

Town of Plymouth
80 Main Street
Terryville, CT 06786
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Plymouth Town Council
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Minutes

March 29, 2011

Call to Order: Mayor Vincent Festa, Jr., called the March 29, 2011, Plymouth Town Council Special Meeting Public Hearing to order at 7:01 p.m., in the Community Room, Town Hall.

Roll Call: Present were Mayor Vincent Festa, Jr., Town Councilman Martin Sandshaw, Town Councilman John Wunsch, and Town Councilman Tom Zagurski. Also in attendance was David Bernagel-Director of Finance, Rodney Houle-Chairman Capital Improvements Committee/Municipal Facilities Committee, Municipal Facilities Committee Member Hildegard Siemiatkoski, Matthew Tellier-Capital Improvements Committee, and Ralph Zovich-Chairman Board of Finance.

Fire Exits Notification

Mayor Festa made note of the Fire Exits for the Town Council and Public Audience.

Pledge of Allegiance

Mayor Festa led the Plymouth Town Council and the Public Audience in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Call of the Public Hearing-Reading of Legal Notice

Mayor Festa read the Legal Notice into the record as follows:

Notice is hereby given to the legal voters of the Town of Plymouth and all qualified tax payers of the Town of Plymouth that the Plymouth Town Council will hold a Public Hearing to allow the Public to be heard on a proposed Resolution entitled: Resolution Appropriating \$19,500,000 for various Capital Improvement Projects (Phase I) and authorizing the issuance thereof the making of temporary borrowing for such purpose.

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Call of the Public Hearing-Reading of Legal Notice Cont'd.

Public Hearing will take place at: Plymouth Town Hall, Community Room, 80 Main Street, Terryville, CT 06786, March 29, 2011, at 7:00 p.m., Vincent Festa, Jr., Mayor, Dated this 14th day of March, 2011, Plymouth, CT.

Mayor Festa stated that the Legal Notice had been posted in the Bristol Press and on the March 29, 2011, Agenda, as well.

Pattie DeHuff, 20 Lynn Avenue, Terryville, questioned if a quorum of the Town Council was necessary at this evenings meeting.

Mayor Festa stated that a quorum of the Town Council was not necessary at a Public Hearing.

Mayor Festa stated that when the business of the Town is looked at in Plymouth, the government is viewed as being a very serious business and should not be taken lightly. He further stated that this evenings meeting would be addressing an issue that had very serious implications for the Community over the next 20 years. Since he's been in office as the Mayor, he stated that he has looked at and has approached a number of issues over the past 3 years. Mayor Festa stated that he was concerned first and foremost about the Community and that he looks at it as he would a vehicle. Mayor Festa stated that the Town has one administration that comes in gets elected, takes the vehicle and starts to dismantle it because they don't like what has been done to it and then over the next couple of years you have a different administration that comes on board and they take that vehicle and dismantle it again because they don't like what was done with it. He further stated that what has happened over a period of years was that the vehicle, that being the Town, has spun its wheel and has ended up in ruts that were deeper than what was necessary. Mayor Festa stated that his personal belief was that we need to move together as a Community and begin to push that vehicle forward, noting that we have many serious issues in Town affecting our infrastructure and that we have roads over this past winter that proved were in serious need of repair and replacement. Mayor Festa stated that the Town has several roofs in Town buildings throughout the Community (the Fire Houses, the Town Hall the Library) that have serious problems. He further stated that the Town has Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) issues in Town Hall to the tune of hundreds of thousands of dollars for repair work. Mayor Festa stated that we were told that every single doorway in the Town Hall has to be widened to five feet to meet ADA requirements and that we need to consider the front and back doors and access for people that are handicapped, wheel chairs, etc.

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Call of the Public Hearing-Reading of Legal Notice Cont'd.

Mayor Festa stated that there were a number of issues going on throughout the Community as well relative to recreation and relative to other departments and the needs thereof. Mayor Festa stated that the Town had a particular set of businesses that have come into Town to take a look at what we had to offer and that most recently, we had been moving forward in establishing a good relationship with some of the businesses. He further stated that the Town had a new business that signed off today, and that the Town had just closed on a lot sale in the Industrial Park and would be moving in shortly. Mayor Festa stated that because of the interest that has been taken with our Route 6 Streetscape, etc., the business was now getting friends together to see if they would support movement of their operations into our Industrial Park, as well. Mayor Festa stated that he firmly believed that the Town needed to look at itself as a Community, look at where it wants to be and where it needs to go over the next 20 years in order for it to move in that direction.

Mayor Festa stated that there would be a presentation by the Chairman of the Municipal Facilities Committee and the Capital Improvements Committee this evening and noted that they had been working hard and diligently with a group of about 25 people from various walks and stations of life. He further stated that they would bring forward tonight a purpose of why they were all here and that was to present a financial plan for the Community that would keep the mill rate at a constant over the next 20 years while the Town invested some of its debt service (that comes off our books) to reinvest in projects that were necessary and important to the citizens of this Community. Mayor Festa stated that Rodney Houle has been the Chairman of both the Municipal Facilities Committee and the Capital Improvements Committee and would be giving an introduction and presentation this evening so that the Town could move forward and have questions answered by the people of this Community.

Introduction-Rodney Houle

Rodney Houle, 16 Frankie Lane, Terryville, explained the handouts (see attachments) noting that the Director of Finance, David Bertnagel, would further detail and elaborate on the figures shown.

R. Houle stated that this evenings meeting was the third Public Hearing which had been held, noting that at the first and second Hearing, people had asked for more information and that information was now available in the documents distributed this evening.

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Introduction-Rodney Houle Cont'd.

R. Houle stated that his Committees had obtained a synopsis of every Town department, which would be affected in the first phase, and that hopefully, everyone would read the documents, absorb the contents and see what the Committees had been working on.

R. Houle stated that the Capital Improvements Committee (CIC) was made up of five members and that their function was to examine all Capital Improvement Projects (major improvement), something beyond what would be put into a regular budget.

