

Preliminary Minutes

Town of Plymouth, Vermont

Select Board - Regular Meeting

Monday, December 18, 2023 @ 6:00 PM

Board Members Present: Jay Kullman Keith Cappellini Rick Kaminski

Staff Members Present: Angela Kissell Elaine Pauley

Others Present: Bruce Pauley Lauren Skaskiw Al Poirier
Terry Bascom Josh Linton

Present via Zoom: Willow Bascom Midge Tucker Tina Fletcher
Geena Baber Craig OBriskie Sydney Steinle
Sue Poirier

1. Call Meeting to Order:
 - a. Jay Kullman called the meeting to order at 6:01 pm.

2. Consideration of Any Changes, Additions or Removals to the Agenda:
 - a. Jay Kullman noted that we were going to add the Davis Road / Manton Boulevard issue to the agenda.

3. Approve Meeting Minutes:
 - a. **Jay Kullman made a motion to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes from December 4, 2023. Rick Kaminski seconded the motion. The motion carried.**

4. Ryan Palmer – Windsor County Sheriff’s Department:
 - a. N/A

5. Two Rivers Ottauquechee Regional Commission:
 - a. Jay Kullman introduced Sydney from Two Rivers to discuss the Municipal Technical Assistance Program. Jay added, it was his understanding that the MTAP was developed

- to help small towns that don't necessarily have the capacity for Grants or to know what grants are out there that might benefit them.
- b. Sydney gave an overview of the program that started in March of this year and it was expanded in October to include more Towns. It is a program that is funded by a budget adjustment. It's helping Towns being able to access grants that they otherwise wouldn't have the ability to access by letting the RPC work with them. There is no charge to the Towns, it is all paid for by the State for eligible activity. The activities that can be done by the municipalities are needs assessments, opportunity assessment, application for those funding sources as well as management of funding, if a grant is awarded. The eligible project categories are fairly broad, but generally they are water & wastewater including septic and well, but there are limited funding sources for those but we can always look if there is a project. It includes housing, climate change, resilience and mitigation and we are figuring out how that one meshes with things that are on our mind right now such as disaster recovery. We don't want to overlap with FEMA/ federal funding. It also includes business support – economic recovery. There is a catch all other category in projects that don't fit neatly in the other four (4) categories and would require Agency of Administration (AOA) permission to pursue funding for those projects. Sydney then asked if anyone had any questions.
 - c. Jay Kullman asked Sydney if she could touch on the needs assessment part of the program.
 - d. Sydney said it is part of the program and it will depend on what the Town wants. There could be a less formal assessment depending on what the Select Board feels is needed for the Town.
 - e. Jay asked where does the Town start with this, where do we kick this off?
 - f. Sydney said that she and Jay have had a good conversation with this and it kind of included a smaller version of the needs assessment where we identified some needs of the Town. She would like to get the Select Board in generals' opinion on some of these needs. I know you have a Town owned school building that is in okay shape and it is used for a lot of functions. I would like to hear more about that building and if there are any needs identified there. Just what towns needs are and I can get a general sense of the priorities and see if they match up with the Municipal Technical Assistant Program and I'll start looking for grants. With the growth that we want to see we will continue to access grants that are available and how the State can support us.
 - g. Jay introduced Lauren and asked her to elaborate on childcare.
 - h. Lauren spoke of all of the support that she has received and how she is looking to expand. She is looking to find grants that will help them operate.
 - i. Rick Kaminski asked, what would the grants be used for?
 - j. We are looking to immediately outfit a baby classroom, but in listening to the Community it sounds like an after-school program is what is lacking. The Woodstock program is no longer offering an after-school program and we have parents in the Plymouth community who are struggling to find after-school programs.
 - k. Rick Kaminski asked Sydney if the after-school program is something that would qualify for a potential grant?

