

Notes from the Plainfield Town Office

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

Thursday January 13th 2022: The town office is now fully engaged in preparation for March town and school meetings. Voting for zoning changes and town and school officers will be by ballot voting on Tuesday March 8th in the school gym. At this very moment we are planning on holding, for the second year in a row, both the town and school business meetings on the same day, for 2022 it will be Saturday March 12th in the school gym. Many details remain to be worked out, but the same day for both sessions hopefully allows greater voter participation and it allows us to reduce hard costs for meeting set up and cleaning as well as reducing the overall disruption to the school's campus. Stay tuned, our old friend COVID and whatever variant is next could, of course, change this plan at any moment!

So, in preparation for these meetings both the School Board and the Selectboard are holding budget hearings on **Wednesday January 19th, the school's starts at 5:30pm the town's at 7:00pm** both can be attended in person or via Zoom. Details are available by visiting the school's and town's website where you can also find posted copies of the warrants and budgets.

The Planning Board which is working on some possible Zoning Ordinance changes has a hearing scheduled for **January 24th 7:00pm** here at the town offices and via Zoom. Here too copies of the proposed changes can be found by visiting www.plainfieldnh.org.

Let us take a quick look at the town budget and the proposed zoning changes. The town budget shows an operating increase of 6.6%. While there are no new positions in the budget, we are anticipating being at full staffing levels for 2022 and there are some funds in the new budget for training in anticipation of staffing changes in 2023.

The inflationary costs of hard goods, particularly in highway (think diesel, salt, parts, etc) can be found through the proposed budget. We have all been impacted by price hikes and the town budget is no different.

We are hoping to replace one or two pieces of equipment in the highway department; a loader and maybe a dump truck. The loader is the highest priority. Capital items are typically paid for from our reserve funds as opposed to current year taxes. So, at the end of the day if the town budget is passed as presented we anticipate the package adding something like \$.35 to the municipal tax rate, a number higher than we would prefer, but one that reflects the reality of our current day economy.

Turning to Zoning Changes, two of the three changes have to do with how businesses are permitted by the Zoning Board the third is making improvements to how solar installations are handled. On the business side, essentially regardless of whether an

Approved Business Project (state roads) or An Approved Cottage Business (town roads), the new language requires the applicants to show that their use is in keeping with a residential setting, the primary use throughout town. One can argue that this has always been the case; the new language is intended to make this crystal clear and consequently does begin to limit the size and scale of commercial uses that might come to Plainfield, both along town roads and on our state roads.

The solar ordinance changes essentially transitions us from a permitting system that was based on energy output to one that is based on overall size and height of arrays. As panels have become more efficient, more and more solar applications have bumped into the 7 kW output limit for residential sized arrays. Note, it has always been possible to have larger solar arrays in Plainfield, but the process for arrays over 7kW involves a visit to the Zoning Board, rather than just a building permit. The town's land use boards remains committed to allowing solar throughout town, however, a public hearing will continue to be required for large arrays, over 500 sq ft. If nothing else, this forces neighbors to talk to each other about things like final location and screening.

So, as you can see there is a lot going on. If any of these issues interest you, check out the details, attend a hearing, and/or give us a call here at the town office.

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

Thursday December 23rd 2021: Last week's storm clean up went very well. Road Agent Collins and his available crew with the help of a Mak's Excavating were able to get through the season's first real storm despite having half our team out with COVID. The good news is we now have crew members returning and we should be in good shape going forward. The really good news is you didn't see me in a plow truck, there would not have been a mailbox left standing. One of the keys to life is to know your limitations and to stay in your lane, literally.

As we go into the holiday week, I offer a big shout out to Road Agent Richard Collins, who has completed his twentieth year of working for the town. He came to us as the department mechanic in 2001 and moved to the Road Agent position in 2011. There isn't a more thankless job in municipal government than a small town road agent. He is responsible for our largest department and millions of dollars of town equipment and everyone who owns a car or has a driveway feels qualified to render an opinion. Keeping his crew safe in all weather conditions, our roads open and equipment running is a daunting task to say the least. So, when you see Rich thank him for all his efforts and longevity with our town.

Finally, from the Town Office we wish you all a safe and happy holiday season. We hope that you are able to spend time with friends and loved ones. From all of your town employee's thank you for the kindness, patience, consideration and support that you have

shown as we all work together, at the direction of the Selectboard, to keep the town operating, something close to normally, during these very odd times.

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

Thursday December 16th, 2021: The Selectboard met last evening and worked on the 2022 budget with the Finance Committee. You can view the latest version; it changes several times a week, on our website homepage anytime you would like. The entire team is trying to find ways that we can reduce the proposed increase, currently at 6.7%, but the reality is that many things just costs more right now to operate than they did one year ago. Stay tuned, we are only about 50% of the way through our process. The town's first budget hearing is January 19th.

Unfortunately, our highway department is working its way through a COVID outbreak of their own. About half of our crew is out with the illness in one form or another. First and foremost we are concerned about each of them and their health. We do have contingency for using one of our local contractors to help snow plow as needed, just be aware that plow times with this weekend's storm might lag a little behind what you are accustomed to experiencing. It's going to be a Saturday night into Sunday event, I say stay in your pajamas put an extra log on the fire and settle in with a good book. Roads will be in fine shape by later in the day on Sunday! You only have to begin to worry if you see me driving one of the plow trucks and right now we are a long way from that. We got this.

Thursday November 18th 2021: The Selectboard met last evening and completed a letter to the Lebanon City Council asking for a meeting concerning the proposed Brook Road closure in 2023. I will make sure the date of that meeting is well publicized. To have the best chance of avoiding the closure, we will need strong support from our residents who depend on Brook Road.

The 2022 Town Budget is being developed right now. The impact of rising prices will be felt throughout the new budget. The Selectboard will have to make some tough choices before we finalize the document in time for the 2022 town meeting.

The Selectboard is looking to fill a couple of openings on the Planning Board, if you are interested please contact the town office. The Planning Board is a great way to check that community service box. The board typically meets once or twice a month. They are responsible for developing our land use regulations and handle both land subdivisions and site plan reviews for new business.

The Plainfield Turkey Trot is next Thursday morning. Visit the town's homepage for all the details. There is no better way to avoid the guilt that comes from food gluttony on Thanksgiving than to cover on foot or by bike the six mile from the Plainfield School to the Plainfield Town Hall before the big meal. It's also a great way to get those relatives out of the house for a few hours. I think the walkers have the best time at the trot. Many a family matter has been decided while walking down Stage Road on a brisk Thanksgiving morning. The winner claims the Golden Turkey for a year and gets a pumpkin pie.

Finally, the Selectboard, at this week's meeting, extended a sincere thank you to Holly Braswell for all her work to beautify Route 12A through Plainfield Village. Holly seemed interested in continuing her work and the Selectboard voiced strong support for her efforts. In an otherwise tough year, those flowers brought a lot of smiles this past summer.

Steve Halleran
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Thursday November 4th 2021: We have all heard about the bridge to nowhere in San Gabriel Ca, here in Plainfield NH we are just hoping, come the summer of 2023, for a bridge to somewhere, mostly on Brook Road to West Lebanon. The letter from the Lebanon City Manager notifying us of the 2023 closure is posted on our website homepage. Your Selectboard is planning to meet with the Lebanon City Council at one of their upcoming meetings. Plainfield does not just want to complain, we are willing to participate in a solution to keep the Brook Road open while Lebanon replaces its bridge. We think that Brook Road is not only an important commuter road, its an important for our local economy and for emergency services. If this issue is of importance to you and you want to help our efforts, you can contact the Lebanon City Council directly by using the following link: <https://lebanonnh.gov/FormCenter/Citizen-Requests-5/Boards-and-Committees-Contact-Form-134>

I think with enough support and our offer to participate in a solution we can get the City of Lebanon to take a second look at this issue, but we need those that are concerned to make their voices heard. Five months is a long time to "go around."

From the Meriden Library Building Committee: A lot has happened with the Meriden Library building project in the last two weeks, and more big changes are coming! The library books were packed up by volunteers and moved to a pod earlier in October. Last week, the abatement was completed. This week, power to the building was disconnected, making it safe to begin demolition. Once the building is removed, the site work will be completed and the foundation will be poured. Anyone who walks, bikes, or drives down Bean Road will be able to see a lot of movement over the next few weeks, so keep your eyes peeled!

Final thoughts: Next week is fairly quiet for town boards. The Selectboard meets next on November 17th and the Planning Board on November 15th. We are now fully into the

fall budgeting/town meeting preparation mode, so if you have an issue that you want addressed now is the time to bring it forward to the Selectboard.

Steve Halleran
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Thursday October 28th 2021: Let's start off this week with a nice tip of the hat to our Plainfield Fire Department. It's been a busy stretch for the crew. A truck rollover on Bean Road, a car crashing into a utility pole on Route 120, a false alarm or two at Kimball Union. It all adds up. Now, lets also remember these are volunteers, members of our community that, like us, have plans for Saturday to get some work done around the house, or maybe a quick fall hike. Folks that have put in a full day at their jobs only to get that fire call as they sit down to supper, meaning all other plans and maybe some sleep are put on hold to rush to the fire stations and assist those in need. Thank you Plainfield Fire for all that you do for us, night and day.

As we get into the heating season, please take extra precautions to make sure that heating appliances are operating properly and with necessary clearances. Let's keep ourselves warm, our properties safe and let the fire department personnel get their sleep.

Tax bills are out, so if you didn't get one and are feeling left out, contact Tax Collector Michelle Marsh to make sure we have your most current mailing address.

The Planning Board will be holding a meeting Monday evening (November 1st) to discuss possible changes to your zoning ordinance. Visit: <https://www.plainfieldnh.org/planning.htm> for all the details. Mostly at issue are the rules for locating business uses throughout town. There will be hearings on any proposed changes, but if you have strong feelings on business in Plainfield and want to participate in these discussions by all means join in, its your town.

The firearm deer seasons begin this weekend and run generally in one form or another through November. Plainfield has acres and acres of multi use conserved lands available for public use. These uses include hiking, biking and yes hunting. There is no need to change your plans. What is helpful is to wear some orange and maybe put a bell on the dog. This assures those who are hunting will know you are in the area. The bell is particularly helpful, as it can be heard from a long distance. That's it, go enjoy the outdoors. Do your thing and let the other person do their thing.

We will, very soon, have an update on the new town website. Its going to have some pretty cool features that many of you will like.

The Selectboard meets next Wednesday night here at MTH and on Zoom. Visit www.plainfieldnh.org for all the details.

Steve Halleran
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Thursday October 21st 2021: The State of New Hampshire Department of Revenue Administration has established the town's 2021 tax rate at \$26.55 per \$1,000 of taxable property. As part of this rate setting the Selectboard approved the use of \$32,503 of the town's unassigned fund balance. The town's targeted unassigned fund balance is \$1,000,000 (think emergency fund) and the Selectboard has been clear that once that goal was reached any dollars over that amount would automatically be turned back to taxpayers. Since our last revaluation in 2018 the town's combined rates have been as follows: 2018- \$26.90, 2019-\$26.00, 2020- \$25.40 and now 2021-\$26.55. The 4.5% increase is more than any of us would like, but less than we had feared coming out of town and school meetings and still has our total tax liability below what it was in 2018. Tax Collector Michelle Marsh will be mailing out the bills in the next couple of days, the due date this year is Wednesday December 1st. Anyone interesting in diving into the details, the tax rate setting pages are posted on the town's homepage.

The town office staff had a productive meeting this week with Casella who is working hard to correct the mistakes of the last couple of collection cycles. So, next week lets all get our trash and recycling curbside by 7am on our collection day. Recycling on one side of the drive trash on the other, make it easy for them. The trash truck and recycling trucks will continue to operate separately; they will not be tied together as I had hoped. So, if your trash bin is emptied stay calm the recycling truck will be along, they are just slower. If you are absolutely sure that you have been missed, give us a call at the town office and we can now access the under the glass red "bat phone" that will get us in direct contact with the trucks working in town. I can't promise the bat mobile will respond, but there is a pretty good chance we can get a Casella truck to you.

As always, thank you to all residents who found the time and energy to once again host a Plainfield Pumpkin person. They certainly make a drive around town entertaining.

This Saturday is a "Drug Take Back Day" 10am to 2pm at the police station. A good opportunity to clean out that medicine cabinet.

Steve Halleran
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Friday October 15th 2021: Many of you have been asking, what is going on with trash and recycling pick up? Missed stops, strange collection times, etc. The answer, of course, is the same as for all other service businesses a dramatic shortage of help. In the Upper Valley right now, maybe the entire country, it's pretty hard to find workers. When you do find one that's good, you just get them trained and some other company steals them away with higher wages or better benefits. What I can tell you is that the highest levels of management at Casella are working hard to get some stability into our collection team. No one is immune from riding on the back of the truck; all the desk jockeys are all out doing what they can to not only find new drivers, but to also get our refuse into one of their trucks on time. It's been a really hard summer for them.

As my old friend John Woodward-Poor said to me during a budget meeting many years ago, if you are not part of the solution your part of the problem. So, what can we all do to help? First, get material curbside by 7am the day of collection. Assume the driver that always went by your place at 10am, is now working at Hypertherm. The new driver may do the route in a different order, get the material curbside early! Make sure that you put trash in one spot and recycling some distance away. Make it obvious which is which. Make it obvious that the trash has a sticker attached to it. Assume the driver is new and very green; give them all the help you can. We are encouraging Casella to keep the recycling and trash trucks tied together. If the two get separated it just seems to lead to more misses and confusion about what has and has not been collected. If your house is missed, call us as soon as you can so that we can take corrective action.

We should have a new tax rate by this time next week. Tax bills will be mailed by November 1st.

The Planning Board meets Monday night and the Selectboard meets next Wednesday. Visit www.plainfieldnh.org for all the details.

The new mask recommendation signs are showing up around town. If you have a business or organization that would like one, give me a call. The Selectboard and Human Services Director are also making disposable masks available to any business or organization that would like them. We are all just trying to do what we can to get past COVID 19.

Steve Halleran
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Friday October 8th 2021: I hope everyone had a reasonable summer, lots of rain and our nemesis COVID-19 made for some challenges. Just when we thought we had it beat down; Delta arrived to mess with us. Working with Health Officer Stephanie Schell the Selectboard has approved some new mask recommendation signs that will be posted around town next week. The signs encourage masking as a means of each of us doing our

part to help get the town through this time in our history. You will not miss the signs; they make the Red Sox's Marathon tribute jerseys look bland.

The Meriden Library Building Committee is green lighted to begin their project. As advertised, there are no new tax dollars funding the project. The new building is overwhelmingly being paid for by the generosity of private donors. So, when you get your 2021 tax bill and its more than last year, and it will be more than last year do not let anyone try to convince you it has to do with the new library, that is simply not true.

The 2021 tax rate should be established by the state in the two to three weeks. What we know is that our taxable property has increased only a modest amount in the last year. We remain around \$304,000,000 in taxable property. While final numbers on educational aide are not yet in, the school, at annual meeting, was advertising an increase of about \$1.00 in the tax rate. The town and county could easily add another \$.35 to the rate. So, even if state aid comes in higher than expected, it's likely we are looking at a tax rate increase of at least \$1.00/\$1,000 on the current rate of \$25.40. If it helps at all, remember that the 2019 rate was \$26.00 and the 2018 rate was \$26.90. As we all know it's a much different world in 2021. A trip to the grocery store will confirm that.

We continue to pursue both funding and wetland permitting for our needed repairs to River Road. It is, as we feared, nearly an impossible task to get a permit to work on the banks of the Great River. I can show you locations along the river where previous road agents have used a more local approach to bank repair and stabilization, the work has held for decades and fish and wildlife abound. I am all for protecting our river, it's a town treasure, but the process for working adjacent to it could be streamlined just a little (pun intended) and we'd all still be okay. Never the less, we will eventually get the bank repaired. It is just going to take a lot more time and money than we had initially hoped.

The Police Department will be holding a "Drug Take Back" event on Saturday October 23rd at the Police Station. Their office, 110 Main Street, will be open from 10am to 2pm for anyone who wishes to turn in unwanted drugs for proper disposal.

The town's budgeting process will be starting right up. Important dates and deadline are posted on the town's homepage. The Selectboard's first budget meeting with the Finance Committee is November 3rd here at the town office at 7pm. Mike Sutherland will be chairing the Finance Committee again this year.

The KUA Study Committee will begin its annual work on October 18th from 6pm to 7pm also here at the Meriden Town Hall.

All town committee and board meetings are both in person and available for attending via Zoom these days. So, keep an eye on the website and you should pretty easily be able to find connection information about any meeting that interests you. If you are having trouble, give the town office a call and we will help get you connected.

Steve Halleran

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Thursday June 24th 2021: Planned summer projects are now fully underway here at the town offices. The initial work related to the heat pump installation is ongoing daily. We are getting to know the duct work contractors pretty well. Kind of like the old Murphy Brown show with Eldin the painter. I even had one of them give me some advice on a road issue he heard me talking about from his step ladder perch as his sawzall ripped plaster into dust for a vent opening. It's all good stuff and come August we will be grateful for their efforts and come the heating season the town hall will have kicked its oil habit (I will concede that how our grid electricity is currently generated is not a lot better, but it is getting greener overtime).

Unrelated to the town's project, be aware that starting right after the 4th of July, the Meriden Water District will begin a waterline main replacement on Main Street. Accessing town hall will always be possible, but without a doubt we are going to be in a construction zone for July and August. Plan accordingly and use the mail or the telephone to limit trips into the construction zone. Save yourself, if you can!

The Planning Board is involved in some discussions with the Building Inspector about permitting of "tiny homes" here in Plainfield. All towns across the state are struggling with this issue. The more we look into it the more it seems a legislative solution is necessary and in fact may be in the works. The town's land use boards fully support ways to make housing opportunities more affordable. For the building inspector the issue is the homes have to be safe reasonable places to live. Just by their size, a tiny home can't meet all of the codes that are required of more conventionally sized homes. Yet, a fire doesn't know the difference or act any differently, it just burns and people have to be able to get away quickly and without obstruction. Stay tuned, I think you will be hearing more about this issue in the future. I am impressed with anyone that can live in 350 square feet of living space. You have to really prioritize your stuff, I guess.

As we do this time of the year, we will now take a break from weekly notes, but we will absolutely get the word out on any town business on an as needed basis. Enjoy the summer, we all deserve a nice summer, we have earned it. The town website is updated regularly, so keep an eye on it for meeting dates and opportunities to participate in local issues. We have a nice website upgrade coming this fall. Soon you'll be able to get updates directly from the site. Just sign up once, click on the topics you want to know about and every time we post a change or notice a meeting, you'll get an e-mail. Its coming as part of an overall website upgrade that Mike Sutherland is working on for us.

