

Town Meeting March 13, 2007  
Plainfield, New Hampshire

The annual meeting for the Town of Plainfield was held at the Plainfield School Gymnasium on Bonner Road on March 13, 2007. Stephen H. Taylor, moderator, opened the meeting at 10:00 a.m. with the reading of Article I.

Total Number on Checklist:	1509
Total number of ballots cast:	404
Percentage voting:	27%

**Article 1.** To choose by ballot: One selectman for three years, one town clerk for three years, One tax collector for three years, one treasurer for three years, one trustee of trust funds for three years, one library trustee (west side) for three years, one library trustee (east side) for three years, one cemetery trustee for three years and any other necessary town officers.

**Town Clerk for three years:**

Ruth Ann Wheeler had 374 votes

**Ruth Ann Wheeler was declared elected.**

**Selectman for three years:**

Judith Belyea had 347 votes.

David Grobe had three votes, Dennis Girouard, Beverly Widger, Steve Sheehan had two votes.

**Judith Belyea was declared elected.**

**Tax Collector for three years:**

Ruth Ann Wheeler had 376 votes

Brad Wilder, Eric O'Leary each had one vote.

**Ruth Ann Wheeler was declared elected.**

**Treasurer for three years:**

Fred Sweet had 372 Votes

**Fred Sweet was declared elected.**

**Trustee of Trust Funds for three years:**

Jesse Stalker had 370 votes

**Jesse Stalker was declared elected.**

**Cemetery Trustee for three years:**

Jesse Stalker had 369 votes

**Jesse Stalker was declared elected.**

**Library Trustee for three years-West:**

Anita Brown had 361 votes

**Anita Brown was declared elected.**

**Library Trustee for three years-East:**

Elisabeth Beck had 357 votes

**Elisabeth Beck was declared elected.**

Moderator Taylor recessed the meeting at 8:07 p.m.

A massive weather front brought over ten inches of snow, followed by a period of sleet on Friday, March 16 but managed to abate in time for town meeting to proceed.

Saturday, March 17, 2007

Moderator Taylor opened the meeting at 10:06 a.m. with an invocation by Rev. Harold “Dewey” Jones, followed by the salute to the flag. Ida Burroughs led the meeting in the singing of America the Beautiful.

Taylor introduced the table, Selectmen, Judith Belyea, Robert Taylor, Mark Wilder, town administrator, Stephen Halleran and Town Clerk, Ruth Ann Wheeler. Taylor explained the rules of the meeting and proceeded to the reading of Article 2. A motion was made by Paul Franklin to dispense with the reading of the full warrant, seconded by Ruth Ann Wheeler.

**ARTICLE 2.** A motion was offered by Stephen Halleran to see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$1,695,956** to defray town charges for the 2007 fiscal year as proposed by the selectmen breaking down as follows: Motion was seconded by Mark Wilder.

<b>1. Executive</b>	<b>\$126,610</b>
<b>2. Election/Registration/Vital Statistics</b>	<b>5,980</b>
<b>3. Financial Administration</b>	<b>51,182</b>
<b>4. Revaluation of Property</b>	<b>13,000</b>
<b>5. Legal Expenses</b>	<b>8,100</b>
<b>6. Personnel Administration</b>	<b>14,600</b>
<b>7. Planning and Zoning</b>	<b>7,500</b>
<b>8. General Government Buildings</b>	<b>5,950</b>
<b>9. Cemeteries</b>	<b>23,960</b>
<b>10. Insurance</b>	<b>36,700</b>
<b>11. Regional Associations</b>	<b>8,000</b>
<b>12. Police Department</b>	<b>224,590</b>
<b>13. Ambulance Service</b>	<b>31,000</b>
<b>14. Fire Departments -Plainfield</b>	<b>39,000</b>
<b>-Meriden</b>	<b>37,000</b>
<b>15. Building Inspection</b>	<b>8,800</b>
<b>16. Emergency Management</b>	<b>1,000</b>
<b>17. Hydrant &amp; Forest Fire Expense</b>	<b>6,350</b>
<b>18. Dispatching for Fire, Police &amp; Ambulance</b>	<b>14,000</b>
<b>19. Highway Administration</b>	<b>19,350</b>

