

SELECT BOARD MEETING DRAFT MINUTES
TOWN OF POMFRET VERMONT
August 7, 2019

Present: Emily Grube, Steve Chamberlin, Scott Woodward, John Peters, Frank Perron, Cynthia Hewitt

Public Attendees: John Moore (Planning Commission), Ellen DesMeules (Treasurer), Ona Chase (Cemetery Commission), Norm Buchanan (Lister), Jim Potter (Road Foreman), Susan Bitzer, Jim Morgan, Christina Chamberlin, Brendan Whittaker, Nick Clark (Thetford Selectman), Marie Cole Cross, Kathleen Dolan, Mark van Gulden, Betsy Siebeck,

1. Call to order 7 PM
2. Public Comments: Ellen read from a prepared statement re: has been a month since the public assault and the Select Board has not taken necessary action. Scott proposed that charges be filed. Ona reminded that board members need to be recognized to speak. Scott apologized to Emily and said he would accept responsibility.
3. Review of Agenda
Emily added
 - a. The finalization of Galaxy Hill Driveway Permit
 - b. Neil Lamson FEMA rate of pay be set
 - c. Planning commission wishes to seek legal counsel
 - d. Nick Clark from Thetford Select Board wishes to present a regional energy coordinator
 - e. John Peters wishes to discuss the incident of the BCA incident
Scott moved and John seconded addition of these items
4. Recurring Items
 - a. Approval of 07/17 and 07/24 Draft Meeting Minutes
Scott made several adjustments to 07/17/19 minutes; these will be added and the minutes resubmitted for approval; Frank moved and Steve 2nd approval of 07/24/19 minutes. (recording started at this point)
 - b. Warrants for Approval. Emily moved, John seconded payment for two warrants:
#19013. \$13,376.07 A/R
#19012. \$ 5,502.14 Payroll unanimous
5. Business Items for Discussion or Vote
 - a. Road Foreman Report
Jim is prioritizing projects. Would like to do the Pomfret Road culverts on Tuesday. Becky will put notice on list serve. Jim has contacted flagging companies for assistance. They will provide two flaggers and signs at \$850/day. Alex Eastman has installed GFI breakers at the garage for \$180. Regarding Rudge Road, it was necessary to use some seeding mats since the steeper areas did not take the seeding. Jim has asked Schultz Construction and Knott for estimates for assistance with Kenyon Hill ledge and some ditching areas. Schultz quoted \$3250. Frank moved and John seconded approval for this expense as Schultz has the bigger equipment necessary. Approved. Grader repair was

\$427.26. Jim asked for approval for rebuilding the grader hydraulics. Steve moved, John seconded approval for this expense of \$1145.51. Passed.

Jim asked permission to bring in some hardpack, approved, no vote necessary. Chris Bumps has recommended a 24 x 35 squash pipe for the Galaxy hill job. 120 feet of 12-gauge steel. \$8430. Steve moved and John 2nd: approved.

- b. The truck RFP was submitted, since then Steve has spoken with and met with representatives who reported numerous other equipment requests which are available in the newer trucks. Steve will amend the RFP with these new options and resend the amended RFP.
- c. Sand RFP. No bids have been received. Emily will call D&D.
- d. Town Garage Maintenance. Emily moved the Royal Security additions be installed. PACIF grants are available to help with costs Wade Masure suggested we apply. She will check with Royal to see who does the monitoring of the system. \$957.54 Wade Masure sent numerous suggestions for improvement. Grants are also available for this and Emily will apply. John Syme will replace the soffit and the roofer will consult tomorrow. John moved we apply for the grant; Frank 2nd: approval. Passed
- e. Nick Clark from the Thetford Select Board presented his proposal for a Regional Energy Coordinator based on a premise suggested by the State-set energy goals. He suggests one coordinator could be shared by several of the smaller towns with the job description developed through Two Rivers. This can be tracked over a 2-3-year trial period and then available grant money applied for. The job description is verbatim from the Town of Hartford's description. A number of towns are interested. Payment would depend upon population, i.e., smaller towns would pay less. The draft regional contract will include 6-8 towns along with Two Rivers. They will provide the contract. Scott moved John Peters be appointed the liaison with Nick. Frank seconded. Unanimous.
- f. Frank moved the Caper Street Grant be accepted; John 2nd: approved.
- g. Aggregate RFP.
- h. Fuel RFP – not to happen; Emily has contacted suppliers for rates. The supplier will perform furnace maintenance, which is another Wade Masure item.
- i. Collier Driveway. A new cut in the road, providing a 2nd access point for the driveway was created near the Maxham sugar house without approval. Emily will write a letter stating an application for permit is necessary
- j. Artistry driveway permit. Artistree has requested a 3rd driveway permit during their children's camp period (June - August). There is a lot of back and forth with parents, children, etc. They wish to have the employees' autos out of the parking area. ZBA approved 2 cuts initially. Kathleen Dolan explained they did not own the property needing the driveway when the original permits were sought. ZBA and Atty McLean will be consulted. This will be on the next meeting agenda.
- k. Galaxy Hill Site Visit. John Harrington added a swale to drain the logging road. Frank Moved and Steve seconded the Nassal driveway permit will be granted only if the Subdivision is approved by the Planning Commission. Unanimous
- l. Wade Masure from VLCT has sent a list of deficiencies in the Town buildings. Jim can remedy those in the garage and he will seek a solution to the eye wash station. John and Scott to investigate Town Hall solutions. Norm Buchanan stated the town hall bathrooms need handicap handles installed.

