

# PLYMOUTH TOWN BOARD MEETING

**APRIL 11, 2022**

**6:30PM**

**PRESENT:** Supervisor Grace Nucero-Alger

Councilman Daniel Meyer

Councilman Frank Williams

Councilman Shawn Cushman

Councilman Garry James

Highway Superintendent Rodney Oakley

Supervisor Alger brought the meeting to order at 6:30pm. She led in the Pledge to the Flag.

She asked if there were any additions or corrections to the minutes of the March meeting. There were none. Mr. James made a motion to approve the minutes as sent. Mr. Meyer seconded the motion. The Board was polled and the motion was passed with five yeses and no nos.

**DOG CONTROL OFFICER'S REPORT:** Mr. Brian Franklin reported the following:

- 3/22/22 Rt. 23 loose dog, owner found
- 4/4/22 Plymouth North Norwich Road dog on neighbor's property
- 4/7/22 Stray dog, Plymouth Reservoir Road, no dog found
- 4/10/22 Stray Dog, Plymouth Reservoir Road, no dog found

**CODE ENFORCEMENT OFFICER'S REPORT:** Mr. Steve Fox reported the following:

- Robert Baker on Inman Road has cleaned up some stuff. It will be a long process, getting it done, because he's not in the best of health.
- Spoke with Brian Cushman about his garage roof. He stated that he plans on repairing the roof within a couple of months.
- Spoke with Jack Sayles, who is Forrest Sayles' brother. He said the Forrest Sayles property is in probate. His mother is the next of kin. Jack said he would work on getting the garbage cleaned up.
- Kelly Johnson cleaned up a lot of her property. It looks much better. The property is located on the Ashcraft Road.
- Jim Cummings owns Anchor Lane. He has removed several of the vehicles there. He has a few more to go. Mr. Fox spoke to him about the pile of scrap metal he has in front of a small garage. Mr. Cummings said he would get rid of that scrap pile. He also asked Mr. Fox if he could put up a fence to put scrap metal behind in the future.
- Martin Casino, who owns the house on the Plymouth North Norwich Road on the corner, still has barrels of waste oil on his property. Mr. Fox has sent Mr. Casino another letter. He never replies to correspondence from the Town. Mrs. Alger asked if there was anything else that could be done about this property. Mr. Fox said the Town could take actions such as attaching a lien on the property, but proper steps would have to be taken.

**HIGHWAY SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT:** Mr. Rodney Oakley reported the following:

- Plowing and sanding
- Took the plows and wings off the trucks
- Cleaning shoulders and started cleaning ditches
- Fixed the shoulder on Tinker Ridge and started cleaning that ditch
- Graded lower Doing Road and Blackman Road
- Paving Doing Road, from County Rd.19 to Reservoir Hill, is scheduled for May
- The County sent out sheets asking for help mowing. They will pay \$85.00 per mile. After working the numbers, Mr. Oakley said the cost to the Town would be \$54.97 per hour. Discussion followed. Mrs. Alger asked Mr. Cushman what he thought about it. Mr. Cushman said he could not comment due to conflict of interest. It was generally felt that the Town did not have the manpower or the time to take this on.

**UTV ACCESS:** Mr. Bob Graham spoke about a UTV club that some people are trying to get started that would work with the Towns to designate certain Town roads that people could ride their UTVs on. He stated that they would like to use approximately 11.5 miles of Plymouth roads. The club would pay for all of the signage, install the signs and enforce the rules. So far, they have 600 signatures of people that want to join the club. He said that a club like this would attract more people to the Town and bring more revenue with them. They are looking mostly at Town seasonal roads. Mr. Graham presented the Board with a proposed list of roads they would like to use. Mrs. Alger



said that some of the feedback she has gotten from some of the residents were concerns about damage that could be done to existing trails. Mr. Graham said this club could confine UTV riders to specific roads. Anyone found using other roads or trails could be subject to being ticketed. Mrs. Alger asked how the revenue would work. Who would get the actual money. Mr. Cushman said that people traveling through the Town would buy food, drinks, and other necessities. Mr. Graham also said that there would be income for the Town via fines if people abused the trails not designated by the club. Mr. Steve Kreiner asked if this would include all UTVs. Mr. Graham said yes. Mr. Oakley said that UTVs are not the cause of damage to truck trails. He said that pickup trucks and jeeps do it. Mr. James asked if the Town would have to pass a Town law to allow this activity. Mr. Oakley said that he believed there was already a law on the books to allow snowmobile traffic. It might be possible to “piggy back” off that law. Mr. Graham said that before anyone received a sticker to ride on any of the trails, they would have to provide proof of ownership and insurance.

