

POMFRET
ANNUAL TOWN MEETING
March 4, 2014

Selectboard member Mark Warner called the meeting to order at 9:00 AM. He asked for the assembly's consent for the meeting to be digitally recorded, and thanked Bob Merrill for his time and ArtisTree for the use of the recording equipment. The Reverend Jennifer Donaldson offered a prayer.

1. Kevin Geiger was elected Moderator for a one-year term. John Putnam was also nominated, with 53 votes cast by paper ballot to Geiger's 113 votes. The oath of office was given by Town Clerk Lynne Leavitt. Bill Emmons expressed his thanks to Bob O'Donnell for his years of service as the previous Moderator.

2. Rebecca (Becky) Fielder was elected Town Clerk for a one-year term. Lynne Leavitt was also nominated, with 50 votes cast by paper ballot to Fielder's 139 votes. Fielder was given the oath of office by Moderator Kevin Geiger.

3. Orson St. John moved to accept the reports as submitted, seconded by Bill Emmons. Margery Fields asked how the Selectboard would respond to the 5 issues in the Auditor's Report detailed on page 7 of the 2013 Town Report, namely Personnel Policy, Funds and Trusts, Financial Reporting, Investment Policy, and NEMRC Accounting System. The Selectboard deferred to the Auditors to answer, and Laura Kent stressed the importance of having professional audits done for the financial health of the town. Ron Rhodes requested that the discussion be tabled until after the Selectboard election. The motion to accept the reports as submitted passed by unanimous voice vote.

4. The following officers were elected:

Selectboard	3 year term	Michael Reese	156 votes
		Neil Lamson	29 votes
Treasurer	1 year term	Ellen DesMeules	Unopposed
Collector of Delinquent Taxes	1 year term	Jay Potter	Unopposed
Cemetery Commissioner	1 year term	Jasmin Reilly	Unopposed
Lister	3 year term	Andrew Mann	Unopposed
Auditor	3 year term	Laura Kent	Unopposed
Auditor	1 year term	Maryanne Murphy	Unopposed
Grand Juror	1 year term	Michael Reese	Unopposed
Town Agent	1 year term	John Putnam	Unopposed
Library Trustee	3 year term	Elizabeth Rhodes	Unopposed
Library Trustee	3 year term	Carole Brown	Unopposed
Trustee of Public Funds	3 year term	Marjorie Wakefield	Unopposed

Following the election of the Treasurer, retiring Treasurer Hazel Harrington was recognized for her 40 years of service to the town. She was honored with gifts and flowers, as well as a rousing standing ovation. Alan Blackmer and Hazel Harrington also thanked Neil Lamson for his service on the Selectboard.

5. Anne Bower moved that the Town appropriate the sum of \$36,935 for the Abbott Memorial Library. Frank Perron seconded the motion. Jenny Satterfield thanked the donors and the outgoing library trustees. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

6. Marjorie Wakefield moved that the Town appropriate the sum of \$3,950 to help support the home health, maternal and child health, and hospice care provided in patients' homes and in community settings by the Visiting Nurse Association & Hospice of VT and NH. Mark Warner seconded the motion, which was then passed by unanimous voice vote.

At this time, Art Lewin asked how the previous articles passed would get their money if the town voted to adopt a July 1 through June 30 fiscal year, as outlined in Article 13 of the Warning. Hazel Harrington responded, indicating that most accounts were not settled until after August 15th.

7. Bruce Tuthill moved that the Town appropriate the sum of \$2,500 to support programming of the Ottauquechee Community Partnership (OCP) and OCP's Mentor and Buddy Program. Corinne Smith seconded the motion, and Lisa Kaija, a representative of OCP, spoke on behalf of the program and encouraged support for the motion. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

8. Marjorie Wakefield moved that the Town appropriate the sum of \$2,500 for the town's share of service for the Woodstock Council on Aging to run the Thompson Senior Center. Lydia Spitzer seconded the motion. Deanna Jones, executive director of the Thompson Senior Center, outlined the services provided to seniors in Pomfret, such as Meals On Wheels and the Thompson Van which makes regular trips through town to bring seniors to events and appointments. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