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

Thursday June 17th 2021: The Selectboard, at their meeting on Wednesday, have agreed to reopen the Plainfield Town Hall for summer activities. The reopening is subject to Selectboard approval of each use that will be in the hall. The board has indicated that small group activities where the vast majority of participants have had access to a COVID vaccine will likely be approved. Events for children under the age of 12 are not likely to be approved until such time as kids have had access to a COVID vaccine.

The Selectboard has agreed to a 2021 Spirit Day, the event will be held on Sunday August 29th early evening on the grounds of the Plainfield School and will include our customary fireworks display.

Based on staff recommendations, the Selectboard has held firm, we are **not** going to have a town sponsored 4th of July parade in 2021. However, I have spoken with Liz McNamara, Dan Cantlin and we all agree that the parade is coming back wicked hard in 2022. I am thinking NBC news will want to cover it, like they do for that little parade out in California on Thanksgiving day. We will have a lot of making up to do next year and its going to be a show you will want to see. Lets hope its not too windy to get the “Snoopy balloon” up in the air. You know the one where he is flying the dog house against the Red Baron.

We welcome new Police Officer Robert Depietro to our department. Rob and his family live here in Plainfield. Most recently Rob has worked for the Hanover PD. Our police department is now, for the first time in many months, at full staffing and stands ever ready to serve and protect.

From the Meriden Library Building Committee: We want to express our gratitude for the support the Meriden Library Building Project received at Town Meeting! We’re so thankful for the incredible fundraising efforts, and for the enthusiasm surrounding this project. We’re planning to keep you updated on our progress regularly via Steve’s Facebook posts, as well as in the library newsletter and on the library website. For the next few weeks, we’ll be working to finalize the detailed design of the new building as the Foundation collects the donations that have been previously pledged. We’ll next meet on Wednesday, 6/23, at 7pm at the Meriden Library, and you can always find meeting minutes on the town website. Thanks

again for all of your support and excitement for the new Meriden Library!

Steve Halleran

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Thursday June 10th 2021: Moderator Paul Franklin got us through a hot and steamy school and town meeting. We had a good mid day break with school meeting concluding shortly after 12pm and town meeting starting at 2pm. Town Meeting ended around 4:30pm. The two big 40'x80' tents were just what we needed to stay in the shade for most of the day and right at the end of the town meeting (4:00ish) they kept us dry during a fairly intense rain event. By days end we felt good about our tent investment. Personally, I am ready for a good old fashioned March school/town meeting, cold and snowy bring it on. If you were able to attend, please make sure to let either Moderator Franklin or any board member know how you felt about having both events in a single day. That feedback will be a key to determining if we continue with joint meetings.

Plainfield did itself proud with its discourse; everyone was civil and respectful of one and another at both meetings. Besides sharing her wide ranging life experience, Patricia Rondeau, with her New England sense of humor, helped us remember why annual meetings are an important part of our local identity. Both the School Board and the Selectboard warrants were basically approved as presented. We shall now go about the business of accomplishing the tasks.

While it is true that the 4th of July celebration in Plainfield Village is not happening again this year it seems very likely that we will be able to hold the annual Spirit Day in late August. The Selectboard and Health Officer Stephanie Schell will have to give their final approval, but Dan Cantlin and I have asked the firework's vendor to hold Sunday August 29th for us. Just in case. We need a party.

This week's big shout out goes to Holly Braswell for her work to line Plainfield Village with hanging baskets. Holly brought this project to the Selectboard for permission and we were able to help her get approval from Eversource to use the utility poles. She and Vern have done all the heavy lifting on this project. Thank them when you see them. Its not easy to keep those baskets growing in 90+ heat.

The Meriden Library Building Committee meets this Friday, the Zoning Board on Monday and the Selectboard on Wednesday. So, even though school and town meetings are finally behind us, there is still plenty going on. All of the necessary meeting details can be found at www.plainfieldnh.org

Steve Halleran

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

Thursday June 2nd 2021: The long awaited 2021 school district and town meetings are finally here. For the second year in a row we find ourselves out of doors and under tents. The Selectboard, the School Board and Moderator Franklin are very interested in any and all resident input on the concept of both meetings in a single day. It is an idea that has been bounced around for several years whenever there is discussion about how to increase voter turn out. Now, a combined meeting in March in the warm confines of the school gym in our flannel shirts and Carhartt pants with a steaming bowl of soup and fresh bread for lunch is a slightly different animal than a combined meeting in June, held at the tail end of a pandemic, out of doors, with limited food, high humidity and hot temperatures. Still, the concept of doing our civic business of funding the school and town operations in a single day is an interesting one. Our goal is to do whatever we can to preserve the self governance that we so highly value here in New Hampshire. Time and time again we see that local is best when it comes to these matters. Stand tall in front of your fellow residents make your best case, discuss it, vote and move on as friends and neighbors, that's what we have done for centuries and we aren't going to let a pandemic stop us.

So, on Saturday bring your annual report and your good ideas to the Plainfield School 92 Bonner Road, maybe a cold drink and come help decide the issues of the day. School meeting starts at 9am, Town Meeting will follow at 2pm. We have two large tents for shade, chairs and lots of space to socially distance. Visit, www.plainfieldnh.org for all the meeting details: town report, (school warrant is on page 101 and the town warrant is one page 8), meeting logistics and moderator rules.

Steve Halleran
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Thursday May 27th 2021: Let us get the worst of it over first. Tax Collector Michelle Marsh has mailed tax bills, they went out today. Payment is due by Thursday July 1st. There, it's done.

One week from this Saturday we gather at the Plainfield Elementary School 92 Bonner Road at 9:00am to begin what will be an historic day in our little hamlet. Saturday June 5th will see a combined school district and town meeting out of doors under the tents. School District Meeting begins at 9am and Town Meeting will commence at 2pm. Due to COVID 19 masks are required on the PES campus. You can find a very nice write up, by Moderator Paul Franklin, on the town's website homepage explaining how the day will work.

Please bring your annual report; it contains the business of the day, both for school and town meeting. Focusing on the town session, we begin with article 2 the possible replacement of the Meriden Library. Lots of information about this project can be found around town and also on our website. The article seeks to replace the existing building on Bean Road with a new building a Geo Barn structure. No 2021 tax money is to be raised

for this project which will cost in excess of 1.15 million dollars. Tax money contributions to the project will total about \$105,000 and represents money placed in reserve funds in previous years. Regardless of how you feel about the project, tip your hat to the many Plainfield residents who have made private contributions to this project. It's an impressive amount of giving.

Article 2 is the town's budget. We will have spent nearly half of it before voters have a chance to weigh in on it. What I can tell you is that with 58% of the budget period remaining we have 63% of the proposed budget remaining. Now, much has changed since the Selectboard built and approved this budget. We have retooled our police department and become fully focused on a river bank failure on River Road. Despite these things our plan is to leave the budget unchanged and just make it work through 12/31/21. As proposed, the budget is a 2.4% increase over the previous year's approved budget.

Article 3 is our capital reserve funding. We rely heavily on these funds for necessary replacements of capital items. The proposed amount is similar to previous years. You can make a good argument that we should increase some of these allocations, but again in this particular year leaving them unchanged seems reasonable.

The rest of the warrant is a pretty straight forward and simple. Deciding the Meriden Library replacement issue and funding our town operations are the main focus of this year's town meeting. We should be home for dinner, maybe even get the grass mowed before!

Other Business: Thank you to Meriden Village resident Kevin Goodan who used his US Forestry Service skills to help the Meriden Bird Club remove a large hemlock tree that blew down and hung up over one of their main trails. A lot of residents walk in the sanctuary and the tree was a clear safety hazard. I happened to mention it to Kevin, who quickly agreed to take a look. It's always amazing to watch someone skilled use the tools of their trade. Kevin made short work of a tree that would have been a dangerous undertaking for most of us typical homeowners. Thanks to his voluntary efforts, the trail system is once again safe and reasonable for all of us to use.

The Solid Waste Committee meets Tuesday, the Selectboard meets next Wednesday and we all meet next Saturday, June 5th Plainfield Elementary School starting at 9am.

Take a moment over the weekend and stop at our town's service memorial in the Plainfield "Plain" Cemetery. There we honor all those from our town that have answered the call of national service in the cause of freedom. It's a beautiful setting to remember how fortunate we are here in Plainfield.

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

Thursday May 20th 2021: The Selectboard, at their meeting last evening , voted unanimously to rescind the town's mask ordinance put into place last August. This decision did not come with the full support of our health officer who would have preferred to have the majority of the mask ordinance remain in place until later in the summer.

In dropping the ordinance, the Selectboard has issued the following statement:

The best way to protect all members of our community from Covid-19 is to have as many people as possible receive the vaccination.

If for any reason a person chooses to remain unvaccinated, we ask him/her to wear a mask when indoors when they are with people who are not in their household. We are well aware that this is difficult or impossible to enforce, but we believe that this is best practice. It is important to consider the well being of all of our citizens, including those who are most vulnerable.

We recognize and support the fact that private businesses may choose to require masks for customers.

The schools in town continue to require mask wearing, and masks should be worn at our June 5 school and town meeting.

The Selectboard supports and encouraged everyone to use vaccines and masks to reduce their own and others exposure to COVID 19. However, given the new CDC guidelines and the wide availability of vaccines the Selectboard felt it was no longer necessary to use their regulatory authority to require masking.

Please call the town office with any questions.

Other business: We are hearing very good things from residents about the Lebanon Landfill composting program. If you would like to learn more about the program, which is very extensive and is open to all Plainfield residents visit www.lebanonnh.gov

Next week's town calendar has only one meeting, the Library Building Committee will gather on Friday 5/28 at 4pm.

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

Thursday May 13th 2021: As back away from the COVID cliff and we begin to return to "normal" one of the few positive things that has come out of the last year has been telecommunication meetings. Granted they are not perfect, we all forget to toggle from mute to live when we speak, sometimes we, the town, put our audience to sleep and that's not pretty to watch and of course we have seen more cat and dog behinds than is ideal.

However, on balance we have seen a continued increase in resident participation at our meetings and at times the ability to have a Zoom meeting has allowed board members to participate, who otherwise might have missed the meeting. It's not entirely clear what the future of teleconferencing will be in NH public meetings, but I know that our town has no plans to discontinue them going forward. We are even making improvements to our conference room to enhance the experience. Things like no more camera duct taped to a hunk of wood that we manually turn from one speaker to another and the elimination of power cords and computer cables draped all over the place. Anything that helps with getting more resident input we are in favor of keeping. Therefore, we might as well make the facility look and function a little more professionally.

The highway department is installing the rest of our new road signs. We have them all in house now, with the exception of a miss or two which are in production down at the state's department of corrections. We hope to have all of them up by June 1st. All the wooden signs have been retained and will be offered for sale as part of some fund raiser, details yet to be determined.

The Planning Board meets next Monday night and the Selectboard meets Wednesday night. Zoom connection information can be found at www.plainfieldnh.org

As they do each year, the Selectboard will be placing a wreath at the town's Service Memorial on Thursday March 27th at 11:45am just after the drive through senior lunch. If you have the opportunity to attend this event at the Service Memorial, main entrance of the Plain Cemetery, please do so. The entire ceremony lasts about 15 minutes. This is one of those local events that makes small town living such a special experience. Check it out, you'll go on about your day feeling good about your home town and with a greater sense of thanks for all the contributions to national service made by Plainfield residents.

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

Thursday May 6th 2021: You have to hand it to those Blood's Brook Bale Buster's they got it done. On Monday I asked the Highway Department to go down to Brook Road and pick up a few bags from the weekend clean up effort. The next time I saw the truck it was mounded with filled garbage bags. The 4Hers did a great job. It is, however, sad that they could collect that much garbage from a single town road.

We have been getting a fair number of inquiries about the local tax impact of our red hot real estate market. Houses assessed for \$250,000 selling for \$500,000 in a day or so that sort of thing. The COVID factor if you will. We update assessments every five years, next in 2023. So, for right now your house is assessed as though it were 2018, even if you

built it in 2020. No one anticipates that the market will stay as hot as it is right now; a couple of New England winters, a little poison ivy and a month with black flies/ticks and dusty dirt roads and the urban lifestyle will begin to look pretty good again. However, in 2023 real estate values will be higher than they are right now and our home assessed values will reflect that. Property taxes are just expenditures less revenue divided by valuation. So, as Stephen Beaupre taught us in school, the denominator gets larger the result gets smaller. The tax rate will go down, but the value you apply it to is up. The moral of the story, do not worry about valuation keep your eye on town, school and county expenditures less revenues the tax rate will take care of itself.

The Selectboard, at their meeting last night, eased some of the outdoor masking requirements in our local mask ordinance. The ordinance remains in place, but no longer requires masking in small group outdoor activities. We are getting back to a new normal, slowly but surely. COVID remains a significant concern, but as science leads to vaccinations and to a better understanding of how transmission occurs, changes in local regulations follow.

We also had some public comment on the River Road slump at last evening's Selectboard meeting. The local river commission subcommittee is, of course, concerned about any work done on the bank of the river. Representative Lee Oxenham voiced strong support for having the town consider a larger climate change driven project and move River Road in this area away from the river bank with the possibility of federal funding. While we agreed to look at all options, my initial feeling about the slumped area is that it does not rise to the level of a climate change issue. Fixing the slump in an environmentally sensitive way and moving on to other equally pressing projects might be the most viable option. Like all towns along the river, we have a history of periodically making these repairs and in our experience when done with local contractors familiar with the river they provide a very good value and do not have to cost millions of dollars. There are two such repairs to the north of the current one that were done at least 30 years ago and both are barely visible from the road or the river and are still holding. It appears that the relicensing of the Wilder dam is going to result in a river water release pattern that is much more stable than the current daily swings in water levels. The reason the change is being made is to reduce bank erosion and environmental damage.

Spring colors and wildflowers are about to really come into their own beauty. They are the poor sisters to autumn foliage in New England but every bit as beautiful to enjoy. If life will allow get out for a hike or bike ride in the next week or two, you won't be disappointed.

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

Thursday April 29th 2021: We have spent a good deal of time this past week wondering why our ancestors always built roads right on top of water courses. The obvious answer is that nature has already started the site work for us, there is usually a nice flat place created by the cutting and depositing force of water over the eons. Like Route 12A two

years ago, our local River Road has developed a spot (much smaller scale) where the Connecticut River and the road are trying to become one. This is not the first time this has happened and it won't be the last. As past Selectboard's have done, our current board is working hard to try and find the sweet spot, a durable repair that we can afford. It's a process that will involve compromises and it almost certainly means our paving schedule will be pushed back a year. We are trying to find some state or federal money, but so far unless we can tie that erosion to the corona virus, we are on our own. Is it a problem? Yes. Will we find a solution? Absolutely we will. In the end, the river will go exactly where it wants to go. In the mean time we shall work hard to keep River Road open and available for all to use.

The Blood's Brook Bale Buster 4H group has agreed to do some road side clean up on Brook Road (another road that is trying to become one with water). With a name like that our expectations are high. They will be building on the good work done last week by resident Scott Fellows and his daughter Emma. The group will be out there on Sunday afternoon around 4pm. The police department will be assisting with traffic calming. The highway department will collect the bags on Monday. Thank you to all that have helped make a dent in our road side garbage. Next time you see a Bale Buster, thank them for their community service.

Next week features the Planning Board on Monday, Selectboard on Wednesday. The Selectboard will be meeting with the Library Trustees to discuss the Meriden Library Replacement project. Visit www.plainfieldnh.org for all the meeting connection details.

Finally, Saturday is the first of three Household Hazardous Collections that Plainfield residents can use. Collection is 9am to noon at the Lebanon High School a flyer with all the details can be found on the town's website under the "services" tab.

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

Thursday April 22nd 2021: This week we shall not speak of the weather. Like a spoiled child, it needs to be ignored, if rewarded, this poor behavior will likely continue.

It is with great pleasure that your Selectboard announced at last evening's meeting that after 90 days of observation and several good discussions; Anthony "Tony" Swett has had the "interim" dropped from his title and is now our permanent full time Police Chief for the Town of Plainfield. Tony becomes the 7th person to hold this position in Plainfield since 1975 when the town changed from the constable to police department model. We all look forward to working with Tony as he continues the long tradition of public service through community policing that we so highly value here in Plainfield.

This Saturday is a “take back drugs day” in New Hampshire. The Plainfield Police Offices located at 110 Main Street will be staffed from 10am to 2pm to receive any and all drugs for proper disposal. Most commonly we receive outdated prescription drugs. These should not be disposed of through waste water systems where they eventually find a way back into the water table, much better to bring them here and let the Police Department deliver them to facilities that are designed for this work.

We are about five weeks out from Town Meeting, keep that Saturday June 5th reserved on your calendar. Town and school meeting conducted out under the tents at Plainfield School. Our sincere hope is that his model provides an opportunity for strong voter participation. Its one day, on a Saturday, to decide the important issues of the day. Please plan to attend this important day.

As we celebrate Earth Day thank you to all the residents that have been working to clean up trash on our road sides. We are still looking for a group to help with Brook Road, we can offer support from our Police and Highway Departments. We even have a donor who is willing to make a contribution to the group. Call the office if your group can help with this community project.

Finally, as our new Selectboard becomes more acquainted and begins that psychology 101 process to form into a team that leads our community, we are starting to learn some fun facts. By example, all three members of our Selectboard have some experience playing the trumpet. Honestly, we got the brass section of the band nailed down. What are the odds of that occurrence? Three individuals from different walks of life with much more in common than you might initially think. Seems like a life lesson hidden in there somewhere. I can't promise anything, but I am thinking if the school board can cover woodwind or percussion we have a shot at a live band performance on June 5th.

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

Thursday April 15th 2021: It is my fault; I walked into the highway garage Monday morning and joked about a mid April “sugar snow” to slow down a spring that seemed outrageously out of control, sun and heat brining plants along way too soon. Its not ideal to have apple trees in bloom in late April when frost is still very likely. My comment was met with an icy stare from all six of our high crew members. Apparently, you don't speak of these things in April. Now here it is Thursday and I am getting e-mails hourly from utility companies, homeland security all focused on the “April Noreaster.” Goodness, all I meant was a few flakes in the air to keep us grounded!

As we move into full spring mode, Friday aside, and you plan a nice hike on our local trails, please keep in mind our new parking rules. Essentially, the Selectboard is asking that if users arrive at a trailhead and the parking lot is full, please don't pull over on the roadside. We have a responsibility to make sure that emergency vehicles can get though

at all times. The French's Ledges trail network is not so large that it can't be easily accessed from any of the trailheads. The Plainfield School lot always has plenty of parking. Colby Hill has a nice pull off, Columbus Jordan Road has two parking areas, and Sanborn Road has one as well. The lot that has the biggest challenge is the first lot on Columbus Jordan Road. It is popular with mountain bikers who seem to travel in groups; consequently the four car lot gets really over loaded on a Saturday afternoon. If for some reason you find yourself heading out with two vehicles or meeting friends at this lot, please pull one car all the way in and park the second car behind the first, saving a space for the next guy. Someday you may well be the next gal and will appreciate that effort. Its going to be a great summer on the trails, but lets show the residents who live on these various roads some courtesy and not park all over the road.