R. Houle stated that the Town departments had all brought their Capital Improvement projects to the Capital Improvements Committee for presentation, review and discussion. R. Houle stated that three years past, a questionnaire had been distributed to every Town department asking what their Capital Improvement needs were and the Capital Improvements Committee then prioritized those projects. R. Houle stated that every department had requested at least one item, some departments more items, noting that the Public Works Department had 82 items. He further stated that the CIC Put them all together examined them all, sorted through them and then interviewed and questioned all of the departments regarding their requests. The Committee then compiled all the requests and prioritized them, leaving out any items that did not fall under the auspices of the Capital Improvements Committee, i.e., requests for pickup truck, lawnmower, etc., noting that those were budget items. R. Houle noted that the qualified items were then prioritized into three categories, from the most important to the least, but still necessary items and noted that they totaled approximately \$60,000,000.

R. Houle stated that the Capital Improvements Committee met with Vicky Carey, Board of Finance Liaison, David Bernagel, Director of Finance, and Vincent Festa, Jr., Mayor and that they had an idea after reviewing the lists and the idea was to take mature bonding and use it for the future needs of the Town. R. Houle stated that the Town had bonding that matures every year if that if the Town let that go it would pass to somewhere else and the Town would lose it. R. Houle stated that the Town has the opportunity to continue bonding and pay for the needs to bring the Town back into focus in the twenty-first century, noting that hardly anything has gotten done. R. Houle stated that the Town has a Police Department that was way too small, that was still in the basement of the Town Hall, and that the Town Hall was not legally compliant with regulations that are in effect. He further stated that the Fire Stations that were too small, and that there were a lot of problems in Town that needed to be addressed. R. Houle stated that the members looked at these issues and stated that 19.5 million dollars would be a good start and that it was a 5 year program, with all three phases being a 15-year program.

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Introduction-Rodney Houle Cont'd.

R. Houle stated that the next Town Hearing would be the formal Hearing and that the Town Council would be present for the fourth Hearing, which would take place on April 12, 2011. R. Houle stated that after the Committee's presentation, the Town Council would act to set a Referendum date (hopefully) possibly for May 15th and that he wanted everyone to come together and move forward to rebuild the Town before it decayed any further. R. Houle stated that the Town needed to get involved in this now, citing a past example of whereby the Library had come to the Town with a \$10,000.00 roof repair and it was not addressed and ended up costing the Town \$100,000.00. R. Houle stated that the Town needed to stay away from that kind of thinking and needed to address the issues now. R. Houle stated that the Town has 85 miles of road and that there was not enough money in the budget to handle that amount of pavement. R. Houle stated that most of the roads in Town were horrible and that the only reason the Town received a C minus in a recent Paving Study was because the roads up at Fall Mountain had been repaired, otherwise the Town would have received a failing grade. R. Houle stated that all the roads needed to be addressed and noted the flooding on Beach Street. R. Houle stated that the portion of the Town Garage that collapsed under the weight of the snow this past winter had been an addition that had been built with the understanding that it was temporary (in 1971) and should only last three to four years. He further stated that it had lasted 40 years and should have been taken care of a long time ago and that this plan was what the Committees were trying to accomplish, now. R. Houle stated that the projects were a huge job and a lot of responsibility. R. Houle stated that the Capital Improvements Committee members consisted of three Engineers, a College Professor and himself, a Project Manager. R. Houle stated that the Municipal Facilities Committee was made up of 14 people, and that their first charge was to provide recommendations for possible usages for two old schools in Town and that they had continued the Committee and combined it with the Capital Improvements Committee because of the volume of necessary work in Town, noting that it was too much for one group to handle. He further stated that subcommittees would be formed to help move the projects forward. R. Houle stated that they were all volunteers with a lot of expertise to offer and were a part of the group because they want to do it.

R. Houle stated that his grandsons live in Plymouth and that he wanted the Town to be a better place for them, as well. R. Houle stated that when he tells people that he is from Hooterville, he also wanted to tell them that this was a good Town, apple pie and Chevrolet. R. Houle stated that the taxes would not go up for this portion of the budget, however if it were to go up it would be because of insurance, health benefits for the Town employees, salaries, etc., but not because of these projects.

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Introduction-Rodney Houle Cont'd.

R. Houle stated that the Town would be taking mature bonding, roughly 3.2 million (plus and/or minus) every year and that it was an excellent idea and that the time was now because construction prices were the best they have ever been. R. Houle stated that he was in the construction field and that the construction people want to stay alive and in business, so the Town would be offering more business and would end up putting people back to work which would assist with the unemployment in addition to saving the Town money, and that it would be a benefit for everyone.

R. Houle stated that David Bertnagel was able to get the Town's bonding rating up by rolling over the Town's bonds and noted this example was having the right person at the time in the right job. He further stated that for a small town we have the rating of a big city because of D. Bertnagel's efforts. R. Houle stated that through D. Bertnagel's efforts and refinancing of the Town's bonds, D. Bertnagel had been able to save the Town \$900,000.00 last year and then an additional \$600,000.00, noting that figure was almost a million and a half in finance charges.

David Bertnagel explained the attachments in detail, noting that they were a compilation of all the projects, which had been submitted to the Capital Improvements Committee. He further stated that this had been a large task that had been taking place for many years. D. Bertnagel stated that all of the Town departments had come forward and had given their description of their project(s) and stated what they needed (with their best estimates and quotes) and were able to whittle the figure down to 60 million dollars. D. Bertnagel stated that in the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (available on the Town's website) and at his office, the Town has what was known as Capital Assets, 170 million worth, which included the Town roads, bridges, vehicles and buildings, which the Town owns as a Community. D. Bertnagel stated that most of the items have a depreciation on them, equating to the lifespan of the item, i.e. buildings 30 year life span, etc., and that over time the value of the assets drops down. He further stated that over the past several years the Town had fallen into the negative territory (depreciation had exceeded what the Town's assets were worth) and that by not reinvesting into those assets, the Town's net value decreases and would be considered when looking at the bonding package. D. Bertnagel stated that the 60 million dollars would be a reinvestment into the Community. D. Bertnagel stated that Phase One had a lot of projects (32) of which the plan would take and begin 29 of them, which would yield 69% of the projects for a start and would cover most of them in full. D. Bertnagel stated that the Committees needed \$19,387,000, and were asking for 19,500,000 because \$112,000.00 would be for the issuance cost to go out and issue the debt.

