

Eric Brann
Selectmen present: Ron Eberhardt  
Robert Taylor  
Eric Brann

The meeting opened at 6pm

Public Comment: Clint Swift asked if town ordinances/policies could be placed online. Halleran noted there is a binder at town office that has them all in it, but it would be very reasonable to link a combined PDF file showing ordinances to the website. The Selectmen directed Halleran to have this done.

Dennis Girouard questioned the process for using the ADA Fund for the Meriden Library project. As agents to expend the Board of Selectmen and town meeting have the authority to direct the funds usage for the purpose for which it was established.

William Knight, Trail Director provided a history of the town’s trail system/Nordic facility that is operated from the PES parking lot. Bill asked the Selectmen for permission to use $5,400 from the trail fund to purchase a new trail drag. The request was granted on a vote of 3 to 0. Selectmen Taylor noted that the entire program is all self funded through donations; virtually no public tax money has been used.

Police: Chief Roberts updated the Selectmen on police work the last two weeks. The department has continued to have trouble with patients from Mt Valley Treatment Center leaving the facility. The Selectmen asked Halleran to schedule the executive director of Mt. Valley for time at an upcoming Selectboard meeting.

Chief Roberts presented the Board with proposals for replacing four radios in the department. The Selectmen approved a $20,000 encumbrance from last year’s approve PD budget. The Selectboard accepted the work and voted 3 to 0 to authorize the $20,007 purchase to upgrade the department’s mobile and portable radios.

Highway Department: The new International truck has still not been delivered. The Selectmen are considering cancelling the order for the truck. Its not going to be available for this winter and nearly a year has been gone since it was ordered. Halleran will communicate this to Scott Reed of SG Reed Inc. The town has a long history of purchasing International Trucks. Mechanical performance and now this issue have the Board rethinking that position.

Town Office: The Selectmen began a discussion about town policies and procedures. A complete review of all town policies is being considered. It has been pointed out that the town’s purchasing policy is more than 11 years old and is out of date with current practices. The town has never endorsed a formal bid procedure, instead electing to rely on the quotation and RFP process. This discussion expanded to include the process for developing policy and procedure. Halleran will speak with Town Attorney Barry Schuster.

Facility Manager: At Town Administrator Halleran’s request the Selectmen held a discussion with Brad Atwater about the facility manager position. The town has had the position for three years and this is an opportunity to discuss the work that is being done. Brad noted that the job has broken down into two sections, brick and mortar repairs and maintenance and strategic planning. The town currently contracts with Atwater Construction for this work. At issues is how much of this work can the town afford or not afford to do? The idea of establishing a Facility Committee to work with the FM on projects and capital budgeting was discussed. The current budget for the FM work is about $12,500/year. All agreed that
position has value, the Selectboard is considering whether its better to contract for the work or to hire a part
time employee to be the facility manager.

At this time, Selectman Taylor moved to go into nonpublic session to discuss contracts vs employee
compensation for the Facility Manager. The motion was seconded and voted in the affirmative, Taylor yes,
Eberhardt yes, Brann yes.

The Board entered nonpublic session at 8:40pm and returned to public session at 9:10pm.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:11pm

Submitted,

Ron Eberhardt, Chair

Stephen Halleran

Robert Taylor

Eric Brann
MINUTES OF THE SELECTMEN’S MEETING  
Wednesday March 4th, 2020  
Meriden Town Hall

Selectmen present:  Ron Eberhardt  
Robert Taylor  
Eric Brann

The meeting opened at 6pm

SG Reed: Scott Reed updated the Selectboard on the long awaited highway truck that was ordered last April. Scott apologized for the delay, noting that many other towns are in the same situation. A labor dispute at the factory and greater than expected commercial orders for vehicles has led to the delay. He is trying to get some additional warranties from International to compensate his town’s for the long wait times.

Mt. Valley Treatment: Tim DiGiacoma, Everett Logan, and Carl Lovejoy met with the Selectboard to discuss the experience with a recent patient that resulted in multiple police calls over a two week period. They assured the town that this was not the “norm” for the facility and pledged to do enhanced training with their staff about assisting the police when asked to do so. The Selectmen thanked them for coming to the meeting.

Finance Committee: Chairman Sutherland shared with the Selectboard the Finance Committee’s recommendation that the town take some action to either explain why its not participating in GASB #75 (actuary study of post retirement employee benefit liability, of which Plainfield likely has little or none) for the annual audit. Plainfield, like many town’s, has not perform this study which costs about $1,000/year and as a result has a qualified audit. The Selectboard determined that the best course of action was to hire a company to do the study. Halleran will see if the work can be included in the 2019 audit.

Highway Report: Plainfield roads are now posted for 6 tons. Road Agent Collins and his crew have been working on repairing muddy roads. March has been unseasonably warm this year. The Selectmen, on the recommendation of Town Administrator Halleran agreed to meet next Monday with the owner of Modern Protective Coatings to discuss options for preserving the steel under the Meriden Covered Bridge. This work could happen as early as April of this year.

Police Report: Chief Roberts discussed coverage plans for town and school meetings alone with Tuesday voting. The Plainfield School is in session that on voting day.

The Chief discussed conceptual plans for replacing the town’s three cruisers in 2021.

Public Comment: Dennis Girouard asked for clarification on the difference between and bid and an RFP. Vernon Braswell apologized for distributing a pamphlet about the Meriden Library project that did not have his name on it. He indicated he has corrected this going forward.