The library building committee meets this Friday, the Selectboard next Wednesday. Saturday May 1st is the first of three household hazardous waste collection days. These events are held at the Lebanon High School 9am to noon and all the details can be found on the town website under the "services" tab select Trash and Recycling.

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

Thursday April 8th 2021: We start of this week with a little tip from the town office. Take a couple of minutes and register with the Hanover Dispatch CodeRed program <https://public.coderedweb.com/CNE/en-US/F4F68ACDD47F>

Once you are registered, this will allow you to receive updates on your phone about things going on in your neighborhood. For example, this week highway had to change out a culvert on Croydon Turnpike and the road needed to be closed. We were able to use the system, through Hanover Dispatch, to send a message to the road residents about the closure. We could do the same for any number of other municipal service issues. A change in recycling or garbage collection, power outage updates, etc. It's a very nice feature and could provide you with some valuable information about a happening in your neighborhood. No Plainfield application for your Iphone just yet, but give us a little time and the sky is the limit. No doubt that there will come a day very soon that you will pay your taxes, buy dump tickets and register your car all using your phone. That day is already here in bigger places. We will likely draw the line at accepting Bitcoin. Our understanding of a cryptocurrency is a little weak. For now, check out CodeRed that one we got.

The warmer weather means getting all of us outside more, the Plainfield Recreation Department is going to be providing some socially distanced baseball and T ball for our young residents. Sign up information is available on the home page of the town's website www.plainfieldnh.org deadline to sign up is April 21st.

Please be very aware of how dry and brown the ground is right now. Essentially, we should be doing no or very limited outdoor burning and only with a permit. Contact one of our local fire wardens if you have any questions page 56 of your town report.

Likewise, if you spot and burning call Hanover Dispatch immediately. Our fire fighters need every advantage right now when dealing with fast moving brush fires, time really does matter!

Very few town board and committee meetings next week, we are all going to get out and enjoy some of this nice weather.

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

Thursday April 1st 2021: First day of April and we have snow in the air and the Red Sox opener at Fenway is postponed, finally some normalcy in our lives! We may well be okay after all.

Thank you to all the good folks who have been doing some road side clean up. Highway has been collecting bags and getting them into dumpsters all week. Let's keep it up. Plainfield residents and local organizations have a long history of this kind of civic involvement. By example, the Friends of the Philip Read Library have been collecting road side litter on Route 12A for more than 23 years now. That's a lot of beer cans and fast food wrappers. If you'd like to help with their effort that covers two miles of Route 12A in the area of the Plain, give Nancy Norwalk a call at 675-5494.

We have not yet called winter over, but as mud season begins to get under control the highway department is moving toward tree trimming along roadsides. The resulting wood is owned by the property owner and should be left for them. Town roads are not on land owned by the town; for the most part our local roads are rights of way over private property. That being said, the wood is available for others to take, with the permission of the landowner. There was a time when residents would cruise town roads after either highway department or utility crew trimming looking for free wood. More than one fight has broke out over who was going to get the firewood. Residents have not spoke to one and another for a decade or two, all over the BTUs trapped in an oak log. The competition is less now, as fewer and fewer of our residents depend heavily on wood for heating their homes.

The Selectboard meets next Wednesday at 6pm. Road related issues have been dominating their work recently. This trend is likely to continue, the Plainfield real estate market is so red hot right now. With housing units for sale at few or none, it puts a lot of pressure on vacant land, some of which has access issues related either to topography or road classification. By definition, these issues all come back to the Select Board to work out.

Library Building Committee meets Friday afternoon via Zoom and the Library Trustees meet Monday.

As always, if you're interested in any of these things, just check in at www.Plainfieldnh.org or better yet go old school and call or stop in the town office. We are here to help.

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

Thursday March 25th 2021: Mud, steaming sugarhouses and Red-winged Black Birds in the Penniman Road swamp; winter has definitely loosened its grip. As the snow recedes, a lot of road side trash becomes visible, a lot. There is nothing like the sun reflecting off the iridescent blue Bud Light cans against the back drop of a brown leafless landscape to make us start yearning for summer days.

The Police Department is always on the look out for those that are tossing garbage out of vehicles. No warnings, it's an immediate ticket and do not pass go. Anyone that has earned a driver's license is aware you should not toss trash out of a car window. Although, I guess a bunch of empty beer cans rattling around on the floor boards lends itself to other issues with the law. A better approach might be to wait till you reach the sanctuary of your own home before you quench your thirst with the old Silver Bullet. But, we have wandered, let's bet back on track.

Anyone that is willing to help pick up trash along a town road your efforts and good citizenry would be greatly appreciated. Just leave the bags safely on the road edge and call the town office. Highway will pick up the bags and larger items taking them to a trash dumpster for proper disposal. If we all do a little, no one has to do a lot.

The real road side garbage hot spots in our town are Stage Road and Brook Road. Planning Board Chairwoman Jane Stephenson has for many years worked hard to organize a clean up effort on Brook Road with local kids. Highway provides signs and the police keep a tight grip on traffic speeds. Jane and I would be willing once again to work with any local group (Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Future Farmers of America, churches, you name it) on this effort. We can provide bags, signage and disposal, what we need is many hands to collect and bag and drag. We can even sweeten the pot; a local resident has agreed to make a donation to the organization or group in support of this community service. It is going to be a great summer Plainfield, lets shake off the COVID blues and make our town look nice, a place to be proud to call home.

Other business: There are very few town board meetings next week, keep an eye on the town calendar for any updates.

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

Thursday March 18th 2021: The new Plainfield Selectboard held its first meeting last evening. Eric Brann will serve as Chairman for the next year and new member Amy Lappin took her seat in the Zoom window. The Selectboard busied itself with road issues (the most common discussion held at any Selectboard meeting before COVID 19) and capital planning. The Board did have some preliminary discussions about 4th of July and Spirit Day. Essentially agreeing to not cancel them yet, but rather to hold until we all have a better sense as to whether or not we have the pandemic on the run. Vaccinations across the state are ramping up, that can only help our chances of having a big party before years end.

The Planning Board conditionally approved two site plan reviews Monday night. Landmark Property Maintenance will begin to make improvements to their 361 Route 12A property that will allow them to use their property as a base of operations for their property maintenance division. Townline Equipment received approvals to move forward with removing a pole barn and replacing it with a new building to serve as storage and assembly space for new equipment. That work too will commence immediately.

Highway is out daily trying to minimize mud season, next week's temperatures promise to bring plenty of mud. Likewise, despite really wanting to put the snow shovel back up in the rafters of the garage, we know that too is premature. Wintah has not yet finished its business with us.

The Plainfield Library Trustees meet next Tuesday at 6:30pm and the Selectboard will hold a site visit to Andrews Lane to view a road concern, next Wednesday at 5pm.

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

Thursday March 11th 2021: Congratulations to the voters of Plainfield, in a second year of the pandemic a full 33% still made the effort to vote, in this case in a town only election. Of the 589 votes cast 26% (155) were by absentee ballots and the other 74% (435) in person. On the town ballot, James Taylor was the high vote getter with 530 on his way to nailing down an uncontested Cemetery Trustee position. On the School side, Moderator Paul Franklin showed his political clout by garnering the most votes (537) on his way to the School Moderator position. Full election results can be viewed at www.plainfieldnh.org

We now take a little break from town and school meetings; Saturday June 5th is the date when we will gather at the Plainfield School athletic fields, under tents and complete our 2021 meetings.

Back at the 1988 the town meeting the town's legislative body approved the creation of a capital improvements plan (CIP). That document has been used as a working public document since 1991 as the basis for town reserve fund contributions and the scheduling

of large purchases, mostly in the highway department. Since, its adoption the town has added at least three buildings (two fire stations and a barn), several new highway vehicles and one full department (fire) to its capital assets. Finance Committee member Eric Sorenson has taken on the task of modernizing the town's capital improvements plan to assist both the Selectboard and the Planning Board (statutory home of the CIP) with planning and budgeting functions. A few of the key tables from the new and improved CIP will now be featured each year in the annual report. Hopefully, this will provide enhanced information to residents about upcoming large purchases. Thank you Eric.

The Planning Board meets on Monday of next week; two site plans are on the docket. The first is a continuation of the Landmark site plan, property management company moving operations to #361 Route 12A. The second is a site plan for Townline Equipment and centers on a proposal to replace an equipment store shed with a weather tight conditioned space structure of the same size to be used for new tractor storage and assembly.

The Selectboard meets Wednesday, where Amy Lappin will be welcomed to the Board and the Library Building Committee meets Friday to continue their preparations for June 5th.

When you make contact with Rob Taylor around town, thank him for twenty years of service as a Selectboard member. That's the same twenty years that also included raising a couple of kids, farming and a full time career. It's a pretty impressive accomplishment.

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

Thursday March 3rd 2021: Final reminder, in person town and school election voting will be held on **Tuesday March 9th 8am to 7pm** Plainfield School Gymnasium. Absentee balloting is also occurring. Essentially, this close to the election, the best course of action for a voter who want to use the absentee option is to come to town hall, present themselves to the Town Clerk and vote right at town hall in our conference room. Once the election of officers is concluded, the town and school deliberative "business" meetings are, due to COVID, delayed until June 5th on the grounds of the Plainfield Elementary school. Details of how that day will work to follow.

At their meeting last night, the Selectmen accepted the terms of a State of New Hampshire Homeland Security grant that was applied for by the town's Facility Manager Brad Atwater. The grant will fund a new generator for our emergency operations center and a more formal telecommunication and video conferencing system for our emergency operations center conference room. In our case, like many small town's the Emergency

Operations Center and the Town Office are the same space, so these improvements while targeting emergency preparedness will also benefit day to day operations. Combining this work with the heat pump project will be a very nice package of upgrades for the town office. Anyone that lives in a 100 year old house can appreciate both the niceties and challenges that come with an old building. Still, at renovation cost of just over \$200,000 in 1995 the Meriden Town Hall which provides us town office and police department quarters has been a pretty good deal for more than 25 years.

A week from now with 50 degree temperatures, local sugarhouses will be steaming away, apple tree pruning will be going strong and mud season will be here for real. FYI, early indications for those that have chosen to live on a gravel road are that it is going to be a real mud season this year. It has not even gotten warm yet and we have had ruts on Freeman Road and Colby Hill that could clean out the undercarriage of even the sturdiest Mini Cooper or sporty BMW. If you witnessed the school parking lot last week, you know exactly what I am talking about. We do operate a Nordic ski center, but the PES mud bog, that was something else entirely. So, help us out, try to minimize trips in and out, talk with the Road Agent (469-3240) before you attempt any large deliveries. Roads are now posted. Most importantly use the old "When in doubt, sit it out." If the mud looks like it could tear up the car, it likely will. Once the bottom of the frost layer thaws the roads will quickly dry up and spring grading can begin. Until then, its going to be a little ugly.

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

Thursday February 25th 2021: The 2020 Town Report, hard copy, is now back from the printer and in the mail to residents. If you have not received a copy, it should arrive in Friday or Saturday's mail. An electronic version is also available on the town's website. In person town and school elections will be held on **Tuesday March 9th 8am to 7pm** Plainfield School Gymnasium. Absentee balloting is permissible, contact Town Clerk Michelle Marsh for the details.

As we have discussed in the past, the annual report contains all the information a voter needs to become educated about town and school business going into the two annual meetings. No technology required and we mail it right to your home. For any given year all the various committee reports are right there for you. If you read just the Select Board and School Board reports along with the Finance Committee report, those three would go along way to providing you valuable information on the topics of the day. The town report will never earn any literary awards, but it does exactly what it is intended to do, it informs and provides a historical record on what was going on in our little down in any given year. By example, a quick look at the 1920 Town Report reveals that in the town warrant raising \$20.00 (twenty) to widen the road ten feet near the HC Daniels barn was a hot topic along with raising a few bucks for Old Home week. In a particularly telling entry, the School Board reported that Plainfield's various schools (we have had as many

as twelve school districts in Plainfield) were closed twice during the year due to the “influenza epidemic.” How spooky is that. In our current case, when in 2120 someone takes down the 2020 annual report they will hopefully be able to learn how COVID 19 impacted our community. So, take the time to give your annual report a read, there is a lot in there for you now, and for those that follow later.

Finally this week, I must share with you an experience that will warm your heart. Mid week we had an older resident, who had not too long ago lost a spouse, stop over at the town office to pick some information. Mostly, the person just needed out of their home for a little bit, a COVID break if you will. Despite a busy work day, your Town Clerk as she has done many times before, left her work station and came into the waiting area to sit with this person (masked up of course) for a few minutes just talking. Favorite foods, funny memories of old Plainfield and days past, a few good laughs all came up in the conversation. A sparkle returned to the eye of our resident and that person went home feeling much better than when they came in. Fact is, in these sanitized, sneeze guarded, rubber gloved very tough times, we all felt better. Just another of many examples of why we call this place home. Small town life is not small.

Next week is full of meetings, Monday Planning Board, Tuesday Library Trustees and Wednesday the Selectboard. All can be accessed from your home via a Zoom.

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

Thursday February 18th 2021: As is typical this time of the year, interest in town and school elections is running high. As we have reported in the past, there will be all day voting for town and school officials on Tuesday March 9th in the school gymnasium. The polls will be open 8am to 7pm. On the town ballot there is one contested race, Dennis Girouard and Amy Lappin are both running for the Selectboard seat being vacated by Robert Taylor who decided not to seek reelection. On the school ballot the one contested race is Jordan Green, Mary (Beth) Houde and Dennis Girouard running for two open school board seats, vote for two. Absentee voting is permissible. Voters will find the application form right on the town’s website homepage www.plainfieldnh.org.

For a bunch of really good reasons, the Town of Plainfield does not send out or participate in any political mailings. Candidates sometimes obtain mailing lists from the town and to do their own mailings at their expense. A recent “postal patron” mailing which included the town’s absentee ballot request form that uses the town’s logo was viewed by some as having come from the town or was an indication of support for a particular candidate. This was not the case. Questions about Plainfield’s voting procedures should be directed to Town Clerk Michelle Marsh 469-3201. As we all know, she works incredibly hard to make sure that all that wish to vote are able to do so.

If you would like to serve your town, but find the Planning or Zoning Board or perhaps the Finance Committee not to be a drinkable cup of tea, the Conservation Commission may be the place for you. Plainfield has a long history of an active Conservation Commissions that have worked on such projects as wetland permitting reviews, control of invasive plant species, water quality protection, wildlife management, town own land improvements. NH RSA 36 provides all the duties of a Conservation Commission (CC). By design, the Conservation Commission is a hands on group that works in the woods or fields, dirty boots and hands and mud covered knees are all signs of active CC members. Seriously, if you have an interest in serving on any town boards, including the Conservation Commission give the town office a call to discuss the possibilities.

The 2020 Town Report is now available on line at www.plainfieldnh.org
Thank you to webmaster Mike Sutherland for all the work to get this on the site each year. Printed books will be mailed to residents on or before Thursday of next week. If you haven't already done so, circle Saturday June 5th on your calendar. That is the date of the combined School and Town meeting, to be held outside on the grounds at the Plainfield Elementary School.

Thursday February 11th 2021: Town meeting update, ballot voting for town and school officers will take place on Tuesday March 9th in the school gym just like any other year. Based on the November election, our team feels confident that we can do this in a safe manner. As was done at the November election, absentee balloting is encouraged. See www.plainfieldnh.org for the how to details.

Now, it's the business meetings where things get interesting. Gathering en masse in the school gym in March just is not happening. So, wake up Siri or Alexa or if you are old school, like me, grab a sharpie and mark **Saturday June 5th 2021** on your calendar. That is going to be an historic day in our township. We shall gather on the expansive grounds of the Plainfield Elementary School athletic fields and dispense with both the town and school district business in one day! There is plenty of room to socially distance. Many details remain to be worked out, but a likely scenario is that we will arrive at 9:00am and conduct the school district meeting in something like three to four hours tops. We will then return to our homes for lunch (think a baseball double header where you have to empty the stadium between games) and we will all be back around 2pm to dispense with the remainder of the town warrant. The first article up for the town will be the Meriden Library replacement project. Once the fine details have been decided we will use all means available to us to get the word out. What we know right now is June 5th is the date and we hope to start by 9am. The tents and chairs have been ordered and town and school staff has all committed to making this event happen in a safe and reasonable manner that allows us to continue with our time honored tradition of gathering and deciding for ourselves the various issues of the day. Town reports will be back from the printer the week of February 22nd and will be mailed to all residents. There are some of us who wonder if, this combined one day event might be the future of town and school business meetings. Rather than requiring some portion of two weekends in March to

complete the town and school business, we take only one Saturday in March. For now, we try this one time and see how it goes.

So, we are off the hook when that third cousin on your mother's side, who you don't really like anyway, sends you that "save the date" card for impending nuptials on June 5th. You can with a clear conscience respond back that you have another commitment. Send them a nice fruit cake.

The Selectboard is back in session next Wednesday at 6pm. We have a long way to go yet with winter, but the day length is growing, sugar houses will soon be steaming away and the spring of 2021 will have found us!

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

Thursday February 4th 2021: At last evening's Selectboard meeting the 2021 warrant was finalized and our annual budget work completed. It has been determined that voting for town and school officials will be Tuesday March 9th in the school gymnasium. On the town ballot there is one contested race, Dennis Girouard and Amy Lappin are both running for the Selectboard seat being vacated by Robert Taylor who decided not to seek reelection. On the school ballot the one contested race is Jordan Green, Mary (Beth) Houde and Dennis Girouard running for two open school board seats, vote for two. As with all ballot voting in Plainfield the polls will be open 8am to 7pm.

The dates for the business meetings for the town and school have not yet been set, but a Saturday in June on the grounds of the Plainfield Elementary School continue to be the most discussed option. We might even try both on the same day, one in the morning one in the afternoon. Stay tuned. The town warrant and budget are posted on the town website.

The 2020 Town Report is now at the printer and will be mailed to residents on or before February 24th.

Coming up this Monday evening at 7pm the Planning and Zoning Board will be meeting jointly via zoom (ID 943 3411 2050) in a workshop format to discuss the town's Zoning Ordinance. So, if you have strong feelings about the ordinance or would just like to learn more about it, joining in on this meeting might be for you. Modern zoning started in the early 1800s in urban areas where fire danger was a primary concern. Standards and rules were established to try and protect building and personnel property. Modern zoning is far more reaching often limiting what uses a property can be put to including just how annoying you can be to a neighbor. In a town like Plainfield we have, on one hand, members of generational families who will routinely say, "Halleran, I don't need a permit, I have a deed." We also have new property owners from more urban areas that

can't imagine their neighbor being able to change the color of their home without going through some review board. Opportunities for conflict are wide spread. In Plainfield we have a strong history of supporting private landowner rights, but we also recognize that more people living together likely means more rules. People just don't share that well. So, if you want to get in on the ground floor of what Plainfield zoning might look like in the future here is your chance. The ordinance has served the town well for decades, but for it to continue to do so requires constant thought.

