

Town of Plymouth
80 Main Street
Terryville, CT 06786
www.plymouthct.us

Plymouth Town Council
Telephone: (860) 585-4001
Fax: (860) 585-4015

Minutes

February 24, 2016

Call to Order: Mayor David V. Merchant called the scheduled February 24, 2016, Plymouth Town Council/Board of Finance Special Joint Meeting to order at 6:40 p.m., in the Community Room, Plymouth Town Hall.

Roll Call: Present were Town Councilwoman Ana LeGassey, Mayor David Merchant, Town Councilwoman Sue Murawski, Town Councilman John Pajeski, and Town Councilman Tom Zagurski. Mayor Merchant stated for the record that Town Councilman Daniel Gentile had an excused absence. Plymouth Board of Finance Members: Vice Chairman Vicky Carey, Pattie DeHuff, Jay Dorso, Dan Murray, James Zalot and Chairman Ralph Zovich. Also in attendance were Capital Improvements Committee Chairman Joe Green, Town Attorney William Hamzy, Chairman Plymouth Firehouse Building Committee Victor Mitchell, Director of Finance Ann Marie Rheault, Board of Education Superintendent Dr. Martin Semmel, Eli Terry School Principal Angela Suffridge, Vice-Chairman Capital Improvements Committee Matt Tellier, and Public Works Director Charles Wiegert.

Pledge of Allegiance

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

Fire Exits Notification

Mayor Merchant noted the Fire Exits for the record.

Public Comment

Keith Golnik, 46 Orchard Street, Terryville, stated the \$3.7 million for the Firehouse was a great deal and was desperately needed, however he felt the \$1.5 million for a couple of bridges could be used for better purposes such as the sidewalks and curbing on Orchard Street and briefly elaborated.

Mayor Merchant stated that the Keegan Road Bridge was included in the \$1.5 million for the Orchard Street Bridge item.

Melanie Church, 328 Main Street, Terryville, questioned how a bonding proposal could be brought forward when the Town didn't have a bond rating. Melanie Church stated she wanted a forensic audit of the last bonding package that showed where the money had been spent.

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Public Comment Cont'd.

Melanie Church stated the listing shown was of different places and things, noting Todd Hollow and Lake Plymouth had been surveyed and the questions should be brought forward one at a time and briefly elaborated.

Chris Simo-Kinzer, 52 Old Farm Road, Terryville, stated he wanted the seven items that were listed voted on individually when they were discussed and voted on. Chris Simo-Kinzer stated the Charles Street Extension Project had been brought up at a previous Town Council Meeting and noted since October 2014 there wasn't any public meetings whereby people could express their concerns/input and briefly elaborated.

Vinnie Klimas, 5 Coral Drive, Terryville, stated the former speaker was wrong regarding the lack of meetings for the Charles Street Extension Project; that it was a distortion of the truth and he was sick and tired of distortions. He further stated the project didn't have a name at that time, but that it had been repeatedly explained and there had been numerous meetings on it, noting it was all for the safety of the children. Vinnie Klimas stated there were Federal, State, and for/not for profit (private donations) available for some of these projects and wanted that included in the Council's motion.

John Murphy, 385 Greystone Road, Terryville, stated the Town had gone through a financial troubling time and noted the Town needs to find out where it stands financially before going out for a bond. He further stated the public needed to be educated about the projects and they should be explained out. John Murphy questioned the interest on the bond rating, noting this would help the public understand.

Presentation by the Plymouth Firehouse Building Committee and Capital Improvements Committee on the following projects for consideration of a Bond Package

Chairman Joe Green, Capital Improvements Committee, stated the Committee had reviewed the projects for many long hours and had spent a lot of time considering many different options. He further stated that Matt Tellier would go through the projects this evening and explain the Committee's reasoning for the listed projects.

Vice-Chairman Matt Tellier, Capital Improvements Committee, thanked the Town Council and the Board of Finance, and members of the public for coming to this evening's meeting. Capital Improvements Committee Vice Chairman Matt Tellier stated the Capital Improvements Committee had been meeting for quite some time on this second bonding proposal, noting the goal this time was to go after some Public Works projects such as infrastructure, and were really need-based projects, not "nice to have" projects.