**LETTERS AND COMMUNICATIONS:** Mrs. Alger reported the following:

- The Town has hired Robert Boehlman to mow Foster Park for \$50.00 per mow.
- The Easter Egg Hunt was scheduled for Saturday April 16, 2022 at 11:30am at Foster Park.
- The Board needs to approve the Investment Policy. Mrs. Aldridge asked what that was. Mrs. Alger said it was a State mandated policy governing Town investments. (Mr. James said the Town didn't have any investments at that time.)
- The County Highway has openings for CDL truck drivers.

**BOARD CONCERNS:** Mr. James made a motion that the Board approve the Investment Policy for the Town of Plymouth. Ms. Rhonda Fairbanks asked how the Board could approve the policy when the public had not seen it. Mrs. Alger said Ms. Fairbanks could wait for Public Concerns to ask her questions. Ms. Fairbanks said it wasn't right that the Board was going to approve the policy before the public could comment on it. Mrs. Alger said it was a mandated policy. She said the County doesn't ask for public input when they approve a policy. Ms. Fairbanks said she was sure that there was some discussion about it before hand. She asked if she could get a copy of the policy right then. Mrs. Alger said yes. A copy was provided.

Mrs. Brown, the Town Clerk, asked the Board what they wanted her to do with money she had been holding since 2018 for someone who had not completed their dog's license. She had tried several times to contact the person who is now homeless. Mr. Franklin said the State Agriculture and Markets Rep. should be able to help.

**PUBLIC CONCERNS:** Ms. Rhonda Fairbanks asked Mr. Fox what happened with the property dispute that was brought up to the Board last month. Mr. Fox said nothing had happened yet. He felt that the dispute was between the two property owners.

Mr. Tom Kreiner asked why Mr. Fox can't have people who violate junk laws arrested. Mr. Fox said he has ticketed people for such violations. He said he ticketed one individual eight times. They are not jailed because of the way the laws are written.

Mr. Scott Aldrich asked the Board how far the process has gone to purchase the Winchell property. Mr. Oakley said that nothing had been



done yet. He said that what people had heard were all rumors. Mrs. Alger said there would have to be a public referendum. Mr. Oakley said it was not the 85 acres that the Town wants. It was the piece of the land that the garage was on and adjacent land. The garage that is there is 54' X60'. The cost of building the same size garage somewhere else would be \$678,000.00. He said the issue had nothing to do with 85 acres. Ms. Fairbanks said it does have something to do with 85 acres. Mr. Aldrich said that property was sold to the current owner for \$132,000.00 in 2008 (without the new garage). He questioned that the land had increased in value by a factor of 2 ½ in 14 years? Mr. Aldrich also provided information about other highway departments around the County. The State Highway facility in Sherburne uses 3.8 acres, the Town of Sherburne uses 1.96 acres, North Norwich Highway uses 2.32, The Chenango County Highway facility uses 10.3 acres, the Town of Plymouth uses 10.17 (which Mr. Oakley said included the land fill) New York State Garage in Oxford uses 9.42 acres, Preston Highway uses 14.2 acres which included a recreational facility for kids. Eight Highway facilities at the town level, county level and the state level around this area add up to a total of 53.6 acres. Why does Plymouth need 85 acres?

