

**PLYMOUTH TOWN BOARD MEETING
AND ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING
JANUARY 8, 2024
6:30PM**

PRESENT: Supervisor Patricia Murray
Councilman Frank Williams
Councilman Ray Elsworth
Highway Superintendent Louis Redenback

ABSENT: Two Council Seats Were Vacant

Supervisor Murray led the attending in the Pledge to the Flag. She then asked for a moment of silence in memory of a much respected former Councilman, Dan Meyer.

Mr. Williams made a motion to go into the Organizational Meeting. Mr. Elsworth seconded the motion. The Board was polled and the motion was passed with three yeses and no nos. Two Council seats were vacant.

Ms. Murray stated the Town positions are as follows:

- Highway Superintendent \$56,000.00
- Assessor \$10,000.00
- Supervisor \$9,000.00
- Justice \$8,000.00
- Bookkeeper \$6,000.00
- Court Clerk \$2,400.00
- Town Clerk \$12,300.00

- Tax Collector \$7,150.00
- Registrar of Vital Statistics \$300.00
- Code Enforcement Officer \$4,400.00
- Dog Control Officer \$3,720.00
- Deputy Town Clerk \$15.00 per hour
- Town Councilman \$2,250.00 each totaling \$9,000.00 for four councilmen.
- Historian – No Salary
- Youth Director – No Salary

Mileage will be paid at \$.67 per mile.

NBT is the Town's official bank.

The Evening Sun is the Town's official newspaper.

Mr. Williams made a motion to adopt all of the above. Mr. Elsworth seconded the motion. The Board was polled and the motion was carried with three yeses and no nos. Two Council seats were vacant. Mr. Williams made a motion to return to the regular meeting. Mr. Elsworth seconded the motion. The Board was polled and the motion was carried with three yeses and no nos. Two Council seats were vacant.

Mr. Williams read Resolution #1 Annual Re-Appointment of Steve Fox as Code Enforcement Officer. Mr. Elsworth seconded the resolution. The Board was polled and the resolution was passed with three yeses and no nos. Two Council seats were vacant.

Mr. Williams read Resolution #2 Annual Re-Appointment of Brian Franklin as Dog Control Officer. Mr. Elsworth seconded the resolution. The Board was polled and the resolution was passed with three yeses and no nos. Two Council seats were vacant.

Mr. Williams read Resolution #3 Re-Appointment of Linda Powell Owens as Youth Program Leader. Mr. Elsworth seconded the resolution. The Board was polled and the resolution was passed with three yeses and no nos. Two Council seats were vacant.

Mr. Williams read Resolution #4 Standard Workday and Reporting Resolution. Mr. Elsworth seconded the resolution. The Board was polled and the resolution was passed with three yeses and no nos. Two Council seats were vacant.

Mr. Williams read Resolution #5 Establishing Monthly Board Meeting Dates for 2024. Mr. Elsworth seconded the resolution. The Board was polled and the resolution was passed with three yeses and no nos. Two Council seats were vacant.

Mr. Williams read Resolution #6 to Create the Position of Deputy Town Supervisor. Mr. Elsworth seconded the resolution. The Board was polled and the resolution was passed with three yeses and no nos. Two Council seats were vacant.

Mr. Williams read Resolution #7 to Appoint Town Historian Dale Pennington. Mr. Elsworth seconded the resolution. The Board was polled and the resolution was passed with three yeses and no nos. Two Town Council seats were vacant.

Mr. Williams read Resolution #8 Authorizing Appropriation and Transfer of Funds for the Purchase of 2015 International Truck-Highway Department. Mr. Elsworth seconded the resolution. The Board was polled and the resolution was passed with three yeses and no nos. Two Council seats were vacant.

Mr. Williams read Resolution #9 Appointment of Town Planning Board Member, Tim Manwarren. Mr. Elsworth seconded the resolution. The Board was polled and the resolution was passed with three yeses and no nos. Two Council seats were vacant.

Ms. Murray asked if there were any additions or corrections to December 2023's minutes. There were none. Mr. Williams made a motion to accept the minutes as sent. Mr. Elsworth seconded the motion. The Board was polled and the motion was passed with three yeses and no nos. Two Council seats were vacant.

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

- 12/20/23 – Dog at large on Rt. 16
- 12/20/23 – Dog Welfare on Rt. 23
- 1/1/24 – Dead dog on Rt. 23
- 1/3/24 – Dog on neighbor's property on Rt. 19. Ticket was given. It was the second warning.