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Presentation by the Plymouth Firehouse Building Committee and Capital Improvements Committee on the following projects for consideration of a Bond Package Cont'd.

Capital Improvements Committee Vice Chairman Matt Tellier stated the purpose of the Committee was to get the Town out of the constant crisis mode and get ahead of it by spending money in a proper fashion; allocating the money before it comes to that point.

2016 Bond Project Listing

Plymouth Firehouse, Estimated Cost \$3,750,000.00; Road Improvements-Todd Hollow and Lake Plymouth, Estimated Cost \$2,000,000.00; East Orchard Street Bridge/Keegan Road Bridge, Estimated Cost \$1,500,000.00, Reimbursement (\$735,900.00); Fall Mountain Water Road Paving Project 110-132, Estimated Cost \$745,000.00, Reimbursement (\$650,000.00); Eli Terry School Rear Access (Charles Street Extension), Estimated Cost \$350,000.00; Town Hall Gas Connection, Boiler Replacements, UST Removal and Front Parking Lot/Sidewalk Repairs, Estimated Cost \$550,000.00; Survey and Engineering Design of Harwinton Avenue and Tory Crossing \$200,000.00. Sum \$9,095,000.00; Reimbursements \$1,385,900.00, Say \$1,100,000.00; Total \$7,995,000.00.

Capital Improvements Committee Vice Chairman Matt Tellier stated there were countless stories of Fire Fighters trying to stop traffic on Route 6 so they could pull out and/or pull in at the Plymouth Firehouse. He further stated with this project, the traffic flow would be coming from Route 6 and then the back doors could be opened and the trucks would roll out on South Street with control of the light. He further stated the Firehouse would go from two bays to four bays. Capital Improvements Committee Vice Chairman Matt Tellier stated that currently, the Fire Department was a volunteer department, however a time would be coming when Plymouth would need some paid Staff and to do that there had to be accommodations such as sleeping quarters, showers, etc., and this construction project would take care of that as well.

Capital Improvements Committee Vice-Chairman Matt Tellier stated a lot of the roads from the last Bond Project were collector roads (high traffic roads) and they had finished a lot of them with only a few stragglers remaining.

Capital Improvements Committee Vice-Chairman Matt Tellier stated Todd Hollow was in bad shape and the serious issues would be addressed and then the Town would be tackling some of the neighborhoods in the Community with smaller roads such as Lake Plymouth.

Capital Improvements Committee Vice-Chairman Matt Tellier stated the bridge construction projects were being funded by the Bonding Proposal and that approximately 50% would be reimbursable by the State. He further stated if the Town didn't start working on the East Orchard Street and Keegan Road Bridge in the very near future the Town would lose the State funding.

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Presentation by the Plymouth Firehouse Building Committee and Capital Improvements Committee on the following projects for consideration of a Bond Package Cont'd.

Capital Improvements Committee Vice-Chairman Matt Tellier stated the Fall Mountain Road Project had State funding as well, but again the funding would be lost if it wasn't started soon. Matt Tellier detailed the area in question, noting this was Allentown Road.

Capital Improvements Committee Vice-Chairman Matt Tellier stated the Charles Street Extension Project had been part of the original bonding package, noting there would be improvements behind Eli Terry School, which would keep parents picking up their children separate from the bus loading in the front, which would make it a safer traverse for the students.

Capital Improvements Committee Vice-Chairman Matt Tellier stated the Town Hall improvements needed to be addressed, noting there were a lot of issues with the old furnaces, which would need replacing. He further stated this project would convert the old furnaces to natural gas and would also include moving an old oil tank, which was sitting on the property. Capital Improvements Committee Vice-Chairman Matt Tellier stated this project would also address the crumbling front parking lot and sidewalks.

Capital Improvements Committee Vice-Chairman Matt Tellier stated two projects would be for the design work for Harwinton Avenue (between Seymour and Shroback), which would address the dips, curves and ice heaves. He further stated when LoCIP came to the Town last year the Town had the shovel ready/engineering design project ready because it had put monies aside for engineering for Bemis Street. Capital Improvements Committee Vice-Chairman Matt Tellier stated the Town received a \$2.5 million dollar road (Bemis Street) at zero cost because the Town had the foresight to set aside the engineering money to get the road ready.

