

Town of Pomfret

5218 Pomfret Road
North Pomfret, VT 05053

Draft Minutes of the June 3, 2015 Regular Selectboard Meeting

Present: Eric Chase (Selectboard Member), Michael Reese (Selectboard Member), Phil Dechert (Selectboard Member), Ellen DesMeules (Treasurer), Arthur Lewin, Sr. (Road Foreman), Anne Bower (Library Trustee), Jean Souter, Laura Kent (Auditor), Sherman Kent, Emily Grube, Betsy Siebeck, Scott Woodward, Keith Chase, Ona Chase, Pam Pickett and Melanie Williams.

1. Call to Order: The Chair called the meeting to order at 7:04pm.
2. Review of Agenda: No changes.
3. Public Comment:
 - (a) Sherman Kent noted the Board has not followed its policy that requires a motion to continue the meeting past 9:00 pm.
 - (b) Auditor Laura Kent re-emphasized the Board of Auditors' concern that the Board follow the Purchasing Policy for the new fire truck. She mentioned that the Board had previously denied a bid from the lowest bidder for snowplowing the school parking lot, because it was not within the procedures of the purchasing policy even though the policy did not apply. She distinguished the Town from a private company, noting the importance of following its policies in spending taxpayer funds.
4. Minutes of Prior Meetings:
 - (a) Eric Chase moved, and Phil Dechert seconded, that the Board approve the minutes of its May 19, 2015 meeting. Following discussion, the Board unanimously approved the motion.
 - (b) Eric Chase moved, and Phil Dechert seconded, that the Board approve the minutes of its May 20, 2015 joint meeting with the Trustees of Public Funds. Following discussion, the Board unanimously approved the motion.
5. Treasurer's Report:
 - (a) Michael Reese moved, and Phil Dechert seconded, that the Board approve warrants for payment numbered 278, 279, 280, 281 and 282. The Board unanimously approved the motion.
 - (b) The Addendum to the 2015 Town Report is available. The Treasurer, with Auditor Laura Kent's assistance, explained the following adjustments to the fund balance in the revised and updated Comparative Financial Statement on Page 2 of the Addendum based upon advice from the Town's accountant:
 - i. In the 2014 six month budget, \$237,619 of the fund balance was designated for expenses instead of collecting taxes;
 - ii. Accumulated State payments to assist the Town with reappraisal costs (\$8.50 per parcel per year) of \$35,328 had not been placed in a reserve fund. The fund balance was decreased by this amount upon the transfer to the reserve fund.
 - iii. The following funds decreased the fund balance for FY 2016 by \$35,500:
 - A. State payment for reappraisal costs of \$5,500; and
 - B. Anticipated delinquent taxes of \$30,000 that were incorrectly listed as income during preparation of the budget.

- (c) Board members noted these changes decreased the recommended undesignated fund balance (2 months expenses) by \$71,000 less than the amount planned when the Board approved Special Town Meeting Warning. If the Town approves the proposed budget and amount to be raised in taxes, then Board members indicated a willingness to review options to maintain the recommended undesignated fund balance.
- (d) The Board expressed its appreciation for the work of the Treasurer and Auditors in preparing the Addendum to the Town Report.
- (e) The Treasurer described the need for another laptop computer for the newly employed Assistant Treasurer/Town Clerk and noted the currently budgeted \$1,000 expense for this purpose.

6. Road Foreman's Report:

(a) General Update:

i. Roadside Mowing: The road crew started putting the roadside mower back together and plan to start mowing alongside the Stage Road tomorrow (6/4/15). The invasive species committee will be contacted in order to reach out to landowners to address the growth of Wild Chervil and other invasive species outside of the Town right of way.

ii. Dirt Roads:

A. The road crew put out over 50 loads of hardpack to raise the roads up so the road crew does not dig up sections of lawn that they've had a couple of complaints about and they'll continue doing that.

B. The Road Foreman noted that additional hardpack makes the roads less susceptible to erosion and mud. Also, he prefers to spread additional hardpack instead of grading the existing gravel/dirt, because it raises the roadway and allows rainwater to sheet off evenly along the entire roadway instead of channeling the water 50-100 yards alongside the road and dumping into a hayfield or lawn.

C. There is no schedule for grading the roads, but they will be done whenever a road needs it.

- (b) Tractor/Roadside Mower Purchase: The Road Foreman presented a quote for a new tractor and roadside mower, and three quotes for lease terms. He will consider how this purchase fits within the Town's Purchasing Policy for presentation at a future meeting.
- (c) Guardrails: Because the company contacted for guardrails (Lafayette) is not available before the end of June, the Road Foreman asked if the guardrail funds from this year's budget can be spent in the next fiscal year. The Board will consider the issue at a future meeting. The Board also encouraged the Road Foreman to consider alternative pricing from other companies.
- (d) Pavement Roadsides: A resident expressed concerns about two holes along the roadside on the Pomfret Road across from Dana Road. The Road Foreman will address it by extending the length of the two culverts and adding material to restore the roadside at this location.
- (e) Speed Study: The Board and the public discussed the findings of the recently completed traffic speed study. Eric Chase will contact the study's author (Rita Seto of Two Rivers Ottauquechee Regional Commission) to determine if her attendance at a future Board meeting might assist the Board in making any decisions based upon the study.
- (f) Vermont 100: Michael Reese noted that he did not place this issue on the agenda, because it was determined last year that the race did not interfere with traffic. The Road Foreman noted traffic was restricted on the Stage Road. Michael Reese will contact race officials to determine if it will interfere with traffic.

7. Appointments:

- (a) Alternate Representative to Greater Upper Valley Solid Waste District: Michael Reese moved, and Phil Dechert seconded, that Doug Tuthill be re-appointed as the Alternate Representative to Greater Upper Valley Solid Waste District. The Board unanimously approved the motion.
- (b) Library Trustee: Michael Reese moved, and Phil Dechert seconded, that the Board appoint Jean Souter as Library Trustee to served until the next Town Meeting in March, 2016. The Board unanimously approved the motion.

8. Town Hall Rental Agreement: The Board and the public discussed the draft agreement. Some Board members appeared agreeable to allowing alcohol at events so long as it is served by a licensee of the Liquor Control Board. Action was deferred to a future meeting.

9. Late Filing Penalty of Homestead Declaration Form: The Board discussed Phil Dechert's suggestion to assess a 4 or 5% penalty with a warning issued the first time a taxpayer files late. Action was deferred to a future meeting.

10. "Hub" for EC Fiber: Supplementing the information received at previous Board meetings, Phil Dechert noted that Stan Williams of EC Fiber believes the cost of the electricity used by the proposed "hub" will not exceed \$200 per year. The Town is expected to supply the backup generator. The plan is a 25 year lease that would automatically renew. Phil will seek to include a telecommunications connection to the Town Garage as well.

11. Special Town Meeting Preparations: The Board will set up chairs at 6pm on the evening of meeting. Scott Woodward will prepare a another draft of the Selectboard Budget Narrative.

12. Closing public comments and adjournment:

- (a) Sherman Kent believes it is critical that the Board apply the Purchasing Policy to purchases for the Highway Department in addition to the new fire truck.
- (b) Scott Woodward commented as follows:
 - i. He asked about the status of the Town Plan draft. Phil Dechert said the Planning Commission withdrew it.
 - ii. He reminded the Board about its previous commitment to adopt an ethics policy.
- (c) Upon proper motion, the Board unanimously adjourned the meeting at 9:21pm.

Date: 6/9/2015

Respectfully Submitted,

Michael Reese