

**POMFRET**  
**ANNUAL TOWN MEETING**  
**March 5, 2019**

Moderator Kevin Geiger called the meeting to order at 9:03am. He noted that the meeting was being digitally recorded. Three of our local Boy Scouts volunteered to serve as the microphone runners for the meeting.

1. Kevin Geiger was elected Moderator for a one-year term.

At this time Kevin went over the basics of Robert's Rules, then read the names of the birth and deaths in 2018, and called for a moment of silence in memory of those who are no longer with us. He then asked for the assembly's permission to allow our State Representative, Randall Szott, to speak. Once granted, Mr. Szott encouraged anyone in town to reach out to him by email with questions, comments, or concerns about local and state issues.

2. Rebecca (Becky) Fielder was elected Town Clerk for a one-year term.

3. The following officers were elected:

Selectboard	3 year term	Ona Chase	12 votes
		John Peters Jr.	75 votes *
Selectboard	1 year term	Frank Perron	Unopposed
Selectboard	1 year term	Ona Chase	12 votes
		Steve Chamberlin	77 votes *
Treasurer	1 year term	Ellen DesMeules	Unopposed
Cemetery Commissioner	3 year term	Bruce Tuthill	Unopposed
Lister	3 year term	Becky Fielder	Unopposed
Auditor	3 year term	Ben Brickner	Unopposed
Auditor	2 year term	Nancy Matthews	Unopposed
Auditor	1 year term	Gennie Lawrence	Unopposed
Town Agent	1 year term	John Putnam	Unopposed
Library Trustee	3 year term	Anne Bower	Unopposed
Library Trustee	3 year term	Jean Souter	Unopposed
Library Trustee	1 year term (to finish out a 3 year term)	Tina Clifford	Unopposed
Trustee of Public Funds	3 year term	Michael Doten	Unopposed

Following the elections, Betsy Siebeck thanked outgoing Selectboard member Michael Reese for his work and his years on the board.

4. Frank Perron moved that the Town appropriate the sums of \$40,547 for the Abbott Memorial Library and \$12,000 for the Cemetery Commission. Anne Bower seconded the motion, which then passed by unanimous voice vote.

5. Ted Matthews moved and Gennie Lawrence seconded the motion for the Town to appropriate the sum of \$9,379 to support the following social services: \$2,500 to EmpowerUp! (formerly known as the Ottawaquechee Community Partnership) to support the Mentor and Buddy Program; \$3,950 to the Visiting Nurse and Hospice for VT and NH; \$750 to the Spectrum Teen Center; \$300 to the Woodstock Area Job Bank; \$979 to Health Care & Rehabilitation Services (HCRS); and \$900 to Pentangle Arts. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

6. Peggy Kannenstine moved that the Town appropriate the sum of \$3,400 for the Woodstock Council on Aging to run the Thompson Senior Center, and Bill Emmons seconded. Deanna Jones, executive director of the Thompson and a Pomfret resident, gave the assembly an idea of the numbers of meals delivered in Pomfret, medical equipment available for loan, and social programs at the Senior Center. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

7. Deanna Jones moved and Bill Emmons seconded the motion to appropriate the sum of \$2,000 for the Ottawaquechee Health Foundation. Director Tayo Kirchof was granted permission to speak, and

highlighted the resources and grants that the Foundation has for people in their served towns, including medical needs and support. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

8. Frank Perron moved that the Town vote to use \$32,624 from the FY28 Town fund balance to offset taxes for FY20; Norm Buchanan seconded and the motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

9. Scott Woodward moved and Peggy Kannenstine seconded that the amount of \$75,000 be moved from the General Fund Rainy Day Reserve Account to the Town Building Reserve. Scott explained that the reason for doing this was that there are a number of improvements planned in the next year for several town buildings, most notably the former Town Offices (brick building), and that the added money will cover most of those planned costs. Peggy Kannenstine asked what measures would be taken to improve the accessibility of the Town Hall, and some discussion was had as to future planning for uses of the Town Hall beyond Town Meeting. There was also talk of the Scoping Study that was commissioned several years ago for the purpose of redesigning the transportation aspects of the "Municipal Complex", which included ADA compliance. No decisions have been made on the altering of the Town Hall at this time, but plans are being explored. Following the discussion, the motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

10. Scott Woodward moved and Peggy Kannenstine seconded the motion for the Town to approve the dissolution of the Town Hall Reserve Fund. It was noted that this reserve fund was created in 2015, but had never been funded, and that all future building funding would be put into the Town Building Reserve. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

11. Kevin Rice, Fire Chief, asked that the Town pass over the question of whether the Town will vote to appropriate the sum of \$44,975 to the Pomfret-Teago Fire Department for operational expenses in FY20, as the Selectboard and Fire Department agreed instead to add the FD's appropriation request to the General Fund budget. Ted Matthews moved to pass over the article, and Gennie Lawrence seconded; the motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

12. Frank Perron moved and Orson St. John seconded that the Town approve the combined budget of \$1,312,435 for town (\$352,335) and highway (\$960,100) expenses shown in the Town Report (not including voted appropriations from Articles 4-7). Including all voted appropriations from earlier articles, the total budget for FY19 is \$1,379,761. The motion passed by unanimous voice.