- l. Sydney, yes, municipal buildings that are being used for things like Daycares, and I know there is a Farmers Market and tag sale which is generally a lot of stuff in this building so it is definitely something that we can look for grants for.
 - m. Rick asked if there is a cap on the funding amount for each project?
 - n. Sydney said it is not a funding program but an assistance program. There is not a specific cap amount that the RPC can provide a Town. There are some very large grants that might take \$25,000 in RPC time to apply or it might be a \$3,000 grant that takes two weeks of our time to apply to. It is just really going to depend. They wanted this program to be flexible so it is not necessarily a concern.
 - o. Rick asked if there was a lot of competition for these grants.
 - p. Sydney said that it is not competitive yet. As funding dwindles down it will get more competitive. Once funding is lower and there is a limit on what we can do it will be prioritized by the “neediest/lowest capacity towns” as defined by the Vermont Communities Index.
 - q. Jay asked Al if there was anything that he wanted to add as the Emergency Management Director and looking at that building.
 - r. Al said he would have to give it some thought as he really hadn’t thought about it.
 - s. Jay asked Rick Kaminski what he thought the general condition of the building is based on his perspective. I know it’s dated, but it seems solid, Jay added.
 - t. Rick answered by saying, it is very solid. It’s got good bones and it has a new roof, paint job and a new boiler. It’s got some good asset to it.
 - u. Rick asked if roads or bridges or utilities like that be covered from a possible grant?
 - v. Sydney added that there are grants out there for the things but its kind of a conversation right now whether MTAP can assist on those. Things like sidewalks in a downtown or village center would be covered, but culvers and repaving is a large discussion that we are having right now.
 - w. Jay said that the next step for us is to get some ideas together and send them to you.
 - x. Sydney, I think that is a great idea. You can send me ideas and I can send you input.
6. Lauren Skaskiw & Caitlin Gagner – Childcare Community Center:
- a. Jay Kullman introduced Lauren Skaskiw as the Community Center Director and she runs the daycare. Jay asked her if she wanted to add anything or if she had any questions for Sydney?
 - b. Lauren Skaskiw began speaking by saying that she had a folder of support letters from business owners and townspeople who are on our waitlist or who are members of the schoolhouse childcare list. We have quite a waitlist and the childcare needs in out Town are only growing. People are looking to make Plymouth their primary residence and if child care is secure, it makes them feel more secure to move here permanently. What we would like to do is take more capacity at the Community Center to become larger and serve the needs of the community. We are looking at grants of course, but also the population that is looking for childcare will support what we would like to do.

- c. Lauren asked the Select Board if they have received the support letters that she provided.
- d. The Select Board acknowledged that they did.
- e. It's been about six to seven months ago since we started our new chapter of staying open year-round. We have had an overwhelming amount of support from the Community that is so happy that we are doing what we are doing by offering child care throughout the week. About eight or nine years ago, I took the position from Terry as Community Center Director and at that same time started the process of licensing one of the rooms to be a licensed childcare. Took a whole year to gather materials and get licensing, insurance and financing behind me to create childcare that has only grown through the years. Lauren elaborated on the young kids who have come through the school house over the years and how the feeling of community kept her going. We operate 8:00 am to 4:00 pm Monday thru Thursday. Caitlin and Lauren split the days to be able to be open all day for childcare to the residents. We charge what we know families can afford, but also what we know the state can reimburse us for. We accept families that are on subsidies and that makes up 3/4 of our families. The reality is that most of our families are struggling to make ends meet. What we are looking to do is expand into the activities room. What that means is it would shift what the building's focus is really from a full-time community center. Nine years ago when I started my relationship with the community center, the rental agreement was 5% of my profit would be the rental amount. I would always say yes to the building being used for emergency relocation and being happy for it to be shared. I am happy for the building to still be used for emergency relocation, but that activity room would now be turned into another classroom. I am hearing, from the community, that there is a need and it should be turned into another classroom. Amazingly enough there is a woman who is local and wants to be my baby teacher and is qualified enough and with my support she can be in that classroom with another four (4) children. Although it sounds small, the ripple effect is huge as there is no infant/toddler daycare. It's hard to get your children into preschool and you have to get on the waitlist when they're a baby. People cannot move into this Town unless they know that there is childcare. People want to be here but if they can't get childcare then someone is staying at home. It doesn't mean that is the best option, but that is what the reality is. I think what you will find in my collection of support letters is families expressing their need to want to be here more, but they can't commit to that unless they have childcare. Between Caitlin and I we have had an amazing year so far and the families are thrilled. The children are growing and I would like to take on another person to make the activity room into a baby/toddler room. I am not going to progress forward with that without the blessing of the Select Board, Historical Society and Emergency Department because that is also a function of the building. I believe the building appreciates having activity in it. It's a great building and the children who bust through that door, it is their second home and they love it. We want to continue to grow the program and I hope that I can make the activity room into another full-time classroom. This is my proposal to do that with the discussion of what that would look like and also if that means compensating more for rent, I am happy to have that conversation because I am grateful to be there and I know there is a

monetary cost to be there. Also, I am not new to applying for grants and I am happy to look for ways to supplement being there and paying the bills.