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

Thursday January 28th 2021: The warrant for town meeting is pretty much complete now and can be found on the town's website, half way down the homepage. At the moment, we are noticing the meeting with the traditional dates (town meeting day in New Hampshire is the second Tuesday in March, the 9th this year). This is when we do ballot voting for town and school officers and zoning changes. The town meeting is then adjourned to the Saturday next or in this case March 13th for the "business portion" of the meeting where we act upon the remainder of the warrant. We think we can get the ballot voting done on March 9th but both the town and school business meetings are likely to be postponed until an open air meeting is possible. May is pretty much the earliest we would dare try such a thing. As New Englanders, we love the idea of April, it just sounds so nice, but we know April is the cruelest of all the months. Sunny and warm on the 5th, 6th of snow on the 15th April just messes with us hard. Early May is not much better, now late May that may hold some promise.

Turning our attention to the 2020 warrant, the Meriden Library replacement is again on the agenda which automatically makes it the "main focus" of the meeting. It is widely known that the Trustees have committed to funding the project with no additional tax dollars and there are no additional tax dollars for the Meriden Library replacement in the warrant. Regardless of the funding source, it is the town's legislative body (the voters) that will decide whether or not to move forward with the project. It's why we gather each year, to figure these things out. If you would like to learn about some of the recent work done by the Meriden Library Building Committee, a very concise "Frequently asked questions and answers" document is now available on the homepage of the town's website, www.plainfieldnh.org.

I am happy to say that Plainfield SWAG, those trash and recycling collection magnets are flying off the store counters and being stuck on refrigerators all over town. No excuse now to miss getting that material curbside by 7am on the correct day. Its right there eye level as you open the door for that cereal milk.

Selectmen have a full meeting on Wednesday next, see the website. If you haven't tried it, "Zoom In" and participate in your local governance. We actually have a good time and you pretty much can count on having someone's cat or dog or maybe even a toddler break up the meeting as they make an appearance on camera. The meeting is going too long when folks begin to fall asleep in their chairs. We are all left wondering what is

really in all those mugs folks are drinking from! That's a lot of coffee before bed. In these times we take our laughs where we find them.

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

Thursday January 21st 2021: The Selectboard held their first of two budget hearings last evening. The Meriden Library project will be the first item of the business portion of Town Meeting and seeks to replace the existing Meriden Library with a new fully accessible single story energy efficient structure. The projected cost is \$1,150,000 and as configured the article requires no additional money from property taxation. The project is to be funded from existing reserves and private donations. The town's operating budget is 2.8% higher than the approved budget for 2020. Contributions to reserve funds are planned at like amounts from 2019. The only other monetary warrant article for 2021 is a request by the Visiting Nurse Alliance for \$8,500 in funding, this article is by petition. The Selectboard will hold a final budget hearing on February 3rd at which time the Selectboard will vote on their required recommendations on all monetary articles. All the details of the budget can be found at www.plainfieldnh.org

Also at the meeting last night, the Selectmen officially appointed Anthony "Tony" Swett as Interim Police Chief. This provides both the Selectmen and Tony an opportunity to evaluate the position and to determine if it's a good fit. The Selectmen are also actively assisting Tony with filling one of the two patrol officer slots that are open in the department. We hope to have a new police officer on board in the next month.

If you have not already done so, pick up a "curbside collection" magnet at one of our two stores or at the town office. Provided by Casella the magnets are a great way to easily determine if it's a trash/recycling service week. In addition, they are large enough to firmly attach to the fridge your favorite photograph of a loved one or maybe the family pet. Check them out, a little Town of Plainfield swag.

Next week is a quiet one for meetings, the town Finance Committee does have a Zoom meeting session planned for Tuesday night 1/26, see the town calendar for details found where else, www.plainfieldnh.org.

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

Thursday January 14th 2021: Let us pick up where we left off last week. In my entire experience with our local town government, which dates back to 1989, the town has had but two Police Chiefs. Chief Gillens was by all accounts the father of our local police department and Chief Roberts continued the main theme of "Community Policing." Our officers pride themselves on being public servants. Helping Plainfield residents and

visitors to our little town is their main focus. Sure, at times that means they have deal with a bad person or two, it goes with the job. We all want our stuff to still be at home when we return each evening. Finding ourselves now at a moment of transition, I know that the Selectboard would appreciate any and all input from residents about our police department. So, lend your voice by either sending me an e-mail which I will forward to the Selectboard or better yet call either Ron, Eric or Rob (each has a number listed in the new Plainfield phone book) or if you see Tony out on patrol tell them all what you'd like to see in the future with regard to our police department.

The town's first budget hearing is next Wednesday January 20th at 7pm, visit www.plainfieldnh.org for all the details and meeting connection information. It has not been an easy task with a pandemic to figure out anything other than a true SWAG for the budget. Its always a guess, it's a budget after all, but boy is this one full of moving pieces. The operating budget stands at 2.8% over the current approved amount with anticipated dollars needed from taxes going up something like \$95,000 equating to \$.32 on the current tax rate of \$25.40. Our sincere hope is to bring that number in at half that amount by tax rate setting time, but if anyone can guess what state revenues are going to look like in 2021 please call me. Our crystal ball seems to not be getting any reception and has gone very cloudy when it comes to the revenue side. Bleak is what we fear.

The big news of this week is that the Plainfield Library Trustees have committed to bringing forward a Meriden Library replacement project to the 2021 town meeting with \$0.00 new dollars from taxation. That is correct, a brand new, energy efficient, completely accessible low to the ground single level library building that will cost something like \$1.2 million dollars and it comes with no six figure ask of the general taxpayers. This is not to say that all the private funding is in place, the Meriden Library Foundation needs more donations, more help to meet the goal. However, because of some incredibly generous donors and highly dedicated building and fund raising groups the end is in sight. If you want to help, contact Library Director Mary King and she can put you in contact with the right people. In my view, one of our community's greatest attributes is our support and love of learning. Evidence of this commitment can be found in our excellent school system and our excellent library system, both contribute to making this a pretty neat place to call home.

Call with any questions.

Steve Halleran

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

Thursday January 7^h 2021: Happy New Year! If you would like a new trash collection calendar for the fridge, hard copies of the 2021 version can be found at both of our convenience stores or you can print one out from the town's website; go to the services tab right off the homepage. It looks very likely that despite increasing cost, the town will be entering into a three year contract with Casella for the continued collection of garbage

and recycling in our community. Details remain to be worked out, but based on the strong support for the program within the community and the RFP response our Solid Waste Group is recommending to the Selectmen to move forward with a three year contract. We are going to continue to look for ways to reduce the cost, but all indications are the program will continue.

If you would like to begin doing some composting to reduce your household garbage, but are concerned about odors and attracting unwanted wildlife, check out the new program being offered by the Lebanon Landfill. Visit either www.plainfieldnh.org or <https://lebanonnh.gov/1464/Food-Waste-Drop-Off-Program> for all the details. Essentially, anyone that has access to the landfill, Plainfield residents have access, can purchase a \$15 permit to bring all compostable waste (more items than you might think) to the Lebanon landfill for a period of one year. It's a great program and a good way to reduce the amount of garbage you put out at the curb for collection. The resulting compost is then used at the Lebanon landfill for their reclamation efforts. Check it out, it effectively allows us all to compost no excuses!

The Selectboard's first budget hearing is Wednesday January 20th at 7pm. Details including the draft budget/warrant are posted on the town's website. Keep a close eye on that town calendar a lot of groups are meeting right now and the public is of course welcome to attend electronically. Library Building Committee, Solid Waste Group, KUA Study Committee, and our Finance Committee will all be holding meetings in January and February.

Finally, in closing this week I must report that the Selectboard has received and accepted the resignation of Police Chief Paul Roberts. All of us wish to thank Chief Roberts for his many years of service to the Town of Plainfield. We are very proud of our Police Department and the assistance it provides to all of our residents. Officer Anthony "Tony" Swett has been appointed Officer in Charge and will lead the department through this transition.

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

Thursday December 24th 2020: Happy Holidays to all. Yes, it's a different sort of year, but there is still much to be thankful for as we close out the year 2020. If nothing else the year has shown us the value of community and of living in a place that has a scale that give us space when we need it, but at the same time allows us to know and help our neighbors. Our differences provide us strength when we face a variety of challenges as we have this year. You need neighbors with chainsaws and tractors when mother nature give you wind and rain and 30" of snow. You need scientists and medical professionals when you are facing a world wide pandemic and still trying to figure out how to continue to provide services essential to a community. We all need highly qualified and innovative educators when you are trying to also keep your schools open and our kids education happening. Mostly, we just need each other and 2020 has shown us to have enormous resources within our community all standing shoulder to shoulder to help one and another.

The Selectboard meets next Wednesday at 6pm to handle some year end necessities as the town's fiscal year draws to a close. The town office remains open, but we do ask that visitors practice social distancing and of course wear masks. There is a drop box on the front steps that can be used twenty four hours a day. If you need something call and we will find away.

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

Thursday December 17th 2020: The big story this week changed from Wednesday night to Thursday morning when rather than 3-8" of snow the Upper Valley was clobbered with more than two feet of snow. Highway will be deploying all of its resources on this storm over the next couple of days. Its gong to take a little time to get it all cleaned up and pushed back. Please do your part by not parking along roadsides and not plowing snow into town roads. The good news about a blizzard is we know exactly how to handle it, as opposed to a pandemic which has kept us off our game all year long. In both cases, we will gain the upper hand, it just takes time.

The Selectboard did have a very productive meeting with the Finance Committee and Library Trustees on Wednesday night. A wide variety of view points and concerns were expressed about the fiscal uncertainty we face as a community going into 2021. The Finance Committee is pushing hard for fiscal restraint and to delay major undertakings until at least 2022. A majority of the Library Trustees is very excited about a Geo Barn replacement of the Meriden Building, but are also fully aware of the fiscal concerns. The trustees do seem committed to giving the voters a chance to weigh in on a Meriden Library replacement this next year. What is not entirely clear yet, is how much taxpayer money will be necessary to complete the project. Literally the number could be zero or \$200,000 most likely somewhere in between. The projects total cost is estimated to be \$1.1m dollars. So, as you can see there is a lot of private funding already pledged and more coming in here at year end. A lot more information on the Trustees plans for 2021 will be forthcoming in the next few weeks.

Next week is a fairly quiet week; the Selectboard will be holding a year end meeting on December 30th, meeting detail is posted on the town's website.

It would appear that the winter of 2021 has arrived for real; once we get it cleaned up safe outdoor winter recreation of all sorts will be available to us. Lets not grumble, lets enjoy it, after all we have chosen to live here!

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

Thursday December 10th 2020: Let's talk some trash. The Town of Plainfield has utilized curbside collection of garbage since 1974 and curbside collection of recycling since 1991. Last year as program costs continued to rise, our Solid Waste Group surveyed the town, received a 60% response rate with 80% of the town wishing to keep the trash collection portion of the program and 90% wishing to keep the recycling portion. Curbside collection of trash and recycling is kind of in our DNA. Here is a very rough thumbnail sketch of the financials of the program.

As a town, we produce something like 825 tons of refuse (525 in garbage, 300 in recycling). The entire bill for collection, disposal and recycling costs us collectively \$256,000/year. We pay about \$90,000 of that from user fees and \$166,000 comes from taxes (about \$.55 of the tax rate). So the entire service costs our mythical average homeowner about \$140 in taxes and \$130 in sticker buys or \$270/year. While expensive, when done at the municipal scale it's still a good deal. An individual subscription service for the same program from Casella would cost something like \$500/year and is not tax deductible. Still, rightly concerned about the cost, our Solid Waste Group working with the Selectboard just completed a quotation process to see if we could find a less expensive option for the service or a similar service. None came forward.

So, to complete our 2020 solid waste program review be fairly warned we are just about to begin an audit of user fee compliance throughout town. There is no need to load the gun or call the police. We have no plans to be at the end of your driveway pawing through your garbage or weighing it to see if you are over the 30lbs of garbage per sticker limit, that isn't going to happen. We do, however, have an obligation to make sure that everyone putting waste curbside is using the stickers and using them properly. We have given clear direction to the hauler, no stickers, no collection. In the end, enforcement isn't really their problem it's ours. In fact leaving garbage behind is just a headache for them. Still they have agreed to help us tune the system. Let's end this trashy talk with a brief review the sticker program, each sticker is good for 30lbs of garbage and should be attached to the bag even if, as it should be, the waste is in a can. The average home in our little hamlet might put out two cans with three to four bags of garbage, two to three stickers is perfect for that. It's not a sticker per bag. Each sticker costs \$2.50 and can be purchased at our two stores, the libraries and the town office. Likewise, you can't laminate a sticker to the side of the garbage can; it's a one time use item, not a permit.

Good try though. You also can't make counterfeit stickers that too have been tried and didn't work. Likewise, don't staple cash to the garbage bag. On more than one occasion the Casella team has hand delivered cash to the town office, still it's not the recommend way to pay your share. So, to insure that your garbage can will be empty when you return home, acquire some stickers and please use them. Most of us are already doing these things.

Don't forget, next week is a busy week with meetings which will go along away to deciding what the 2021 warrant looks like. Visit www.plainfieldnh.org for all the details.

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

Thursday December 3rd 2020: Despite a cold rain, we were able to complete the 2020 Turkey Trot in a safe manner. At the finish everyone masked up and we felt comfortable taking a quick photograph with participants spread out on the library lawn. Walker Paul Merchant took home top honors finishing at 10:59:59! His family will host the "Golden Turkey" for 2021 and hopefully enjoyed the fresh pumpkin pie from the Plainfield Country Store. The "turkey trot spirit award" (new for 2020) went to new residents the McMaster family from Ladieu Rd. They hung in there, mom, dad, a toddler and the family dogs. The three year old's ride attempt, bicycle with training wheels (that's grit) came up short, but mom and dad carried her the rest of the way bike helmet and all, sending the bike back to the start with the police department. That's Turkey Trot courage right there. The best thing about the turkey trot this year was that we could do it all; a little normalcy was good for the soul.

If you wish to participate in town governance, circle December 16th on your calendar. The Selectmen will be in session via Zoom (see www.plainfieldnh.org) along with Library Trustees, the Meriden Library Building Committee and our Finance Committee. We are going to attempt to figure out what the 2021 warrant might look like in these very strange times. The town's operating budget, the Meriden Library replacement project, converting the town office and police department from an oil furnace to heat pumps will be front and center. Getting involved early is always the best way to have an impact. So if you have interest in these subjects this meeting would be an ideal time to become informed. The town's first budget hearing is Wednesday evening January 20th, but really the best time to make a difference is now, don't wait. We will be posting a bunch of information on the town website prior to the meeting December 16th at 6pm via Zoom.

Thank you to all the members of our community who continue to offer end of year giving to the Schell Community Fund. That fund, a private trust fund, is the absolute best vehicle we have to allow Human Services Director Stephanie Schell to assist members of our community that need a hand up in a tough time. Donation checks should be made out to the Town of Plainfield with "Schell Fund" in the memo line.

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

Thursday November 19th 2020: At Wednesday's Selectboard meeting the board held discussions about several key projects. Here are two examples:

We are inching closer to, as part of the "Ready for 100" initiative voted in at the 2018 annual meeting (article 8), replacing the town office heating system with heat pumps. Facility Manger Brad Atwater has put a lot of time and effort into studying this with the town's building committee. Taking advantage of existing electric utility incentives along with interest free financing from Liberty Utilities may just make this project possible without having to pay for it all at once. The town's energy committee is 100% behind the project; the town's Finance Committee still has questions as they crunch the numbers. The voter directed goal is to have our municipal buildings and vehicles all carbon neutral by 2050. We have been adding insulation and air sealing our buildings, now we start to change out the heating and cooling appliances and finally we add some municipal solar and alternative fuel vehicles to complete the goal.

The Finance Committee has become interested in the concept of possibly transitioning to leasing all of our vehicles and heavy equipment. The logic here goes something like with today's reserve fund method those of us here now pay by putting money into a reserve fund, sometime down the road the fund is used to buy the new grader and the folks living in town at that time get the benefit of the new machine. In the case of a lease, you purchase only the portion of the machine you are going to use and those that pay see the benefit. In this model we would turn equipment over much sooner than we do now. This approach would be a real paradigm shift for us. It's nice to have a fresh set of eyes looking at the possibilities and doing the analysis. Stay tuned.

Health Officer Stephanie Schell reminds us all how important it is to keep our guard up with COVID 19 once again on the rise throughout New Hampshire and our entire Country. Social distancing, masks, hand washing remain the easy things that all of us can do during these unprecedented times to support each other. Our Police Department is spending time in our public spaces making sure that masks are being worn. The support for the mask ordinance from our local businesses has been nearly universal.

We are going forward with a socially distanced turkey trot this Thanksgiving. Here is how it will work. The sign up sheet will be placed at the Plainfield School by 8am. A pen and hand sanitizer will be provided, please feel free to use your own pen or pencil.

The route is PES to Route 12A via Stage Road (don't go Daniels Rd), right into Plainfield Village ending at the Plainfield Town Hall. The person who finishes the route (walking, running, biking, horseback, whatever) closest to 11am (no watches can be worn or cell phones used) will be awarded the honor of housing the "Golden Turkey" for one year and will receive, to keep and eat, a pumpkin pie from the Plainfield Village Store. Here is what is different. We ask that all participants stay in their own group and arrange their own return transportation, that when you finish you mask up, grab a water and head home. No standing around, no group picture on the library steps. We will take pictures of the finishers and use some of them in the annual report. The whole point of this fun event is to get some outdoor exercise before the big meal. We can still accomplish that and get everyone home quickly and safely. We will post on the town's Facebook page the photo of the winner holding both the pie and a properly masked Golden Turkey.

The Meriden Library Building Committee meets via Zoom on Friday and the Library Trustees meet next Monday, also via Zoom with the building committee. Visit www.plainfieldnh.org for all the connection details.

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

Thursday November 12th 2020: Monday evening we had a very productive trails discussion with many of the landowners and hard core users of the French's Ledge's trail network. At issue of course was how to manage the explosion of use the trails are now receiving. Hikers, bikers, dog walkers all on the trails dawn to dusk seven days a week with Saturday afternoons being particularly busy with activity. Trailhead parking on the smaller access points is getting full early in the day on Saturdays, leading to cars lined up along some of our smaller gravel roads. This in turn creates safety concerns about fire trucks and such being able to get by in an emergency. So far all the abutting landowners have shown patience and understanding, many hoping that the massive increase in use will recede once COVID 19 has been eradicated or at least controlled. We are going to try some friendly signs asking users to move to other lots if the one they had hoped to use is full. We are also going to encourage groups using the trails to park in the larger lots like the main access point at Plainfield School. We were fortunate to have in the session a staff member from the Upper Valley Land Trust and you could tell this was a story he had heard many times this summer. Mountain biking, hiking and dog walking all work nicely together at some low level of intensity, but as the numbers grow so do the negative interactions. In our case, mountain bike usage has sky rocketed and while those groups tend to be well organized and willing to help with projects their use is also harder on the land than foot traffic. The good news is we had a really good discussion filled with universal love for the trails and pledges from all view points to work cooperatively on finding solutions. We will continue to make widely available opportunities for our residents, trail users and landowners to participate in these discussions.

