

Town of Pomfret Selectboard
Meeting Minutes
November 1, 2023

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

Public: Jim Potter (Road Foreman), Neil Lamson (Lister), Betsy Rhodes (Library Trustee), Nancy Matthews (Auditor), Karen Osnoe (ZBA Administrator), Scott Pearce, John Moore (Planning Commission), William Emmons (Planning Commission), Cynthia Hewitt (SB Asst), Beriah Cushman (Stitzel Page)

1. John called the meeting to order at 7:02 pm.
2. Agenda Review – John moved and Steve seconded addition of supplemental heating oil and propane contracts, Trustee of Public Funds appointment, and Road Crew appreciation holiday gifts. Unanimous.
3. Public Comment – Betsy Rhodes thanked Jim and the Road Crew for patching the pot hole on Library Street; she also inquired about furnace maintenance contracts.
4. Road Foreman Report – Jim has placed the order for road signs, they should arrive for installation next week. Scott Jensen from Vtrans joined Jim for a site visit of the Broad Brook Road damage as well as the debris above Hatfield's on Stage Road. Jim will obtain permission from Hatfield to perform the job. Mr. Jensen approved both projects, the cost of which will be covered at 75% by FEMA. Jim will rent a large excavator for one month from Nortrax to complete these repairs. The Broad Brook Road repair will require installation of large stone, which will eliminate the need for Jersey Barriers; the machine can also be used to remove large trees/trunks from the Town Garage property, and to reduce the ledge on Joe Ranger Road. Emily moved and Steve seconded that Jim be authorized to rent the excavator at the cost of \$5,600, and to purchase Jersey barriers if they are still necessary. Unanimous. Jim is obtaining competitive quotes for the purchase of tire chains. GMP will supervise the installation of wiring for the new generator at the town garage. ECFiber will also perform an installation. New snow fence has been ordered. The new fence is green and will replace the orange fencing in use for more than 20 years.
5. Items for Discussion or Vote
 - a. Propane Tank for the Garage – Keith Chase will purchase a 1,000-gallon propane tank from F.W. Webb; Jim will install the underground tank with the assistance of Mike Bartlett, a certified propane installer. Emily moved and Steve seconded approval of the tank purchase and installation work, to be paid for from the Town's share of ARPA funds. Unanimous.
 - b. Caper Street Intersection Signage – A Caper Street resident requested a review of the signage and speed limit at the intersection of Caper Street and Pomfret Road. It was noted that a Road Safety Audit Review was performed in 2015-16, resulting in signage changes and a reduced advisory speed limit. Jim will confirm the current signage along the road is consistent with the audit recommendations and will discuss the same with the resident.
 - c. Generator Service Contract – A decision on this was postponed to the November 15 meeting to allow time to confirm the contract term and decide which generators should be included. Scott Pearce requested that installation of the North Pomfret

Station generator be postponed to spring if possible so that a barrier can be built to protect the generator from road salt.

