

SELECTBOARD REPORT -2014

It doesn't seem possible that another year has passed and another annual Selectboard Report is due. Thanks to our hard working town employees, Plainfield remains well run and efficient in providing many needed services. Thanks as always go out to the professionals who serve us as well as to the many volunteers who contribute their time for the betterment of Plainfield. As is customary, what follows are brief updates of the Selectboard's activities during the prior year (in no particular order).

- Recreation Department Trails Director and New Groomer- To continue what has become an Upper Valley Treasure, the Selectboard appointed Bill Knight to become the town's "Trails Director". This will bring the trails program, centered around the Plainfield Elementary School (PES), under the umbrella of the town's Recreation Department, led by Dan Cantlin, (Rec. Director). The Board feels strongly that the trails program currently underway is one of the brightest developments in Plainfield in a great while. Also, with 100% donated funds the town purchased a new snow groomer to better maintain the myriad cross country ski trails around PES.
- Emergency Response Trailer- With grant monies secured from Fed. and State sources as well as Plainfield's own investment an "Emergency Response Trailer" has been put into service for the town (summer 2014). This trailer is stocked with signs and other equipment to better respond to any emergency, be it highway, police and/or fire related.
- Municipal Dump Truck Body Swap- The highway crew led by Road Agent Collins completed a swap of dump truck bodies on one of our newer town trucks. A so called "municipal style" body was added to become a combination dump and sander body. The project approved at Town Meeting was completed in time to make an impact on winter work for 2014/2015. This brings the number of so equipped trucks to two in our fleet. This upgrade has proven to be a significant upgrade to the Highway Department's efficiency and reliability.
- Fire Chief Stipend Implementation- The Fire Chief is now a paid position in town. Chief Currier has become a regular contributor to the Selectboard meetings and he continues to bring the Meriden and Plainfield Associations together to serve the entire town so well. Our sincere thanks go out to both departments for their dedication to service and to Frank's efforts with both village departments.
- New Roadside Mower Into Service- The newly acquired mower with all its capabilities has been highly successful in improving the roadside mowing program. From its safer operation to its extended reach the machine looks to be a nice addition to the tool kit of highway maintenance.
- Many Expensive Repairs to Highway Equipment- While success abounds in the Highway Department, it was also a year for major repairs to equipment as well. Two big trucks saw costly repairs and so too did the 590 Case backhoe. One of the largest parts on this digging machine, known as the boom, was replaced at a

cost of nearly \$6000. This is either due to extensive wear and tear or old fashioned bad luck.

- Libraries- The Selectboard continues to support our unified library system approved at Town Meeting some years back. We do not favor a return to the previous two board system. There appears to be some difficulties with the current system mostly due to the personalities involved. An reversion to the old way of doing things does not seem to be the best solution to continue our strategy of cohesion and unity in town services.
- Solid Waste and Recycling Update- While there was lots of talk of going to a “toter” trash and recycling container system, our contractor, Casella, has backed away from an attempt at complete a changeover. It appears that some changes and adjustments to our current system will come in time, just not in the ways that we had been anticipating.
- River Road Phase 1- Along with brush clearing and drainage upgrades, a portion of River Road was topped with a new coat of pavement in 2014. The remainder is of the road is scheduled for completion in 2015. This road, along with Brook Road, continues to be a great challenge for the town to keep well maintained.
- Croydon Turnpike Drainage- The upper portion of Croydon Turpike saw some substantial upgrades to deal with drainage and the driving surface. Some timely tree clearing coupled with this work have already made quite a difference along this road.
- Penniman Road- The road from Stage Road to Cornish Stage Road (Penniman) is in need of some significant work. A portion of it will actually need to be excavated and re-graded to handle moisture issues. We had hoped to get started in 2014, but decided that delaying work until 2015 would allow for more complete repairs to happen.
- Human Services Update- We would like to commend our Human Services Director, Stephanie Schell, for her tireless efforts in providing assistance to the town’s neediest citizens. Mrs. Schell has tackled the job with creativity and compassion and has expanded programs to meet the needs of many people in town. If you know of anyone in need of help, do not hesitate to contact her through the Town Office.
- Highway Engineering Work and Gravel Testing- The Selectboard has begun to use a local engineer who formerly worked for the State of NH, Jeff Albright, to assist us with many highway related issues. One of the most interesting is the town’s gravel and other pit products. As we have discovered, our roads are built of material that is often too fine a material and is in need of additional stone to “sweeten” our gravel. We appreciate the help from a very qualified individual, and will continue to tap this resource.
- Dust Control and Road Salt Maximization Programs- At the recommendation of a neighboring town, Plainfield is implementing a new program to use new products to both improve the road surfaces (dust control) and improve road salt effectiveness. A product known as magnesium chloride will be purchased

through a contractor to accomplish these improvements. The benefits will also be in labor savings and cost controls.

- Federal Government Property Sale- The Selectboard, along with our Town Councilor, have been applying pressure on the IRS and other Federal officials to complete the sale of a tax delinquent property on Center of Town Road. This property is nearly \$200K in arrears with the town property taxes and continues to deteriorate and lose value. It is also an attractive nuisance property that needs to be brought back into usefulness for a future property owner and the town's tax base.
- Highway Garage Facility Management and Upgrades- As a result of a request to install solar panels on the highway garage roof from our Energy Committee, it has become apparent that the building is in need of some upgrades. The Selectboard has approved using an engineer to evaluate the most pressing needs for the building and that would appear at least installing a new roof on the building with additional structural enhancements and insulation upgrades.
- Vermont Gun Range Issues- The Selectboard has been actively assisting residents on Ferry Hill Road and Carvel Lane in dealing with excessive use of a gun range on the VT side of the CT River. It is without question that the Plainfield residents, within earshot of this facility, are being adversely affected by the excessive use of the facility. So far officials in VT have been responsive and we appear to be working towards some kind of solutions to mitigate the negative impacts to our Plainfield citizens.

Please join us for one of our bi-monthly meetings (on the first and third Wednesdays of each month). Or call the Town office at 469-3201 to express an opinion. If you have questions, comments or problems please let us know. Also, please note that there is always a need for volunteers to serve Plainfield in many different ways. Here is hoping for good weather in 2015!

See you at Town Meeting,
Rob Taylor, Judy Belyea, Ron Eberhardt



**Jane Stephenson receiving the Stephen H. Taylor Award
Photo S. Halleran**



**Library Employee Sarah Gillens participating in an fire extinguisher safety
training course taught by Fire Chief Frank Currier Photo S. Halleran**