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Introduction-Rodney Houle Cont'd.

D. Bertnagel stated that the Town had approximately \$28,000,000 worth of outstanding debt, (see attachment Pro Forma Debt Amortization Schedules) which he had compiled and detailed the existing principal and interest. Noting that the mill rate had already been budgeted at 3 mills, D. Bertnagel stated that the Level Debt Bonding Proposal would not increase taxes and feel well within the cap of 3.3 million dollars . R. Bertnagel further noted that the figure was structured to have flexibility built into it, and that any unknown foreseen emergencies (i.e., 2 to 3 million road collapse, etc.) would be covered without increasing taxes.

D. Bertnagel stated that the projects, in general, were self explanatory, and that the last page noted that the debt service into two separate bond issues. D. Bertnagel stated that there were pros and cons to handling the projects separately, one individual project at a time. The pros would be that every project would have a lot of input and would be voted upon separately.

David Bertnagel stated that the concerns would be that every separate project would require a separate official statement, separate authorization and a separate referendum, noting the costs would run between\$35,000 and \$50,000, not including the par value of the bond and that it would be a huge dollar amount. D. Bertnagel stated that if the Town were to handle each project as a separate item, the total would be approximately \$600,000.00-\$700,000.00 of additional costs to the taxpayers.

D. Bertnagel stated that all of the projects on the list would have to be addressed at some point in time, noting that the problems with the roads and building were not going to go away. D. Bertnagel noted that in the past, everything was run by emergency situation, and this was a Financial Plan.

D. Bertnagel reviewed each project on the listing and detailed what the project included.

D. Bertnagel noted that the Board of Education line item needed to be addressed in order to keep them in compliance and up to date.

D. Bertnagel stated that the Comptroller's Office line item, Computer Enhancements and Land Acquisitions, was because the Town had not kept up with the technology installed 12 years back. He further stated that this line item would aid in telephone line charges (in the operating budget) and would assist the Town in saving monies.

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Introduction-Rodney Houle Cont'd.

D. Bertnagel stated that the financial systems presently utilized by the Board of Education and the Town were two separate systems and noted that at the end of the year it was a nightmare to reconcile the accounts. D. Bertnagel stated that they were looking to make one financial system, noting that move would make operating under one system more efficient. D. Bertnagel stated that they were looking into going to a higher internet speed, which would reduce operating expenses in the long run by providing more control. D. Bertnagel stated that he saw this as a six to eight year payback.

D. Bertnagel stated that there were several opportunities to acquire property, noting R. Houle's statement for the need for firehouses public works garage potential, fields and that these acquisitions would afford the opportunity for the Town to purchase land. D. Bertnagel stated this would be an advantage to the Community for future growth.

D. Bertnagel stated that the Fire Dept came forward six to eight years ago with an approved plan before the Town Council for \$10,000.00 with a study of what they felt was needed for their facilities at that time. He further noted that some of the issues with the fire trucks were size and location of them, not having gender appropriate facilities, noting they have the design work built into the bonding package to get the work done and getting these things up to par with what we need to do.

D. Bertnagel stated that the Diesel Exhaust System has been in the Board of Finance's budget for 10 years and was always kicked out, because when the budget fails the Town was limited to certain dollar amounts with what can be pay for with cash. D. Bertnagel stated that the \$250,000.00 would address 11 apparatus in the Fire Department. D. Bertnagel stated that when the trucks back up into the garage the diesel fumes were in a confined space in the garage and that the system would expel the exhaust from the building and puts the Town into OSHA compliance.

D. Bertnagel stated the monies earmarked for the Waterwheel and Streetscape would be cash contributions for these projects. He further stated that the Mayor has been very proactive in getting grants to secure the project itself, and that when the Town looked at the finances it was noted that the amounts were way short of what was needed to get them done. D. Bertnagel stated that if the Town relies on fundraising alone, it would take 30 years to finish one segment, financially speaking.

D. Bertnagel stated the Library Expansion would be for the purchase of the property next to the library (the Wilcox house), noting that it used to house the Fire Marshal and the defunct V.N.A., and now stands vacant.

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Introduction-Rodney Houle Cont'd.

David Bertnagel stated that the Town was still paying for utility costs in the building, as well as maintenance costs and that a decision would have to be made at some point as to what to do with that particular building. D. Bertnagel stated that the Library building was having problems with its 30+ year old air handling units and that item does not go into their operating budget because it was a huge dollar amount. He further stated that the building was leaking. D. Bertnagel stated that the Library's roof repair project went from \$10,000 to \$100,000 because it kept getting put to the back burner.

D. Bertnagel stated that the Vice Chairman of the Board of Finance, Vicky Carey, had visited the Parks and Recreation Department, noting that they had a lot of equipment which was old and hadn't been replaced in years and needed to be addressed. He further stated that the tennis courts and fields needed refurbishing.

D. Bertnagel stated that everyone look at the Lake Winfield overhaul project in conjunction with the Seymour Road project because they would both be run as one continuous project. He further noted that whatever was done on Seymour Road would have an impact on Lake Winfield.

D. Bertnagel stated that there were a couple of options for the Police Station, noting that originally it was to be a part of the Town Hall Building with an allocation of 4.2 million dollars. He further stated that it would have to be addressed, but that did not mean that the Town would be running out and building a brand new Police Department on a piece of land. D. Bertnagel stated that whether the Police Station stays in the Town Hall, or was built as a separate building, the Committees would examine what was in the best interest for the taxpayer and where we they could save the most money. D. Bertnagel stated that it might be more advantageous to keep the Police Department in the Town Hall (after renovations) and/or put an addition on. D. Bertnagel stated that verification for the 4.2 million (12,000 square feet) was based on past and current construction projects in the demographic area.

D. Bertnagel stated that the Public Works Highway Facility had a lot of roof issues on the old structure building and that the new one had been built in 1971 and had collapsed. He further stated that insurance issues were presently taking place and that the question remained as to what to do with the reimbursements and how was the Town going to house the vehicles.

