

Town of Pomfret Selectboard
Meeting Minutes
October 16, 2024

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

Public: Christina Chamberlin, Cynthia Hewitt, John Moore, Doug Tuthill, Neil Lamson, Bill Emmons, Art Lewin, Becky Fielder, Ellen DesMeules, Justin Ricard, Kevin Geiger, Tracie Hartford

1. Ben called the meeting to order at 6:03 pm.
2. Executive Session
 - a. Ben moved and Meg seconded that the Selectboard enter executive session pursuant to 1 V.S.A. 313(a)(1)(F) to discuss contracts and confidential attorney-client communications, the premature general public knowledge of which would clearly place the Selectboard and/or another involved at a substantial disadvantage, and pursuant to 1 V.S.A. 313(a)(3) to discuss the employment of public employees. Unanimous. The Selectboard entered executive session at 6:04 pm.
 - b. The Selectboard exited executive session at 7:00 pm, with no decisions having been made therein.
3. Agenda Review – Emily moved and Steve seconded that Item 6C (Town Office Parking Lot Paving) be deleted; this will be discussed on November 6 instead. Unanimous.
4. Public Comment – Neil asked about the plan to complete grading of the town roads this season. See Item 6A below for the answer. Christina thanked Justin Ricard for his service on the road crew; the Selectboard joined Ms. Chamberlin in expressing the same.
5. Road Crew Report – Art has installed plows, frames, and wings on the trucks; brush piles and stone piles are cleaned up; Truck 1 has an appointment for hydraulic work on November 5 and the front tires have been replaced; 3/8” stone is ordered; Cloudland Road signage, etc. will be taken down on Thursday. Art asked for an announcement to go on the listserv regarding trees blocking the roads; Ben will send this. Art suggested the Road Crew Worker help wanted ad be run more frequently; Cynthia will submit for publication in this weekend’s edition of *The Valley News*, as well as Vermont Job Postings, and the Upper Valley listserv; Meg will investigate Front Porch Forum advertising. Ben will speak with Rita Seto re: the Allen Hill Road grant-in-aid project and the Better Roads road inventory.
6. Items for Discussion or Vote
 - a. Employment of Public Employees – Ben moved and Emily seconded making an offer to Ernest Chamberlin, Jr. for employment as a grader operator on a part-time basis. Unanimous (Steve recused). Ben moved and Emily seconded making an offer to “Person A”^[1] for employment as road foreman, on a full-time basis, with other terms and benefits as per the town’s personnel policy. Unanimous (Steve recused). Steve will notify both parties of their respective employment offer.
 - b. Selectboard Organization re: Highway Department – No discussion or decisions made.

^[1] **Editor’s Note:** On advice from the Vermont League of Cities & Towns, to protect Person A’s current employment the name of “Person A” is being withheld until the offered employment has been accepted.

- c. Better Roads Grant Application – Vtrans has awarded the town a Better Roads grant to implement clean water improvements and address road-related water quality issues. Meg moved and Steve seconded approval of the related grant agreement #BR1225. Unanimous.
 - d. Two Rivers Draft Regional Plan Discussion – John Moore and Kevin Geiger presented information, maps, and a schedule for early hearings regarding this draft. Public hearings will be held on November 4 in Bethel, November 6 by Zoom, and on November 7 in Fairlee. The draft plan has undergone major edits, except the Land Use and Homes in the Region chapters, which will be revised starting in 2025.
 - e. FY 2026 Budget Discussion – Becky and Ellen attended to review the FY 2026 Town Budget on a line-by-line basis and adjustments were made. Budget discussions will continue November 6 with the FAST Squad, Fire Department, and Listers.
 - f. Appointment of Public Officers – Tracie Hartford and Patti Wickersham have volunteered to serve as Town Auditor. Ben moved and Emily seconded that Patti be appointed to the vacant seat having a term expiring in March 2025, and that Tracie be appointed to the vacant seat having a term expiring in March 2027. Both seats will appear on the ballot this Town Meeting Day; the former for a full 3-year term and the latter for 2 years to complete a 3-year term. Unanimous.
 - g. Warrants – Emily moved and Meg seconded approval for payment of the following warrants:

25031	\$	83.58	Tax Refund
25032		14,990.89	Payroll
25033		222,101.64	A/P

 Unanimous.
 - h. Approval of September 27 and October 2, 2024 Minutes – Emily moved and Steve seconded approval of the September 27 and October 2, 2024, meeting minutes as presented. Unanimous.
7. Meeting Wrap Up
- a. Correspondence – Ben was contacted a second time by the citizen-led Barnard Roads Committee; he will respond to the additional questions and request a courtesy copy of the committee’s final report.
 - b. Review of Assignments – Ben to post a downed tree announcement on listserv and speak with Rita Seto re: Better Road Grants; Cynthia to post advertisement for Road Crew Worker in various places; Steve to extend job offers to road crew personnel.
 - c. Agenda for Next Meeting – Town office parking lot paving; FY 2026 budget (FAST Squad, Fire Department, Listers).
8. Adjournment – Steve moved and Emily seconded that the meeting be adjourned. Unanimous. The meeting was adjourned at 9:39 pm.