Facility Manager: Brad Atwater asked for authorization to spend up to $15,000 on weatherization projects for the Plainfield Library and the Plainfield Fire Station. 35% of the work will be paid for by Eversource. A private company will do the air sealing and insulation work. The project has a 12 year payback with a simple rate of return of 8%. The Selectboard did not
approve the work, preferring to defer action on the project until after a three person facility committee has been established to work with Brad. The charge of that committee was discussed. Brad indicated that utility funding for the project could be lost after 60 days.

**Purchasing Policy:** The Selectmen took no action on this issue, deciding to first consider the appointment of a policy committee who would first develop a policy for making policies.

Chairman Eberhardt at 9:00pm moved to enter nonpublic session for the purpose of addressing two complaints against town officials that could adversely effect their reputations. Taylor yes, Brann yes, Eberhardt yes.

The Selectmen came out of nonpublic session at 9:40pm.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:41pm.

Ron Eberhardt, Chair

Stephen Halleran

Robert Taylor

Eric Brann
Selectmen present:  Ron Eberhardt
Robert Taylor
Eric Brann

The meeting opened at 3pm

The Selectmen met to set up the polling place for tomorrow’s town meeting voting.

At 3:45pm the Board met with Scott Roystan owner of Modern Protective Coatings to discuss his company’s proposal to clean and paint with a Zinc based compound the structural steel under the Meriden Covered Bridge. This work needs to be done to preserve the steel. Scott noted that his company has been doing NHDOT work since 1969, his dad started the company. He is currently working on a project in Montpelier Vt and has a “soft” spot in his schedule for three weeks after that. He has proposed very aggressive pricing to the town to fill that slot before his summer work begins. He provided recent NHDOT bid results for bridge painting to back up his assertion that the pricing is below market.

The project would take three to four weeks. While considering this approach the Selectmen asked Road Agent Collins to remove a small section of the covered bridge decking to better assess the condition of the top flange of the steel. The Selectmen my authorize highway to replace the decking on the bridge at this same time. This would allow the top of the beams to be cleaned and painted as well.

The meeting adjourned at 4:40pm.

Ron Eberhardt, Chair

Stephen Halleran

Robert Taylor

Eric Brann
MINUTES OF THE SELECTMEN'S MEETING  
Friday March 13th, 2020  
Meriden Town Hall

Selectmen present: Ron Eberhardt  
Eric Brann

Others Present: Moderator Paul Franklin  
Police Chief Paul Roberts  
Facility Manager Brad Atwater

The emergency meeting opened at 2pm

As allowed by the emergency provisions of RSA 91-A, the Selectmen met with Moderator Paul Franklin to discuss the postponement of the Plainfield Town Meeting “Business Portion” scheduled for tomorrow morning. The United States has now declared a national emergency due to the COVID 19 pandemic, as a result gatherings of large numbers of people are being discouraged. Both the Selectmen and Moderator have heard from members of the medical community who strongly advise postponing.

Having sought the counsel of key Plainfield officials, Moderator Paul Franklin, as allowed by RSA 40:4, postponed the March 14th business portion of town meeting until Saturday June 13th at 10:00am at the Plainfield School.

The rest of the meeting was spent on press releases and developing strategies to get the word.

The meeting adjourned 3pm.

Ron Eberhardt, Chair

Stephen Halleran

Eric Brann
MINUTES OF THE SELECTMEN'S MEETING  
Thursday March 26th, 2020  
Meriden Town Hall

Selectmen present:  Ron Eberhardt-Zoom  
                   Eric Brann  
                   Rob Taylor  

Others Present:  Stephanie Schell-Zoom  
                 Bonnie Swift-Zoom  
                 Vern Braswell-Zoom  
                 Holly Braswell-Zoom  
                 Mike Sutherland-Zoom  
                 Jeff Allbright-Zoom  
                 Mike Sutherland-Zoom  
                 Helen Koehler-Phone  
                 Brad Atwater

The meeting opened at 6pm:

Robert Taylor was elected as Board Chairman

Public Comment: Bev Widger asked about the town’s COVID 19 preparedness plans.  
Chairman Taylor indicated the Board will be discussing this later in the meeting.

The Selectmen approved a lien release prepared by Town Counsel Barry Schuster concerning an 
abandoned trailer at the Meriden Trailer Park. The release is necessary to finalize the disposal 
plans. The town has no hopes of recoup the taxes owed from the owner who has died or the 
estate.

The Selectmen approved up to a $100,000 expenditure on the Meriden Covered Bridge to clean 
and coat the steel understructure and to replace the existing wooden deck. Town Administrator 
Halleran was authorized to finalize the project details with Modern Protective Coatings of 
Hudson NH.

The Selectboard froze all employee pay rates until the town’s budget is approved at the June 13th 
town meeting. The March 14th session was postponed due to the COVID 19 pandemic. Any 
approved changes for employee compensation typically go into effect on April 1st.

Human Services Director Stephanie Schell joined the meeting to discuss with the Selectboard her 
efforts to communicate with Plainfield’s senior and special needs populations during the 
Pandemic. The Selectboard offered their help. Plainfield has many residents and businesses that 
stand ready to assist anyone that needs help. Bev Widger encouraged the town to be as proactive 
as possible in making sure that all residents feel included. Stephanie noted that she is making 
about 80 calls per week.

Facility Manager Brad Atwater discussed some work he would like to do to sure up the 
foundation at the Plainfield Town Hall. Board members agreed to take a look at this planned
work prior to next week’s meeting. The Selectmen will visit two town buildings next week, the
Gravel Pit Annex and the Plainfield Town Hall. Next week’s meeting at the Meriden Town Hall
will start at 6:30pm.

The meeting adjourned at 8:00pm.

Ron Eberhardt, Chair

Stephen Halleran

Robert Taylor

Eric Brann