

Town of Pomfret  
Draft Minutes  
Select Board Meeting  
July 17, 2019

Present: Emily Grube, Steve Chamberlin, Scott Woodward, John Peters Jr., Frank Perron

Public Attendees: Ona Chase, Keith Chase, Christina Chamberlin, Jim Morgan, Neil Lamson (Lister), John Moore (Planning Commission), Susan Bitzer, Ellen DesMeules (Treasurer), Cynthia Hewitt (Select Board Secretary), Betsy Siebeck, Marge Wakefield (Trustee of Public Funds), Kevin Rice, Becky Fielder (Town Clerk), John Zonay, Christian Avard (Vt Standard), Norm Buchanan (Lister), Jim Potter (Road Foreman), Art Lewin (Road Crew). (at Regular meeting)

1. Emily called the Special Meeting to Order at 6:01
2. Special Meeting: HR Contractors Presentations

a. Erika Schramm 6:00 [www.skylightcoaching.com](http://www.skylightcoaching.com)

b. Ginny Champney 6:20 **HR Consulting Solutions, LLC. (HRCS), Waterbury, VT**

c. Teresa Miele 6:40 HR Acquired LLC, N. Clarendon, VT

These three candidates were recommended by Jill Muhr, VLTC, as potential HR consultants to the Town. They all have education, experience and background to support their expertise. Each would like the opportunity to work with the town in developing and/or perfecting our personnel policies, procedures, and processes. All determined a preliminary visit to examine our records and existing programs would be necessary so they could then make recommendations to bring up-to-date, streamline, and renovate to suit our purposes. Of particular importance would be to create a timely process of performance review, including a scheduling calendar, help in compliance with DOT CDC Drug testing and licensing regulations, and put in place equitable hiring processes and fair practice workforce compensation in regard to different levels of employment, i.e., full-time, part-time, contract, appointed, elected.

Ms. Schramm, Ms. Champney, and Ms. Miele each participated in a 20-minute telephone conversation with the Board, answering questions, discussing their history and skills, and presenting concrete and distinct ways in which they can bring the Town what is needed to fulfill our needs.

1. Call to Order Regular Meeting. 7:01pm
2. Public Comment. Betsy Siebeck attended the meeting to bring the problem of speeding and limit violations on the public roads. She queried whether the VSP contract included speed checks. Her comments will be taken under advisement. Kevin Rice stated there is a pot hole on River Road which is coincident with river bank erosion, thus creating a hazard. Art stated that this problem actually is situated in the town of Hartford.

3. Review of Agenda

Added: Regarding Open Meeting Violation. Scott stated that since the decision on 07/03/2019 to limit web site access was not on the agenda and thus warned properly, the decision was not legal. It is included in tonight's agenda. Then Scott read a prepared statement regarding the perceived breakdown in the integrity of the Select Board and asked for remediation by working on this problem. The dysfunction is distressing and has included public verbal assault, witnessed by the Board of Civil Authority meeting. This has produced fear and unrest. Several citizens commented on the unprovoked attack as being contradictory to the demeanor of a Board member. Outside mediation is suggested along with Special Meetings to work towards a solution.

Regarding Web Site Management: Scott asked whether Bob Merrill was finished with the website; Becky is in contact with Bob and Thad Richardson and they are working on it.

Added: Ellen reported that the tax bills have been sent and the State consequently changed the rate; we are currently working on recalculation and resending the statements to all taxpayers. Ellen also asked if the paving funds should be moved to the reserve since they won't be used this year. Scott stated the board does not have that authority, only the voters. Emily will check with VLTC. Chad Hewitt is trying to close the books.

4. Recurring Items

- a. Approve 07/03/2019 Minutes. In the Road Foreman's report, it should be clarified that Scott Jensen performed the site visit on Rudge Road. Scott moved the acceptance with this correction; Frank seconded; unanimous.
- b. Warrants for Approval. Emily moved and Steve seconded the following warrants for approval:  
#19007     \$44,143.93 Accounts Payable  
#19006     6,658.13. Payroll  
Passed
- c. Server Dilemma: Scott asked whether Bob Merrill was finished with the website; Becky is in contact with Bob and Thad Richardson and they are working on it. A new

piece of equipment is necessary to set up cloud back-up. There is also a need for updated equipment for the Highway Department, current computer is 6-years old. A new computer would cost ± \$1400.