<b>20. Highways and Streets</b>	<b>522,700</b>
<b>21. Road Projects</b>	<b>100,761</b>
<b>22. Street Lights</b>	<b>8,000</b>
<b>23. Solid Waste Collection</b>	<b>135,000</b>
<b>24. Solid Waste Disposal</b>	<b>80,610</b>
<b>25. Health Agencies</b>	<b>17,900</b>
<b>26. Animal Control</b>	<b>1,500</b>
<b>27. Welfare</b>	<b>6,750</b>
<b>28. Recreation Commission</b>	<b>18,240</b>
<b>29. Libraries</b>	
- Plainfield	<b>49,537</b>
- Meriden	<b>32,035</b>
<b>30. Patriotic</b>	<b>1,500</b>
<b>31. Conservation Commission</b>	<b>2,500</b>
<b>32. Principal Long-term debt</b>	<b>25,000</b>
<b>33. Interest Long-term debt</b>	<b>11,251</b>

**Total:                   \$1,695,956**

Halleran offered the following points of explanation for this year's budget. Last year's budget was over by \$9000 due to several factors 1) decision to overlay of Methodist Hill at cost of \$28,000 2) FEMA money for Willow Brook Road was denied so spent \$5000 to do paperwork for a state grant resulting in a \$167,000 gain 3) legal fees spent in acquisition of land adjacent to town gravel pit. There is no increase in staff; only a 3% increase in wages; 15% increase in retirement and insurance costs; increase in fuel costs.

Halleran said that a signed contract with Lebanon would reduce our trash disposal fees. Other points of importance were a signed agreement with Claremont for septic disposal as state law requires (will result in lower fees for individual homeowners); road projects will be finishing Beauty Hill road followed by Colby Hill Road. The finance committee felt that the increase for the Philip Read Library was justified as the library provides a community and resource center for the Plainfield Village.

**Doug Chapman offered the following amendment to the motion:**

That a sum of \$10,500 be added to the overall budget to be distributed to full time town employees in the form of pay rises effective July 1, 2007. It was seconded from the floor.

A paper ballot was taken.

Yes    121  
No     22

**It was declared a vote in the affirmative.**

There being no further discussion, Moderator Taylor as for a paper ballot for the revised budget of \$1,706,456 including the approved \$10,500 increase.

Yes    136  
No     7

**The vote was in the affirmative and so declared.**

At this point in the meeting, moderator Taylor asked Karla Skindar and Matthew Houde, our local representatives and officers Master Sergeant Lawrence Dore, Corporal Paul Roberts and State trooper Eric Brann to come forward. Skinder and Houde presented a commendation to the

department and to each individual officer from the House of Representatives for their heroism in rescuing a woman from a burning vehicle. Skinder offered in absentia a similar commendation from Senator Peter Burling and the Senate. Skinder also commended the EMTs, the fire department personnel and all others who assisted at the car crash site.

Robb Taylor also presented a commendation to each officer on behalf of the Town of Plainfield.

**ARTICLE 3. Mark Wilder offered the following resolution:** To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$95,000** for the purchase of a new bucket loader to be used by the highway department, and to authorize the selectmen to withdraw the sum of \$95,000 from the Highway Vehicle Capital Reserve Fund created in 1987 pursuant to RSA 35:1 and to further authorize the selectmen to sell or trade the town's existing 1991 loader (the new loader has a value of \$120,000 the town=s existing loader an estimated value of \$25,000). Seconded by Robb Taylor. Wilder explained that the time had come, as the costs of repairs were increasing and that the present overhauled motor would be defunct soon. A Case 621D has been chosen for its value and the ability to have the repairs done by a local dealership.

A vote by paper ballot was taken.

Yes 149

No 4

**It was a vote in the affirmative and so declared.**

**ARTICLE 4. Robb Taylor made the following motion:** To see if the town will vote to authorize the selectmen to enter into a two year lease agreement for the purpose of leasing a police cruiser valued at \$24,650 and to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$11,000** for the first year=s payment for that purpose. Further to authorize the selectmen to sell or trade the existing 2003 police cruiser, valued at approximately \$2,650. This contract includes a second year non-appropriation clause. Seconded by Halleran.

R. Taylor explained that the old cruiser was at 90,000 miles and showing signs of wear. Cruisers are kept for four years before replacement. All existing equipment will be moved to the new cruiser with the current radios, which are up-to-date. This is not a usual lease but a special contract, which allows the town to purchase the cruiser for \$1.00 at the end of the second year.

Halleran said, as this is an ongoing expense; it could be included in the police budget in the future.