- d. Reserve Fund Policy – Nancy Matthews presented a draft of the policy with an appendix listing the current funds with the date they were created and the purpose for which they were created. Nancy will edit the policy and appendix as discussed and present for approval at the November 15 meeting.
- e. Rainy Day Reserve Funds Policy – This revised policy has suggested a formula for determining the amount of money to be reserved. Nancy will edit the policy as discussed and present for approval at the November 15 meeting.
- f. Errors and Omissions Certificate (PVR-4261-E) – Emily moved and Ben seconded approval as provided by the Listers. Unanimous.
- g. PACIF Uninsured/Underinsured Coverage Limit and P&C Deductible – Ben moved and Emily seconded maintaining the Uninsured/Underinsured Motorist (UM/UIM) coverage limit at \$250,000 as this coverage is rarely utilized (the Town’s auto and workers’ comp policies cover many of the same perils) and the only alternative is to increase the coverage limit to \$10 million for an additional premium. Unanimous. Emily moved and Steve seconded increasing the deductible on the Town’s property and casualty coverage from \$1,000 to \$5,000, which is anticipated to reduce the related premium by about 6% per year, and because the Town is unlikely ever to file a property or casualty claim for a small loss. Unanimous.
- h. Preliminary Budget Discussion – Ben circulated a preliminary spreadsheet of the FY 2025 budget to interested departments and organizations, requesting their input before the November 15 meeting. The Selectboard scheduled the first two budget-only meetings for November 22 and November 29 at 7:00 pm.
- i. Continued Town Administrator Discussion – Ben prepared an initial job description at the Selectboard’s request, based on examples Becky obtained from a town clerks’ message board and the recent Woodstock town manager description. The Selectboard asked Ben to circulate the initial job description for its review.
- j. Trustee of Public Funds – Steve moved and John seconded the appointment of Bob Coates as a Trustee of Public Funds, to finish a 3-year term expiring in March 2024. Unanimous.
- k. Heating Oil and Propane Fixed Price Supply Agreements – When approving the initial contracts in July, the Selectboard understood that the Fire Department would separately contract for heating oil and propane for the 2023-24 season, but the Department were unable to do so. Accordingly, the Selectboard obtained proposals for additional product to cover the difference. Ben moved and Emily seconded approval of the proposed agreements: 500 gal. heating oil at \$3.286/gal. (or 1,000 at up to \$3.300/gal., if available) and 1,500 gal. propane at \$1.495/gal. Unanimous.
- l. Road Crew Appreciation Holiday Gifts – Emily moved and Steve seconded approval of a Hannaford gift card for each Road Crew member. Unanimous.
- m. Warrants – Emily moved and Ben seconded approval for payment of the following warrants:

24034	\$9,700.59	Payroll
24037	\$28,383.50	AP (all except the WCSD invoice, which will be paid directly by the Cloudland Road neighbor group)

Unanimous.

- n. Approval of Minutes – Ben moved and Emily seconded approval of the October 18, 2023, meeting minutes. Unanimous.
- 6. Executive Session
 - a. Ben moved and John seconded that the Selectboard enter executive session pursuant to 1 V.S.A. 313(a)(1)(F) to discuss confidential attorney-client communications. Unanimous. The Selectboard entered executive session at 9:52 pm.
 - b. The Selectboard exited executive session at 10:20 pm, with no decisions having been made therein.
- 7. Items for Discussion or Vote
 - a. Settlement Agreement (23-ENV-00092) – Ben moved and Emily seconded that defendants’ proposed settlement agreement be declined and that the settlement agreement proposed by the Town’s outside counsel, Stitzel Page & Fletcher, be approved, contingent on defendants’ acceptance of the same. Unanimous.
- 8. Meeting Wrap Up
 - a. Correspondence – Ben reported that The Daily Show/Comedy Central recently contacted the Town about producing an on-location segment regarding the recent foliage road closures. The Town also received a message from the Vermont 250th Anniversary Commission asking the Town to participate in the upcoming celebrations; the Selectboard may create a committee to work on this.
 - b. Review of Assignments – John to contact Brookfield re: generator service contract term and whether to include the North Pomfret Station generator; Sheriff re: Howe Hill directed patrols; Marge Wakefield re: Trustee of Public Funds appointment; Irving re: additional heating oil and propane contracts; Ellen re: DocuSign for UI coverage limit (maintain at \$250,000), sending the WCSD invoice to Cloudland Road neighbor group, increasing P&C deductible to \$5,000 starting in 2024. Ben to prepare a listserv message calling for volunteers on a new 250th anniversary committee; circulate town administrator job description to the Selectboard; review revised financial policy drafts.
 - c. Agenda for Next Meeting – FY 2025 budget, Reserve Fund Policy, Rainy Day Reserve Funds Policy, Generator Service Contract, Vermont 250th Anniversary Committee Resolution, Town Administrator job description.
- 9. Adjournment – Ben moved and Meg seconded that the meeting be adjourned. Unanimous. The meeting was adjourned at 10:35 pm.