13. Norm Buchanan moved the article to see what the Town will raise in taxes (estimated sum of taxes to be raised is \$903,067) and Frank Perron seconded. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

14. Laura Kent moved and Bill Emmons seconded that the voters require that taxes be paid in U.S. funds in two installments (the first by 2:30pm August 16, 2019 and the balance by 2:30pm on February 7, 2020), with interest on overdue taxes to be charged at 1% per month, and all delinquent taxes will be subject to an 8% penalty after February 8, 2019 in accordance with Vermont Statutes. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

15. Other proper and necessary business:

- Marge Wakefield asked why there was no longer an article to accept the reports as submitted, and Scott Woodward explained that it was an unnecessary article, that there was no legal obligation to include it, and on advice from the Vermont League of Cities and Towns (VLCT) it was dropped.
- Laura Kent commended the Selectboard for the hours of work that they put in. She noted that the demands of the job have increased greatly over the years, and implored the board to look into hiring a part-time town manager to take on some of that work, which would in turn encourage more people to volunteer to run for the board. Many people in the audience applauded the idea.
- Alan Graham spoke on behalf of ECFiber and noted that the rate of subscription in Pomfret is 49%, just below Barnard. He also noted that the Invasive Plant Committee is active and in need of help controlling invasive species, and that there will be a program at the Abbott Library in the near future on this subject. Finally, he spoke on behalf of the Historical Society, who are actively seeking help in typing up information for their searchable database of information and artifacts.
- Kevin Rice brought up the idea that the voting for Selectboard members should be done at the end of the meeting or by Australian ballot, giving people an opportunity to learn who the candidates are and why they are running for the board and allowing voters to make more educated decisions about who runs the town. This proposal was met with enthusiasm and applause.
- Bob Coates and Patti Kuzmickas (School Board members) were joined by Joe Rigoli (WCSU Facilities Director) to discuss the state and status of the Prosper Valley School building. There was a moisture and mold issue that occurred in the summer of 2018, prompting the closing of the school building and relocation of TPVS students and staff to the Woodstock Elementary School campus for the entire 2018-19 school year. Joe outlined the remediation and preventative measures that they were employing to ensure that the moisture problems do not reoccur, and Bob and Patti spoke about the potential campus configurations once the school reopens. It is not clear at this time if the school will be reopened in time for the beginning of the 2019-20 school year,

nor what grades will be housed in the building when it does reopen. Many people from the community expressed support for reopening the school as soon as possible, and frustration that the Town and students have lost our school identity. There was also talk of creating affordable housing in town in order to encourage families to settle in Pomfret and increase our student population. Among those expressing their opinions and posing questions to the board were Frances Uptegrove, Frey Aarnio, Bill Emmons, Anne Bower, Corey Smith, Orson St. John, Sheila Murray, Alan Graham, Tom Gubbins, Heidi Gennaro, Betsy Siebeck, Bill Hoyt, Caroline Shepard, Terri Chamberlin, Laura Kent, Peggy Kannenstine, Deanna Jones, Norm Buchanan, Gennie Lawrence, and Kevin Geiger.

- Joanna Long reported that there are more new babies in town than are listed in the Town Report, and noted that one of the teachers at TPVS has asked her to join a town/school history discussion with her students in the coming weeks. Also, she would like to thank the road crew for the exemplary job they have done maintaining the roads this winter, Rudge Road in particular.
- Ellie Pizzani promoted the upcoming Red Cross Blood Drive on March 15<sup>th</sup> at WUHS.
- Sherman Kent reminded everyone that Green Up Day is Saturday May 4<sup>th</sup>, and he will be distributing more information in the next few weeks.
- Kristina Waters commended the road crew for keeping the roads open at all hours this winter – even with a late shift job she has made it home every night, 3 miles up a dead end road.
- Scott Woodward noted the \$1000 budget line for a Veteran’s Memorial, which is being researched in cooperation with the Historical Society. He also thanked Michael Reese for his Selectboard service and mentorship.
- Terri Chamberlin, Assistant Chief of the Fire Department, noted that there are some improvements to be done to both fire stations, including fire alarms and exterior staining, that will be upcoming in next year’s budget.
- Bill Emmons gave his thanks to all of the farm families in town who have shaped the landscape and produce the high quality homegrown products that our town has to offer, such as milk, cheese, syrup and so on. His comment received much applause from the assembly.

Bill Emmons moved to adjourn, Orson St. John seconded, and the Moderator declared the meeting closed at 11:23am. The new officers were sworn to their duties by Becky Fielder.

Our thanks to the Thompson Senior Center for providing coffee for the meeting, and Alice Lamson for making her wonderful donuts!

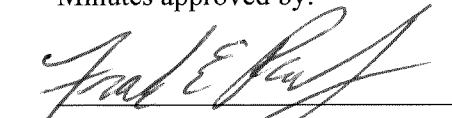
Respectfully submitted,



Rebecca Fielder, Town Clerk

Minutes approved by:

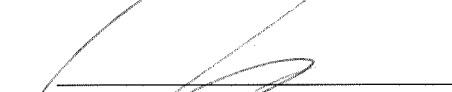
Date:



17 March 2019



20 March 2019



20 March 2019



20 March 2019

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