A hand vote was taken.

Yes 152

No 0

**It was a unanimous vote in the affirmative and so declared.**

**ARTICLE 5. Judy Belyea offered the following motion:** To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$117,500** to be placed in existing town capital reserve and general trust funds, pursuant to RSA 35:1 and RSA 31:19-a as follows:

RSA 35:1 funds:

\$10,000 Town Bridge Capital Reserve Fund created in 1994.

\$5,000 Revaluation Fund created in 1993.

\$45,000 Highway Vehicles Fund created in 1987.

\$50,000 Transportation Improvement Fund created in 2006.

RSA 31:19a funds:

\$5,000 Town Hall Repair Fund established in 1996.

\$2,500 Library Building Repair Fund established in 1992.

The selectmen are named agents to expend for the bridge fund, the town hall repair fund and the

library building repair fund. Seconded by Halleran.

Belyea explained that this was an ongoing article presented each year creating fund accounts to offset major expenses.

A vote by paper ballot was taken

Yes 161  
No 2

**It was a vote in the affirmative and so declared.**

During the counting, David Grobe, chairman of the Plainfield Conservation Commission presented the Plainfield Conservation award for Outstanding Stewardship to Ruth Ann Wheeler for her past accomplishments on behalf of the town.

**ARTICLE 6. Robb Taylor offered the following resolution:** To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate **\$20,400** from the town=s fund balance to be deposited into the Transportation Improvement Capital Reserve Fund established in 2006. Said funds were received from the Plainfield School District in 2006 as part of the highway department=s assistance with the previously approved connection to the Meriden Village Waste Water plant. The intent of this article is to make these funds available for future highway improvement projects. Seconded by Belyea.

Taylor explained that the budget for the Meriden sewer system hook-up to the Plainfield School was \$40,000. The bids exceeded this amount. An agreement was made with the Highway Department where the pipes and other material would be paid for and the balance of \$20,400 would be go to the Town. This article is to allow the town to place the monies into a trust fund. It is a fine example of cooperation between the town and the school.

A vote by show of hands was taken.

Yes 148  
No 0

**It was a unanimous vote in the affirmative and so declared.**

**ARTICLE 7. David Grebe offered the following resolution:** To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$5,000** to be used by the conservation commission to refresh the boundary markings of town-owned properties where needed. This is the second part of this project; the initial work was funded last year through the passage of article 14. Further. to withdraw said sum from the Forest Maintenance Fund established in 1992 pursuant to RSA 31:113. Seconded by Stephen Halleran.

Grobe explained that no taxes would be collected as the funds come out of the existing fund. It is good stewardship to have all the boundaries marked and blazed. It is the mission of the Commission to help residents appreciate the natural resources of Plainfield.

Stephen Taylor said that in the 70's only 10% of Plainfield was surveyed and very difficult for title searches to be done. Aerial photos helped establish boundaries to create a set of maps.

A vote by voice was taken.

**They're being no negative votes; it was declared a unanimous vote in the affirmative.**

**ARTICLE 8. Stephen Halleran offered the following resolution:** To see if the town will vote to

raise and appropriate the sum of **\$4,000** to be used for the purchase and installation of signs welcoming visitors to the town and its various villages. Seconded by Judy Belyea.

Halleran explained that the sign committee would like ten signs in total but this year felt that four-one at each geographical entrance to town and two in Plainfield Village would suffice. The two in Plainfield Village are to serve as traffic calmers as well as a welcome to the village.

A vote by show of hands was taken.

Yes	134
No	5

**It was a vote in the affirmative and so declared.**

**ARTICLE 9. Mark Wilder offered the following resolution:** To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$3,000** for the purpose of continuing to repair, and when needed, replace fencing around the town=s various cemeteries. Seconded by Judith Belyea.

David Chellis said that rather than having this as an article; it should just be part of the cemetery budget.

**A voice vote was taken. It was a unanimous vote in the affirmative and so declared.**

At this time, Moderator Taylor handed the gavel to Paul Franklin, assistant moderator.

**ARTICLE 10. Judy Belyea offered the following resolution:** To see if the town will, pursuant to RSA 31:19a, vote to establish an expendable trust fund to be called @Townsend Bridge & Trail Fund@ for the purpose of maintenance, replacement or removal of the Townsend bridge and the maintenance and expansion of the surrounding trail network. Further to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$7,163** to be deposited into this fund. Said funds to come from the following sources: \$663 from fund balance, \$5,000 from committed private donations and \$1,500 from the Conservation Commission Fund. The Board of selectmen to be named agents to expend. Seconded by Mark Wilder.

