

POMFRET

ANNUAL TOWN MEETING

March 5, 2013

Moderator Robert J. O'Donnell called the meeting to order at 9:00 A.M. The Reverend Jennifer Donaldson was asked to begin the meeting with a prayer.

1. Robert J. O'Donnell was elected Moderator for a 1 year term. He was given the oath of office by the Town Clerk, Lynne A. Leavitt, and then reviewed the procedures and rules of order for the meeting. He stated that this meeting, his 13th, was his last as Town Moderator and recommended. Fred Doten thanked Robert J. O'Donnell for all his years of service to the Town of Pomfret.
2. Lynne A. Leavitt was elected Town Clerk for a 1 year term and given the oath of office by Robert O'Donnell.
3. William Emmons moved to accept the reports as submitted. Marjorie Wakefield seconded. There was a long discussion on whether an unaudited Town Report/s should be accepted or not. Fred Doten thanked James Potter and the Highway Department for the good job they do on the Pomfret roads. After a loud applause, Robert O'Donnell informed Fred Doten he was out of order. Laura Kent made a motion to amend this Article to read "We accept this Town Report after a CPA comes in to verify and/or correct these numbers and to provide professional direction to the Board of Auditors all preferably by July 1". Anne Bower seconded. There was a long discussion and Laura Kent withdrew the amendment and Anne Bower withdrew her seconded of the amendment. The motion to accept the reports as submitted passed by voice vote.

4. The following officers were elected:

Selectboard	3 year term	Neil I. Lamson	72 votes
		John (Jack) R. Peters	34 votes
Treasurer	1 year term	Hazel B. Harrington	Unopposed
Collector of Delinquent Taxes	1 year term	Jay L. Potter	Unopposed
Cemetery Commissioner	3 year term	Amy L. Potter	Unopposed
Lister	3 year term	Norman M. Buchanan	Unopposed
Auditor	3 year term	JoAnn Webb	Unopposed
Grand Juror	1 year term	Michael S. Reese	Unopposed
Town Agent	1 year term	Michael S. Reese	Unopposed
Library Trustee	3 year term	Emily B. Harrington	Unopposed
Library Trustee	3 year term	Anne L. Bower	Unopposed
Trustee of Public Funds	3 year term	Bettina L. Lewin	Unopposed

Note: While the ballots were being counted Robert W. Merrill gave the Pomfret List Serve address pomfret-subscribe@lists.valley.net and stated that is was not affiliated with the Town. He also gave an update on EC Fiber.

5. Anne Bower moved that the Town appropriate \$36,935 for the Abbott Memorial Library. JoAnn Webb seconded. Anne Bower stated the increase of 3.9 % is broken down as 3% for the librarian salaries and .9% in fuel costs, etc. Douglas Tuthill wanted to know how many hours and what was the hourly rate for the librarians? Anne Bower said the Library is open 22 hours per week, but in addition to those hours the staff delivers books, attends conferences and respond to emails. Hazel Harrington said the hourly rates for the librarians were approximately \$16.00, \$14.50 and \$11.00. Joanna Long explained how the salaries are set in the budget. She stated that the Library staff is well educated and experienced. The Library is a warm and welcoming place. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote.
6. Sheila Murray moved that the Town appropriate the sum of \$3,950 to support the home health, maternal and child health, and hospice care provided in patients' homes and in community settings by the Visiting Nurse Association & Hospice of VT and NH. Marjorie Wakefield seconded. Sheila Murray said it is a great organization and they absorb most of the cost themselves. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote.
7. Anne Bower moved that the Town appropriate the sum of \$2,500 to support programming of the Ottauquechee Community Partnership (OCP) and OCP's Mentor and Buddy Program (previously known as the Shining Light Mentoring program). These programs help keep youth in the WCSU area drug-free, engaged in healthy activities, and provided with opportunities for leadership and personal growth. Corinne Smith seconded. Nicole Fosse asked "what do they really do?" Lisa Kia, Board of Directors, said they have mentoring programs and a substance programs for grades K-12 and at this time they have 27 children in their Mentor and Buddy Program. For the substance abuse programs they have 2 staff members and an office in the Woodstock Union High School. The reason they are asking for more money this year is due to the lack of state funding, it has almost dried up. Norwood Long said he is in favor of these programs; they do an outstanding job with troubled teens and the drug problems. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote.
8. Deanne Jones moved that the Town appropriate the sum of \$2,500 for the Woodstock Area Council on aging to run The Thompson Senior Center. Marjorie Wakefield seconded. Deanna Jones, Executive Director, thanked the Town for their support. She explained the services they provide, such as home delivered meals, Monday through Friday and weekends, driving people to medical appointments and to the center. She said new this year is a flyer at the Teago Store "Aging in Community", please check it out. They did cut some of their transportation costs by getting a smaller van. If anyone has questions or would like to use their services please call her. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