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

- Follow up on 102 Henry Lane. Rosemarie Snell has cleaned up quite a lot, still more to do.
- 111 County Rt.21. Spoke with Kelly Cushman who said she wasn't financially able to take care of the property. She said Mr. Fox should talk to her ex-husband.

- Followed up with Quinten Kemp who was trying to move some vehicles and got his truck hung up in the woods behind his house. He has no idea how he is going to get it out.
- Return visit to 3303 State Hwy. 23. Told Mike Bishop to stop procrastinating and get things cleaned up starting with the junk in the boat by the road. Mr. Fox informed him that he was working with the Town Board to clean up his property for him and add the cost to his tax bill. Follow up – Mr. Bishop did work on moving the boat and some junk.
- 140 Travis Road. Mr. Brock Manwarren sold his property to Colby Spaven. Mr. Spaven's mother complained about Mr. Felter's animals. Mr. Fox explained that the Town does not have a fence ordinance so there was nothing he could do.
- 140 Travis Road. Property owner commented about a new septic going in. Mr. Fox saw where someone had been working on the septic but it appeared to be finished. Spoke with Colby and he referred Mr. Fox to Spaven Construction Company. Mr. Fox followed up. Spaven Construction said all they did was repair a septic line.
- Received a letter from Principle Design about the septic system for Paul Simack stating that it was not feasible to do a septic system. Mr. Fox referred the letter to Mr. Dave Gorman at the Health Dept. because he didn't think he had the authority to authorize a variance for a holding tank. Mr. Gorman said it was not going to happen.

Ms. Murray introduced April Ray as the Town's new bookkeeper.

HIGHWAY SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT: Mr. Redenback reported on the following:

- The highway crew has been plowing and sanding (9 times)
- Fixed damage caused by the rain on the 18th.
- Worked on Pigeon Hill Rd.
- Turned a bad portion of the Plymouth/North Norwich Rd. in to dirt.
- Truck #2 (the one that was wrecked) is back on the road.
- Truck #1 is back in service.
- Doing Truck maintenance and repairs.
- Cleaned up more of the garage and built a new work bench for all the hydraulic stuff.
- The heaters for the bathrooms have been installed.

PLANNING COMMITTEE REPORT: Mr. Tim Manwarren reported on the following:

- Explained the mix-up with Mr. Manwarren's term expiration and his wish to remain on the Planning Board.
- The January 2 meeting was not a legitimate meeting due to a lack of a quorum and an error in the posting of the date of the meeting.
- A list of meeting dates for 2024 have been posted on the board outside the Town Hall and on the Town website.
- Mr. Manwarren was not sure he could continue his report because the January meeting was not a legitimate meeting. Ms. Murray said the report would not be official, but he could continue.

- They had one new request. Cook brothers want to divide their property. They met the threshold of the Town's requirements.

Ms. Murray read a personal statement written by her. She felt she had been bullied and disrespected by everyone. She asked for everyone's cooperation.

Ms. Murray said the Town needs two new Councilmen, a Court clerk, and, in the fall, a new Justice.

Ms. Murray asked if Judge Fox would like to say a few words. He presented Mrs. Brown with a letter of resignation from his Court clerk. He said that the person that the public elected as Town Judge did not accept the position. The Unified Court System was contacted and they reappointed Judge Jim Fox for another year. He encouraged everyone to consider running for Justice. He invited them to come and see him to learn about the position. He announced that court hours have been changed to Tuesdays at 1:00pm. He also said that he would be looking for a new Court clerk. He informed everyone about a new law concerning tenants who are being evicted. They may now sue the landlord.

Town Clerk Brown read letters of resignation from the following:

- Martha Vidler – Court Clerk effective January 31, 2024
Mr. Williams made a motion to accept the resignation. Mr. Elsworth seconded the motion. The Board was polled and the

motion was passed with three yeses and no nos. Two Council seats were vacant.

- Shawn Cushman – Town Councilman effective December 31, 2023
Mr. Williams made a motion to accept the resignation. Mr. Elsworth seconded the motion. The Board was polled and the motion was passed with three yeses and no nos. Two Council seats were vacant.
- Daniel Meyer – Town Councilman effective December 31, 2023
Mr. Williams made a motion to accept the resignation. Mr. Elsworth seconded the motion. The Board was polled and the motion was passed with three yeses and no nos. Two Council seats were vacant.