Capital Improvements Committee Vice-Chairman Matt Tellier stated the Tory Crossing project was on the eastern side of Town, noting it was a mess and was basically a horse and buggy road. He further stated that it was a bad intersection, which would require design work to make it a safer intersection than what we have right now.

When questioned by Town Councilwoman LeGassey, Capital Improvements Committee Vice-Chairman Matt Tellier explained the section of the Harwinton Avenue Project, noting it was a collector road and led to the high school and Industrial Park.

Town Councilman Zagurski questioned where the dollar figures came from, noting he was a little upset because he didn't have anything more than the project listing, which he received this evening. He further stated he agreed with Keith Golnik and couldn't believe the cost of the East Orchard Street Bridge would be half a million dollars.

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Presentation by the Plymouth Firehouse Building Committee and Capital Improvements Committee on the following projects for consideration of a Bond Package Cont'd.

Capital Improvements Committee Vice-Chairman Matt Tellier stated members of the Fire Department had gone out for costs and the Capital Improvements Committee had met with people (on their dime) who had provided their figures and briefly elaborated. He further stated the Pavement Management Study had been utilized for the Road Improvements.

Public Works Director Charles Wiegert stated the project bridges and the Fall Mountain Paving Project figures were based upon Engineer estimates. He further stated that East Orchard Street Bridge and the Fall Mountain Paving Projects were 95% designed; Keegan Road Bridge not as far. Public Works Director Charles Wiegert stated the East Orchard Street Bridge was small, but there was gas and a sanitary sewer running under it. He further stated the bridge was undersized to be able to handle what was running under it so it would need enlarging, noting there was no clearance between the utilities and that was why the cost was so high and briefly elaborated. Charles Wiegert stated he would provide data to everyone prior to the Public Hearing.

Town Councilman Zagurski stated he agreed with Chris Simo-Kinzer in that the Charles Street Project did not allow for adequate parking for the residents when he saw it last. He further questioned if it had improved and if there were any better ideas on how it would work.

Public Works Director Charles Wiegert briefly outlined the project parking available, noting the policy was to try to keep the parents moving through.

Eli Terry School Principal Angela Suffridge stated approximately 25 to 30 children were picked up daily; a brief discussion followed.

Plymouth Board of Education Superintendent Dr. Martin Semmel stated the Administrators had spent quite a lot of time studying the issue to ensure proper supervision and had a communications plan with the parents so they would be aware of the process and what the expectation would be.

When questioned by Town Councilwoman LeGassey, Public Works Director Charles Wiegert stated the boarded up house on Charles Street was privately owned, however the Town would be acquiring it and it was included in the price of the project. He further stated the road would be going through the area where the garage stood.

When questioned by Town Councilwoman Murawski, Public Works Director Charles Wiegert stated the parking would be on the Charles Street Extension part, noting more could be added in the future if needed. He further stated the residents currently did not want additional parking there.

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Presentation by the Plymouth Firehouse Building Committee and Capital Improvements Committee on the following projects for consideration of a Bond Package Cont'd.

Town Councilman Zagurski questioned why one of the worst bridges in Town, Todd Road Bridge, wasn't being addressed.

Public Works Director Charles Wiegert stated the Todd Road Bridge was a Keystone Bridge and was considered to be historical property, noting the Town was not allowed to touch it.

When questioned by Town Councilwoman LeGassey, Public Works Director Charles Wiegert stated some large repairs could be done on the structure, but not without permission from the State Historical Property people. He further stated there might be some historical property funding available, but it was very tight.

When questioned by Town Councilman Zagurski, Public Works Director Charles Wiegert stated the drainage issues in and around Lake Plymouth would be addressed. He further stated there would be no widening of any of the roads unless it was easily doable.

Matt Tellier opened the floor for questions/comments from the Board of Finance:

Vicky Carey – stated she had no questions, they (Capital Improvements Committee) put a lot of hard work into this; they do have engineers on their board and worked on this for just about 2-3 years.