We have not made any final decisions about the 2020 Turkey Trot; this is another one of those quasi town events that mostly happens year after year because people care about keeping it going. No town money is ever used for the event, it just happens each Thanksgiving. I was given “the folder” some twenty years ago by then Selectman Jay Waldner, who I think got “the folder” from Malcolm Grobe. To be clear, we are not talking nuclear codes here, mostly just turkey trot flyers a sign up sheet or two and lots of records from previous years. Here is what I think we may do. We will offer the event but ask that everyone stay in their own group, sign up as usual at the Plainfield School, complete the walk or run or ride (Bonner to Stage to Route 12A to the Plainfield Town Hall) and when you are done we will grab a quick photo of you, masks required at the finish area, and ask that you head on home for turkey. The whole goal of the turkey trot is to bring everyone together at the same time en masse finish. Start when you wish, finish by 11am. The person who finishes nearest to 11am goes home with the Golden Turkey and a pie. This typically leads to a lot of people standing around waiting for the finish and the photo. Not great when you are in the middle of an airborne pandemic. This year, if we are green lighted to do the event; there won't be any standing around, grab water off the table, snap a photo and go. If you have strong feelings about the turkey trot going forward this year send me an e-mail or Facebook message. We want to do the right thing.

The town's Energy Committee meets on Monday evening and the Selectboard meets on Wednesday next. Visit the calendar on the town's webpage for more information.

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

Thursday November 5th 2020: On behalf of the Selectboard a special thank you to Town Clerk Michelle Marsh and all of the election officials that worked with her over the last few weeks to make Tuesday's election such an organizational success. A presidential year is always difficult, combining that with a world wide pandemic adds a new dimension. Everyone who wished was able to vote (an astounding 89% of those on the Plainfield checklist voted) and all of our ballots were counted, tabulated and the results turned into the state by 9pm. No hanging chads here no jammed up voting machines. So, to everyone that played a role, large or small, thank you from your Board of Selectmen.

2021 town budgeting is now fully underway. We will be discussing the new budget at each Selectboard meeting in November and December. So, if you have something you want considered now is the time to come forward. There is a lot of good discussions happening at each board meeting. You can join us via Zoom to learn more, connection information is posted on the Selectboard's webpage.

Next week features a discussion about Plainfield's trails and a Zoning Board meeting both on Monday. The trails discussion is at 5:30pm via Zoom and will focus on landowner concerns and parking areas. As the use of our town trails has grown it has necessarily lead us to discussions about our future plans and what is and is not working

well. The Zoning Board meeting will follow at 7pm. If you visit www.plainfieldnh.org and look at the weekly calendar you can find all the necessary information to participate.

Pumpkin people have once again receded and we find ourselves quickly approaching the dark cold time of the year that keeps New England from being over run by those folks who prefer to live somewhere where the weather is not life threatening a quarter of the year. As we all know, it takes a certain amount of grit to live here December thru February.

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

Thursday October 29th 2020: Well, your Selectboard came to town hall, turned me upside down and shook and another dime fell out. We were able to set the combined town tax rate at \$25.40 for 2020 rather than the \$25.50 mentioned last week. In all seriousness, the Selectboard provided clear direction the 2020 tax rate was to be set as low as we could possible get it, without jeopardizing the town's financial health. Your (school and town administrative team) believes that we have done that.

The KUA Study group has its first meeting Monday at 6pm via Zoom. The Planning Board meets Monday at 7pm to consider a request by Liberty Utilities to do tree trimming maintenance on Black Hill, Pierce and River Roads. The Selectboard meets on Wednesday 11/4 at 6pm and will have their first session with the Finance Committee at 7pm. For additional information visit www.plainfieldnh.org All these meetings have a Zoom connection option.

Please take the time to vote on Tuesday. Based on our absentee voting it would appear turnout is going to be heavy. It's great to see a high level of interest in voting.

Human Services Director Stephanie Schell reminds us all this is not the time to get lax on our efforts to keep COVID numbers as low as possible. The virus is clearly making a second run at us all. Past success is no guarantee of future success. Hand washing and masks for everyone are the most obvious ways we can each do our part to keep the upper valley COVID numbers low. Plainfield Strong, we leave no one behind and we take care of each other, end of discussion.

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

Thursday October 22nd 2020: Plainfield's tax rate should be set by Monday or Tuesday of next week. All indications are that the new rate (2020) will be something like \$25.50 down from \$26.00 (2019) which was down from \$26.90 (2018). The Selectboard's decision about whether or not to influence the new rate because of COVID uncertainty, became much simpler when School District's were given the authority by Governor

Sununu (emergency order #38) to retain any unspent appropriation (historically school districts can't hold unexpended funds, only town's/cities can do that). The Plainfield School Board used this authority to hold onto, for the moment, about \$400,000 that was not needed to complete the last school year. Having the ability to retaining these funds provides the district with a level of insulation from unanticipated costs that could result from changes in the way education is provided because of COVID. This move also provides taxpayers the same insulation with regards to their individual tax liability. Everyone would like to see their tax burden reduced. Likewise, almost no one wants their tax burden to be reduced this year only to swing widely upward the next year. Retention of appropriations not spent due to highly unusual circumstances (COVID), is exactly the same as our capital reserve funds, the move helps to level out the tax rate overtime. It takes courage to do it as not all residents will agree with the decision, but if you are here for the long-term it makes a lot of sense. Finally, just to be clear, the District can only spend the money to address COVID issues.

The Plainfield Police Department will be participating in the state wide drug take back effort. This Saturday the Police Department located at 110 Main Street, will be open from 10am to 2pm for anyone to drop of unused medications.

No town board meetings next week.

Finally, the Plainfield Pumpkin people have now arrived in full force. Again this year, you have to tip your cap to the creative genius in our town. Whether it's the concert pianist on Main Street or Winnie the Pooh with his head stuck in honey pot on Stage Road, Snoopy flying the dog house on Underhill Road or the snow boarder on Brook Road they are all just great. If you can't get out visiting them in person, you can view them all on the Plainfield Pumpkin People Facebook page. You cannot look at them and not feel good about your decision to call this rocky piece of ground home. Even in the year 2020 they make you smile and we can all use a smile.

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

Thursday October 15th 2020: The highway department will begin installing phase I of the new Plainfield street signs in the next few days. We purposely have divided the project into three phases. The first batch of signs took a little longer to get from the NH Dept of Corrections than we had hoped. However, they are here now. The new signs comply with Federal DOT requirements and we have tried to make them unique to Plainfield by adding our town logo to them. For decades we have all loved the "Ira Townsend" signs, but the reality is those signs are not very helpful to relatives trying to find our homes late at night (Ira was clever that way) and more importantly they can delay EMS responses in an emergency. Most of us don't like change, but sometimes change has to come whether we like it or not. We are planning to save the old road signs and offer them as some sort of fundraising event. Given the time of the year (freeze up coming) and the time it took to get the first batch, the conversion from old to new will likely take us into next spring to complete. So, leave a light on, by this time next year

those relatives who saved \$30 by booking the flight that arrives in Manchester at mid night will now be finding your house, likely around 2am.

Working with the Selectboard, the town's Solid Waste Committee has completed its work on a new refuse collection Request for Proposal (RFP). Advertisements will soon be out and vendors wishing to provide a proposal to collect our trash and recycling will have until December 4th to make a submittal. Any changes to the program would begin in July of next year.

Guidelines for Halloween related activities are now posted on the town's homepage of our website. www.plainfieldnh.org

The Planning Board meets Monday night to begin its work on the Schoolhouse Condos LLC project. The conversion of the Duckworth Museum to three residential units was approved this past Monday night by the Zoning Board.

Selectboard meets on Wednesday 10/21 and will continue some of their early budgeting work.

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

Thursday October 8th 2020: The Board of Selectmen met Wednesday evening and approved guidelines for allowing socially distanced Halloween activities. The guidelines were drawn up by Human Services Director Stephanie Schell who worked closely with Plainfield School's PTA. The main theme of the guidance is of course, common sense and good parenting. Let the kids have some fun, but let us keep a close eye on them at the same time, they are after all kids. All the major stakeholders urged the Selectman to approve the guidelines with the condition that all activities could and would be cancelled at a moments notice should our experience with COVID 19 take a turn for the worst. Kimball Union Academy, understandably, has opted out of any Halloween Activities on their property. They, like us, are working very hard to keep their campus and our community as COVID free as possible. It is essential for them to be able to maintain in person instruction. We will have the guidelines posted up on the town website and Facebook page shortly. So, dust off that old costume from your fraternity days, Halloween is on.

The Selectmen opened their 2021 budget work with a capital asset discussion with the Road Agent and Police Chief. The goal being to either reprioritize or confirm our current capital improvements plan (the town has had a CIP since 1992) Highway's next major need remains a replacement loader, a chipper and maybe some day a small excavator. Right now we are on track to replace the loader in 2023. For Police, it will be a replacement round of police cruisers next year and a storage area of some sort in the next 2-5 years.

While not yet set, the 2020 tax rate continues to look as though it will be lower than the current (2019) rate of \$26/\$1,000 which is lower than the 2018 rate of \$26.90, \$1,000 of taxable property. The real work for the Selectboard will be to determine what, if anything the board can do now to prepare for a COVID driven loss of significant state revenues in 2021. Most, but not all, of the people I talk with feel that a consistent steady tax rate is preferable to one that looks like a saw blade, swinging up and down from one year to the next. The whole reason we so aggressively fund capital reserves is to level out those peaks and valleys in the tax rate. We will just be kidding ourselves if we think the state of New Hampshire is going to have any significant “rooms and meals tax revenue” to distribute to municipalities in 2021. Now perhaps some Federal monies will be freed up to make up for a short fall, but counting on that might be risky. What is it we learned in the Cub Scouts? “Hope for the best, plan for the worst.” So, yes we believe that the tax rate will go down in 2020; the crystal ball for 2021 is a little murky.

Finally, sorry to end on a down note, but the following is true. The Labrador and I did the morning walk to Plainfield’s beloved French’s Ledges. More graffiti is in evidence. Based on the style and color I would say a reemergence of our first “artist” from two summers ago. Rather than mad, I am just sad. So many people work so hard to open trails on private lands and to make the French’s Ledges trail system open to all. The reality is we can’t stop the painting on the ledges and when for years visits to the top were in the hundreds per year we got very little vandalism, now that visits are in the thousands of trips per year, vandalism is part of the landscape. Humans in large numbers just aren’t that good. The result of course is that other private landowners are much less likely to offer trails and conservation easements with public access on their land. We have built it and they have come, the good ones and the bad ones.

The Plainfield Zoning Board meets Monday night to begin deliberations on the conversion of the former Duckworth Museum to a three unit condominium complex. Visit the ZBA web page for application details. <https://www.plainfieldnh.org/zba.htm>

As always, if we can help, just call.

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Thursday October 1st 2020: The Town Clerk’s office continues to be just swamped with election related work, the NH primary is in the review mirror but the general election is right out ahead of us, approaching fast. Absentee balloting is in high fashion right now. The fall election absentee ballots have now arrived from the state of New Hampshire. The easiest and most time efficient way to absentee vote is to present yourself to the clerk and vote right here at the town hall. You can use the privacy of our conference room and when you are done you hand your completed ballot, sealed in two separate envelopes, to the town clerk who then takes custody of it placing it in our secure vault with all the others until election day.

Given the anticipated volume of visitors to town hall the next few weeks please give yourself a little extra time when you come wait times could be slightly longer than you

are accustomed to experiencing. We are fully open but we do ask that visitors wait in the foyer or on the front porch until the persons ahead of you have cleared. Likewise, if you just inherited a 1972 utility trailer from your now dead uncle in Shrewsbury Quebec Canada, of which you have little or no documentation, give Michelle a call in advance. You might have a little homework to do before you come in.

So, lets take a little journey down in the basement behind the old K2 skis and three pin binding cross country skis to that big nasty spider covered pile of old paints, solvents and chemicals from past cleaning, gardening, and painting projects. This Saturday is your final chance for 2020 to take that mess to a household hazardous waste collection day from 9am to noon at the Lebanon High School parking lot. Your annual tax bill is paying for this opportunity, take advantage of it. The materials will be properly disposed of and you will now have a little free space in the basement to keep other warn out items that you know you should part with but just can't.

Visit <https://www.plainfieldnh.org/documents/HHWSchedule2020.pdf> for all the details.

Next week we get fully into fall mode. The Planning Board has a busy October with two scenic road hearings, at least one site plan review and one annexation. The Selectmen meet on Wednesday with a focus on capital budgeting for 2021. The Zoning Board will meet in October to review a plan to convert the former Duckworth Museum to a three unit condominium complex. Visit www.plainfieldnh.org for all the details. All land use board applications are posted on their specific webpage. Click on the governance tab on the homepage. We have now posted the "Important Dates" for the 2021 town meeting process. It's all right there for you on the town website.

Our annual visit from the Pumpkin People has begun. They seem to be COVID free and they enjoy their time in our little hamlet. Take a little time to grab a maple creamy with your significant other and check them out!

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

Thursday September 24th 2020: We hope, despite COVID 19, everyone was able to squeeze in a little summer. Although it's been only a few weeks since the 2020 Town Meeting, it's now oddly time to move into fall mode and begin thinking about 2021. To that end, we are resuming these weekly notes. The hope being to provide a little information and maybe a laugh or two, because lord knows we can all use either some mirth or merlot, maybe both? Let's jump right in:

The mask ordinance adopted last month is the Selectboard's way of doing all that it can to minimize the impact of COVID 19 on our community. As Selectman Eric Brann said

at the hearing, if there is even a chance that something as simple as wearing a mask could potentially save one Plainfield life we owe it to our citizens to wear them. None of us is perfect at it, we forget them, we wear them wrong, they are uncomfortable and we don't like them very much, but we try to wear them and to use plastic barriers to both protect ourselves and out of respect for each other.

We are going to begin the 2021 budgeting process with a series of discussions at each of the upcoming Selectboard meetings on capital planning. Each of our department heads will be talking with the Selectboard about their department's capital wants and needs for the next five years. If this subject interests you, please plan to "Zoom In" to any of the upcoming meetings and listen in on the discussions. October 7th is the next Selectboard meeting.

Trail use around town has settled back to a manageable amount as more and more folks have returned to work. We still have the occasional dog issues. Dogs need not be leashed, but they must be under control. No exceptions. Dog waste sealed forever in a plastic bag left beside the trail doesn't count as taken care of. Really, who thinks that's better? Take it with you; we have no town dog poop picker upper on the payroll. Most recently we have had some horse riders on some of the trails (whole other discussion about public land use) and if you think dog waste in a lugged soled hiking boot is no fun, and you're correct, wait till you wade through a fresh horse paddy. A dog owner may well stop and use a stick to get waste off the trail, I have yet to see any evidence that these particularly horse riders immediately jumps down off their steeds and pull out a shovel for their work. I guess given the state of the world it's a problem we can live with but come on help us out here. Mostly we are all just trying to live and let live, but it can be a challenge, particularly in 2020!

While we are on the subject of waste, please be aware that our Lebanon Landfill coupons here at the town office are for resident's use for that odd object or small clean out that needs to go to the dump. They are not meant as a substitute for a temporary dumpster or roll of container or to allow someone to operate your own trash hauling business. To ensure that we maintain wide access to the punch cards for all residents, we are now rationing the tickets to no more than five per sale per month. If you need more than that (each coupon is for like several hundred pounds, contact the office in advance so we can try to figure out why and what some other options might be for you.

Finally, while we are all enjoying this fantastic September weather, please don't even think of having an outside fire right now. Things are horribly dry (just look at the condition of our brooks) and there is a much enhanced fire danger. You only have to look to the west to see why our EMS folks are very concerned about fire danger. All of us need to be concerned about our fresh water supplies. We need some rain, but until it comes we need to be very careful and use our water resources very carefully.

The Planning Board meets next on Monday October 5th to discuss a scenic road hearing for power line maintenance on the west side of town. Details at <https://www.plainfieldnh.org/planning.htm>

The Selectboard meets next on Wednesday October 7th details at https://www.plainfieldnh.org/select_board.htm

Steve Halleran
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Thursday July 16th 2020: Thank you to all who felt comfortable enough to attend last Saturday's Town Meeting. We were able to complete the warrant and everyone was headed home by lunch time. We even found the sweet spot between rain and tropical humidity. Nine residents observed the meeting using Zoom. One observer clearly had forgotten to shut down the video from their end. Thankfully, for them, we weren't broadcasting on the big screen TV.

As planned, the Meriden Library was shelved for this year, additionally the Selectboard amended budget was approved, and the town set aside reserve money at the customary levels and approved the All Veteran's Credit. We also created finance and KUA study committees, approved the annual report and agreed to tell our legislatures to look into carbon pricing as one option of promoting renewable energy. A pretty solid 90 minutes of work. We now know that we will have no problems establishing a tax rate in the fall and the gears of local government will continue to grind along. Everyone that attended came together and helped us get the work done that we were required to do. Thank you to Mike Sutherland for his work in capturing a photographic record of this historic July town meeting. We intend to leave a lot of crumbs for future generations to follow should they wish to learn what was going during the year 2020**

Town Meeting behind us and summer already starting to peak, we are going to take a little time off from these weekly updates. Things tend to slow down through out the summer months. To be valuable to readers we want the updates to be fresh and new each week. If you have any questions about town operations just call the town office or send us an e-mail. Obviously, if we have information that we need to get out we will use all the tools in the social media toolbox. The weekly updates will resume with some new material and hopefully a few chuckles, in mid to late August as we approach the fall election and budgeting season. If you are looking to stay current on town boards and committee meeting schedules and other events, check the town website or just call the office. For example a quick look at the calendar on the website shows that Plainfield residents may participate in the upcoming Household Hazardous Waste Collection Day(s) this Friday and Saturday at Lebanon High School. For the program details visit https://www.plainfieldnh.org/trash_recyc.htm

Stay safe while trying to fit in a little summer.