- f. Jay Kullman has a couple questions. Sydney is still on, I see and if there are grants could they be applied for through the municipality.
- g. Lauren added that she is hoping for support from the state and mentioned Tesha Buss' name. She said that Tesha knows what is going on with the state.
- h. Jay is also wondering about community events. There are a few that happen throughout the year there.
- i. We have the tag sale and the farmers market, which has been pretty consistent the last few years. In looking at that, they don't have to happen at the Community Center. We can be creative and these things can happen at less cost to the Town. The tag sale can happen outside where I don't have to put out the signs and open up the building for the bathrooms.
- j. Jay Kullman added a better higher use of the building. There was more conversation about cleaning and usage of the building.
- k. Lauren is more than happy to post for the Plymouth Press but her duties would become less if she expands the daycare. She also added that since the Municipal Building has been renovated there could be a shift of where meetings are held such as the historical society meetings.
- l. Jay asked Al his thoughts since he was there on behalf of Emergency Management, if the building is used to a greater degree does that create any challenges for you if you have to open it as a shelter.
- m. Al Poirier said that it certainly sounds like it would be a potential challenge. It depends how much material and desk and furniture are put in the rooms. With the current day care room we have lost approximately 50% of that space. We have to push everything to the side. It would definitely hinder the use of the shelter. I am not saying it is impossible, but we need to discuss it.
- n. Jay added that the historical society still occupies part of the building and that has come up and whether that is the best space for them. We don't have the answer for that yet.
- o. Keith added that Angela and I have been discussing it and we called up there this week.
- p. Angela Kissell added that we do have an appointment with someone from the Coolidge Foundation who will be doing a site visit on January 18th.
- q. Lauren has started the conversation with the Historical Society and expressed her need to expand the childcare services for Plymouth residents. She did add that it was her understanding that 20-30 years ago the Historical Society was up at the Coolidge Foundation.
- r. Jay and Keith talked about the future usage of the Annex Building.
- s. Keith said, as a Select Board member he needs to think about all of the people in Town versus just parents and feels that the decision of what should be done with the Community Center should be brought to the townspeople to vote on.
- t. Jay said that we can illustrate the cost and what it takes to heat the building and electricity, but some of these costs will remain as they are part of having it available as an emergency shelter.

- u. Keith said that it would make more sense to move the Historical Society to the Coolidge Foundation. It would give them more room and more people would see it up there.
- v. Rick Kaminski asked Lauren if her business was a non-profit.
- w. Lauren said that she is not a non-profit because when she started, she wanted to make a profit so she opened as a sole proprietorship. It does, however, knock me out of some of the grant options. If I wanted to be a non-profit I would have to shut down the school house and open under a different entity. I am a for-profit.
- x. Rick said that he is happy that Lauren is looking to expand. He also added what brought it to their attention a couple months ago was an itemized bill as the director and it was a surprise to us. We are trying to get our arms wrapped around that and manage expenses.
- y. Lauren said what you're probably referring to is the time logged for the tag sale which takes a lot of hours. Terry is here and he can attest to the fact that it takes a lot of hours. The month before, during and right after, it takes a lot of hours. It is not something that I am doing as a volunteer. It is something that the community has expressed wanting and it takes a lot of time.
- z. Rick Kaminski added that they have been discussing having the Clerk, Angela take over some of the duties.
 - aa. Keith added volunteers to help.
 - bb. Lauren said if the childcare can expand she doesn't see the need to spend that many hours on a tag sale for just 12 people. So that bill would pretty much go away.
 - cc. Keith said that this was an informal position by a previous Board therefore you're not technically an employee. Keith was not speaking on behalf of Jay or Rick but didn't feel comfortable that this was a formalized town position with the amount of money that was being spent on it. This is another thing that the Town would have to decide. Do they want to pay someone? My opinion, for the amount of people who attend those events, it's not worth the money.
 - dd. Terry Bascom recalled that there used to be a line budget for the Community Center Director position. Does that still exist? Is it still there?
 - ee. Lauren said the pay used to be \$8,000 then it was dropped to \$6,000 with more duties put on her.
 - ff. Terry said it sounds like things changed.
 - gg. Jay said he didn't think there is anything and it is now being discussed since they're currently working on the budget. We want to see what we can do to make it work for Lauren.
 - hh. Terry said as Director he noticed a couple things. He did a survey and noticed that more people wanted to do outside activities versus inside ones. He also realized that he wasn't connecting with the younger people who were moving back into Town and that is why he proposed to Lauren to take over. The question is, does the Town of Plymouth really need a Community Center?
 - hh. Terry made reference to the municipal building and why it could be used as a shelter versus the community center.