- m. Scott moved to approve Engineering Planning commission appointments: John Moore and Ann Reynolds will continue. ZBA appointment: Sean Picket and Ben Brickner will accept new appointments. Steve seconded. Unanimous. Scott will look into other possible appointments which need to be updated.
- n. Horizon Proposal for Howe Hill Project. Jim and Emily visited the Sharon Select board. Sharon expects to raise their bond by the end of November. Individual RFPs in conjunction with a time frame done together will reap the benefit of movement of machinery, gathering materials, etc. This will allow maximum savings of resources. John Harrington did the proposal of all of Sharon's work and is helping with language and technical information, he will be hired to help create a seamless project. John moved and Frank 2nd that Horizon Engineering be contracted for Howe Hill project. Unanimous. It was also noted that the band rail will have to be removed and replaced, this will be added to the bid.
- o. After some discussion, Scott moved that Theresa Miele be contracted as the HR consultant to work an initial 10-20 hours (or as needed) to review and recommend policies, with 1-5 hours per month thereafter, at the rate of \$65/hour. He recommends that the Board commit to following her recommendations. The money will come from the Professional Fees Budget. John seconded. Ellen introduced the idea of a part time town manager since she perceives the amount of work the Select Board is overwhelming. Scott believes this first step will help determine future needs. Passed.
- p. Mediation with VLCT funding. Emily has spoken with Karen Stackpole and Jill Muir and there is no VLCT money available for mediation. Karen suggested we adopt Rules of Conduct. Our HR consultant may be able to help in developing. This will be added to the agenda for the next meeting.
- q. Slack Software – John will attain more information and prepare a presentation for next meeting.
- r. Information Technology. Scott suggested we reach out to Bob and ask him to prepare a written report. Emily will ask Becky to ask Bob for a report and also research the need for a new computer at the garage with a backup system.
- s. Emily moved and Frank seconded Neil Lamson's rate of pay for his FEMA work be set at \$17/hour. Emily reports Neil would be happy with this. Unanimous.
- t. Emily moved and Frank seconded approval for the Planning Commission to seek legal counsel for the Nassal subdivision permit and the ZBA recommendations. Unanimous.
- u. Discussion of Pomfret Town Website Investigation. Frank requested a number of emails as a matter of public information which were created in late June, early July. He feels that Ellen inserted herself into a Select Board function. Emily explained that she had asked Ellen and Becky for such an investigation because several meeting records had suddenly disappeared from the web site, including recordings of minutes. Frank felt the language used by Ellen was editorialized and inflammatory. Betsy Siebeck stated she was shocked at the language used and felt Ellen did not do what Emily asked. Ona asked who requested the public records – Scott did, not Betsy. They are not confidential information. Betsy is sure there are clear legal statutes involved. She also stated this "felt like persecution." John Moore stated that since email has replaced private conversations of the past, we must be more circumspect with language. Ona suggested the Select board Handbook be studied. John agreed that select board policy is not

mandated. Scott feels there has been tension for more than a year and he feels it is time for roles and responsibilities to be clarified and respected. Boundaries need to be defined. John feels we should devote a special Select Board meeting towards this goal. Norm suggested that VLCT has classes available for Select Board members, Listers, Zoning Board, etc. Frank stated he has attended such classes. Steve feels the Board needs to get over childish behavior. Betsy states the email situation is a new problem and we would be remiss in not dealing with it. Scott feels the Board should not allow a town official to use public comment section for such activity. Ona asked if Ellen was here as a public official or as private taxpayer; Ellen stated as a taxpayer. Emily stated that the Board will listen to anyone who wishes to make public comment. We cannot disallow or stifle public comment or we lose our ability to be a democracy. She stated we must move on to the next topic

- v. BCA Incident. John Peters stated that he was not in attendance at the BCA meeting, and he is reluctant to bring the topic up since he is a family member which could be seen as a conflict of interest. He feels the incident needs to be addressed by the Board. He understands the incidents which led up to the incident. He feels such behavior should never happen and that a formal, written apology is necessary. Scott agreed to offer a written apology; he also feels there has been a ton of hyperbole around the issue and feels he has been aggressively attacked over the past year and this is also not acceptable. He will not try to justify what he did. If anyone feels this warrants censure, he would like it brought forward. He feels “I represent change and am viewed as an outsider and not well understood.” Again, it was agreed we need to define boundaries and not do things that create consequences. Christina suggested “ask yourself why you are on the Board?” This should be to benefit the town with no hidden agendas, to demonstrate professionalism and work as a group. There always will be criticism. Discussion continued until Emily ended the conversation at 10:12 pm.

6. Meeting Wrap Up

- a. Select Board Correspondence – Ambulance bill has been received. Annual fee for the current year is \$30,000
- b. Assignments: Emily Collier Letter; Becky – Garage computer, Bob Merrill report; Scott – talk to attorney re: Artistree driveway permit; John & Scott – Slack Software; Follow up Sand RFP; Steve – amend Truck RFP; Jim to speak with GMP about tree removal and removal of debris from last winter; John and Scott Town Hall handicap access.
- c. Agenda for Next Meeting: Slack software, Artistree Driveway, Fuel RFP, Rules of conduct

7. Frank moved and Steve seconded for Adjournment at 10:20 pm