Mr. Mark Bennett pointed out that the Town would pay \$325,000.00 for the land, they have it surveyed which would cost about \$10,000.00, Then the old house would have to be removed which would cost about \$25,000.00 to \$30,000.00. That would be close to \$400,000.00 before any new building would be put up. The existing building would have to be added onto. Mr. Bennet asked how Mr. Oakley knew how thick the

concrete floor was in the existing building. Mr. Oakley said Randy Monroe told him it was 6" thick. Mr. Bennett said his point was that not one person was saying that a new Town garage was not needed, but this was not the way to go about it. That is too much property. It would be taken off the tax rolls. Mr. Bennett said to do what it would take to accomplish what Mr. Oakley has been proposing would cost everybody a lot of money. There was inaudible conversation by several people. Mr. Aldrich suggested a piece of property which Mr. Oakley said was not suitable. Mr. Oakley said he has bought up several pieces of property. Ms. Fairbanks asked if he had contacted the owner of property of Rt. 23 that was suggested at the last meeting. Mr. Oakley told her to talk to the Planning Board. Ms. Fairbanks said she had asked to be informed when there was going to be a Planning Board meeting. She had not heard anything. She also wanted to read minutes from their meetings. She had not received any. Mr. Earring from the Planning Board said they do not have any minutes. Mrs. Brown said that by law, they were supposed to have minutes.

Mr. Jim Earring reviewed his findings so far on this project. He said to build a new building from scratch would cost \$4.2 million. Then it would cost another \$50,000 to \$60,000 to put in electric, a well, and a septic system. Mr. Bennett said you could still have the same expenses with the Winchell property.

Ms. Kari Kron said she was an engineer and had worked in construction consulting for a long time. She complimented the Highway Department on the work they had done on the road she lives on. She asked if the Town had a scope (a document that describes what the needs are for a new garage). Mr. Oakley said no. She made the suggestion that a



document be drawn up showing the requirements for a new highway facility. She said \$200.00 per square foot is perfectly reasonable. She said then you have something to reference when talking to contractors to get a ball park figure of the cost. There will be changes, but it is a place to start. She said when pieces of property are being considered, there should be another document drawn up cataloging how the properties measure up as far as existing pluses and minuses as compared to the Town's needs. Mr. Oakley stated that it was not his job to make decisions about this project. It was the job of the Planning Board and the Town Board. There was inaudible discussion by several people. Ms. Kron asked what the process was from where the Town is to get to what Mr. Oakley wants in a new garage. Mrs. Alger said an appraisal would be first. Mrs. Brown asked if that has happened yet? Mr. Oakley and Mrs. Alger both said no. Mr. Oakley said the Town was actively looking for property. Ms. Kron asked what the next step would be if a property was found that looked workable. Mr. Oakley said he would like to check it out. Ms. Kron said she would be willing to spend some time with Mr. Oakley and interview him to get all things documented to get a scope developed. Mr. Oakley said he would be happy to do that. She would also put together a spread sheet to help determine what the best course of action would be going forward. Mrs. Alger requested that Mr. Earring also be included in this meeting. Ms. Kron said she would like to meet that week. Mrs. Brown asked what the engineering company, that had attended a previous meeting, was doing. Mrs. Alger and Mr. Oakley said they were not doing anything.



Ms. Rhonda Fairbanks wanted to know if Mr. Winchell has been asked if he would sell the Town just 10 acres of land. Mr. Earring said no he had not. Ms. Fairbanks asked why not. No answer.

Ms. Fairbanks thanked everyone for coming to the meeting. She also spoke about ways to get more people to come to these meetings. She suggested that a mailing be sent out informing people when the meetings are and about the website. She asked about a sign to be placed out front. She said the wooden sign that was out near the road needed to be repaired. She asked that the Flag be corrected on the flag pole.

Ms. Fairbanks brought up Foster Park. She said it still isn't painted, why? Mr. James said he had been working there and had it all cleaned up. He said he was going to paint it with a spray painter that the Highway has. He said he was doing all this for nothing. Ms. Fairbanks said that there had been more than once that people had volunteered to paint the building. Mrs. DeSha said she had a whole crew from her place of employment ready to paint the building, but the Board could not decide what color or how much paint would be needed. She said, that as a tax payer in the Town of Plymouth, she was completely embarrassed about the fact that the Fosters would have to do anything with the park that they donated to the Town. And as a Town Board, they should all be embarrassed too. She said that the septic should have some attention to avoid future problems with the toilets.

Inaudible discussion followed.