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

Thursday July 9th 2020: As odd as it seems, we are in fact having a town meeting this Saturday July 11th at the Smith Auction Gallery using their outdoor venue. The “tent” has no sides and is simply designed to provide cover from rain drops and shade from the sun. Sides are open and chairs socially distanced. For those that are able to join us, come up the driveway and park in the field on the left as though you were attending an auction hoping to find that claw footed dresser of your dreams. For those that can't easily make the walk up to the gallery, the tent is on the north side, we have limited parking up front with a few handicap spots as well. One of our police officers will be there to help with traffic and parking. Everyone going to the meeting will pass through a sanitization station where you can get your hands clean. Bring your own pen to sign the voter card; we will have some disposable pencils and no photo ID requirement for this local event. We are asking that all attendees wear masks and we will have masks for those that forget them or don't have one they like. More and more the evidence with COVID is showing how important a mask is in slowing the spread. None of us like them, but we wear them just the same, if not for ourselves than for our loved ones.

Once you are in the venue with your voter card, grab a sanitized seat that meets your social distancing requirements (couples can sit together, plenty of single chairs too) and you are set. We have worked hard this week to compress the meeting format as much as we can. We will be true to the fact that it is annual meeting, but the goal is to be time efficient and get everyone back in their cars and headed home as quickly as possible. We fully understand that this is not the year for new initiatives. It's a year to hold the line and let other matters wait until we can all feel comfortable gathering. Selectboard Chair Rob Taylor had a great explanation the other night when asked how the Selectboard could cancel Spirit Day and still be having a Town Meeting? Spirit Day is the fun that none of us can have this year; it's the luxury of a night out on the town. Annual meeting is the groceries that we must buy to eat. As much as we don't like going to the grocery store right now, we mask up, sanitize like crazy and do it because we must eat. Likewise, in absence of action by our governor, we must have an annual meeting so that the key requirement of being a New Hampshire town (spending and resulting taxation) is ratified by our legislative body, the voters.

We have developed very brief, mostly question based, presentations of the warrant. Short and sweet and answering any questions will be the theme. Our sincere hope is that we can gather as representatives from our community, knowing that many of our neighbors aren't comfortable coming, put aside any differences that we might have and complete the 2020 town meeting. We have developed a fully supported plan to shelve the Meriden Library for this year, we have reduced the operating budget from a 3.8% increase to a 2.2% increase and we feel confident that the 2020 tax rate will be lower than the 2019 rate, which was lower than the 2018 rate.

We do have an internet connection at the venue, so while **you cannot vote remotely** anyone that wishes to listen or watch from home can try to join in using Zoom or a phone connection. I have no idea how stable the connection will be or if we will get over loaded and crash it. We felt it was important to try.

Topic: Town Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/99538155374>

Meeting ID: 995 3815 5374

Dial by your location

+1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)

+1 646 876 9923 US (New York)

See you on Saturday and if we make quick work of our business maybe we can get Bill Smith to offer that claw foot dresser up for a quick sale. No, I guess that wouldn't work, damn this year!

Steve Halleran

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

Thursday July 1st 2020: This week lets take a break from COVID 19 (don't we wish we really could) and the upcoming town meeting. Next week we will focus entirely on town meeting details. As you know the meeting is scheduled for Saturday July 11th at the Wm Smith Auction Gallery under the tents beginning at 10am. If you did not receive a flyer let us know and we can get you a copy

Plainfield Planning and Zoning Update:

The town's Planning Board will be continuing its work on the Landmark Property Maintenance site plan review #361 Route 12A on Monday night July 6th. More information on this application can be found at www.plainfieldnh.org/planning.htm. The applicants completed their zoning work in 2017 but are just now working on the site plan review part of the process.

The town's Zoning Board has two cases coming up the next week on July 11th. Case 20-05 has to do with Lundy's Lawn Care at #235 Route 120 wishing to add a vehicle repair service out of the existing shop. Because the property fronts on a state highway, multiple business uses are possible. The second case, 20-06 is a request by Michael Venditto of #393 Bean Road to use a structure on the property to host weddings and other outdoor gatherings. Both of these applications are posted on the town's website and can be reviewed at www.plainfieldnh.org/zba.htm The Planning and Zoning Board meetings are held via Zoom and any interested person is of course welcome to "attend."

The Plainfield Zoning Ordinance, available online for your reading pleasure, essentially allows residential and agricultural uses without any review. Unlike the city to the north you can, here in Plainfield, have more than three hens and a rooster if you wish. Keep in mind though, so can your neighbor. Turns out guinea hens can quickly result in neighbor conflicts. We had a little case of that last week. Yes they do eat ticks, but they also roam around from property to property, crap and like to climb up on cars. When they desire to, they can even screech. Sorry, I got a little off track there it was a fowl matter. Back to the ordinance, businesses larger than a typical home occupation (carpenter, internet

business with no employees etc) have to go through a two phased process. First they need an approval from the Zoning Board followed by a site plan review by the Planning Board. The Zoning Board flies at the 30,000' level, they focus on is the use, as proposed, allowed by the ordinance and is it appropriate for the site and neighborhood? The Planning Board process is then focused on the operational details, much more in the weeds. We, of course, have residents who feel strongly that if you have a deed that's all you need. Why should you have to ask the town to use your own property? On the end of the spectrum we have folks who have purchased homes in a particular neighborhood setting and like it that way, so they often feel as though our zoning ordinance is too permissive allowing for too wide a variety of uses. Like most things in life the correct answer lives mostly somewhere in the middle. Private landowners certainly have rights to use their land and everyone has the right to be able to enjoy their own property. You can't however use your land in way that ruins another person's reasonable enjoyment of their land. In the end, it's the Planning and Zoning Board members; all volunteers, who have to thread the needle and find a reasonable outcome. Some time the answer is no and sometimes the answer is yes, but with certain conditions. It is not easy work. If you wish to see this process in action you have several opportunities in the next ten days or so.

Please stay safe this weekend and if you have questions for the upcoming town meeting let us know and we will try to get you the answers.

Steve Halleran
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Thursday June 25th 2020: As mentioned last week, the postponed Town Meeting has been rescheduled **for Saturday July 11th at 10:00am at the Smith Auction Gallery #1064 Route 12A in Plainfield Village.** We will be using their outside, social distanced, auction venue. Basically, we will be out back under the tents. Health Officer Stephanie Schell is working with us to make the set up as safe as we can for everyone. Each household will be receiving a bright red flyer from the Town Office providing the details on the day. Our first choice was not to have to gather at all this year, but after a month of waiting for Concord to act, we have decided locally the best thing to do is go outside and technically achieve the town meeting that we are required to hold each year. Knowing that many may feel unable to attend, we are asking for those that are okay with attending to come and help make this one of the most time efficient town meetings in Plainfield's history. New projects are to be shelved and we ask for your support on the budget, reserve funds, and the All Veterans exemption to get us through this difficult year. All indications, even with a reduction in state revenue, suggest that our property tax rate is headed down for a second straight year. I have pledged to not run at the gums and to offer a town budget resolution that will be the quickest in my twenty years of making

them. We will, of course, be happy to answer questions on any of the business that we need to complete, but frankly mostly we just want to get through it and get it behind us.

I am also available each day at the town office and the Selectboard meets via Zoom next Wednesday, so if you have a particular question or suggestions on the warrant please give us a call or stop in and let us see if we can get you the information you need between now and July 11th. The warrant can be found on the town website and in the town report starting on page 7. We have completed Article 1. Each article is pretty self explanatory. Just remember that Article 2 the Meriden Library replacement, is being amended down to \$0 for 2020. Except for that change, the information in the town report is valid and should provide a good base of information for the remainder of the warrant. Our plan is to also read the town budget for an amount lower than the posting. We are now 50% through the year and frankly some of the things we had hoped to do, just aren't going to happen this year.

In closing, the Selectboard and all of us here in the town office wish to extend a sincere thank you to William Smith for allowing us the use of the auction facility. In a time of uncertainty when their business is trying to figure out how to move forward in a new world the Smith's immediately answered the call and agreed to host the town meeting. It's just another example of what makes small New England Town's great places to live. We know each other and when trouble strikes we take care of each other. It's a little remembered fact that I actually worked a Smith Auction or two in my high school days. Despite my employment, the business has continued for two generations now. I can clearly remember Bill Sr. (who by the way served as town Tax Collector for a few years) at a sale over in New York responding to a question from the audience about whether a little television set I was holding up was a color unit, it clearly wasn't. Bill never missed a beat, he responded "yes, two colors black and white" After a hardy laugh from the crowd the TV sold at a price like it was a color unit. Good stuff. Thank you to the entire Smith family for assisting our community for decades now.

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

Thursday June 18th 2020: Town Meeting update. It now looks like we will have an outdoor town meeting on **Saturday morning July 11th** starting at 10:00am. We will be picking up where we left off back in March with article #2 of the posted warrant. See your town report or visit www.plainfieldnh.org It is very likely that the event will be held at the Smith Auction Gallery, using their outdoor auction venue. Moderator Paul Franklin has given this situation an enormous amount of thought and effort and in the end he has concluded and the Selectboard agrees, that while no option is perfect, a traditional town meeting held out of doors is the safest alternative that meets our statutory obligations for holding an annual meeting. We understand that some members of our community will feel, due to health concerns that they cannot attend. To this end, in my view, what we need from all who can attend is to help us come together as a community in this very odd year. We have a short warrant that contains only three money articles,

the Meriden Library, the budget, and reserve funds. The Meriden Library article, while we must act upon it will be amended to \$0, the project is not happening this year, period. The proposed budget will be amended downward as there are several projects that will not have happened because of the pandemic. The reserve funds are critical to our long-term ability to meet our capital needs and will likely be left at the customary levels they were proposed back in March. As a town, we plan to be here a long time, COVID 19 be damned. Lastly, there is an article to extend the \$500 Veterans Credit to all Veterans that have been honorably discharged, whether they served in a time of conflict or not. It's a new law that has been adopted in many towns throughout the state. That is the majority of the business we have to do on July 11th to allow the town to stay the course, nothing more. Most of the other articles can be dealt with in very short order, like a few minutes or even less, and we will ask the petitioners of Article 9, the Carbon Tax petitioned article, to come up with an abbreviated presentation on their request. Plainfield has a long history of not playing parliamentary games at its annual meetings. We gather, we offer our thoughts and we vote and accept the results moving on. It's the tradition of self governing that we so highly value. So, in this very difficult year when just living is more work and risk, those of us who feel we can safely, need to gather for a brief period, conduct our necessary town business as efficiently as possible and adjourn leaving our differences, possible new approaches and new projects for another day when we all feel we can participate. We pledge to you, as reviewed and approved by your elected Board of Selectmen, to do only those operational things that are necessary to get through this year in a reasonable manner that protects our town and its existing infrastructure going forward. The 2020 tax rate will be smaller than the 2019 rate, which was smaller than the 2018 rate. New ideas, new projects that will require more debate and discourse we deal with them in the future.

Next week we will officially announce the venue and there will be information forthcoming from your Selectboard about how the meeting will work and efforts being made to minimize risk to everyone that is able to attend. We can do this people, Plainfield Strong.

Other Business: Thank you to those that have put some time in cleaning up French's Ledges. Your efforts have not gone unnoticed.

No meetings next week. Stay safe, this may well be the time for enhanced efforts rather than letting our guard down.

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

Thursday June 11th 2020: Thank you to former Town Clerk/Tax Collector Ruth Wheeler, long time resident, gardener extraordinaire for once again taking care of the flower bed at the Plainfield Highway Garage. Your efforts do not go unnoticed or unappreciated. Even those tough highway guys smile a little when they pull in to the shop after a day of work and all those blooming flowers around the flagpole are there to greet them.

The Plainfield Zoning Board held a successful meeting on Monday night, with three members being here at town hall, socially distanced of course, and the applicant and two other members joining via Zoom. No mischievous attendees, it all went fine. The one application was for an Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU). The ADU has become our ZBA's main meal. More and more residents are utilizing this option to find housing for family members or to develop a rental income. It's understandable given the housing market in the Upper Valley these days.

The Town has finally taken delivery of the new plow truck that was approved at the 2019 town meeting. We ordered the truck in April of 2019 for the winter of 2020, well that didn't happen. Its here now and will be ready for the winter of 2021. We appropriated \$123,000 for the vehicle; final cost was \$116,000. Remember when you could buy a house for that, now it's a tight squeeze for a mid sized municipal plow truck.

The Selectboard is going to post up some rules of conduct for the town property near the Mill Covered Bridge. While Plainfield does not own a swimming hole, this property is located adjacent to water and on hot summer days folks have been known to cool off there. Well, like anything (French's Ledges) it only takes a couple of bad apples to turn the place from a family friendly community resource to something harder less friendly. The Police Department is in the process of issuing no trespass letters to a few out of town guests who used the property and were less than perfect in their conduct. All town properties are first and foremost for our residents and while, of course, all are welcome we do expect civility and adherence to NH law. For example, 18 year olds can't drink achohol, that shouldn't be news. I long for the days when the biggest trouble we had down there was when a group of Gordon Research scientists meeting at Kimball Union would get liquored up at the snack bar after a long day of solving the worlds problems and sing out the solutions to quadratic equations and such down Main Street on their way to the "swimming hole." This would result in a call from Alice Best, who didn't appreciate their mathematical or singing skills at mid night. That was good fun.

The Selectboard meets next week. The year 2020** continues. We are here to help. Let us know if we can. Otherwise we will, like you, continue to keep the doors open and the lights on and wait respectfully for better days to come.

We end this week with an information release from the Plainfield Library Trustees: Because of the Covid pandemic the Library Board of Trustees and the Meriden Library Building Committee will not be requesting any funding this year for the Meriden Library Replacement Project. The Board of Trustees is committed to continue monitoring the library budget and working with the town during this difficult time. Our director, Mary King, continues to work with Town officials and state agencies to safely open our libraries when all necessary precautions are in place.

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

Thursday June 4th 2020: One of the few “positive” things this spring has been that with so many people home; lots of new folks have discovered our wonderful town trail network. In some cases loving the trails right to death but people enjoying the outdoors and getting exercise is always a good thing even when it comes at a cost. For those that might not know, it is a very complex web of public, private and conserved lands that these trails exist upon. For example, we have trails exclusively on private land, we have trails exclusively on public land and we have trails on privately owned land that has conservation easements. To muddy the water just a little more not all conservation easements are the same, some allow for public access, some allow only limited public access some no public access at all. Some land is specifically set aside for wildlife and other conservation easements are mostly just a prohibition against development. No matter how good your intentions are if you find yourself on a trail in Plainfield not on land that you personally have a deed to and you are holding a chainsaw, handsaw or clippers or god for bid a leaf blower you should stop! The only time any work on a trail should be done is if you have consulted with Plainfield’s Trail Director Bill Knight. Some trails exist purely because he has worked out a handshake with the private landowner to allow us to connect from one place to another. Bill will immediately know which landowners need to be consulted before any work is done. All of our trails look the same; you can’t tell the legal status of them from a walk in the woods. We know people want to give back, they want to help, intentions are good, but we ask that you simply do so in a way that is coordinated through our trail director. It’s a small ask. Obviously, this doesn’t apply to a branch that falls down or minor obstruction that you can reach down and pull out of the way with your hand. We all do that. Just talk to Bill before you fire up the big boy and girl toys and start logging, building bridges or jumps, etc.

We do have a developing effort by our trail team and the Upper Valley Mountain Bike Association to clean off the graffiti on French’s ledges. Unfortunately, the painting has continued. Therefore, I am going to put my money where my mouth is, I will pay, from my own coffers \$1,000 to anyone that provides information to our Police Department that leads to the arrest and conviction of this individual or individuals. The markings within the graffiti consistently say either “Sparks” or alternatively “5sparks,” “Butterfield” “Treve.” To many of us, French’s Ledges is one of Plainfield’s cornerstones. We have enjoyed countless hikes to “the ledges” in all seasons of the year. It is just wrong to be defacing French’s Ledges and we need to make it stop. Sometime between this past Monday morning and Wednesday mid day the amount of paint on the ledges doubled, someone who was on the trails during that period may well have seen something that will help.

Other matters: We had our first “Zoom Bombing” at a town sponsored meeting last evening. During the Selectmen’s meeting our attendance went suddenly from 11 to more than 35 participants and based on conduct and comments we quickly realized what was happening and shut that meeting down. We did reopen a new meeting and did our best to get the ID information to those who had been in attendance. Now we are working on a Zoom Meeting “Bombing” procedure to announce at each meeting. We also will be

using some of the Zoom features like the virtual waiting room. It's all a fine line, since we are doing the public's work, you shouldn't really be screening who gets to attend. All of this used to be so much easier. I kind of felt bad for our "bombers" Disrupting a Selectmen's meeting in a rural town in NH, important work of course, but not exactly like interrupting a United Nations meeting or something. But I guess even Zoom Bombers have to start somewhere.

Next week we have for your Zooming pleasure a Board of Adjustment meeting on Monday and a Library Trustee Meeting. Connecting information can be found on the town's website.

From the Selectmen, a heart felt thank you to all of our first responders who continue, through these unprecedented times, to answer every call for assistance. Police, Fire, Cornish Rescue, Highway, we depend on all of you to keep us safe.

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

Thursday May 28th 2020: Despite COVID 19, a small mask wearing group met on Friday afternoon of last week to lay a wreath at the Plainfield Service Memorial. As he has done for several years now, Plainfield Selectman and Town Trumpeter Ron Eberhardt played taps. The memorial, initially suggested by then Moderator Stephen Taylor was established in 2008 and honors all those from Plainfield who have served our nation in the cause of freedom. For some, that meant making the ultimate sacrifice. Our responsibility is to never forget them. Margaret and Virginia Drye have attended all of these events over the years. Local and national service runs strong in their family. They always help us to make sure the event is scheduled.

The Moderator and Selectboard continue to work to try and find a way to get Plainfield through this very hard year with respect to Town Meeting. Frankly, the preferred way would be to have the Governor's pen allow us to use last year's appropriation again this year and hope for safer times come 2021. Its not clear that this will happen, but its worth a try. Letters and calls have been sent and made. Under that scenario, new business like the All Veteran's credit would have to wait another year to be adopted. Last year's appropriation is smaller than the requested one for 2020, but in this year we would make it work.

The other likely option is something called a "drive thru Town Meeting," the details remain a little fuzzy, but essentially voters check in curbside, receive a ballot with yes, no options (no amendments), mark it, and drive up to the ballot box check out and away you go. I am not sure if the Selectmen and Moderator each get to wear a funny hat and along with an apron? Voter: I'll have the budget with a side of reserve funds, hold the Meriden Library, and throw in an All Veterans credit for dessert. Moderator: Thank you very

much, that will be a tax rate of \$25/\$1,000 please pull ahead to window #2 where the Selectboard will take your money and have your order ready. Replace the shrubs at town hall with a pair of golden arches and call it good. Stay tuned, we continue to wait for guidance. It will be a shame if our governance has come down to the American fast food restaurant model, but stranger things have already happened in 2020.