Ms. Murray appointed Mr. Williams as her Deputy Supervisor.

Ms. Murray said there would be a thirty day wait before the check for the truck from Hamilton could be signed due to regulations regarding the use of money from the Highway Reserve.

PUBLIC CONCERNS: There were several questions and comments made by several people that concerned where money went. Also, complaints about how the Town finances were being handled. Ms. Murray explained to the best of her ability.

Mr. Redenback said that the oldest truck in the Town's fleet just cost the Town \$20,000.00 in repairs. He made the point that that truck was not worth \$20,000.00. He wondered why the Town couldn't come up with

another \$10,000.00 to buy a newer truck instead of wasting \$20,000.00 on an old unreliable truck.

Discussion followed.

Mr. Ed Pierno offered to lend the Town the money for the truck at no interest. Ms. Murray said she would have to ask the Town attorney.

More discussion.

Ms. Murray asked that the Highway bills be brought to her on the Wednesday before the meeting. Mr. Redenback said that would not work for him. She asked that Mr. Redenback keep a record on each truck's expenses and bring that for the Board to see.

There was a question about the increase in property taxes. Ms. Murray explained that it was a result of several years of mishandling of the budget.

Mrs. Bernadette Jackson asked if the people who ran for Councilman would be considered for the position now. Ms. Murray said yes if they signed the signup sheet.

Salt sheds and grant writers were discussed.

Mr. Wightman stated that on 12/1/19 \$83,318.00 was taken out of the Capital Reserve Fund to pay for a skid steer. He asked why we have a bond on that. Ms. Murray said she would look into that.

Judge Fox interjected that the Town is undergoing a very long and detailed State audit. He said that all the questions about where the money went would be answered when they are finished. He advised that everyone wait to hear the comptrollers report. They will answer all the questions and name names. He said we should move on and work toward a better future for our Town.

Mr. Brett Wightman asked why \$6,600.00 was taken out of General Repairs, a payroll fund. He quoted State Law which says a Town may not take any money out of a budget line that already shows a 0 amount. He also said that \$16,572.00 was taken out of the Snow Removal line. Ms. Murray said she and the new bookkeeper were looking in to it. Bringing the bookkeeper up to speed will take some time.

There was a great deal of discussion about the electrical work in process at the Town garage. Pictures were passed around of the electrical work that has already been done. Most agreed it was unsatisfactory. Mr. Tim Manwarren volunteered to be a project manager if that would help. He expressed his disapproval of having the same electrician do more work and the Town pay him more money when his work had already proven to be disappointing. Ms. Murray said she would talk to the Town attorney and get an answer on this subject for everyone.

Mr. Wightman brought up that the Town's Procurement Policy requires three bids for anything over \$7,500.00. Ms. Murray disagreed. After

rereading the policy and discussing it with Mr. Wightman, she realized she had misunderstood it. The insurance company said the whole roof should be replaced. They will pay for it. Ms. Murray said she had contacted three contractors. Only one was interested in the job and submitted a bid. Mr. Franklin suggested that when bids were required, Ms. Murray should send out written requests in the interest of clarity.

Mr. Wightman expressed his concern about the water testing at the garage. He said he had asked for further testing to find out if the water could be harmful to the skin. The test lab said they would not give the results until the second test was paid for. The location of the bill is unknown.

Mrs. Jackson asked when a decision about the new Board members would be made. Ms. Murray estimated in about three weeks. Mrs. Jackson asked if the whole Board would be making the decision. Ms. Murray said yes. Ms. Jackson suggested that the Town needs another way to inform people of the dates of the meetings.

Some people objected to the Board not automatically appointing the people who had run for councilman and were not elected. The Board will appoint the new councilmen.

Someone asked who appointed the Deputy Supervisor. Ms. Murray did alone. The Deputy Supervisor will fill in for the Supervisor when needed.

The bills were reviewed. Mr. Williams made a motion to pay bills. Mr. Elsworth seconded the motion. The Board was polled and the motion was passed with three yeses and no nos. Two Council seats were vacant.

Mr. Williams made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Elsworth seconded the motion. The Board was polled and the motion was carried with three yeses and no nos. Two Council seats were vacant. The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted by,

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

Virginia E. Brown

Plymouth Town Clerk

January 22, 2024.