Dan Murray – nice job on presentation. (a) Todd Hollow - why could they not address the full needs of that project. Charlie Wiegert stated in cap projects there is survey work for Todd Hollow due to petition from Todd Hollow Road residents to address condition; had intended to survey entire road and prepare for reconstruction of the whole thing and after discussions decided more financially appropriate to address the problem areas of which there are 4 or so large problem areas such as curves, drainage and they can do engineering work also and combine with survey. Areas in between will be handled to keep current condition where reclaim asphalt and curbs, aprons on the way. Dan Murray stated his concern is to do it right the first time and if the project is done the right way will cost "x" and to do piecemeal will be "y". Charlie Wiegert stated it will not be done in piecemeal but when have drawings for 4 bad sections a contractor will go in address, construct and go to next but in the end the entire road will be reclaimed and repaved but doing design on four sections allows us to get more done for our dollar.

Jay Dorso – nice job on presentation.

Jim Zalot – great job on presentation and most questions were asked and addressed.

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Board of Finance Members presented their questions/comments Cont'd.

Pattie DeHuff – (a) why when asking Council and BOF to make a motion and vote on this tonight to send to public hearing and why do none of us have small copies of stuff you just presented to us; more information can be made available and can get deeper into discussion; has trouble voting when cannot look at project, no diagrams to look at; mentioned furnace or boilers at town hall and want to convert to gas, isn't that going to put us in a situation where gas prices will be high and we are stuck and no flexibility. Matt Tellier stated there were conversations at meetings and discussion to go both oil and natural gas and more expensive to do that and less efficient and to do so, once we pull out an oil tank we need to find somewhere to put an oil tank as the one we have needs to come out; trying to be prudent on costs and going with dual fuel furnace for idea that maybe somewhere down road. (b) engineers that worked on this, East Orchard and Keegan bridges; did we pay those engineers. Charlie Wiegert stated the bridges were designed by consultant and East Orchard was capital 2 years ago and Keegan was done out of the operating account this year, Fall Mountain is being done as a operating expenses from last fiscal year. (c) we should consider comments from Chris on Charles St Extension and pointed out the Mayor has made a comment we would not be taking questions from the public once the meeting begun but reminded the Mayor this is a Town Council and joint meeting and to the Charter the public shall have input throughout the meeting and in the best interest for the public to ask questions and read a sentence into record from the Charter, Section 3. (d) Projects presented, two bridges and has reimbursement from the state and Fall Mountain has some reimbursement and think an advantage to make sure they get passed; if lump together in one you have potential that the entire package will be defeated. Recommends to Council to separate each project out and list one by one as projects might go down if not separated out.

Ralph Zovich – Stated as chairman (a) we are not presenting anything to the people for referendum if the BOF does not have a firm grip on expenses and comments made on bond rating and costs, we will have auditors reports finished shortly. We need the Finance Director who has been laboring under massive workload to get back and do real job and we need to know what our bonding schedule is, reviewed. The CIC will initiate the project and we would initiate bonds needed to cover the project; background of last bond project given. We are continuing what was started 5 years ago; CIC was created to avoid haphazard projects and created a list of projects and prioritized them. (b) if improve East Orchard bridge we must address flooding at Ames and Beach Ave and there was money put into the flood study for the Pequabuck River Watershed. Charlie Wiegert stated Ames and Beach flooding was looked at and after study completed we had an engineering firm look and the opinion was there is no way to fix flooding short of widening the Pequabuck as that is a backwater flooding issue and need to drop flood elevation of the Pequabuck River so it will not back flow. Suggestion to provide 1-2 property owners with flood control measures to their house and to shore up house in times of flooding. East Orchard is unrelated to Beach Ave. (c) to clarify, is that culvert an issue of structural or water flow.

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Board of Finance Members presented their questions/comments Cont'd.

Charlie Wiegert stated it is both; bridges in town are inspected by the state and currently there are a few rated poor or structurally deficient: North Main, Keegan, East Orchard and Napco Drive bridge were on list; have secured a partial reimbursement for three bridges structurally deficient, update given. (d) Todd Hollow is a horrible road and if doing that bridge at bottom of Keegan and fixing Todd Hollow to entrance of Hancock Cam there is a piece of road that curves to connect Keegan and Todd Hollow that needs to be fixed. Charlie Wiegert reviewed work to be done on Keegan Road and drainage will be installed. (e) fire house, 750,000 was designed years ago for Plymouth ambulance and by the time finished design ended up 2.5 million and question is how comfortable is he with 3.75 million and will that take care of everything needed. Victor Mitchell stated for Plymouth fire station it should not be issue and they have confirmed prices recently with a few architects and feel confident with price. Discussion held on safety issues and what will be included in this station. Ralph Zovich stated they chose Plymouth first as safety factor of Route 6 and do they foresee using this station for recruitment and will it draw people. Mr. Mitchell stated fire department now with members are as skilled as paid firefighters in CT; they volunteer hundreds of hours a year; someday the town will be looking at paid folks during the day.

MOTION: To recess at 7:50 p.m. by Dan Murray; second Jim Zalot and the vote unanimous.

Board of Finance Member Pattie DeHuff stated when the Board of Finance recessed across the hall they were talking about this, but there was no general consensus; the point was brought up, but there was no vote taken about what the Board of Finance would do when they came back from their recess; it was informational just discussing the Charter. Board of Finance Chairman Ralph Zovich thanked Board of Finance Member Pattie DeHuff for the clarification.

Plymouth Town Council discuss and take action on referral of Bond Package to the Board of Finance

Mayor Merchant stated he wanted to reiterate that none of the projects listed were etched in stone and the purpose of the meeting tonight was to get the projects to a Public Hearing. He further stated the Board of Finance was present so that the Capital Improvements Committee only had to make the presentation one time; a brief discussion followed.

Town Councilwoman LeGassey made a motion, seconded by Town Councilwoman Murawski, to recess for five minutes at 8:02 p.m. This motion was approved unanimously.

Mayor Merchant called the Plymouth Town Council-Board of Finance Special Joint Meeting back to order at 8:10 p.m.

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Plymouth Town Council discuss and take action on referral of Bond Package to the Board of Finance Cont'd.

Town Councilwoman Murawski made a motion, seconded by Town Councilman Zagurski, to refer the Bonding Package as presented to the Board of Finance for their approval.

Discussion:

Mayor Merchant stated the Bond Package could be changed/alterd at any time and that after the Public Hearing had taken place the Town Council would still have that option.

Town Councilman Zagurski stated he understood that the Town Council was not setting a dollar value this evening; only recommending what they heard this evening.

Mayor Merchant stated Town Councilman Zagurski's statement was correct.

Vote:

This motion was approved unanimously.

Motion for Plymouth Town Council to Recess

Town Councilwoman Murawski made a motion, seconded by Town Councilman Zagurski, to recess at 8:13 p.m. This motion was approved unanimously.

Motion for Plymouth Board of Finance to Adjourn

MOTION: To adjourn by Pattie DeHuff; second Vicky Carey. Discussion: none. Vote: unanimous.

Board of Finance adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

MOTION: To adjourn by Pattie DeHuff; second Vicky Carey. Discussion: none. Vote: unanimous.

Board of Finance adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

Plymouth Town Council reconvenes to set a Public Hearing date on the Bond Package Proposal

When questioned by Mayor Merchant, Town Attorney William Hamzy stated the Town Council was okay to set a Public Hearing date; a brief discussion followed.

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Plymouth Town Council reconvenes to set a Public Hearing date on the Bond Package Proposal Cont'd.

Town Attorney William Hamzy stated the procedure was created to have a joint meeting between the Town Council and the Board of Finance to consider the recommendation made by Staff, the Capital Improvements Committee, and anyone else offering information. Further, for the Town Council to set a Public Hearing date to get input from the general public so there may be changes to the Bond Proposal that is presented and then for the Town Council to issue a Resolution recommending a Bond Proposal, which would then go to the Board of Finance for their recommendation and if they recommend it, then the Town Council would set a Referendum date.

Town Councilwoman Murawski made a motion, seconded by Town Councilwoman LeGassey, to set a Public Hearing date for the Bonding Package on Tuesday, March 8, 2016, at 6:30 p.m. This motion was approved unanimously.

Motion for Plymouth Town Council to Adjourn

There being no further business of the Plymouth Town Council, Town Councilwoman Murawski made a motion, seconded by Town Councilwoman LeGassey, to adjourn at 8:26 p.m. This motion was approved unanimously.