Seriously, right now we have a tax rate of \$26/\$1,000, we think and really its way too early to know for sure, that the 2020 tax rate will land somewhere in the neighborhood of \$25/\$1,000. That maybe optimistic, but we think it's very possible even with what will likely be reduced revenues from Concord. The upside of being self reliant when it comes to things like property taxes is that in a horrid year like this, you don't have much outside revenue to lose. Please know that keeping the 2020 tax rate as absolutely low as possible is something the Selectboard is working on. The key is to achieve the goal in a way that is responsible and balanced. Town's are not short term sprinters, slow and steady is more our speed. We would always be the turtle, never the hare.

We have two meetings next week with Zoom, the Planning Board on Monday night, where work will be continued on the Landmark Property site plan review and a Selectboard meeting on Wednesday.

There is little doubt that when history looks back on 2020, there will be plenty of asterisks attached.

Final thought, first half property tax bills will be out Thursday or Friday, (1/2 of last year's total, unless you did a big project) so be looking for them in the mail. Due date is July 1st.

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

Thursday May 21st 2020: The town's road grader tested negative for any major problem and is now fully recovered and back out grading each day. In addition, the Selectboard has kept Robbie Williams out grading with his machine, this is allowing us to rapidly catch up and get our gravel roads back in shape.

Meriden Covered Bridge opened up last Friday. Thank you to the Mill Bridge neighborhood for their patience while the work was done. Based on the positive experience we have had with Modern Protective Coatings we may well have them look at one or two of our other small bridges with steel superstructures.

I am saddened to have to report that once again that French's Ledges has been hit by graffiti vandals. Make no mistake; we are the ones who suffer for this thoughtless act. The ledges will be here for thousands of more years, it is us that gets to look at the "art

work” for the next however long. Unrelated to the Town of Plainfield, I have pledges of private funds that will pay for information that leads to the arrest and successful prosecution of the individuals. Alternatively, if the “artists” who did the work, will take responsibility for it and work with a group of us to clean off the ledges, no formal charges will be filed. We have some places where we could use their talents to do some neat art work that would bring happiness to residents and visitors to our town. Painting vulgarities and various nicknames on our iconic ledges is not one of them. So, we can turn his into a positive learning experience or we can turn it into a criminal record.

Town Meeting Update: Moderator Paul Franklin and the Selectboard are working on plans for the 2020 town meeting. As we all know, the March 14th business portion was postponed until June 13th. That date has now been pushed further out by Moderator Franklin until Saturday July 11th. In absence of some other option from Governor Sununu, a town meeting of some sort of has to happen before September. We set our tax rate in early October. We anticipate guidance from the State of New Hampshire sometime in the next few days. Stay tuned for more details.

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

Thursday May 14th 2020: Significant time has been spent this week getting Plainfield plugged into two funding opportunities to assist with COVID 19. The first is for hazard pay stipends for first responders. Essentially, this program is attempting to compensate in some way our police and fire fighters who are responding to EMS calls during the pandemic. The second program has a wonderful acronym GOFERR grant (Governor’s Office for Emergency Relief and Recovery), and is a broader program to help with expenses related to COVID 19. We will of course only ask for what we need, no plans to try and wallow at the federal trough. After all local, state and federal government is us. There is no free money, and we all pay for it in the end. Your Selectboard is, however, committed to making sure that the members of our team who have the greatest exposure while performing their duties receive extra compensation for hazard duty. Our dedicated Police, Fire, Human Services team, Highway Department and Town Clerk’s office have all worked every day to keep Plainfield’s services and protections available to all of our community. We have been extremely fortunate with the COVID illness and we are taking all reasonable precautions. However, there are significant risks for our employees, and to take care of our residents we have to take care of our team.

The town’s road grader has now come down with flu like symptoms (its running a little hot and generally acts sluggish) so out of an abundance of caution we have quarantined it for 14 days. Not great news if you live on a dirt road. Now, it is spring and roads must be graded, so the Selectboard has authorized the use of some of our local talent to get the spring road grading underway. In short, many thanks to former Selectman Mark Wilder PCCI Construction, Kevin McNamara Mak’s Excavating, and Robbie Williams Williams Excavating. Each has been very responsive to our calls and has been willing to help. Robbie Williams who owns a grader is out now doing some work with his machine on

the worst roads. The Selectmen will have the results of testing on our grader by Wednesday and they will determine if a month rental of a grader makes sense for highway. Our hope is that the repair is simple and can be done in less than a week. But again, just another example of what makes this such a great community, when you can pick up the phone and immediately have three local contractors all willing to help. None of them owns the “right” grader for municipal road work, why would they? Each was very sincere and willing to try and we appreciate that very much. So, the roads are being graded and our machine is expected to make a full recovery. If we can’t get a warranty, lets at least hope for some immunity. Stay safe, have a great week, we are a phone call away if we can help.

Next Selectboard meeting is Wednesday evening May 20th using Zoom or the telephone. Meeting ID information is always posted a day or two in advance on the appropriate board’s webpage.

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

Thursday May 7th 2020: The Meriden Covered Bridge project is now in its final phase. New wooden deck planks are being installed this week with a wearing course to follow next week. MPC has completed their contract work on the steel and has moved out. The only work they have remaining is to touch up the areas that were covered by the staging and the steel that we are welding into the center support.

As of this writing the town has 67% of our proposed budget unspent with 64% of the year remaining. Plainfield’s 19 year average for this week of the year is to have 68% of our budget unspent with a high of 72% left and a low of 63% left over that span of time. So, in general we are on target. The harder part for us is that we have no approved appropriation. There is some talk of a legislative solution, essentially no town meeting this year and your approved appropriation from 2019 carries forward to 2020. Conceptually that is workable for most small towns but like most things, the devil is in the details. Those details are as of yet unknown. As of this date the Selectmen and Moderator are still planning some type of town meeting to be held between June 13th and September 5th. The next Selectboard meeting will feature discussion on this topic. The Selectboard has invited the Finance Committee to join in as well. All are welcome to “attend” by Zoom. Meeting details will be posted by May 18th. It looks very unlikely that we will, as a community, be voting on the Meriden Library replacement in 2020. The building committee has recommended that the project be effectively shelved for this year.

Turning to the revenue side of our ledger, in the early going here Plainfield’s receipts look remarkably okay. Last year at this time we had collected \$145,000 in auto registrations, this year that same number is \$148,000. We will, however, undoubtedly

see a reduced amount of revenue sharing from the state. That money comes from business profits tax and rooms and meals tax. Enough said.

All cities and towns in New Hampshire will be receiving a portion of \$40 million dollars from the Federal Government to help offset COVID 19 expenses. For Plainfield this number is up to \$57,570. In addition, the town will be receiving reimbursement for a program designed to increase compensation for first responders during the COVID 19 pandemic.

As of all this becomes clearer during the course of the summer, the Selectboard will be discussing options that they have to soften the 2020 tax rate. Right now, based on adopted school spending and proposed town spending (sans the Library) we would anticipate a 2020 tax rate of about \$25/\$1,000 the 2019 rate was \$26.00.

So in closing, your Board of Selectmen is absolutely concerned about the financial health of the town and the financial health of our community members. To date the wheels have not fallen off the town buggy (we might have one that is a little wobbly, but that is it), but clearly this is not the year for new projects or large purchases. What the Selectboard has directed me to do is keep town employees and residents safe, keep operations moving forward in a reasonable manner and to the extent that we can to maintain the status quo.

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

Thursday April 30th 2020: It has been a very busy few days for our fire department; one week ago we lost an historic home up on Colby Hill. The structure was heavily involved when our trucks arrived on scene. Thankfully, no one was hurt and we did not have any firefighters injured. It was a very dynamic and dangerous emergency scene. The department with help from many other communities was able to stop the fire from spreading to another nearby home. Since that call, the fire department has responded to at least one car accident, a brush fire and a pretty significant chimney fire. To say the least Chief Taylor and his crew are hoping for a quiet spell.

It is always heart warming to see the outpouring of assistance that comes from our community when one of us suffers a loss. Stephanie Schell has been directing and providing assistance as needed to the homeowner. It is just another example of why we are all proud to call this bony piece of ground tucked between the Connecticut River and the Croydon ridge, home.

Your Selectboard has recently approved energy efficiency projects for two town buildings. These initiatives are in keeping with our Ready for 100 vote at the 2018 town meeting. The town will be hiring a contractor to perform air sealing and add insulation at the Plainfield Library and the Plainfield Fire Station. The work will cost about \$15,000 Facility Manager Brad Atwater has been able to take advantage of a utility company program that will pay 35% of the cost. The work has a payback period of 12 years with a simple rate of return 8%.

The steel super structure under the Meriden Covered Bridge has now been cleaned and encapsulated in a zinc based compound that will protect it from further corrosion. Road Agent Richard Collins is welding some additional steel to the base of the bridge's center support. This work was prescribed by a civil engineer hired by the town to insure the work we are doing will result in the bridge being open for decades to come. Next all the steel is then painted with two coats of bridge paint. MPC should finish their work by early next week (the rain is not helping) and the highway department will be replacing the bridge deck directly and reopening the bridge to traffic.

The Selectboard meets via Zoom next Wednesday evening beginning at 6pm. Visit Plainfieldnh.org for meeting connection information. Like you, we continue to limp along trying to make sure we get done those things that we can in a safe manner without risk of complicating an already complicated world.

Next week a discussion on town finances for 2020, after all it is May and we still don't have any voter approved appropriations.

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

Thursday April 23rd 2020: A big shout out this week for Plainfield's Human Services Director Stephanie Schell! She wrote a grant request to the NH Charitable Foundation for our local food pantry and was awarded an unrestricted gift of \$5,000 to purchase food for the pantry. We have seen an increase in demand for food and this money along with other private donations will help a great deal.

Plainfield is an enormously generous community and as a result we are seeing private donations almost on a daily basis. If you are planning to make a donation to help those that are in need during this pandemic, please call the town office so we can provide you some of the options. Municipal finance is a fickle animal at best and we want to make absolutely sure that any gifts are available in the way that the person making them intended. How a check is made out and or which fund it is placed in can make all the difference.

The Meriden Covered Bridge is now closed and torn apart. It's a little scary to have one of the town's "Cornerstones" in pieces. We all want to be part of the solution that extends the life of the bridge; no one wants to be known for playing a role in its toppling over in a big wind storm into Blood's Brook! Work is occurring on a daily basis and we are committed to getting the bridge reopened just as quickly as is possible. So far, early indications are that this should not be a problem. We may in fact have fewer hours of repair to the steel beams than we had anticipated and all the material for the new deck is here. You don't tear a bridge open in a pandemic stalled economy without first having all

the major parts to put it back together onsite. The steel cleaning and coating company, MPC, would like to be on to their next job in two weeks.

No meetings next week, we are trying our best to keep town operations moving along, but at the same time respect the need to also hunker down and keep our distance. The Selectboard will be in session on Monday May 6th via Zoom. Never thought we'd use the word Zoom and Selectboard meeting together.

Stay safe, we just got to hold the line for a few more weeks. It would be such a shame to become complacent now and have to start this whole process over again.

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

Thursday April 16th 2020: The Selectboard held its third Zoom meeting last evening. While we have a few flat spots, mostly it has gone very well. The meetings are getting slightly higher public participation with Zoom than without. It's nice to know that a Selectboard meeting is more entertaining for some than watching a 1995 Red Sox v. Yankees or Oakland A's classic baseball game on NESN. Dennis Eckersley has the same hair in 2020 in the broadcast booth that he did in 1988 on the mound when he was bringing the cheese.

The Meriden Covered Bridge project is starting up on Monday morning. There will be several days of "mobilization and set up" but essentially by the end of next week the bridge will likely be closed and some much needed maintenance work will be in progress. The entire project, cleaning the steel supports under the bridge, repairing them, coating them with a zinc based preservative, and replacing the bridge's wooden deck should take three to four weeks.

Spring road grading is starting and while mud season was a dud, that doesn't mean we don't have ruts and pot holes, we do and the grader is out.

Town Assessor George Hildum will begin making his rounds on Thursday of next week. We are sending out letters to all property owners where George will be stopping. He will not be doing any interior inspections, but he will be grateful for an outdoor Q and A session that will help him list the improvements correctly. Most of you know George, he has been the lead dog in Plainfield assessing for going on 25 years now. To say he knows the town would be an understatement. Nobody likes taxes, we get that, but they are a fact of life and we apportion them based on real estate. Help George out, it's not his fault!

Finally, the Selectboard is looking to establish a Plainfield Building Committee. This group will be charged with working with Facility Manager Brad Atwater to plan out, several years in advance, major improvements/maintenance on our eight town owned buildings. This work will also include significant capital improvements planning. Things like how much longer can we reasonably utilize our existing highway garage or town

office? If you have an interest in this type of planning and would like to participate in your local government, please contact the Town Office or send me an e-mail by May 19th. The Selectboard is hoping to seat the committee by June 3rd.

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

Note: COVID 19 has not changed much in Plainfield over the last week, which is a good thing. Please continue with physical distancing. We can do this! Besides, between Ticks, the Emerald Ash Borer, April weather in general, the outside experience is a bit over rated right now. Give it a month.

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

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

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

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

The Selectmen meet again next week, Wednesday April 15th. Zoom meeting details will be posted on their webpage on Monday or Tuesday. Our Planning Board will be having one April meeting, on the 20th also using Zoom. This meeting has to do with the Landmark Properties wishing to use their Route 12A property as a place of business.

They received Zoning Board approval back in 2018 and are now ready to start the Planning Board process. Details may be found on the Planning Board's webpage.

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

Link to survey: <https://forms.gle/u4Db1G2Gh5FkDL839>

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Our Fire Department is anticipating an active brush fire season. Chief Taylor is preparing for an extended time of bare brown ground before green up starts. Please, make sure you contact a Fire Warden before doing any outside burning! A brush fire means having to pull together a large group of fire personnel, a gathering we'd like to avoid for any number of good reasons.

Here is a brief review of the Town of Plainfield's COVID 19 preparedness plans thus far: The town office is in daily communication with the state's office of emergency management, the Selectmen have met with the town's Emergency Management Director and each of them checks in regularly at town hall. We have obtained personal protective equipment for our EMS folks. Human Services Director Stephanie Schell is checking in regularly with the town's elderly and special needs population. Our Police Department is making daily welfare checks to those that are most at risk and perhaps feeling isolated. We even have a municipal strategic reserve of toilet paper. It's true, we do, contact Stephanie if you need a roll. Its institutional quality is such that a month ago you would have passed on it, but now through the current lens it looks pretty darn soft. Finally, we have a strong contingent of volunteers ready and willing to help at a moments notice.

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

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

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

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

Thursday March 19th 2020: Like the entire world, your local government is dealing daily with the COVID 19 pandemic. Discussions are occurring on a regular basis with the State of NH Office of Emergency Management. Your Selectboard is in regular contact with the town office, Emergency Management Director, Police Chief and Fire Chief and our Human Services Director. We have made sure that our EMS folks have the necessary

personal protective gear that they might need in responding to calls. We are all practicing social distancing; this includes closing the town office to all unnecessary traffic. Car renewals, inventory forms can all be done over the phone or by mail. We have a drop box out front. Visit www.plainfieldnh.org for more details on town office operations. We are also moving toward a video meeting platform, in our case Zoom. The Thursday March 26th Selectboard meeting will be the first attempt using Zoom. The physical location of that meeting has moved back to the Meriden Town Hall, our libraries are now closed. For any meeting that has a Zoom component I will post the meeting ID# on the town's website for anyone who wishes to video conference in to the session. You can use a free app for audio and video or a regular phone line to listen in. It's all a work in progress, so we will need a little slack in the early going as we get used to this new format.

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

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

Steve Halleran- Town Administrator

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

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

Basis for Postponement

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

I have spoken twice with the NH Attorney General representative at the Sec. of State's office. He noted the Governor has determined from his March 11 conference call with various health officials that there is not a state of emergency in NH at this time due to the coronavirus. The individuals that have tested positive in NH have been from individual traceable contact and not a community spread. I also reviewed the NH Dept. of Health

and Human Services Department's website and the federal health officials (CDC and others) recommendations for guidance. I then conferred as required with the town clerk and select board. We agree that the risk now is low and does not render the "meeting location unsafe". Also, if we were to postpone the meeting, identifying a "safer" future date is difficult, especially as most health experts predict the situation will likely be worse for a period of time before hopefully getting better.

Mitigation of Concerns

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

- 1) The statutes do not provide for absentee or written ballot voting at the business session portion of the town meeting. However, for Article 2, the library article, I will keep the ballot box open for an hour after discussion concludes. While not required, it will allow for voters who do not want to congregate during the discussion but wish to vote, to have family or friends call them at home and be able to come, register, vote and return home.
- 2) All the chairs, tables, etc. will be cleaned and sanitized the evening before the meeting and hand cleaner will be available during the meeting. Voting and microphone use will be done in such a way as to eliminate any contact.
- 3) The regular school entrance will be locked, nor will there be any 8th grade food buffet, babysitting or other displays in that area. You will enter the side gym door as you did for voting on Tuesday. Hopefully the 8th grade will have some donation "help your self" food in the gym, but you may want to bring your own drink and food.
- 4) To minimize the time we are assembled, I will try to stream-line where we can without inhibiting discussion.

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

Paul Franklin, Town Moderator

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

The sap is running a sure sign of town meeting season. We now turn to the remainder of the town meeting warrant, Article 5. "All Veterans Tax Credit" (RSA 72:28-b) is an opportunity for voters to extend to anyone who has served in the US military for more than 90 days a tax credit. The law requires that if adopted, the relief be the same as the standard tax credit, which in Plainfield is \$500 per year. Currently, we raise an additional \$52,500 at tax rate setting to offset the 105 Veterans Credits that we issue to qualifying service men and women and their spouses.

Article 6. This article seeks to continue the KUA Study group. A report from this group may be found each year in the annual report. In my view, the group provides a necessary linkage between the town and school

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

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

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

So that is it, in articles the warrant is very small; in substance it is very robust.

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

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

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

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

Thursday February 27th 2020: For obvious reasons, Plainfield's gravel roads will be posted as of Monday March 2nd. Vehicles over six tons will need permission from the town's Road Agent before travelling on town roads. Mud season used to be a late March, April thing, much like sugaring season, mud season is now a late February early March thing. If you live on a gravel road and you're new to this mud season experience, things are going to get interesting for you. If you drive a low to the ground two wheel drive car and the road looks like it's too muddy or the frozen ruts are too deep; they probably are and vehicle damage could result. Our highway department will do what it can, but frankly

there are days some years when they can't do anything until the frost drops out and the road begins to "dry." I clearly remember years ago being in a town 4x4 truck hubs locked in (remember those) with Road Agent Albert Earle, unfiltered Camel cigarette clenched firmly in his teeth as he gave the gas to the truck, hard, in a failed attempt to climb to the top of True Road the town maintained portion. I am not sure why Albert had chosen to take me up there on that particular day, probably to show me it was muddy. He was right.