Ms. Fairbanks asked if anyone had checked with the banks for foreclosure properties. No one had. Mrs. Alger said she would contact the bank. Mrs. Brown said there were five banks in Norwich.

Mrs. Kylie Anderson stated that she lives on Liddle Lane which is a dead end. She said there is no Dead End sign. She was concerned about the safety of her children. She asked for a Dead End sign. Mr. Oakley said that would not be a problem.

Mrs. Suzanne Aldridge warned everyone about debris being left behind by Meth addicts on Town roads. The police should be notified. The bottles left can explode. They must be removed by the authorities.

Ms. Patty Murray informed the Board that they could go to the County Clerk's office to search for properties that are in foreclosure. She said she would help with the search. She also asked who the Town attorney was. Mrs. Alger said James Gregory. Ms. Murray asked if the Town had consulted with Mr. Gregory. Mrs. Alger said for the property issues the Town is using Coughlin and Gerhart because the Town attorney does not handle these issues. Ms. Murray also asked the question, pertaining to the Investment Policy, if it called for the Board to vote before an investment could be purchased. Mrs. Alger said yes.

Ms. Murray thanked the Board for their service.

She also suggested that the Town consider a Town cleanup day. Maybe provide some dumpsters for people to bring things they want to discard.

Mrs. Charlene DeSha asked about the sign on her road. Mr. Oakley said he had it and would put it up when the ground dried out. She also asked about a culvert that needed some attention near Howie Sullivan's property. Mr. Oakley said he was aware of the problem and would fix it. Mrs. DeSha also informed Mr. Oakley that the beaver problem had



been solved, but she didn't know how much the affected culvert had been undermined.

Mrs. DeSha asked what plans Mrs. Linda Powell-Owens had for the youth in Plymouth this year. Mrs. Alger said the only thing right now would be the Easter Egg Hunt. Mrs. DeSha asked when Mrs. Powell-Owens would be coming in to make a report on the youth activities. Mrs. Alger said she would ask her to come in during the next meeting. Mrs. DeSha said the Town does not do enough for the kids in our Town. She said we can't expect to change behavior of the people in this Town if we can't give these kids a purpose. She listed suggestions for things that could be done for the kids.

Mrs. Anderson said she agreed with Ms. Fairbanks about a mailing informing the Town's people of the Town activities.

Mrs. Aldrich suggested that signs be posted at the Post Offices informing people about meetings.

Mr. Jim Earring said that some County landfills have a free dump day. Mrs. Aldrich asked if there was a time when people could get rid of electronics. Mr. Cushman advised her to contact the Chenango County Highway Department.

Ms. Murray said that many people in our Town are older and do not use the internet. She said the internet speed is very slow. Also that even though the cell tower is up, it didn't make any improvement in our cell service. She asked if there was anything else that could be done to improve service. It was said that eventually other providers would add on to the tower, improving service. She asked if anyone had asked other providers about adding on. The answer was no. Ms. Fairbanks

asked why no one has called Mr. Matt Beckwith to find out how to contact the proper people. Ms. Kron said this would be a corporate level issue. She said that even if we were able to get through to the right people, it would still be 18 months before anything would happen. Mr. James said he would touch base with Mr. Beckwith and go from there.

Ms. Fairbanks asked what had changed between the January and the February meetings regarding the Winchell property. Mr. James said that after listening to the Planning Committee and the Code Enforcement Officer, the Board changed their minds.

Ms. Fairbanks objected to the language that Mr. Oakley used on Facebook. She said he was representing our Town and should behave with more respect. Mrs. Denise Rothwell also expressed her indignation at being subjected to such offensive language.

There was inaudible discussion because many people were raising their voices at the same time. Due to the commotion, Mrs. Alger said that the meeting was adjourned at 8:15pm.

The bills were reviewed and signed. Mr. Williams made a motion to pay the bills. Mr. Meyer seconded the motion. The Board was polled and the motion was carried with five yeses and no nos.

Mr. Meyer made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Williams seconded the motion. The Board was polled and the meeting was adjourned again.



Respectfully submitted by,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Virginia E. Brown". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Virginia E. Brown

Plymouth Town Clerk

April 29, 2022