D. Bertnagel stated that the question remained as to whether or not the building would remain where it was or be rebuilt somewhere else.

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Introduction-Rodney Houle Cont'd.

David Bertnagel stated that the Town did not have a large enough Salt Storage Shed to house salt and that because of that reason, the Town had to purchase salt at the whim of the market.

D. Bertnagel stated that there were a whole host of issues with the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) that concerned the Town's Transfer Station. He further stated that there were necessary upgrades that the Town had to do to comply with the DEP, as well as replacement of the hopper. D. Bertnagel stated that there were also DEP permitting regulations that had to be met and that A. Lorenzetti had done a phenomenal job keeping the DEP at bay. He further stated that the Town had Federal and State regulations to meet and that the \$700,000 would address those issues.

D. Bertnagel stated that the Major Road and Drainage Repairs line item was a huge figure and that the Town had a lot of road repairs, which totaled \$65 million dollars. He further noted that the three million dollars would get quite a bit of work done with this appropriation.

D. Bertnagel stated that the North Main Street Bridge (Route 72) would be a 1.3-1.5 million dollar project with State reimbursement, but the Town's share would be the 1.3-1.5 million. He further stated that the bridge had received a high priority when the State came in two years prior, but then it was downgraded three to four levels. D. Bertnagel stated that the Town would have to shut it down if the repairs were not made and that it would be a huge inconvenience to anyone traveling that roadway, and that would have to be addressed. He further stated that the Town had been able to secure a grant/State funding before it went away (at 32.8% of the project).

D. Bertnagel stated that the GIS Base Mapping started years ago and fell in sync with the computer orientation planning and developing, noting that the Town would be on the cutting edge if it could have all its maps and data available to anyone in the Community. D. Bertnagel stated that the GIS would assist with the assessment evaluation of the property, taxes, would detail who owns the property, etc., noting that there was an entire host of things that the GIS would be able to do. D. Bertnagel stated that the \$300,000 would get the Town where it needed to be and that this was an Economic Development project with a lot of positives.

D. Bertnagel stated that a study had been performed on Beach Avenue drainage problem and there were a lot of flooding issues there, as well as severe flooding in other areas in Town, noting they would all have to be addressed.

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Introduction-Rodney Houle Cont'd.

D. Bertnagel stated that the Street Line Establishment Project was necessary because the Town did not know (100%) which streets were town-owned and which were not. He further stated that this project would eliminate the question and engineering department right of ways were a necessary item which would aid the Town in moving forward with road projects.

D. Bertnagel stated that the Town Hall upgrade and Senior Center Project would cover the ADA and compliance issues inside the Town Hall building. He further stated that this project would make for a more efficient operation and put the departments where needed to be placed, all working together.

Anthony Lorenzetti provided clarification for the Lake Winfield and Seymour Road Project and detailed how they would work together. A. Lorenzetti noted that the Board of Finance had given his department some money to begin the design work for Seymour Rod and detailed the necessary work. A. Lorenzetti discussed the Pavement Management Study noting that it was a surface inventory of pavement, which provided information to keep the Town's road from getting to the point where they would need to be reconstructed.

Ralph Zovich stated that the Board of Finance did formally endorse the 19.5 million dollar project, unanimously. R. Zovich stated that last year David Bertnagel had come to the Board of Finance and presented then with a proposal on the level debt service, noting that the level debt service was a financial management policy that the Board of Finance had approved and forwarded to the Town Council, who also unanimously approved the plan. R. Zovich stated that the Board of Finance (prior to the establishment of the Capital Improvements Committee) used to take capital projects on a catch as catch can basis, the squeaky wheel process, who ever yelled the loudest or had the most political clout would get their projects done and that people would go to the Town Council and hope they could get their project approved and we would end up with spikes on the graph, instead of level and descending, we would have capital budgets that would rise and fall like saw teeth and that D. Bertnagel's proposal would level that out. R. Zovich stated that the plan would require financial discipline and that was why the Board of Finance put it into a written policy for the Town Council's approval. R. Zovich detailed the attached graphs and stated that with the 19.5 million dollar bond proposal, all the projects should be hopefully done or well underway, and this it was similar to what you would do if you took out a construction loan to build your house or a business. R. Zovich stated that if a future Council and the electors and taxpayers did not approve the next phase (14 years from now) the Town would then have a 1.2 million dollar surplus in its debt service.

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Public Comment on the Level Debt Service

Pattie DeHuff, 20 Lynn Avenue, Terryville, stated that she had been listening to the Mayor and Ralph Zovich make the statements that this proposal, this bond authorization would not effect the mill rate and noted that she was having a hard time understanding that concept. She further stated that she understand that you are keeping debt at 3.3 million every year going out for the length shown on the chart. P. DeHuff stated that when you build, if one were to build a new police station at 11,000++ square feet someone has to clean it, it may not be able to be done by the people that currently do this particular building, so once that project was completed it seemed to her that the mill rate would have to go up to pay for that individual to clean and to heat it and all the other things which we call operating expenses. P. DeHuff stated that she believed Ralph described it as a construction loan, noting that she owns a home at 20 Lynn Avenue and she wants to build a family room because her living room is too small, she'd really like to have a family room but it is not necessarily a need to have that. She further stated that she is fully aware of the Good Book and what it has to say about that and stated that it says "owe no man anything but love" and she was sure that the people who dedicated their time to this Committee, and she has herself sat on Committees, and she knows it's a lot of time and she has a great deal of respect for people who do.

Pattie DeHuff stated that she wanted those people them to think about why we need this Committee. P. DeHuff questioned how many people were aware in this room that the unemployment rate in Connecticut stands officially in the month of February at 11.9%, the unofficial rate was much higher than that. P. DeHuff stated many of us carry balances on credit card and she hopes to never carry a balance again because the borrower is a servant to the lender and as long as she has that debt on her credit card, she would not be able to do other things, and that it becomes a constriction thing instead of a freedom thing. P. DeHuff stated that the people that have devoted their time to this Committee she tremendously respects and that there was nothing stopping you from personally, there is nothing prohibiting the members on the Committee and the Town Council and the Board of Finance and whoever else in favor of this, stopping you from personally, if you have them or your retirement, if you have one, because some people here don't have them and others do not have them, there was nothing preventing you personally from giving from your pocket and contributing to needs you feel is appropriate. P. DeHuff stated that if Lake Winfield was on your heart dip into your savings and fix Lake Winfield, however she didn't personally have any interest in Lake Winfield, at all, and that she didn't care about it, it was not a need in her mind. She further stated that she might think differently about a Police Station, and that she wasn't sure she would compare Plymouth to Farmington, she doesn't think our Town was the size of Farmington.