9. Laura Kent moved that the Town appropriate the sum of \$750 to support programming of the Spectrum Teen Center. Corinne Smith seconded the motion. Heather Rubenstein from Spectrum spoke of behalf of the teen center, stressing its importance in the community by providing a free, safe, drug-free space for the youth to feel welcome and included. Douglas Tuthill and Laura Kent both expressed their support for the center, and the motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

10. Marjorie Wakefield moved that the Town vote to create a reserve fund to be used to purchase non-vehicular fire equipment including, but not limited to, hose and associated accessories, self contained breathing apparatus and personal protective equipment. Mark Warner seconded the motion. Kevin Rice, Chief of the Pomfret-Teago Fire Department, asked for community support to create this reserve fund. He stated that the current personal protective equipment in use is of all different ages and manufacturers, and that replacing items in the near future will be necessary to ensure the safety of our volunteer firefighters and first responders. The reserve fund would allow these purchases to take place without putting additional strain on the town budget. Orson St. John spoke in support of creating this reserve funds, and the use of reserve funds in general, as a means to finance unexpected expenses. Kevin Rice clarified that there is no request for funds at this time, just for the establishment of the account. Frank Perron thanked the firefighters for their unity in creating a single town-wide fire department. The motion to create the reserve fund passed by unanimous voice vote.

11. Phil Dechert moved to ask the Town to grant the Selectboard the authority to spend unanticipated funds such as grants and gifts. Mark Warner seconded the motion, which then passed by unanimous voice vote.

12. Sherman Kent moved to ask the Town to authorize the Selectboard to borrow money, if necessary, for the payment of current expenses of the Town pending receipts of payments of taxes. Lydia Spitzer seconded the motion. Hazel Harrington clarified that this article is needed for the protection of the Town, as a backup in case the necessary tax funds are not paid to the Town in time. Doug Tuthill reiterated that it is not about having an emergency fund, but is for borrowing funds in lieu of money from taxes left unpaid. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

13. Orson St. John moved that the Town adopt a July 1 through June 30 fiscal year to be effective for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2014. Frank Perron seconded the motion. Orson St. John stated his support for the change to a fiscal year, and then called on the Selectboard to respond to questions about the funds that had not yet been placed in the Building Reserve Fund. He was ruled out of order. Doug Tuthill spoke on behalf of the fiscal year change, as it made sense to be operating on the same level as other government bodies. Phil Oman asked how the Town would determine which expenses would get paid during the months between now and the beginning of the new fiscal year. Michael Reese responded, crediting Hazel Harrington with outlining which bills get paid at what times. Melanie Williams said that if Hazel Harrington recommended the fiscal year change while paying the bills on time, that the change has validity. Doug Tuthill supported using the budget surplus from 2013 to get us through to the adoption of a July-June fiscal year. Phil Dechert said he supported the move to a new fiscal year. Lydia Spitzer asked for clarification on whether we would be using the budget surplus to temporarily fund the fiscal year move. Michael Reese stated that yes, a portion of the budget surplus would be funding the Town in the interim, as outlined in Article 14. Norwood Long voiced his support of the fiscal year change. Betsy Rhodes said that it would correlate with the school budget. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

14. Frank Perron moved that the Town approve the budget of \$448,298 for town and highway expenses as shown in the Town Report for the period of January 1, 2014 to June 30, 2014. Orson St. John seconded the motion. Michael Reese clarified that these are not needed additional funds, but are the surplus from the 2013 budget year. Mark Warner outlined the needs of the Emergency Services (pages 17-18 of the Annual Report). Fred Doten had to leave the meeting early, and at this time thanked the road crew for their hard work over this winter. Melanie Williams moved to amend the budget; she proposed that the funds for health insurance for the Town Clerk and Treasurer for the 6-month budget term be combined and divided equally between the two positions. Kevin Geiger explained the parliamentary procedure for adding a motion, and discussed where it is appropriate to amend or look at a budget line by line. Phil

Dechert explained that the allotment is at the discretion of the Selectboard as long as additional funds are not needed. Melanie Williams agreed to remove her motion, as long as these points are clarified and further discussed in Selectboard budget discussions. The amendment was withdrawn. Doug Tuthill said that there could be discussion to lower the budget but not raise it during this meeting. Kevin Geiger clarified this point from the Moderator's Handbook. Joanna Long brought up an example of raising the budget from a past budget meeting. There were no further comments, and the motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

