

Town of Pomfret Selectboard  
Meeting Minutes  
March 19, 2025

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

Public: Frank Rogers, Jon Ricketson, Eric Chase, Cy Benoit, John Moore

1. Ben called the meeting to order at 6:31 pm.
2. Executive Session
  - a. Ben moved and Emily seconded that the Selectboard enter executive session pursuant to 1 V.S.A. 313(a)(1)(F) to discuss confidential attorney-client communications made for the purpose of providing professional legal services to the Selectboard and the premature general public knowledge of which would clearly place the Selectboard or a person involved at a substantial disadvantage. Unanimous. The Selectboard entered executive session at 6:32 pm.
  - b. The Selectboard exited executive session at 7:00 pm, with no decisions having been made therein.
3. Agenda Review – None.
4. Public Comment – None.
5. Road Foreman Report – It's mud season. Frank reports the crew is grading and spreading hardpack and stone where needed. All equipment is running well. Frank will assist Emily with preparing specifications for the paving RFP. Frank would like to pave Pomfret Road from Rudge Road to Johnson Road if sufficient funding is available.
6. Items for Discussion or Vote
  - a. Highway Paving Request for Proposals – The town office parking lot will be broken out into a separate RFP due to the extra scope of grading, drainage, etc. Emily will work with Frank to prepare the separate RFP and to prepare a scope of work description for the Wayside Road bridge to be added to the existing RFP. Both RFPs will be reviewed and discussed at the April 2 meeting.
  - b. Town Highway Structures Grant Application – To be discussed at the April 2 meeting.
  - c. Town Highway Class 2 Roadway Grant Application – Ben moved and John seconded that the Town Highway Class 2 Roadway (Paving) Grant application be approved as revised during the meeting. Unanimous. Ben will submit to Vtrans.
  - d. Town Right-of-Way Tree Mitigation – Tree Warden Cy Benoit reports the need to remove dead, dying and diseased trees in the town rights-of-way, particularly those that are a nuisance or pose a hazard. Cy suggested locating and marking these trees for removal. Cy also suggested that the town get ahead of the Emerald Ash Borer, which is now present in Pomfret and surrounding towns. Once mud season has ended, Cy and Frank will drive around and locate trees for removal and determine which trees Green Mountain Power should handle due to proximity to power lines. Cy will show Frank the telltale “blonding” of infested Ash trees; this is caused by woodpecker damage as they seek Emerald Ash Borer larvae. Once blonding occurs, the integrity of the tree becomes compromised and removal becomes more difficult. Alan Graham has returned as Deputy Tree Warden and will research grant opportunities. Alan and Neil Lamson will also assist with locating and marking trees for removal. The town has \$20,000 available for tree removal this calendar year: \$10,000 through June 30 and \$10,000 beginning July 1.

- e. Capital Planning Committee Discussion – Last January Eric Chase submitted to the Selectboard written comments and analysis regarding capital planning for and utilization of the town’s highway equipment. Eric’s analysis was then forwarded to the Capital Planning Committee for review. The present discussion was motivated by several factors including the town’s plan to purchase three new highway trucks in the next three fiscal years, the substantial increase in the cost of these trucks since the current capital plan was adopted in 2021, and changes in the interest rate environment since that time that may make financing more viable today.

Committee member John Moore offered that the Committee would study and compile data in the following areas as the town considers the purchase of a second new highway truck later this year:

- i. Winter Season
  - Equipment needed
  - Manpower needed
- ii. Spring, Summer, Fall
  - Equipment needed
  - Manpower needed
- iii. Long Term Trade-in Analysis and Trend
- iv. Efficient Utilization of Highway Equipment
- v. Consider Finance options in particular Vermont's statewide program

Eric volunteered to join the Committee as a member. Frank was invited to participate ex officio. The Committee will revise actual costs of new equipment while considering lengthening term of service (e.g., 6-to-7 years versus 5-to-6 years), impact on anticipated trade-in values, and other uses of idle equipment during off- or slow seasons (e.g., trucking our own material versus having everything delivered for a fee). The Committee also will consider opportunistic financing options versus all-cash purchases. The Committee will return to the Selectboard to present more information at the April 16 or May 7 meeting.

- f. Appointment of Public Officers – No person having filed a petition and a consent to be a candidate for the office of Lister or for the office of Library Trustee, and no person having otherwise been elected to fill either of those offices at the annual town meeting this year, Ben moved and Emily seconded that Norm Buchanan be appointed to the office of Lister, and that Heather Durkel be appointed to the office of Library Trustee, in each case to serve until the next annual town meeting, pursuant 17 V.S.A. 2682. Ben moved and Emily seconded the following appointments, each for a one-year term expiring March 31, 2026 unless otherwise noted:
- i. Capital Planning Committee – Eric Chase (term indefinite)
  - ii. Citizen Trustee of Labounty Fund – Marge Wakefield
  - iii. Constable – Doug Tuthill
  - iv. e911 Coordinator – Becky Fielder
  - v. ECFiber Governing Board – Alan Graham (primary), Betsy Rhodes (1st alternate) (1-year terms expiring April 27, 2026)
  - vi. GUVSWD Board of Supervisors – Doug Tuthill (alternate)
  - vii. Planning Commission – John Moore, Doug Tuthill (3-year terms expiring March 31, 2028)

- viii. Tree Warden – Cy Benoit (primary), Alan Graham (deputy)
- ix. TRORC Board of Directors – Bill Emmons (primary), Tyler Wellington (alternate)
- x. Vermont Ethics Commission Liaison – Becky Fielder
- xi. Zoning Board of Adjustment – Benjamin Brickner, Shaun Pickett (3-year terms expiring March 31, 2028)

Unanimous.

- g. Warrants – Emily moved and John seconded approval for payment of the following warrants:

25087	\$ 12,809.15	Payroll
25088	65,061.68	AP

Unanimous.

- h. Approval of March 5, 2025 Minutes – Emily moved and John seconded approval of the March 5, 2025 meeting minutes as presented. Unanimous.

#### 7. Meeting Wrap Up

- a. Correspondence – Meg received information re: Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) funding for the Freeman Road project. Funding decisions are made every two years; Meg will discuss with John Moore regarding feasibility and report back. Ben reported that *The Vermont Standard* published a correction regarding the prior week's article about Pomfret town officials' involvement in ambulance dispatching decisions.
- b. Review of Assignments – Emily and Frank to revise existing paving RFP and prepare a separate RFP for the town office parking lot; Frank to work with Cy re: tree mitigation after mud season; Ben will submit paving grant application to Vtrans, speak with finance person re: timing of the municipal equipment loan fund.
- c. Agenda for Next Meeting – Equipment Loan Fund Application, Highway Paving Request for Proposals, Town Highway Structures Grant Application, Appointment of Public Officers

- 8. Adjournment – John moved and Emily seconded that the meeting be adjourned. Unanimous. The meeting was adjourned at 8:28 pm.