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Public Comment Cont'd.

Pattie DeHuff stated that she has a little trouble thinking (if she did her calculations correctly) that each police officer needs over 300 square feet, she has trouble with that, but there are things she might agree with on this particular proposal but others she wouldn't. P. DeHuff stated that she does not believe this proposal would keep the Town's taxes level, there was not, that it was a nice sounding sales pitch but that it was not true and that she looks forward to the second Public Hearing and asked the Town Council to remember that the Town has people in the Community that do not have jobs, savings and retirement and to ask them to keep a level debt when we should have no debt, noting that would be the goal, to have no debt and that was something they should ponder.

Matthew Tellier, 238 Preston Road, Terryville, stated that he was a member of the Capital Improvements Committee, and noted that the Capital Improvements Committee was trying to institute a financial business plan for the Town. He further stated that it was important to run the Town like a business, all successful businesses don't say what are we going to do today to make money, they say what are we going to do five years from now so that we are more successful than we are today. M. Tellier stated that the Level Debt Proposal was the plan that would make the Town more successful, as a Community, five years from now. He further stated that the Town was not a business; it did not generate revenue, which the Town was a Community that provides services to the people that live in the Town, and around the Town. He further stated that those services mean having a road you can drive on to work everyday. M. Tellier stated that anyone could vote no, but that a no vote would get you driving down Bemis Street (two years from now) and cursing the Town crew saying why don't they fix the road, noting that the Town does not have three million dollars in the budget to fix the road and that was why the Level Debt Bond Proposal was needed. M. Teller stated that anyone could vote not but that they should not question why the Library smells like mold inside because the roof leaks and there's water everywhere and that the water was now in the carpeting, which needs to be replaced. M. Tellier stated that he wanted a Library that everyone could be proud of when they walk into it. M. Tellier stated that the Town could begrudge the school with having windows that were efficient, and also could begrudge the handicapped with a Town Hall that they could actually access with proper doorways, proper elevator, and proper restrooms. He further stated that the Town could tell its youth that it had built Memorial Park in the 1950-60's and the seesaw doesn't work anymore but it was good enough for us at one time so it was good enough for you, go roll in the dirt you will be happy. M. Tellier stated that some people say that 19 million dollars is a lot of money and how could the Town say it would not raise the mill rate.

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Public Comment Cont'd.

Matt Tellier stated that R. Zovich had explained the process to everyone and that he did not know how to make it any clearer; that it had been building into the budget (already) for next year. He further stated that whether or not the proposal passed, the monies were already in the budget and would stay there for next year. M. Tellier stated that the money would be spent on something, and that the Level Debt Bonding Proposal would give the Town a plan on how to spend the money in a reasonable, financially responsible manner. M. Tellier stated that the Town would be idiots not to fix the Route 72 bridge and if it didn't, that in five years from now the people would be saying they couldn't believe it had fallen down and was unusable and that the Town was nothing but a bunch of idiots for not repairing it when it needed to be repaired.

Joseph Carey, 665 Greystone Road, Plymouth, stated that he understood all of the points being made and that it was a time when a lot of people were have financial difficulties with paying their bills, some more than others. He further stated that he thought as a Community, we owe it to each other to uphold our part even if we are having some hard times paying bills and that we were still responsible to and for each other and that he wanted to hold his head up and carry his fair share. Referring to the earlier comment that those that want to fix Lake Winfield should be the ones that pay to fix Lake Winfield, J. Carey stated that he lives on Greystone Road and hasn't been to Lake Winfield in a long time, but he still feels responsible for the people that live in that area because of their needs just as he feels they should feel responsible for the Greystone Road area when he has a need. J. Carey stated that he thought that was the whole concept of what a Town and Community was about, we all work together for the benefit of each other, not each particular sentiment or special interest. J. Carey questioned what guarantee did the Town have that the 19 million dollars line item projects would still materialize should a new Administration/Town Council come in during the five year phase one timeline. He questioned what prevent the new Administration from selectively putting their own pet projects into the line items. J. Carey stated that he had no problem with addressing the 19 million dollars for the funding. J. Carey stated that the five year construction time table it was a bargain right now, but when the economy starts to turn and the prices escalate how would the priority for projects get paired if the three million for each year did not cover the projects in the five year time table, and questioned who would be making that determination.

R. Houle stated that a lot of the figures came before the recession and that he could not help that some people were unemployed, but this proposal would put hundreds of unemployed people back to work that were unemployed and that it would be organized to the best of the Committee's ability.

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Rodney Houle stated that there were people on the Committees who were very prosperous, owned their own businesses, held patents, had credentials, were volunteers for the Committee and were doing the work. R. Houle stated that hopefully, they would get all of the project completed and that they would be doing their best, because they did not want to see these projects become another Terryville Trust building. R. Houle stated that he would not let this happen, that he would be involved, and that he would go in first. R. Houle stated that if these projects were not started, everyone might as well go home and wait for everything to fail, noting that it was all failing now. R. Houle stated that he wanted the Town to look good and be solid as a rock. R. Houle stated that he wanted to say "wow, this is a nice Town Hall, what a good Town Hall we have" and that he did not want to talk about "what if's", that he wanted to think positive. R. Houle stated that if anyone had some good ideas and wanted to help, come to the meetings and offer them and that the Committees rely on everyone's help. R. Houle stated that he had lived in Town for 40 years and was hoping to live another 40 and that with everyone's support and good ideas, the projects would get done. R. Houle stated that the proposal would be good for everyone in Town and for every organization and department. R. Houle stated that he was talking about saving money, now and in the long run and that the Committees would do everything possible to come in lower with each project. He further stated that the Committees would be watching every project and all the monies going out, that they were talking about saving money and did not want to spend the whole 19.5 million if they could help it. R. Houle stated that when someone signs a check it will be under the Committee's watchful eyes, they would be involved to watch the people in place work, not for their benefit, but for the Town's.

Lynn Robinson, 14 Richmond Drive, Plymouth, stated that Rodney brought up the old Terryville Trust building and noted that if we don't begin putting money into this Town our roads, our buildings and everything else, the whole Town was going to look to look like the Terryville Trust building. L. Robinson stated that she has lived in the Town for 37 years and doesn't want to see that happen. She further stated that we have a good Town. L. Robinson stated that she deals in Real Estate and that she was tired of hearing people say "Terryville, are you kidding, Terryville there's nothing up there, you can't even drive through the Towns on those roads", noting that she wanted to hear just the opposite from them and that they want to move to Town.

L. Robinson stated that she felt the projects were great and the way to go and that it was about time.

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Anthony Rinaldi, 465 Harwinton Avenue, Plymouth, stated that from what he's heard tonight, this has to go through and that this Community needs to be helped out and these are things that were going to improve the quality of life for these people immediately. He further stated that he has seen things happen here and that he's been here for 24 years and he knows things don't happen immediately. He stated that he was concerned about the Industrial Park on Preston Road and that he noticed it had been used for a snow storage facility and felt that we should pass this proposal, noting that it was important, it was immediate and that it would affect everyone that lives in this Town.

Matt Tellier stated that the changing of the guard would not be an issue, that the projects would be defined and controlled by the Capital Improvements Committee and the way that the membership had been set up was by the Town Council (on a staggered basis) it would be hard to change or stack the membership. M. Tellier stated that everything the Committee does has to fall within the 5 year plan. M. Tellier stated that he had been the Chairman of a Town Board for 10 years and that in all that time not once did he ever have someone from the Administration call him to tell him how to do his business. M. Tellier stated that the Capital Improvements Committee were the ones that selected the projects and would continue to and that they would have subcommittees and that certain projects would have their own committees to gain more input from the public. M. Tellier stated that they would have the correct people in place and that right now they had a lot of volunteer's in-place that would not be swayed or pushed around by a Council because of the way the whole process had been structured.

Melanie Church, 328 Main Street, Terryville, stated that she believes the Capital Improvements Committee and the Municipal Facilities Committee were both ad hoc committees and they don't have the power, if you read in the thing they are not a full commission, they can't spend money, they can't bring forward the projects, they have to be approved by the Council, so there could be a change in Council and the projects could change, we just don't know with elections. The State of Connecticut borrowed and bonded a lot of projects where is the State of CT today? In debt, who is going to have to pay the bill, we the taxpayers, people are saying we need relief, now if you took that money and gave relief for half of that money to the taxpayers and put the other in the undesignated fund and then you wanted to do a project, you know what we have a good portion of it there. The Waterwheel I see on this, how many years have we been doing the Waterwheel, and to show how reliable the information given to the public is number one it was not going to cost one penny in tax dollars.

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Melanie Church stated that she disagreed with that statement, it was going to be completed we are sitting here with contaminated property which they knew when they bought or if they didn't know shame on them, because when it was the Hart property and after the fire the Hart family tried to clean it up and if you go back and you look in Planning and Zoning minutes guess what they could never get it clean so we knew we were buying contaminated property, we have sat and looked at an eyesore, the Historic Commission I believe redid that Waterwheel, has it been kept up? I don't think so when she goes through this list and used lake Winfield as an example she sees an additional cost there of \$45,000.00 for seasonal help but it is not going cost, in the description listed was seasonal help for \$45,000.00 so that is an increase. As she looks through this she sees a Streetscape which is \$200,000 net that we have to put in, yet we're using STEAP grant which is State money to do \$500,000.00 when it is complete I have a question for you, it's an improvement that the Town did to the State highway or the State sidewalks or highway which is Route 6, who is going to pay for that benefit, is it all the businesses because now their property is worth a little more, so to say it does not cost anything and it's not going to cost you a penny to me I see it as costing money. As you hear the Governor says we have to pay these bills, well you know what, when you add these, and I do sit in on Board of Finance Meetings and I hear them and they're going to get an increase this year and unfortunately we have people that come in and want a five percent increase in their pay, as I sit and I listen, it's your taxes are going up, there is no guarantee that this is not going to cost you a penny, and you know what the people that are saying this they are not liable, we the tax payers are liable.

Rodney Houle stated "what if what if what if," and that he does not understand "what if's", they are not real. R. Houle stated that he was not a defeatist, that he has a positive attitude and that the glass was half full not half empty. R. Houle stated that we have to move the Town forward for prosperity, get out of the hole and stand up tall, that we have to stop the pain and suffering and move ahead and put people to work and that the Town needs to accomplish something so that the Town could thrive, noting it was that simple, and that easy.

Ralph Zovich stated that he wanted to be very crystal clear that when he had said the Board of Finance had adopted the Level Debt Service Policy it was a unanimous decision which was sent to this Council and this Council adopted it so that we would maintain the debt service at its current level, which stands at nine percent of the general fund budget, and that we do not control the other 91 percent, so if he was clairvoyant he could tell everyone that five years from now that their mill rate would not go up, he would.

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Ralph Zovich questioned who would have predicted two years ago that the investment bankers on Wall Street and the Real Estate community would collapse and would have driven this country to the worse recession since the Great Depression. R. Zovich questioned who would have predicted that just two years ago that General Motors and Chrysler would both declare bankruptcy in the same year, so none of us are clairvoyant, none of us can see five, ten fifteen years down the road, but does that mean we don't plan for it, does that mean we stand by and do nothing and watch the infrastructure crumble.