15. Orson St. John moved that the Town approve the budget of \$1,709,888 for town and highway expenses as shown in the Town Report for the twelve-month period of July 1, 2014 to June 30, 2015. Mark Warner seconded the motion. Michael Reese outlined the highway project grants, the fire department budget needs, and the need for a new town truck. Orson St. John asked why no funds are budgeted to go into the Building and Highway reserve funds. Michael Reese said that at this time it is not appropriate to raise those costs, as you can not buy capital goods while trying to put money into reserve accounts. Bob Harrington commented on the importance of balancing spending and keeping taxes at a reasonable rate. Orson St. John moved to approve an additional \$100,000 to be added to the Highway Equipment Reserve Fund on August 15th after the next tax payments come in, which would amend the current budget total to \$1,809,888. Kevin Rice seconded the motion. Doug Tuthill expressed that he is adamantly opposed to adding to the budget. Kevin Geiger clarified what is in or out of order, and ruled that the amendment be called out of order. Norwood Long and Phil Dechert spoke in support of the move by the Moderator. The main motion to approve the twelve-month budget of \$1,709,888 was passed by unanimous voice vote.

16. Article 16 is not applicable, as Article 13 was adopted.

17. Mark Warner moved that the Town raise \$804,009 in taxes. Connie DeWitt seconded, and the motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

18. Bill Emmons moved that the Town have the Treasurer collect taxes in two installments on August 15, 2014 and February 15, 2015. Late payments shall be subject to interest of 1% per calendar month or a portion thereof. All taxes outstanding on February 16, 2015 shall be delinquent and subject to a penalty of 8% for the Town. Phil Dechert seconded the motion. Marjorie Wakefield questioned the 6 weeks that are left uncovered between July 1, 2014 and the August 15, 2014 tax payments that require Article 12 to stand. Betsy Rhodes said that the fiscal year change will eventually erase the need for Article 12. Lydia Spitzer had a question about the tax collection timelines, and Kevin Geiger clarified the dates. Nelson Lamson asked why the Town could not collect the taxes on June 15, 2014 instead of August 15, 2014. Phil Dechert responded that the state school tax rate is not set in time to do so. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

19. Article 19 is not applicable, as Article 13 was adopted.

20. Other proper and necessary business:

Bob Merrill gave the address of the Pomfret list serve, and responded to a question by Brad Burrington that the list serve is not posted on the town website, but is a public posting service for the use of the townspeople.

Joanna Long reminded the assembly of the upcoming Special Town Meeting on April 9, 2014 at 7pm, where we would elect a new member to the Selectboard and a new Trustee of Public Funds to fill vacancies left by recent resignations.

JoAnn Webb said that the Auditors had consulted with the Selectboard regarding not adding the names of delinquent taxpayers to the Town Report. She asked the voters if they would prefer to have these names printed in the future, and the assembly responded No.

Kevin Rice asked the members of the Fire Department and Fast Squad to stand and be acknowledged for their efforts. He then recognized Jim and Loie Havill for their years of service and honored them with a plaque.

Doug Tuthill thanked everyone for participating in a civil meeting, and said he hopes to start things off with a clean slate.

Betsy Rhodes asked what is the best approach to amend or question budget line items. Kevin Geiger brought the question to the assembled voters. Norwood Long said that it should be discussed at a later date, after the Selectboard has reestablished with 3 members (after the April 9 special meeting). Melanie Williams agreed, saying that it would be better to give the full Selectboard direct feedback.

Dick McCormick, State Senator for Windsor County, said he would be milling about during the lunch break and would be happy to answer any questions anyone might have for him.

Bill Emmons moved to adjourn, and Frank Perron seconded. The meeting adjourned at 12:37 PM. Several new officers were sworn to their duties by Rebecca Fielder.

Lunch was served by the Pomfret School Leadership Group and their advisor Sarah Woodhead.

Respectfully submitted,

Rebecca Fielder, Town Clerk

Minutes approved by:

Date:
