

Town of Pomfret Selectboard
Meeting Minutes
July 3, 2024

Present: Benjamin Brickner, John Peters, Steve Chamberlin, Meg Emmons, Emily Grube

Public: Ryan Palmer (Windsor County Sheriff), Karen Hewitt Osnoe (Delinquent Tax Collector), Jim Robinson, Marie Robinson, Mike Doten, Jim Potter (Road Foreman), Nancy Matthews, John Moore, Bob Crean, Nancy Matthews, Bill Emmons, Cynthia Hewitt (Selectboard Assistant)

1. Ben called the meeting to order at 7:01pm.
2. Agenda Review – None.
3. Public Comment – Marie Robinson noted that River Road has suffered several washouts and as a result is narrow in places. Jim explained that because the road closely follows the river and cannot be relocated up-bank, it is difficult (and costly) to repair. Cones have been placed warning motorists of the damage until repairs can be made. In the meantime, John Peters will ask the Town of Hartford if they have decided whether to reclassify their segment of the road.
4. Road Foreman’s Report – There have been no applicants for the road crew member position; Cynthia will run the ads for another week and confirm with the *Vermont Standard* that the correct version will be run. Cynthia will also ask Jim to re-post the opening on the Vermont Local Roads ListServ.
5. Items for Discussion or Vote
 - a. Law Enforcement Services Contract – Sheriff Ryan Palmer attended the meeting to discuss enforcement strategies to address the ongoing issues of speeding and unsafe passing in town. He presented a report on the relative numbers of tickets and warnings that were issued since he took office 15 months ago. He asked that the town provide a list of “hot spots” that can be prioritized for patrol and will ask his deputies to step up enforcement. Ben will prepare a list and circulate to the Selectboard for review before forwarding to Sheriff Palmer. Steve moved and Meg seconded that the 2024-25 Law Enforcement Services Contract be approved as presented. Unanimous.
 - b. Aggregate/Gravel Purchase Contract – As expected, Pike’s pricing for aggregate increased 8% this year, including the cost of trucking the same. Due to the large purchase amount, it was felt that at least two quotes were advisable. Jim will obtain pricing from Twin State for review and comparison by the Selectboard at the July 17 meeting.
 - c. Right-of-Way Crossing Permit (Wild Apple Road) – Jim met with the applicant and sees no issues with the proposed work. John moved and Steve seconded approval of the application with a condition that the applicant give Jim at least two business days’ notice before commencing work. Unanimous.
 - d. Fall Foliage Traffic Management – Ben presented a further edited version of the planning memo incorporating Mike Doten’s comments but with adjusted closure dates. It was felt by the Selectboard that the proposed 30-day closure was too long. After discussion, the closure period was tentatively set as Wednesday, September 25 through Wednesday, October 16, which is 22 days. The Selectboard also discussed how many of the contracted Sheriff’s weekly patrol hours would be diverted to the

closure area. Last year 8 hours per week were diverted. It was tentatively decided that this year 6 hours per week would be diverted. Ben will contact the Woodstock Select Board for approval to close their segment of Cloudland Road in coordination with Pomfret’s closure of its segment. Woodstock’s next Select Board meeting is July 16. The Pomfret Selectboard will aim to finalize the traffic management plan at its meeting the following day, on July 17.

- e. Delinquent Tax Matters – Karen Hewitt Osnoe attended the meeting to update the Selectboard on delinquent property taxes. After discussion, it was decided she will send one more certified letter to taxpayers who are delinquent by more than one year before initiating tax sale proceedings. Karen also noted that the town’s outside counsel alerted her to recent state law changes regarding delinquent tax collection, which may require the town to update its policy regarding the same.
- f. Financial Policies and Goals Introduction – Ben presented minor edits to the Financial Policies and Goals Introduction document reflecting the recent adoption of other financial policies. John moved and Emily seconded that the introduction document be approved as presented. Unanimous. Ben will post the same to the town website.
- g. Town Hall Maintenance – Becky reports success in trapping vermin; Cynthia will again ask the two contractors for estimates to repair the front steps. The Tuthill family donated funds to replace the refrigerator at the Town Hall. A thank you note will be sent to the family c/o Bruce Tuthill.
- h. FY 2024 Financial Review – Ellen circulated preliminary trial balances as of June 30; these do not yet reflect any final adjustments that will be made later in July to close the fiscal year. Preliminarily the general fund ended about \$64,000 ahead of budget and the highway fund ended about \$3,300 ahead of budget. Despite this favorable result, the highway fund may have ended with a small deficit. Once the final numbers are available later this month, the Selectboard will determine whether it is necessary to transfer money from the highway rainy day reserve fund to cover a deficit.
- i. FY 2025 Town Tax Rate – Based on the municipal grand list as of July 3, the amount of taxes to be raised by the budget approved by the voters at town meeting, and the number of veterans’ exemptions claimed this year, Ellen determined that the FY 2025 town tax rate should be \$0.3534 per \$100 assessed value (up 1.6% from \$0.3479 last year) and that the FY 2025 local agreement rate should be \$0.0007 per \$100 assessed value (unchanged from last year). Emily moved and John seconded the same. Unanimous. Tax bills will be mailed later this month and the first installment will be due at the town office on or before 2:30 PM on August 16, 2024.

The Department of Taxes published the education tax rates earlier in the week. The homestead rate will be \$1.6654 per \$100 assessed value (up 13.8% from \$1.4632 last year) and the non-homestead rate will be \$1.3837 per \$100 assessed value (up 3.5% from \$1.3370 last year). The Selectboard will prepare a letter to accompany tax bills explaining how the tax rates were set and how they have changed since last year.

- j. Financial Management Questionnaire – Emily moved and John seconded that the questionnaire be signed as having been received by the Selectboard. Unanimous.
- k. Warrants – John moved and Emily seconded approval for payment of the following warrants:

24115	\$ 11,116.51	Payroll
24116	33,636.43	A/P
25001	540,935.51	A/P

Unanimous. Ellen will be asked to hold the two CVC Paging checks on Warrant 24116 until the invoicing can be confirmed. The approved amount for Warrant 25001 reflects a corrected invoice received from Pike Industries earlier in the day.

- l. Approval of Minutes – Emily moved and John seconded approval of the June 18, 2024 meeting minutes as presented. Unanimous.
6. Meeting Wrap Up
 - a. Correspondence – Ben noted the legal spend for FY 2024 is up significantly from recent years. Emily noted that delinquent tax sales contributed to the increase, as well as the highway access dispute on Bartlett Brook Road.
 - b. Review of Assignments – John to contact Hartford re: River Road; Ben to send the Sheriff a list of priority locations and times for directed patrol; to finalize the Fall Foliage Traffic Management Plan for adoption on July 17. Cynthia to renew road crew member newspaper ads, send a thank you note to the Tuthill family, contact Town Hall contractors.
 - c. Agenda for Next Meeting – Aggregate purchase contract, fall foliage traffic management.
 7. Adjournment – Emily moved and Steve seconded that the meeting be adjourned. Unanimous. The meeting was adjourned at 9:27 pm.