R. Zovich stated that he wanted to address the governance issue, and stated that all these documents had been entered into the minutes of all the meetings to date. He further stated that was a matter of public record. R. Zovich stated that not every one of these projects on the list would come in exactly as the cost was estimated, but a bond authorization was the legal authorization to spend up to and including 19.5 million dollars, not a penny more. R. Zovich stated that when the \$47,000,000 bond was authorized for the new high school project and the renovation of Eli Terry and Fisher, the School Building Committee, which Mr. Allread served on as well as and Councilman Wunsch, had been charged with the responsibility of spending that \$47,000,000 and getting the most amount of school construction for the money. R. Zovich stated that there had been a legal challenge, delays, there was a second Referendum and during that time the price of steel went up so the pool had to be deleted, and again as much as he wished he could see the future five years from now should the price of concrete suddenly triple that means we will get one-third less concrete for the money just as the price as the asphalt escalates and Public Works gets fewer tons, you deal with it. R. Zovich stated that there was flexibility built into the proposal and should a project come in way over the cost estimate, we would deal with it. He further stated, using Mrs. Dehuff's example, you put an addition on your house, the bid comes in twice what you estimated so you cut back on square footage, you have 4.2 million dollars for a 11,000 square foot Police Station, if the bids for the Police Station come in at five or six million dollars, then the Capital Improvements Committee would order changes and the square footage would have to be reduced. R. Zovich stated that some projects would end up costing cost more and some projects would cost less and maybe some would not get done in the first phase.

R. Zovich stated that the Town has Boards and Commissions that are specified in the Charter and that the Town has its legislative body, the duly elected Town Council, which he served a term on, and which has the authority to establish a Standing Committee.

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R. Zovich stated that the School Building Committee and the Capital Improvements Committee were Standing Committees and that with the Capital Improvements Plan, which the Board of Finance had approved and adopted, as did the Town Council, they would be the governing oversight body and the Town would still have an elected Board of Finance that would be watching the expenditures just like they did on the cost expenditures of the school project. R. Zovich stated that when the Board of Finance saw that the school project was going over budget on the sidewalks. they put the brakes on the track construction, just as the Capital Improvements Committee goes through the bids they will have to examine the timing the scheduling. R. Zovich stated that we can't pretend to know all the details which they will have to deal with and as M. Tellier had mentioned, there will be subcommittees and that he urges everyone to volunteer on the Committees because the more public input that a government has, the more eyes it has watching the money and the more efficiently it will be spent. R. Zovich stated that the worst thing to do would be to do things under the cover of darkness behind closed doors. R. Zovich stated that to have a completely negative approach where we say some Town Council five years down the road tired to come in and dismantle everything that was done, would not happen because they cannot undo a legal bond authorization and as tax payers and as beneficiaries of these projects why would you want such a Town Council in the first place, but you obviously would have your voice heard. R. Zovich stated that the School Building Committee came in on time and under budget, despite the delays and rising costs that they had to deal with. He further noted that they had to delete some items that the School Board wanted and that was what might happen here as well. R. Zovich stated that it was called project management just as if you were doing a construction project in your own home and you couldn't afford the granite countertops so you settle for laminate. He further stated that this proposal was on a much larger scale.

R. Zovich stated that no one could predict the cost of asphalt five years from now. R. Zovich stated that he did not want his words twisted and that when he says that this bond authorization will not raise the taxes one mill he means it. However, he further stated that happens with the other 91 percent of the budget was still unknown, taxes could go up and probably would because of the 91 percent issues and invited everyone to attend Public Hearing to learn why, but cautioned people not to use this project as an excuse to complain about an increase in the mill rate.

Hildegarde Siemiatkoski, 249 East Washington Road, Terryville, Municipal Facilities Committee member, stated that she wanted to quote Mayor Festa, noting that his comment was "we need to invest in our Community, if we do not, then who would?"

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Town Councilman Zagurski stated that he was still uncertain of the process, if we vote on this and it passes and we get 19.5 million dollars he wanted to know if that would get him every project that was listed for the first phase.

R. Houle stated that the Committees would make every possible effort to see that happen.

Town Councilman Zagurski stated that he had heard Bemis Street mentioned in the first phase.

R. Houle stated that Seymour Road and Bemis Street would be addressed in the first phase.

Town Councilman Zagurski stated that he did not hear that from A. Lorenzetti.

Anthony Lorenzetti stated that Seymour Road was specifically listed as a project, and Bemis Street would have to come out of Capital Road Improvements.

Town Councilman Zagurski questioned if Bemis Street would be done because he heard A. Lorenzetti dancing around that question when he spoke earlier this evening.

Anthony Lorenzetti stated that Bemis Street was one of the roads that would require design and geometric improvements, as well as drainage, noting that does not happen in one day and that it would take time to get that done and when it has been done, Bemis Street would need to be reconstructed. A. Lorenzetti stated that he could not say that Bemis Street would be done next year, noting that would not happen.

Town Councilman Zagurski stated that he was questioning if Bemis Street would be covered under the drainage and road construction. He further stated that he thought A. Lorenzetti had answered his question and that Bemis Street was not in the project.

Anthony Lorenzetti stated that when the capital numbers were put together they used a linear footage estimate for roads in general, and did not specifically specify Bemis Street. He further stated that depending on what dollars were available, the Town could look at what roads could be done.

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A. Lorenzetti stated that if there was only \$700,000 or a million dollars allocated, it probably would not be enough money to redo Bemis Street and that further, he would not recommended doing the street in pieces.

Town Councilman Zagurski stated that he had heard the Town would save a lot of money because of the fact that the Town would be using local contractors going out for bids, etc., but it was his understanding that the Town had to go with prevailing wage.

David Bertnagel stated that each project would be bid out independently, depending upon the contract dollar amount and the value of the contract, noting that it would depend whether or not it would be a prevailing wage project itself. He further stated that presently, the threshold was approximately \$100,000,00-\$400,000,00 for rehab and that it would depend on the project when it goes out for bid.

Town Councilman Zagurski questioned if the proposal were to pass and the Committees were to build a new Police Station, what would the next step(s) be, would the Committees go before the Town Council or would they be able to just go out and spend the money.

R. Houle stated that the Capital Improvements Committee had to go through the same process with each new project item, Planning and Zoning, Board of Finance, Conservation Inland/Wetlands, Town Council, etc., same as everyone else that comes with any starting project, proper procedure, but that the Committees would be involved with it, and that they were not overstepping anyone.