Belyea explained that this article is to create a fund and it does not involve raising of further taxes.

A slide presentation was giving by William and Laura Knight showing the stages of construction of the bridge. The Knights explained that ongoing expenses are unknown at this time other than the yearly inspection. Kimball Union Academy has given the town a permanent easement for the use of the land and trails.

**A voice vote was taken. It was a unanimous vote in the affirmative and so declared.**

**ARTICLE 11. Robb Taylor offered the following resolution:** To see if the town will vote to dissolve of the Sullivan County Regional Refuse District. Seconded by Stephen Halleran.

This is to formally dissolve the district. A 2/3 vote of all towns in New Hampshire is needed.

A paper ballot was taken as required.

Yes	135
No	2

**It was a vote in the affirmative and so declared.**

**ARTICLE 12. Mark Wilder offered the following resolution:** To see if the town will, in the event that the dissolution of the Sullivan County Regional Refuse District is not approved by the affirmative vote of two-thirds of the members of the District, vote to withdraw from the Sullivan County Regional Refuse District as permitted by the district agreement, effective July 1<sup>st</sup> 2007. Seconded by Stephen Halleran.

This article is to let Plainfield out of the Solid Waste district if the district did not receive a 2/3 vote by all other towns.

A paper ballot was taken as required.

Yes 144

No

It was a unanimous vote and so declared.

**ARTICLE 13. Stephen Halleran offered the following resolution:** To see if the town will vote to increase the real estate exemption on dormitories, dining rooms, and kitchens of Kimball Union Academy above the required \$150,000 as allowed in RSA 72:23, to one hundred (100) percent of the assessed value of property over which the town has statutory discretion. Seconded by Robb Taylor.

Halleran explained that the increased exemptions are returned to the town in the form of scholarships to Plainfield day students. At this point, all students receive a small stipend but most of the funds are distributed on a "needs" basis. Approximately \$9000 in monies is given out.

Many felt that it should only be given on a needs basis; monies should never exceed what it would cost to send a student to Lebanon; the state should have a voucher system.

A paper ballot was taken.

Yes 106

No 41

It was a vote in the affirmative and so declared.

**ARTICLE 14. Robb Taylor offered the following resolution:** To see if the town will direct the selectmen to appoint, within 60 days of town meeting, a committee to continue the KUA/Plainfield study. The charge to this committee shall be to meet with representatives of the KUA administration and maintain an ongoing review of the relationship between the academy and the town, including any agreement pursuant to RSA 72:23, and to report its findings at next March's annual town meeting. Seconded by Stephen Halleran.

A voice vote was taken.

**It was a unanimous vote in the affirmative and so declared.**

**ARTICLE 15. Mark Wilder offered the following resolution:** To see if the town will vote to instruct the moderator to appoint a finance committee (advisory only) of six Plainfield voters to advise the selectmen, and other officers of the town in the prudential affairs of the town. Seconded by Robb Taylor.

S. Taylor said that the finance committee began in 1931 and now has become an elective board in many towns. He thanked this year's board for their fine efforts.

A voice vote was taken. **It was a unanimous vote in the affirmative and so declared.**

**ARTICLE 16. Judy Belyea offered the following resolution:** To see if the town will vote to instruct the selectboard to reappoint the Solid Waste Committee established by Article 14 of the 2005 annual meeting and Article 13 of the 2006 annual meeting. Seconded by Robb Taylor.

Susan Williams presented a slide show showing the amount of unrecyclable debris left at the town shed on a weekly basis despite all of the signs and warnings posted. The best was the Christmas tree on top of the metal dumpster.

Williams said that the committee is in the process of updating the shed and would like to increase the amount of materials recycled this year.

A voice vote was taken. **It was a unanimous vote in the affirmative and so declared.**

**ARTICLE 17. Stephen Halleran offered the following resolution:** To see what action that town will take with respect to the reports of town officers. Seconded by Ruth Wheeler.

