

SELECT BOARD REPORT

Perhaps the most difficult year in anyone's memory has come to an end for the Town of Plainfield and as is customary, here is an update of the Board of Selectmen's activities for the previous twelve months. Like every year, many issues were addressed, and decisions made. Unlike other years, the Town of Plainfield faced a global pandemic that brought challenges never seen before in our corner of the world. In the interest of being concise, we are listing our most notable work here in bullet form. For your information, our complete meeting minutes are available on the Town's website: www.plainfieldnh.org or in hard copy at the Plainfield Town Offices in Meriden.

- COVID19 Pandemic- A dominant issue for 2020 has been the onset of a global health crisis. Confirmed cases in Plainfield quickly made it clear that Plainfield would not escape the impacts of the virus that has swept the USA and the rest of global civilization. The move to remote meetings (of the Selectboard and other boards and committees) was one consequence. Our choice was to move to the Zoom web meetings platform, and for the most part we have been successful in this change. In fact, we have noticed an uptick in the average attendance for most meetings and people have appreciated being able to be involved from the comfort of their homes.
- Town Meeting Delays- The onset of COVID19 was also unfortunate in timing for the Town Meeting. We were able to hold the Tuesday voting/ election, however by the subsequent Saturday it was determined to be too risky to have everyone in the Plainfield School gymnasium. Months of delays followed with a decision finally coming to have the traditional Town Meeting on July 11th at William A. Smith's Auction tents in Plainfield Village. The Selectboard wishes to thank the Smiths for their accommodations and we were pleased with everyone's patience and cooperation through the delays and execution of the eventual meeting. It will certainly be a unique memory for all that attended the July event. The entire warrant was disposed of in about one hour.
- Solid Waste Committee- At the direction of the Selectboard, the Plainfield Solid Waste Committee was refreshed and took on the task of reviewing the services offered and the provider's contract. It was determined that the community is generally supportive of our existing curbside trash and recycling programs. A request for bids was issued, however the only submission that we received was from Casella Waste Services, our existing provider. The Solid Waste Committee made the recommendation to ultimately renew our contract even with a significant increase in cost. It is clear that Plainfield will have to pay more for the same services. This is due largely to the collapse in the value of recyclables and increased trucking and tipping costs.
- Increased Trails Usage Issues- As a result of the increased usage related to the COVID19 crisis, Plainfield has had some issues arise related to the Town's trails system. Examples of these issues include graffiti, un-permitted burning, dogs out of control, and parking congestion to name a few. The Selectboard met with the trail users, land-owners and easement holders and has advanced some preliminary solutions. The first idea is improved signage at trailhead parking areas. Another idea is to improve the navigational signage along the trails. We will continue to monitor the usage issues and to coordinate with all involved to protect this incredible resource. We appreciate the hard work of our trail volunteers and trail boss, Bill Knight, who have helped to create this extensive network of well-maintained outdoor recreation options.
- Facemask Ordinance- On 8/26/2020, Plainfield became one of the first ten communities in NH to mandate the use of facemasks. It became clear that this simple precaution could have an impact on the transmission of the COVID19 virus. We have been happy to see

widespread conformance with this new ordinance and have also heard positive feedback from local businesses who are happy to point to the Town as being responsible for the enforcement and compliance.

- Employee Handbook- The Selectboard was happy to work with a local HR expert, Bev Widger, on an update to our employee handbook. This long overdue project brought us up to current employment standards and implemented some key policies that the board felt were important to the hiring and retention of our most valuable asset, our employees.
- Facilities Upgrades and Improvements- Our facilities director, Brad Atwater, successfully oversaw some significant upgrades to our Town buildings. These included lighting upgrades as well as insulation, and weatherization projects. The Selectboard also created a new Building and Facilities Committee to work directly with the Facilities Manager. They will help set priorities and act as a consulting group for the Selectboard as well. We would like to thank the members of this new committee: Jody Perkins, Doug Plummer and Todd Godfrey. We look forward to using their combined, significant knowledge to help us keep up with our many different buildings and facilities.
- Highway Truck Delivery- The long overdue delivery of a new 24,000 lb GVW International 4X4 truck was made to the highway department. The delay was largely due to supply chain issues at manufacturers and the installation of the plow and body equipment. We are happy to report that this truck is now a primary implement in our road maintenance program, particularly in the winter for the application of road salt.
- Elections Trailer- The Selectboard approved the purchase and acquisition of a new trailer to facilitate the set-up of a mobile election storage unit. We decided that all the associated gear (polling booths, barricades, etc.) for the elections should be kept together in an easily transportable and dry storage system. This year was a particular challenge for us because we had four elections and the COVID19 pandemic made everything more difficult.
- Meriden Town Hall Heating System- The Selectboard has approved the installation of a new heat and cool system at the Meriden Town Hall. This decision was the result of many meetings and extensive consultation with our facilities manager, our energy committee, and our finance committee. This decision is consistent with our “Ready for 100” renewable energy commitments as well as our desire to make our Town Office more comfortable and efficient. The system will likely be installed in the spring of 2021.

Finally, the Selectboard would like to thank everyone who serves the Town in all roles. From the members of our various boards and committees, to the Police, Fire and Rescue personnel who answer our calls for help. It is this volunteer spirit that means so much to Plainfield. A few people to specifically call out include Stephanie Schell for her work as our Human Services Director/ Health Officer during the still ongoing COVID19 pandemic health crisis. We would also like to acknowledge the work of Michelle Marsh, our Town Clerk, and Steve Halleran, our Town Administrator for their dedication in providing uninterrupted services to our citizens during the health emergency and also for piloting us through four elections and a summer Town Meeting safely and efficiently. As always, please join us at one of our meetings on the first and third Wednesdays of each month. Until we make it through the COVID19 state of emergency, our meetings will continue to be held via the Zoom web meetings platform. Check the Town’s website for the necessary login information. You can also call the Town office at 603-469-3201 during weekday business hours to ask a question or express an opinion. If you are interested in serving the Town on a board, committee or in one of our many volunteer capacities, there is always a need. We are hoping for a safe and successful 2021 for Plainfield!

Select Board Rob Taylor Chairman Eric Brann Ron Eberhardt