

## SELECTBOARD REPORT

Another year has passed, and it seems as though 2007 was a culmination of events, teetering on extreme, and which will not soon be forgotten. After starting the winter season with unusually mild temperatures, which kept away the frost through January, Plainfield was whacked with a Valentine's Day blizzard, which provided more than 20 inches of snow before Mother Nature decided to show us any mercy. The minutes of our February 21<sup>st</sup> meeting indicate that even when teasing early winter temperatures such they were, our Highway Department was indeed ready and eager for the event and received a number of favorable comments from residents around town concerning their good work keeping our roads open. The next hurdle came in mid April when parts of Meriden and East Plainfield were hit with wind gusts of 60 mph. This Nor'easter featured heavy rains all weekend with many downed trees and limbs along with widespread power outages. Once again, our road system withstood the test very well with only minor washouts here and there. Our road crew and emergency responders deserve our gratitude for all their efforts in keeping Plainfield safe and running smoothly all year long.

Given the rollercoaster ride of events during the spring, as they were, River Road sustained damage from a slide along the bank of the Connecticut River. Through the efforts of our Town Administrator and much prodding of the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services and Connecticut River Commission members, the Selectboard learned that the only way to contend with this problem was to fill in the slumps and leave them along. The Board and Road Agent took this remedy in stride, but continue to have mixed feelings since this approach does nothing to prevent further bank erosion in the future.

In June, the Selectboard also learned that the town was awarded a \$159,000 FEMA mitigation grant, which will be used to repair some slumped sections of the Willow Brook Road as well. We have contracted with Daniels Construction Company of Ascutney Vermont to do some of this work as soon as possible. This will mark the start of a major overhaul of Willow Brook Road. Because of the time and complexity of the project it appears as though an outside contractor will do all the work, leaving the highway department free to perform their usual duties.

When the work was done from all these other uninvited tasks, the highway crew was able to settle in on the reclamation of Beauty Hill Road where culverts were replaced, gravel was added, blacktop laid, slopes seeded and the new Case load was initiated.

The Selectboard applauds the work done by David and Susan Smith in their efforts researching and hand drawing an updated version of the map of Plainfield, originally done by Vernon Hood. These maps are now available at the town office and all proceeds benefit the town's service memorial project, which the Selectboard hopes to complete this year.

The Selectboard wishes to express its thanks to the finance committee and all the volunteers who assist us every year. Your thoughts, ideas and hard work are invaluable throughout the year in keeping our challenges (however extreme they be) in check.

Finally, our thoughts turn to the event which would most certainly be characterized as extreme in any form of reason and the burden and duty of which should not be placed on those in any small town. During the months of uncertainty, apprehension and desperation, because of the situation brought onto us by the circumstances in the Edward and Elaine Brown debacle, our feelings for our friends and neighbors along the Center of Town Road and Hedgehog Road grew to concern and sympathy. If the self-inflicted events of the Browns were not already bad enough, the trash brought to Plainfield by their supporters from around the country certainly was, and our inability to get the answers we were looking for quickly became painfully obvious. Our frustrations grew as none of us seemed to be able to dodge the threats. After their convictions for federal tax evasion and the springtime passed to summer and then summertime to fall, our frustrations turned to anger because of the time it taking to bring these criminals to justice. We asked questions. We tried to understand. Then we asked more questions and sent letters that were ignored. The United States Marshal's Service, our state and district representatives, the Governor, the Attorney General at the Justice Department and the State Police had nothing to offer us and only continued to say that orders were being directed from Washington DC. Residents were taunted by loud helicopters overhead as the

Brown's continued to invite guests to their parties and defy all of us who work for things in the world to be right.

Through all of this drudgery there were many people who comforted us and gave us strength to keep right on going. They were locals, our family and neighbors who came to stand by us and protect us when Joe Haas came to town and was arrested in front of the town hall and taken away. There were those who serve us tirelessly on the police force Gordon, Larry, Paul and Tony. And then there were those for whom we always heard high praise from our chief about their willingness to offer support in any way- the Sullivan County Sheriff's Department and the Enfield and Lebanon Police Departments. We have often offered assistance to other towns through our mutual aid agreements, and when we were in need they were there for us.

This board wishes to express our highest praise and thanks for the level of commitment offered by our dedicated men in the Plainfield Police Department. We want our residents to not only know, but to understand, that we think of these people in the highest regard. These folks never gave in, even though all of us are extremely grateful no one was hurt all of us had hoped that it would reach an end sooner than it did.

At the end of the day when all the noise was gone and the dust settled, and whether or not you agree or disagree with the cause that the Browns were trying to defend, this board continues to believe in the process upon which our country was built. Though none of us enjoyed paying taxes of any kind, it is, nonetheless, the means by which we are able to continue to uphold and protect the very values that hold us together as a society. When some of us feel as though government on any level is not working as it should for us, the process will eventually bring the changes that we are seeking. We have always encouraged people to become involved and to speak up so that all of us have the very best understanding about the way things should be. The system is not always perfect, but we hope you will agree that even through the extremes, Plainfield is a beautiful place to live.

Respectfully, *Mark Wilder, Chair, Robert Taylor, Judy Belyea*