Back to our peek at town meeting, we have finished with Article 2 the Meriden Library replacement and enjoyed a nice lunch from this year's 8th grade class. You have, by now, taken a few minutes to check on townfolk, basically to see who is still with whom, or who might now be sparking with whom and of course the annual speculation on who might be adding to the future school age population of Plainfield. It is spring after all. Settling back into your seat its time for Articles 3 and 4.

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

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

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

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

additional money at tax rate setting last year and will not be likely to do that again this year.

Town reports are now out, if you didn't get one in the mail, contact us and we will try to get you one. The cover design has been well received. The full report is also available online. Please plan to vote on Tuesday, we do have contested races for Selectman and Library Trustees, and plan to attend the Saturday Business portion of Town Meeting.

Thursday February 20th 2020: Note to be outdone by the national stage, Plainfield's own Finance Committee is bringing to you the **2020 Plainfield Candidates night on Thursday February 27th from 6:30pm to 8:00pm at the Plainfield Elementary School Music Room.** We do have three contested races in Plainfield, one for Selectman and two for Library Trustees. It's not clear yet if CNN and FOX are covering the event, we will have a location established for parking of satellite trucks and the like just in case. Please plan to come, ask the tough questions and see if you can make the candidates squirm. If nothing else it sounds like you can have free light refreshments. What is not to like about that.

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

body to show up on Saturday March 14th (business portion of town meeting) and decide this issue.

Next week we shall cover articles 3&4, the town budget and reserve funding, after that it's article 5 the All Veterans Tax Exemption and the rest of the warrant. The week after that, you guessed it Town Meeting week. Please plan to vote on Tuesday March 10th and attend the business session on Saturday March 14th, your voice is important. By definition, our town reflects the outcomes of these meetings. Those that show up and vote, decide the issues of the day.

Thursday February 13th 2020: Well, after the great Iowa Caucus Raucous, NH election officials were, going into Tuesday's Primary, nervous as cats in a room full of rocking chairs. However, thanks to the work of Selectmen, Moderators and most importantly Town Clerks all over the state, the NH Primary was proof yet again that local government is best and gets the job done. Right here in our own home town, we organized helpers, set up polls, processed hundreds of votes, counted them using paper and pen, put all the election stuff away and were tucked into bed by 10pm with nearly all the state's results known to the world. Good job New Hampshire and many thanks to all those who did their jobs! In the case of Plainfield, much of our day's success was due to the extraordinary effort of Town Clerk Michelle Marsh. For Town Clerks weeks of work lead up to voting day and days of work follow it.

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

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

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

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

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

The Selectboard is in session on Wednesday evening at 6pm Plainfield Library. Agendas for these meetings can be viewed at www.plainfieldnh.org

Thursday February 5th 2020: The Selectboard completed their work last evening on the warrant and budget for voter consideration at this year's town meeting. Both can be viewed by going to www.plainfieldnh.org.

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

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

Thursday January 30th 2020: Where is winter, people seem to be asking as an icebreaker for their visit to town hall? Yesterday at my house we had full sun and two chipmunks running around on a stonewall like it was September 29th, not January 29th. However, as my favorite substitute teacher at PES used to say, kids lets not fold up our tents too early. We know very well that we are but one or two snow events and a blast of arctic air away from feeling and looking a lot like winter. April 15th is a long off just yet. None the less, given the current weather, the Highway Department is sharpening their chainsaws and putting on their safety chaps, we are headed back outside to do some tree trimming and brush clearing along town roads.

Last week we covered a portion of the zoning ordinance that dealt with the approval options for property owners to have businesses on their property. Something we have seen less of in recent years. This week, a few words on the sections of our zoning ordinance that are booming: **Solar energy systems (section 3.18)** is heavy hitter right now. Staying out of the weeds, essentially if you want a solar system on your roof to serve your home it's a \$50 building permit and off you go. If you want a ground mounted system to serve your house have at it, again just a building permit is required. If you want a ground mounted system of any kind and you live in the Village Residential zone (smallest lots, highest densities of houses) you need a special exception from the Zoning Board of Adjustment. This will cost you \$150 or so and about thirty minutes of your life. You might have to hear from you neighbors, if they wish, and you might end up moving the location slightly or doing some extra landscaping, but again that's it pretty simple and easy to do. Every proposed solar array has been approved.

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

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

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

Thursday January 23rd 2020: A little update on last week's notes, there is now a 2020 Garage/Recycling Calendar posted on the town's website. It can be viewed and printed right from the town's website homepage www.plainfieldnh.org. While future program changes are still possible, Casella was very accommodating and agreed to do up a new calendar, now, for 2020. Once printed copies are available, they will be placed at various locations around town.

The Selectmen will be completing their budget work on February 5th and will post the warrant for Town Meeting on February 19th. You can view the town's proposed budget and warrant articles anytime by visiting the town's website.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Steve

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

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

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

For more key dates visit www.plainfieldnh.org

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

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

Thursday December 12th 2019: Last week we discussed projects that we would not be doing in the next five years, this week let's turn our attention to one that we will do in the next five years. The Mill Bridge (aka the Meriden Covered Bridge) is like French's Ledges, the Connecticut River, Burnhaps Island, the Plainfield Town Hall its one of those

cornerstone icons of our town. The bridge was built by James Tasker of Cornish NH in 1880 for \$693. Tasker was paid \$492, the other \$200 went to Levi Sanderson for the site work and abutments.

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

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

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

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

Steve

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

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

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

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

Steve

Wednesday November 27th 2019: First and foremost from the Plainfield Town Office, best wishes to everyone for a safe and happy Thanksgiving holiday. The Selectboard's week started off with one of their favorite activities as Selectboard members, the presentation of the Boston Post Cane to our oldest resident. Having sat in on a number of these over the years, I can attest to the fact that you always come away feeling richer and thankful for our community and its members who come from all walks of life. Without exception the recipients are always someone that you can learn from and have a meaning

experience as you visit. In the current case, the Selectboard presented the cane to Elizabeth “Libby” Backofen. Libby and her late husband Walter moved to Plainfield in the 1960’s, restoring an old farmhouse and returning fallow fields to apple orchards, Christmas trees and blue berry bushes, surrounded by well cared for hard and softwood timberland. Now well into her 95th year, you always know exactly where you stand with Libby and how she feels about a subject. The cane presentation was a great way to start the holiday week.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Have a great Thanksgiving with family and friends.

Steve

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

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

If opportunity allows for it give some thought this year to participating in the annual Town of Plainfield Turkey Trot. This fun family friendly event goes from the Plainfield School to the Plainfield Town Hall, nearly 7 miles all down hill. The joy of the turkey trot is you start any time you wish, seriously it's true, and the winner is the person who arrives at the Plainfield Town closest to 11:00am. Hint, those super fit runners always finish way too early. The prize, a local baked pumpkin pie and the right to bring home the golden turkey trophy for a year, bragging rights if you will. This event dates back to at least Malcome Grobe then Jay Waldner. For the last twenty years I have held "the turkey trot folder" at my house. Melissa and I changed to the pie prize from a box of chocolate covered cherries and added the Golden Turkey. The en masse finish is what

makes it unique. It's all in fun, but no matter how you choose to get across town (run, walk, bike, ski) you can then spend the afternoon enjoying guilt free turkey and football. I think the people that get the most out of the event are family and friends who walk together, catching up on news and the like. Check out the town report, we always put a picture in there of the participants, its tradition. Some years we are in shorts, others we are wearing winter gear. Turkey trot details are posted on the town website and at the libraries. The sign up sheet is at PES no later than 7:30am on Thanksgiving Day.

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

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

Steve

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

them that can take 48 hours or more to sort out and make real progress. In the case of ice storms, the worst of all storms, it can easily be days, a week or more. Consequently, all of us need to be prepared for a three or more day outage should “the big one” hit. We have had several 100 year storm events in the last ten years. I know that doesn’t sound statistically possible, but it’s true. Be prepared.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Town Office is pleased to report that the Board of Selectmen has with the State of New Hampshire Department of Revenue Administration established the 2019 tax rate at \$26/\$1,000 of taxable property down from last year’s rate of \$26.90. This will save the average taxpayer \$200 to \$300 on their property taxes over the previous year. At the same time the Selectboard added more than \$100,000 to the town’s undesignated fund balance. This money will be available to “soften the rate” should it increase more than

anticipated in a future year. Some years you spend fund balance other years you accumulate it that is just the reality of tax rate management. I will acknowledge it takes courage to slow the descent of a New Hampshire property tax rate, but if you are going to live here for the long- term you, again in my view, thank your Board of Selectmen for showing this kind of leadership. The reasons for the decrease this year can be found with the school tax rate. Give credit where it is due. Still plenty of things to complain about, we are New Englanders after all, but the reason your tax bill is less is that the school is the bulk of the overall tax rate and they needed less local tax dollars as compared to the previous year.

Paving work was completed this week, literally hours before Thursday's rain/wind storm. Mill Village, Daniels Road and Hell Hollow Road all received fresh pavement. This work cost \$128,000. Paving roads is not an inexpensive endeavor. Drivers beware; yellow lines are scheduled for Monday. Nothing sticks to a car like road marking paint. Pretty hard to say you don't drive in the middle of the road when your wheel wells and rocker panels look as though you drove through a mustard factory. Take Stage Road, let that paint set up!

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

Steve

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

Plainfield Pumpkin People have arrived for the season in great numbers. It's a lot of fun to view the creative skills that our residents display. From East Plainfield where this annual event originated to the Connecticut River we have wonderful examples of what families can do with a fall weekend and some props. So, if you haven't gotten into the

game yet, it's not too late, this holiday weekend would be a great opportunity. Thank you to our Pumpkin Person Director, resident John Austin, for all his work getting these visitors into town.

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

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

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

Thursday October 3rd 2019: Our town government family is saddened by the sudden loss of Library Trustee Nancy Liston. One of the great joys of this job is the people that you get to work with on a daily basis. I first got to know Ron and Nancy Liston when they built their home on Freeman Road. Ron Liston served for many years on our Planning Board. We both shared a common interest in sailing and through that connection developed a great relationship. I was fortunate to get to know Nancy Liston through her work in our library system. You always knew exactly where you stood with Nancy and if you made a commitment to her, you darn well should be planning to

complete the task. By example, for two years now I had been promising her that town forces would remove an old storage shed from the library property. Now when Town Administrators make these promises, often they mean highway department will do it. Road Agents, in addition to road work, always have a long list of these projects on their plate. So time does pass. Well, two weeks ago Nancy called me to inquire about that shed; it was not lost on her that it remained. I went time certain on her, that shed would be off the library grounds no later than September 30th. I am pleased to report it happened. As Mary King and I discussed Nancy's unexpected passing, I asked her if Nancy was aware that the shed was moved. Mary assured me she was aware and thankful for the Highway Department's effort. It made us both smile and gave us a moment of peace as we thought of the loss of one of our group. Thank you to the Liston Family for letting our community benefit from some of both Ron and Nancy's time.

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

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

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

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

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

compromises, folks on both sides of the issue went home with less than they wanted, but hopefully enough of what they needed.

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

Thursday September 19th 2019: Swipe, baby swipe. It may seem a small thing but it has been a long time coming, the Plainfield Town Office for the first time in its history now accepts debit and credit cards for payments. What took so long you might say? Good lord, the 18 year old selling jewelry from a street cart has a card reader on his Iphone which allows acceptance of credit card payments. Well that may be true, but that person is not a municipality working under the laws of the State of New Hampshire with at least three software vendors in the mix. However, thanks to the efforts of Town Clerk/ Tax Collector Michelle Marsh our card reader is now good to go. Be aware, there is a cost to this convenience. You will be charged a minimum of \$1.95 or 2.95% whichever is greater for the pleasure of that swipe. The taxpayers of Plainfield will be covering the cost of the software and hardware, but unlike the clothing store, the town doesn't get hit with a percentage charge, you do. A \$500 car registration will cost you \$514.75. A \$5,000 tax payment will set you pack \$5,147.50. Enjoy, but buyer beware!

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

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

Pumpkin people have started to arrive, keep your eyes out.

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

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

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

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

The next Selectboard meeting is September 18th at the Plainfield Library beginning at 6pm.

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

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

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

Thursday August 21st 2019: This week has all been about the kids returning to school next week. By example college students stopping in to see if it is possible to cast an absentee ballot. Love that enthusiasm, but we don't even know who the candidates all are yet or what all the issues might be for 2020. Best to check back in with us later in the fall on that one. Moms getting the minivans registered, secretly trying to clear the "to do list" so that come next Thursday when the house is quiet a good book can be enjoyed or perhaps a lunch, with maybe even a glass of wine, out with another mom who is also wicked psyched that a new school year is upon us.

Remember, this is the time of year when our young kids are cycling or walking to school, use extra caution around the Plainfield School. Often the backpack and bicycle are bigger than the kid and it can all be kind of wobbly as they race down Bonner Road.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Steve H.

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

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

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

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

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

The Route 12A River bank project has run into several unyielding drivers. These folks seem to feel that the flagger holding the stop paddle does not apply to them. A bunch of folks worked very hard to convince the State of NH DOT to keep the road open during construction. Needless to say Chief Roberts and his officers are spending some time over

at the site, ticket book in hand. Fines are doubled in construction sites. Its 90+ degrees outside with nearly 100% humidity and some can't be bothered to sit for five minutes in their air conditioned SUVs. Good Lord, I say rather than a ticket let them stand out there for an afternoon.

Since last week we have received several strong positions of support for keeping the wooden road signs around town. They have a real nice small town feel, no argument there, we love them too. Maybe we can find some middle ground. The biggest obstacle to them is their visibility at night, when your relative from out of town can't find your house. On second thought maybe they are just fine.

Unfortunately, we have continued to experience significant turnover in our Police Department. We are down two officers at the moment, a full time position and a part time position. The Selectboard is taking this opportunity to take a very close look at the Police Department and has asked Chief Roberts and I to investigate some other staffing options for our coverage. The 2020 budget season is just around the corner and in this very tight labor market finding certified police officers is difficult.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Thursday June 6th 2019: Our two new bridges now have paved approaches. Final seeding and mulching is all that is needed to call both of them done. These are both structures that will serve the town for years. We couldn't afford the wooden guardrail that we would have liked, but within a year or two the "shine" will come off the new guardrail and the new pavement will have grayed up some and the entire package will be aesthetically more appealing. Time will take care of that. Each of them represents about \$120,000 and that's without substantial abutment work. Bridges are not cheap.

Daniels Road could, if the weather stays reasonable, see new pavement early next week. Highway has been checking culverts, mowing and ditching the roadsides in preparation of the new overlay. Road Agent Collins is meeting with the NHDOT to make sure that our road work eliminates the potential for standing water where Daniels and Route 12A meet.

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Selectboard has a meeting on Wednesday June 5th here at the Meriden Town Hall starting at 6pm. Visit www.plainfieldnh.org for all the details.

Thursday May 23rd 2019: Plainfield tax bills will likely be in the mail to taxpayers as early as this Friday. In the envelope will also be a copy of Plainfield resource guide put together by our Human Resources group. Jane Stephenson, Stephanie Schell and Michelle Marsh put a lot of effort into making sure this brochure is accurate. It's a wealth of information about your community. The brochure is definitely refrigerator worthy!

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

week's meeting the NHDOT has been asked to consider working around the clock to complete the repair and/ or to temporarily widen the road enough to allow for traffic to continue to use the 12A corridor while the repair is being made.

As this very wet spring continues its Plainfield's own River Road that keeps us up at night. We have experienced some slumping on the river bank adjacent to the road. At best it too will need to be repaired. At worst it could alter our entire summer work plan.

This Saturday is the first of several Household Hazardous Waste Day collections. From 9am to noon residents may bring materials up to the Lebanon High School parking lot for proper disposal. Visit https://www.plainfieldnh.org/trash_recyc.htm for all the details.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Thursday April 18th 2019: The Selectboard met Wednesday evening. Despite the very expensive winter that we all endured it does appear, based on current cost estimates, that we are going to be able to move forward with reconstruction of the paved section of Hell

Hollow and put a pavement overlay on Daniels Road. If the road project gods look on us favorably we might even be able to do some paving work in the Mill Village area, a place in town that hasn't seen new pavement in 50 years or more. See page 70 of the 2018 town report for more information on paving plans. In addition, right out of the Spring gate we plan to pave the approaches to our two new bridges, Camp Road and Houser Lane.

The Highway crew will spend a significant portion of the summer ditching roadsides and working on cutting back trees and vegetation. It's a never ending battle.

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

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

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

Have you registered the family dog yet?

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

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

**1994 Chevrolet Pick up truck
One ton single axle/ 6.5 diesel power plant**

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

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

Next week's meetings include the Selectboard at 6pm Wednesday at the Meriden Town Hall. In addition, the group working on updating the town's Hazard Mitigation Plan will meet with Consultant Jane Hubbard on Thursday at 7pm here at the Meriden Town Hall. An updated plan is a prerequisite to receive Federal money. The plan update is at the direction of the Selectboard and is being paid for using a state of NH grant.

Thursday April 4th 2019: As is often the case the last and first week of a given month visitor traffic at the town office this week has been dominated by auto registrations. Note to self, arrive just before the end of the month or just at the start of a new one and odds are pretty good you'll have an opportunity to get to know some of your fellow community members as you wait. Conversely, come to town hall between the 10th and the 25th of any month for your car registration and you can pretty much count on a quick in and out trip. Another little tip, if you have a new to you car that you plan to transfer your old plates to, bring the old registration with you. You will save yourself some time, you won't have to drive home to get it, and/or you save yourself some money, both good things.

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

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

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

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

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

As the weather improves the Police Department asks that you be extra attentive when driving around town, young children, bicyclist, and walkers will all be out on the roads. Please use extra caution on Bonner Road; kids will be once again walking to and from the school. You can expect to see our Police on Bonner Road before and just after school.

Next week the Planning Board meets on Monday April 1st at MTH starting at 7pm. The Selectboard meet over at the Plainfield Library at 6pm Wednesday evening April 3rd.

Enjoy the spring weather.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Steve Halleran- Plainfield Town Administrator

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

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

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

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

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

Steve Halleran- Plainfield Town Administrator

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

transfer from two private to a single public fire departments continues. In short, we thank all the past, present and future members of the departments for their service to the Town of Plainfield and we look forward to working with them one and all.

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

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

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

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

Steve Halleran- Plainfield Town Administrator

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

A second and final hearing on the Meriden Library replacement project is scheduled for **6:30pm on Wednesday night February 6th at the Plainfield Library**. A good

opportunity to learn and get some of your early questions answered and to express an opinion on this project.

A second and final hearing on the town operating budget is scheduled for **7:00pm Wednesday night February 6th at the Plainfield Library**. The proposed budget and warrant are posted on the town's website right off the home page.

So, as you can see there is a lot going on and there are plenty of good opportunities to get involved and make your opinions known. If we can help stop in at the office and we are glad to do so.

Steve Halleran, Plainfield Town Administrator