

## SELECTBOARD REPORT -2017

Plainfield would not be the community it is without the contributions, dedication and hard work of our professional staff and the many volunteers who so generously give of their time and expertise. As always, we thank them. Here is an update of some of our 2017 work. Complete minutes of 2017 Selectboard meetings can be found at the town website, [www.plainfieldnh.org](http://www.plainfieldnh.org).

Fire Department Discussions: Members of both the Plainfield and Meriden Fire Departments engaged in ongoing discussions with the Selectboard in 2017 concerning the multiple issues surrounding the merger of the two departments into a single municipal department, a concept fully supported by the Selectboard. This will be voted on at our 2018 town meeting. If approved, statute requires the new department to begin operations one year after the date of the vote. Plainfield Fire Chief Frank Currier retired after many years of service. Bill Taylor is now Chief of both the Meriden and Plainfield departments.

The Camp Road bridge was red listed by the NHDOT during the last bridge inspection. Our Highway Department has replaced the abutments and the deck work will be done next summer. We received an unanticipated highway block grant from the state in the amount of \$99,290. This will be applied to the Camp Road bridge work, followed by the replacement of the Ladieu Road bridge and painting of the beams under the Meriden covered bridge.

The solar array at the Plainfield Elementary School is now operational. Another project is in the works at the Meriden Village Water District. The Selectboard supports the use and growth of renewable energy in our community. After receiving and discussing a petition signed by over 100 residents, we unanimously adopted a resolution in support of the climate goals established at the Paris Climate Accord, thereby joining many other municipalities and states in this endeavor. As renewable energy projects become more common, we are mindful of the need to ensure that they meet acceptable aesthetic and environmental standards. It is our goal to encourage this development while considering the fiscal impact on the town.

In our highway department, we have hired a part time, highly experienced grader operator to work from late April through early November, thereby allowing our Road Agent to focus his skills and energies on managing the department. Summer highway work this year included paving Thrasher Road, Methodist Hill and some patch work on Willow Brook Road. As has been the case in recent years, we have appreciated the time donated by resident Jeff Albright, a retired NHDOH engineer. His expertise and experience have been an asset. In addition to the usual highway work, we had a few extreme weather events to deal with, including the October 29 storm that resulted in the most power outages in NH history. Such events appear to be “the new normal”.

The Board commissioned an in depth study of our highway department. Observations/recommendations included:

- Our highway garage should be replaced, rather than repaired. (no need to do this yet, but most likely within the next ten years)
- Our highway department, as currently equipped and configured, is well thought-out and well run.
- Equipment should be replaced in a timelier manner, in order to reduce down time.

Discussion continues regarding planning for a new Meriden Library building. The committee working on the Meriden Library replacement project hopes to bring forward a vote on a new building for 2019. A total replacement of the building is recommended. The new building and necessary parking will fit on the existing one acre lot if building size is kept to below 4,000 sq ft.

The Selectboard has contracted with Avitar Associates for the 2018 property assessment update. The statistical update has begun, and the new values will be in place for April 2018.

July was a busy month in Plainfield. Our 4th of July celebration featured summer resident U.S. Supreme Court Justice Breyer reading the Declaration of Independence on the steps of the Plainfield Town Hall. The event was well attended, the weather was perfect and the parade was a grand success.

On July 5th, we dedicated the Zea Memorial Garden in front of the Meriden Town Hall. In doing so, we honored Howard Zea, long time Plainfield Town Clerk. Howard's widow and son were in attendance, as were 30-40 others. Steve Taylor delivered remarks to acknowledge and honor Howard's many years of dedicated service.

Our new police cruiser is in service. We now have three dependable vehicles, and our plan is to keep them in service until the summer of 2021.

The police department has been making extra patrols on Bonner Road during the times when students may be walking or biking to school. We have met with representatives from our regional planning commission in order to determine the best means of calming traffic so that our students may travel to and from school safely.

The Selectmen approved a two year extension of the existing garbage/recycling contract. Beginning in early 2018 Friday recycling will be eliminated. Recycling will be picked up the same day as a resident's trash is collected. All residents received a flyer detailing the changes, and the schedule is posted on the town's website.

As always, we invite you to join us at any of our meetings on the first and third Wednesdays of each month. Contact any of us or call the Town Office if you want to express any concerns or opinions. There are many opportunities for citizens to be involved in the workings of our community. Your participation would be welcomed.

See you at Town Meeting,

*Rob Taylor, Judy Belyea, Ron Eberhardt*