ii. Jay thinks it's amazing what is going on at the Schoolhouse and hopes that we can find a way to support this.

jj. Al Poirier added it's not that we wouldn't use this room as a shelter, it's that if it is a flood event we would have to go to higher ground. If it's an ice storm it would be a non-issue.

kk. Rick told Lauren that there is a lot of community support for her program and it has a lot of value for Plymouth but we have to satisfy the element that looks at this from the business perspective of dollars and cents. A way to keep this moving forward would be for you to come up with a proposal on what you think you can afford for rent. If the Board gave the approval, Lauren, how long would it take to get this up and running?

ll. Lauren said a few months. I already have the license and I have a woman who wants to work....so a month.

mm. Rick said the idea of a proposal with that in mind might move this forward so you might want to think about that. nn. Rick asked Lauren, how do we transfer some of these Director duties to Angela? oo. Jay added that we are just shifting costs.

pp. Karith said that if we are going to put this to a vote shouldn't we ask the Town if they want to have a community center and to continue these events, to have the tag sale and stuff and then we can transfer to Angela. qq. Keith said that Town Meeting is a couple months away and it can be voted on.

7. Select Board to Review and Sign the Following:

a. Resolution

b. Tax Certificate

c. Current Expense Note

d. The Select Board reviewed the above-referenced loan documents. Jay Kullman noted that we are waiting on funding from FEMA and we will advance \$500,000 on this line of credit to get us through.

e. **Jay Kullman made a motion to review and sign the Resolution, Tax Certificate, and Expense Note. Rick Kaminski seconded the motion. The motion carried.**

8. Town Constable(s) Role and Responsibilities:

a. Keith Cappellini started by saying that we have kicked this ball around for about a year or so with our first constable, Josh Linton who is here. He added that there is some agreement that the Town would be in better hands if the constable was able to act with some official policing duties that are almost equivalent to an acting police officer. Josh and I would like to propose, together, a 12 hr week with coverage on the weekend. This would be coverage for when the Sheriff is not on duty. This is a proposed 3-6 month trial period. He is already doing this for the Town of Woodstock.

b. Josh Linton gave a brief overview of the estimated cost for a body cam, radio, vest as well as dispatching fees and other miscellaneous items needed to take on this role. He added that there is a lot to this and if it is decided that we move forward we can figure this stuff out.

- c. Jay Kullman asked about the administrative side of it. We talked with VLCT a while ago and they said that you would have to have backup.
- d. Josh answered by saying that, I believe the Sheriffs would be back-up. Josh said that at some point if we were done with the Sheriff's department then we would have a conversation with VSP or a neighboring Town.
- e. Jay said that would be tough. Looks like we would still use the Sheriff's department. There was more conversation around the administrative side of this. Some of the work would be tied to contested speeding tickets. Josh thought maybe we could work something with Woodstock dispatch.
- f. Jay understands there will be a one-time capital expenses and then I am hearing ongoing expenses. Jay asked Keith what the ongoing expenses are? They discussed payroll, mileage, insurance as well as Clerk administrative fees as some of the ongoing expenses.
- g. Ryan Palmer, attending via zoom spoke about the Sheriff's department's coverage and feels that they are doing a good job and to say that they are not responding is disingenuous.
- h. Terry Bascom expressed his opinions about keeping services local versus making everything centralized.
- i. Keith said that we don't need black suburbans in small rural towns.
- j. Jay added that Ryan Palmer has done everything he has said and has been trying to change the way things were. We had an incident at the Town Hall and Ryan Palmer was very responsive. He called and couldn't get a hold of me right that second but called me back to help us solve the problem. They came out here and asked what we wanted as a community and they have tried to deliver. I am not against the thing with Josh, but the Sheriff's department is meeting our needs. One of the needs is on call 24/7 and we have that now and the price is pretty darn reasonable.
- k. Ryan Palmer discussed the vehicles and the training records of the Sheriff's department. We have worked very hard to professionalize the department, he added. We also have silver and white vehicles. We care about the people of Plymouth and stop in the businesses when we are in Town. If you want to go in a different direction, that is fine, but don't make it out to something else.
- l. Keith said that we have been having this discussion for a couple years as to the needs of the Town of Plymouth so it predates you, Ryan.
- m. Bruce Pauley said there is nothing wrong with the constable, but the Sheriff's department is between the local and state police and they're not a militarized version of a police department. To think that small Towns are immune to bigger problems than what we might have had in the past or what we might see in the future is not seeing things clearly. Things change and a Sheriff's department has the resources to do a lot of things that a Town Constable doesn't have access to. It is a great thing to know a local cop but there has to be a separation between that local cop and the population so that things don't slip by because of the old boy network type of a situation. I am very comfortable with the Sheriff's department and I think Josh could offer something in addition to that if the Town wants to spend the additional money. It comes down to what Ryan says.

