

Pomfret Selectboard  
Draft Minutes 04/15/2020

Present: Emily Moore, Steve Chamberlin, Scott Woodward, John Peters, Chuck Gunderson

Public: Hugh Herman, M.D. (Health Officer), John Moore (Planning Comm.), Ben Brickner (Zoning Board, Auditor ), Richard Martin, Bob Coates, Betsy Siebeck, Jim Potter (Road Foreman), Cynthia Hewitt (Select Board Asst.)

1. Call to order 7:06
2. Public Comment: none
3. Agenda Review: Hugh Hermann, M.D., the Town Health Officer, asked for time to update the Board RE: Covid 19
4. Recurring Items
  - a. Approval of 03/04/2020 and 03/18/2020 Minutes. Emily would like the 03/04/2020 Minutes (6j) to not state she had permission to sign a report; she was granted authority to conduct business with VTrans as Chairman of the Board, in the absence of a Road Commissioner. Scott moved and John seconded that the 03/04/2020 minutes be approved with editing by Scott Woodward; unanimous roll-call vote. Steve moved and Chuck seconded that the 03/18/2020 minutes be accepted with editing. Scott moved and John seconded that the 04/01/2020 minutes be edited and resubmitted to the board for approval. Unanimous roll-call vote.
  - b. Emily moved and Chuck seconded approval for payment of the following Warrants for Approval; unanimous roll-call vote.

19101,	\$30,172.63	Accounts payable
19100	11,151.47	Payroll
5. Items for Discussion or Vote
  - a. (20:00) Dr. Herman informed the Board of two active cases of Covid-19 in Pomfret, they are quarantined at home. He also informed the Board that Kevin Rice has a list of people who can use help with groceries, pharmacy, etc.
  - b. Road Foreman Report

Jim reports that the crew is busy grading the south end of town, i.e., River Road, part of Cloudland Road, and Sugar House Road. They are social distancing. GMP has been cutting trees and took down a large pine tree which was looming over the Town Garage, since they were storing their trucks at the Garage. Jim asked for permission to arrange additional work with the crack sealer while he is in town doing last year's sealing. This was granted. Jim wondered how reimbursement from grant money was credited to the Highway Fund. Emily and Scott explained the process. Jim was asking because he has already spent the culvert fund. More careful budgeting of grant proposals would be helpful. Jim lifted the lids on the Town Office septic system due to odor reported in the building; a pump-out is scheduled for Thurs. 04/16/2020, Jim will have the lids off. In the process of his investigation he found a broken furnace vent and bathroom vent.
  - c. VTrans Stay Safe Stay Home Announcement. *“Projects being funded as part of any of VTrans’ grant programs (Better Roads, Class 2 Roadway and Structures) are*

*expected to halt all construction activities until the Governor's Executive Order is lifted otherwise the work completed will no longer be eligible for grant funding. This pertains to both contracted work as well as work to be completed by municipal forces,"* which compels us to furlough/lay-off the road crew. We are also a government agency thus must comply. Jim asked for one more day to work on the worst of the potholes and washboards to prevent more acute damage from heavy rain. Emily will ask for guidance from VLCT on this matter and another meeting will be scheduled to make a decision between furlough/lay-off/essential work. John moved and Chuck seconded that the road crew be authorized to work one more day and then be on-call for any emergencies.

- d. Road Commissioner Position. We are required by statute to appoint a Road Commissioner. The position has been offered to Jim Potter, with Emily being his Board point of contract. Jim would like to sit down and discuss this with the board, not over the internet after Covid-19 restrictions are lifted.
- e. (49:00) Howe Hill Delay of Project. Emily has been in touch with Sharon and they agree to honor the Governor's order at least until May 15<sup>th</sup>. Emily moved and Scott seconded that Jim be delegated to explain this to Caleb at Pike. Unanimous roll-call vote.
- f. Tree Cutting – So. Pomfret. Timber Tenders will do this tree cutting for \$1800/day, and believe it will take two days. The Board feels that the dead elm trees especially present a hazardous situation. John moved and Steve seconded that Timber Tenders be hired for two days @ \$1800/day as per their bid to remove dead trees in So. Pomfret; Cy Benoit will ask them if their work is considered "essential." Unanimous roll-call vote.
- g. Scott moved and Chuck seconded that discussion of pending personnel reviews and quarterly meetings be postponed to after the Covid-19 restrictions are lifted. Unanimous vote.
- h. Sewer Issues – due to an odor at the Town Offices, Jim inspected the sewer and a pump-out is scheduled for 04/16/2020 at the price of \$800 for the two 1000 gal. tanks. Emily moved to approved the expense; Scott seconded. Unanimous roll-call vote
- i. Consideration of Postponement of Zoning Hearing. The May 4, 2020 Meeting has been warned and advertised with plans to conduct the meeting via Zoom. There are, however, new regulations that would allow a 60-90 day extension of deadlines, due to Covid-19. Betsy Siebeck asked that more notice be given besides the Standard. John Moore stated that the Zoom meeting format is much better than the usual speaker phone. John Peters moved and Steve seconded that after consideration and discussion the May 4<sup>th</sup> meeting will be held, and an in-person, vs. Zoom, meeting can be scheduled if/when possible depending on the outcome, participation, and sentiment from May 4<sup>th</sup>. Unanimous roll-call vote.
- j. Financial Management Committee is not meeting; however, Nancy Matthews is working on final reports and may be consulted for a copy.
- k. Roles and Responsibilities in Town Government. The Board is committed to this as an agenda item; however, discussion is tabled.
- l. Formulating a Compensation Plan. Scott would like to determine a logical process for paying employees who are elected, appointed, and hired. He will get the average

pay scales for the road crew via the VLCT Wage Survey; Emily suggested we look at only the towns within a 20-mile radius of pomfret, which are likely higher than, for instance, the Northeast Kingdom. We also need to calculate the total compensation package vs. hourly wages. Further development of this topic is noted and next steps will be discussed at the next meeting

- m. TA-60. Neil Lamson has assisted Emily in preparing the TA-60 report using the budget items. Neil has experience with this form in the past. Scott moved and Emily seconded that the Ta-60 be submitted. Unanimous roll-call vote.
- n. Frey Aarnio has volunteered to be on the Energy Committee. His history includes “worked in power generation for the Department of Defense and Department of Energy through a defense contractor. I have attended several seminars on alternate energy here in Vermont and in Idaho.” Scott moved and Steve seconded that Mr. Aarnio be appointed to the Energy Committee. Unanimous roll-call vote.
- o. Scott moved and Emily seconded that Neil Lamson has permission to sell his vegetables, baked goods, syrup, etc. at the Town Hall parking lot, since it seems likely the Mt. Tom Farmers’ Market will not reopen. He will schedule pick-ups at specified times so there is not a large number of people in attendance at once. Four ayes and one abstention. Motion passed.

6. Meeting Wrap-Up

- a. Selectboard Correspondence – none
- b. Review of Assignments. Emily will speak with Cy Benoit re: Timber Tenders, Mike Blakesly at VTrans, and with VLCT re: furloughs. Scott will arrange Zoom for upcoming meetings and hearings.
- c. Agenda for Next Meeting:
  - Town Compensation Plan
  - Rules and Responsibilities in Town Government

7. Meeting adjourned at 9:45 p.m.