A voice vote was taken. **It was a unanimous in the affirmative and so declared.**

**ARTICLE: 18. Robb Wendt offered the following resolution:** To see if the town will vote to approve the following resolution to be forwarded to our elected officials at the local and state levels:

Resolved: We the voters of Plainfield believe in a New Hampshire that is fiscally responsible and locally controlled -- but fair. The property tax has become unfair. AThe Pledge@ against considering any alternative broad-based taxes perpetuates this unfair and burdensome property tax. We urge our elected officials to reject AThe Pledge@, have an informed discussion covering all options, and adopt a revenue system that retains the good aspects of fiscal responsibility and local control -- but relieves the unfair local property tax burden. Seconded by Sandy Stettenheim.

Wendt had several charts showing the burden of taxes and percentages paid according to income.

Margaret Drye felt it was not a "town" issue and felt that it would be better to talk to representatives and senators. Drye asked that the motion be "tabled". Seconded by Robb Drye.

A voice vote was taken on the motion to table. **The "nos" had it and the motion was declared lost.**

Doug Cogan felt we needed to speak to State Officials.

William McGonigle was in favor of local control and not an income tax.

Others felt that only town business should come before the meeting--others felt the body should send a message to Concord.

Susan Fauver said she hated being in the position of voting either for the children or her neighbors.

Bob LaFlam felt that an income tax in Vermont didn't help and they had just as much trouble funding schools.

Robb Drye requested a paper ballot.

A vote by paper ballot was taken.

Yes 114

No 26

**It was a vote in the affirmative and so declared.**



**ARTICLE 19. Lee Lynd offered the following resolution:** To see if the Town will vote to approve the following resolution to be forwarded to our elected officials at the local and state levels:

Resolved: We the voters of Plainfield believe that relief must be provided to our most heavily burdened taxpayers while supporting an excellent education for our children in a fiscally responsible way. While we hope that the State of NH will begin to address its education funding responsibilities, we also believe that towns should be able to enlist the creativity of their residents to resolve intra-town tax inequities in ways that the state currently limits. Toward that end, we urge our elected officials to pass enabling legislation that expands the opportunities for towns to raise revenue as their citizens see fit. Seconded by Rodd Wendt.

Lynd said that in 1991 he was on a tax inequity committee and we still have an inequity problem. The present system is unfair. He researched the laws with Rep. Matthew Houde and discovered that there is no local control. The town cannot pass any ways to help without the permission of the NH legislature.

Marc Rosenbaum felt that is we couldn't have home rule and help our neighbors; we will lose our diversity in the community.

Others echoed the general concept of having a way to help neighbors locally.

A vote by paper ballot was taken

Yes 119

No 17

**It was a vote in the affirmative and so declared.**

The meeting was returned to moderator Taylor.

**ARTICLE 20. Nancy Mogielnicki offered the following:** To see if the town will go on record in support of effective actions by the President and the Congress to address the issue of climate change which is increasingly harmful to the environment and economy of New Hampshire and to the future well being of the people of Plainfield.

These actions include:

1. Establishment of a national program requiring reductions of U.S. greenhouse gas emissions while protecting the U.S. economy.
2. Creation of a major national research initiative to foster rapid development of sustainable energy technologies thereby stimulating new jobs and investment.

In addition, the town of Plainfield encourages New Hampshire citizens to work for emission reductions within their communities, and we ask our selectmen to consider the appointment of a voluntary energy committee to recommend local steps to save energy and reduce emissions.

The record of the vote on this article shall be transmitted to the New Hampshire Congressional Delegation, to the President of the United States, and to declared candidates for those offices.

Mogielnicki explained that this article was on the warrant in 180 towns in New Hampshire by the Carbon Coalition.

Besides sending a message, there are many things a town can do to help individual households-energy audits, use of fluorescent lighting, etc.

A voice vote was taken. **It was a unanimous vote in the affirmative and so declared.**

**ARTICLE 21.** To transact any other business that may legally come before this meeting. Robb Taylor thanked all the committees including Dan Cantlin and the Recreation Committee, Al Grindle, Diane Rogers and Mary Ellen Sullivan for their efforts on the senior dinners and the ballot clerks who made it through the snow. Thanks also were given to Kate Pierson who was our main microphone runner.

The meeting adjourned at 3:14 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Ruth Ann Wheeler  
Town Clerk

Officers sworn in at the meeting:      Judith Belyea-Selectman  
Ruth Ann Wheeler-Town Clerk and Tax Collector  
Anita Brown-Library Trustee-West

Sworn in by Ruth Ann Wheeler      Fred Sweet- Treasurer  
Jesse Stalker-Trustee of Trust Funds-Cemetery Trustee