- n. Tina Fletcher said that this appears to be an expensive initial step to break away from the Sheriff's department and as a citizen of Plymouth, I am not comfortable with that. If we are going to have Josh take over duties of the Sheriff's department we are going to need more than one person. If this is the route that we're looking to go it doesn't sound like we will have adequate coverage and with the Sheriff's department now, we do. It sounds like we have coverage 24/7.
- o. Angela Kissell added, as an employee of the Town, she feels comfortable with the Sheriff's department and their coverage. She asked Josh Linton what his schedule would be. She knows that he is on multiple departments and what if he is on call or gets called in. How would he provide coverage then?
- p. Josh responded by saying that this was just an idea that was tossed out two years ago and it is just being revisited. Ultimately, maybe it is something that I can work with Sheriff Palmer. I am open to those conversations.
- q. Keith Cappellini said if we are not going to utilize the constables then let's do away with them.
- r. Elaine Pauley asked that we ask the Town what they would like and let them vote.
- s. Rick Kaminski added that he agrees with Jay and appreciates what the Sheriff's department does. Rick then asked Josh if he saw this position as a town employee or as a subcontractor?
- t. Josh answered by saying that he couldn't be a subcontractor.
- u. Rick Kaminski said that if we are paying you by the hour then there will be additional expenses such as insurance and workman's compensation so we have to be aware of that. If I were you Josh, I would put together an accurate budget and let's identify the accurate costs. Put it down on paper so we have a budget that we can take to the floor at town meeting and let the voters decide. We cannot do that without an accurate budget.
- v. Ryan Palmer added that he has spoken with Josh about taking him on and providing him a car. Josh is a level 2 which means that he cannot investigate. He can't do much more than showing up and calling for back-up. He added that he feels the Town is taken on more risk by having the town constables act in this capacity. He is willing to have more in-depth conversations with the Town.
- w. Terry Bascom thought that some of these discussion items around the constable were items that posed a problem last time.
- x. Ryan added one more comment that the future of constables will probably only be around for another 4-5 years.
- y. Al Poirier added that if you are looking to add radios, frequencies and antennas, there is also an additional expense for those items. They're not cheap.
- z. Josh Linton said there has to be a way where the Select Board has some say but we can make something work, Ryan,
- aa. Ryan Palmer said that I am more than happy to hire you, but what are you looking for?
 - bb. The next thing is the budget. What are the drawbacks? More discussion to be had.

9. Errors and Omissions:

- a. 1672 Hale Hollow Road
- b. Scott Terrace
- c. 2112 Messer Hill Road
- d. 99 Owen Road
- e. 35 School Drive (2)
- f. Grand View Lodge
- g. The Select Board did a review of the form that outlined the Errors and Omission.
- h. **Jay Kullman a motion to approve the Errors & Omission. Rick Kaminski seconded the motion. The motion carried.**

10. Other Business:

- a. Jay added that we need to have a discussion about a road name. Is it where Davis Road ends? Keith added that the State 911 map refers to a private ROW as a piece of Davis Road which it is clearly not. It is private property and it is not a town road going up a map so it needs to be corrected so it doesn't reflect that.
- b. **Jay Kullman made a motion to have Two Rivers Ottauquechee correct the mapping. Keith seconded the motion. The motion carried.**

- c. **Jay made a motion to approve the contract with Woodstock Ambulance. Keith Seconded the motion. The motion carried.**

11. Set the Date for the Next Meeting:

- i. Next meeting is set for Monday, January 15th at 6:00 pm.

12. Possible Executive Session:

- j. Went into Executive Session at 7:58 pm.
- k. Came out of Executive Session at 8:38 pm.

13. Adjourn:

- l. **Rick made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:39 pm. Jay seconded the motion. The motion carried.**

Respectfully submitted,

Angela Kissell
Town Clerk
Recording Secretary

Select Board

Jay Kullman, Chair

Rick Kaminski

Keith Cappellini