Town Councilman Sandshaw questioned the diesel exhaust systems for the firehouses and spending the \$250,000.00, noting that it was a needed thing, but down the road three or four years, the Town would be building the fire houses.

R. Houle stated the firehouses would not be built for approximately six to eight years, but in the meantime the men were breathing carcinogens in the air and this issue was brought up twenty years ago and kept getting knocked off the budget until this year. Noting that it was too late for himself, R. Houle stated that the new fire men, that are in the fire houses now, were breathing diesel carcinogens and urged everyone to protect them as much as possible. R. Houle stated that the money for the fire houses would only be the architectural engineering charges to start, then hopefully in phase two, the fire station buildings could begin, but in the meantime the Town should protect the men and women from the diesel exhaust.

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When questioned by Town Councilman Zagurski if the diesel exhaust systems were transportable, R. Houle stated he would have to find that information out.

D. Bertnagel stated that when the items were bidded out, that would be specified within the bid documents as part of an option. He further stated that the diesel exhaust systems were an OSHA regulation.

Town Councilman Zagurski stated that he did not have a problem with spending the money; he only questioned spending the \$250,000.00 and then throwing it away, which this sounded like.

R. Houle stated they were not throwing the money away, they were finally addressing a safety issue for the next six or seven years, and hopefully, would be extended out.

Town Councilman Zagurski questioned if the Capital Improvements Committee had considered a Public Safety Complex and wondered if it would that save the Town money.

R. Houle stated it would depend on how the Town moved forward, i.e. put an addition on, etc., noting the progression would proceed in the manner that would save the Town the most money, as well as satisfy the needs of each department.

Town Councilman Zagurski stated that \$250,000.00 had been designated for Fire Stations and questioned was that for all three fire stations.

R. Houle stated this amount was for all three fire stations, noting that all three were too small for the apparatus of today and that the facilities inside only addressed males, not females and that there was no bunking facilities, no hazardous materials facilities, and that there were a lot of non-compliance codes. He further noted that one of the fire stations was in a dangerous location on Route 6, which wasn't good a good location.

When questioned by Town Councilman Zagurski, R. Houle stated that excepting the main Fire House on Harwinton Avenue, they would try to combine the same architect and same plan, that they were both engine companies and could be the same building, if the property dictated that. R. Houle stated that if it were at all possible, they would save a lot of money.

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R. Houle stated that Station one would still need to be designed, noting that the ladder truck clears the door by one inch and if someone steps on the gas, half a million dollars would be destroyed, and that it could not go any higher because that was where the I-beam was located. He further stated that there was simply no room in the fire Station for the ladder truck. R. Houle stated that the next facility would have a larger door and that it would be a drive-through, not a back it up inside building where the drive hopes he misses everything, every time.

Town Councilman Zagurski questioned investing 1.7 million dollars to dredge Lake Winfield, and asked what would he be getting for that amount of money.

R. Houle stated that combining Lake Winfield with Seymour Road, at the same time, would save a lot of money, hundreds of thousands of dollars and that the Town hopefully, would have the lake that it had before. He further stated that it would be an attraction, a fun place to be in the summertime and that it would be a nice park where he thought there would be swimming, again.

Town Councilman Zagurski stated that he had his doubts that anyone would ever swim in Lake Winfield again.

Town Councilman Wunsch stated that he had lived in Town his entire life and played baseball in the Town Hall field, and that his father had lived in Town his entire life, as well. He further stated that he could tell everyone, first hand; that everybody knows the Town has gone downhill, there were sidewalks that people could not even walk on anymore. Town Councilman Wunsch stated that he had watched some of the physically challenged people in Town using motorized vehicles and that could not get up some of the sidewalks. He further stated that the Town had to start somewhere, that everyone could complain that sidewalks were not being done, that the buildings were crap, and that a person could nitpick every item on the proposal or they might not like every item on the list. Town Councilman Wunsch stated that there was a group of about 20 people that had spent a lot of time on this proposal and noted that anyone could go to their meetings and micro-manage and have input. He further stated that anyone was entitled to express their opinion on what they do or do not want, and that was why this was such a great country, but we owe it to each other to provide these proposals for the Town. Town Councilman Wunsch stated that he had two children and a granddaughter living in Town and it was important to him to take care of the Town. He further stated that in a couple of week's time the Town was considering putting water in the Burr Road Harwinton Avenue area because it was the right thing to do for everybody in the Town.

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Town Councilman Wunsch stated that because he has water at his home, it would not affect him, but that he owes it to those that do not, that everyone has to have self-pride in their Town, that they have to have pride of something. He further stated that the Town could go back to dirt roads, that's was everyone's choice, they could can vote whatever they wanted. Town Councilman Wunsch stated that for the \$400.00 everyone would receive back, instead of the proposal, he wanted everyone to know that he drank more than that on a weekend, in diet Pepsi.

Town Councilman Sandshaw stated that when he moved into Plymouth 54 years ago it was the neatest little Town that he had ever seen. He noted that Main Street was vibrant, there were all kinds of activity, everybody was proud of their property and a lack of investment in our Town in the last 54 years has gotten us to the point where we are today. Town Councilman Sandshaw stated that the Town had gone through numerous boom years and did nothing, nothing at all, and that now it was a real hard time to do this, but if we don't do this now, and roll up our sleeves and get down to the nitty gritty of saving this Town, we might as well just roll it up and sell half of it to Thomaston and the other half to Bristol.

Mayor Festa thanked everyone for coming out this evening and stated that the next formal hearing will be held on April 12, 2011, 7:00 p.m., and that the Town would then be moving forward to a Referendum on the proposal. Mayor Festa stated that the Town would have another presentation and that if anyone had any issues, they should not hesitate to call the Mayor or the Comptroller's Office for answers. Mayor Festa stated that Public input gives the Town the right to move forward.

Adjournment

There being no further business of the Plymouth Town Council, Town Councilman Sandshaw made a motion, seconded by Town Councilman Zagurski, to adjourn at 8:55 p.m. This motion was approved unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
Acting Recording Secretary