5. Business Items for Discussion or Vote

- a. Road Foreman report: Jim was in touch with Mike Blakesly regarding Adelson's culvert; he suggested a consultation by Chris Bumps, who is currently on vacation; he will come by for a site visit when back to work; they say the 30-inch culvert would be the minimum for this project. In a town garage inspection, it was noted the outlets are not GFI, up to code. The highway garage also is lacking insurance on the salt shed and back shed. Frank stated there is still grant money available for updates by Royal Security. The repair work is finished on truck #2. Truck #3 was returned and after 200 miles the front axle packing failed. It is expected that this will be covered. Rudge road should be finished within 2-3 days. The cost so far has been \$27,000 and there will be an additional cost of ± \$14,000 for hardpack and stone lining, plus man hours. Jim stated it would be advantageous to pull together more accurate cost beforehand on the next project. Jim has put 150 hours on the grader since his hire. Ditching needs to be a priority on all roads. Jim is having to poke cutouts for a short-term solution. Frank stated that Wild Apple needs work. Steve reports that Webster hill has some hazardous areas that need to be addressed. Neil suggested guard rails are needed if the problems aren't solved. Jim and Emily will take Chris Bumps for a site visit when he becomes available.
- b. Truck RFP to be submitted with the additions of disk brakes and outside plow controls. Emily moved and Steve seconded the RFP be submitted on 07/22/2019 with a return date of noon on 08/21/2019. Unanimous approval. Christina Chamberlin suggested it be submitted for pricing of TWO trucks, since one was not purchased last year. This will be accomplished.
- c. Sand RFP in the amount of 3000 ton to be submitted on 07/17/2019 with return due at noon on 08/07/2019. Frank moved and Steve seconded; passed.
- d. Town Garage. Jim will see that the GFI outlets are acquired; Emily has called Tom Mullen of Black Ox Roofing to inspect roof damage and estimate repairs. Scott moved and Steve seconded that Emily be given the authority to ask John Syme to repair the soffit. Jim has removed another precarious tree.
- e. Galaxy Hill Culvert discussion is postponed until Chris Bumps is available.
- f. Crack Sealing. Jim is to determine where these repairs will be most needed. Steve moved and Frank seconded that Nikon be awarded the contract at \$4350 per day, not to exceed \$25,000, after reviewing two bids; Passed.
- g. Regarding inadequate garage insurance, John moved and Frank 2<sup>nd</sup>, to increase insurance to protect town assets. Unanimous.
- h. Repeater easement. Kevin Rice explained this is necessary in order to get large equipment in and out. The antenna will likely be replaced, but there is no need to add another. Phil Dechert is drafting the easement.
- i. Plumbing Issues. It was voted to investigate moving the pump and switches.
- j. Slack Software. Scott suggested Bob Merrill's opinion should be sought. John will get more information for further discussion

- k. Purple Crayon Update – to be discussed in Executive Session on 07/24/2019 with Joe McLean in attendance. The latest counter-draft had been submitted to Purple Crayon as of July 19th and that it's time for the latest draft to be reviewed by the full board
  - l. Open Meeting violation & website access and management. As per previous discussions (see Review of Agenda above #3) the Board has determined further meetings and discussion will be helpful to further getting along and improving communication. The board took up and voted on a matter that was not on the previous meeting's agenda, which is a clear violation of Open Meeting Law. Becky will talk with Bob Merrill re: changing from a code to a text format in the Board Meeting page. John moved and Frank 2<sup>nd</sup> that web access be granted to Becky, Cynthia, and Scott; that Becky and Cynthia only will post agenda, minutes, warnings, etc. Unanimous.
  - m. Election of a Select Board Clerk; Scott is willing to fill this roll but the Board decided it was no longer necessary in view of the fact that communication, etc. seems to be in transition, communication is on the road to improvement, and the Board needs to move ahead.
  - n. Financial Management Committee: Ellen reports that she and Nancy Matthews are working on this report and it should be completed by November. Emily's input will be sought once they have the final rough draft. They are fine tuning policies. She stated that Nancy is excellent at minutia.
  - o. Scott moved that 3 special meetings be scheduled for open discussion of furthering the Board's improvement. Betsy Siebeck suggested a mediator would be very helpful. Frank agreed that an "outsider" was definitely necessary. VLTC likely has some grant money, assistance along these lines. Scott moved that Emily be authorized to contact VLTC and Jill Muhr regarding a mediator/mediation. John seconded. Passed.
6. Meeting Wrap UP
- a. Selectboard Correspondence: EFC contract is signed and returned.
  - b. Review of Assignments:
    - Emily plumbing issues, soffits, Bumps to Webster Hill, VLTC mediator, Fuel RFP
    - John SLACK software.
    - Scott/Frank Purple Crayon paperwork.
    - Frank Aggregate Pricelist
  - c. Agenda Items for Next Meeting
    - For 07/24/2019. Purple Crayon (Exec session), Generator maintenance; driveway permits, Jill Muhr
    - For 08/07/2019. Slack software, Garage Maintenance, HR hire, VLTC mediator, Fuel RFP
7. Adjournment: Frank moved for adjournment at 9:40pm, Scott 2<sup>nd</sup>. Passed