9. Anne Bower moved that the Town appropriate the sum of \$500.00 for the Spectrum Teen Center. Our objective is to engage teens in healthy activities and provide them with a safe and drug free environment. The Spectrum Teen Center strives to make youth feel supported, welcomed and included along with giving them a sense of belonging. There is no charge to attend our regularly scheduled programs. Douglas Tuthill seconded. Joan Staples asked how many teens and how often do they meet at the Teen Center? Douglas Tuthill said this is an excellent place for kids to go, it is drug and alcohol-free, they can play games and eat food. It is at the Woodstock Recreation Center on Friday and Saturday nights. It is a very important service and the kids have benefited from it greatly. Anne Bower said it is really filling needs for the kids. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote.
10. Kevin Geiger moved that the Town vote to create a Pomfret Fast Squad Equipment Reserve Fund to be used for the purchase and repair of equipment used by the Pomfret Fast Squad. Anthony Thacher seconded. Fred Doten asked what happen to the Fire Department's reserve fund when they merged? Kevin Rice said the money is still there. Neil Lamson explained, in order for the Town to reserve funds it must first vote at Town Meeting to create the fund. This establishes the fund only, not the money. The amount of \$4,400.00 is in the budget. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote.
11. Marjorie Wakefield moved that the Town vote to create an Abbott Memorial Library Building Reserve Fund to be used for the repair and maintenance of the Abbott Memorial Library. Vernon Clifford seconded. Geoffrey Klingenstein asked who owns the building? Anne Bower said the Town owns the building. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote.
12. Anthony Thacher moved that the Town vote to create a Communications Equipment Reserve Fund to be used for the purchase and repair of communications equipment used by the Fire Department, Fast Squad and town employees. Orson St. John seconded. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote.
13. Geoffrey Klingenstein moved that the Town vote to create a Town Buildings Reserve Fund to be used for the repair and maintenance of Town buildings. Anthony Thacher seconded. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote.
14. Anthony Thacher moved that the Town authorize the Selectboard to spend unanticipated funds such as grants and gifts. William Emmons seconded. Andrew Mann wanted them to look into the Article; he didn't think it needed to be warned. Neil Lamson said we didn't need to put it on the Warning, but we left it there any way. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

12:30 P.M. Vernon Clifford made a motion that we recess until after the School Meeting. Hazel Harrington Seconded. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

Town Meeting reconvened at 2:40 P.M.

The Moderator then called upon Kevin Rice, Fire Chief, Pomfret-Teago Volunteer Fire Department, Inc., he presented a plaque to Nelson Lamson for his 32 years of service on the Teago Fire Department.

15. Anthony Thacher moved that the Town will vote to exempt the properties of the Pomfret-Teago Volunteer Fire Department, Inc. from taxes for a five year period. Andrew Mann seconded. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote.
16. Michael Reese moved that the Town will vote to exempt Teago Grange Hall Building and lot, owned by the non profit Corporation known as the Teago Community Hall Association, from taxes for a five year period. Kevin Rice seconded

There was a lengthy discussion and 3 proposed amendments.

- 1) To see if the Town will vote to exempt Teago Grange Hall Building and lot, *now* owned by the non profit corporation known as the Teago Community Hall Association, *or to be owned by the Pomfret Historical Society, Inc.* from taxes for a five year period. Moved by Michael Reese. Seconded by Douglas Tuthill. The amendment did not pass.
- 2) To see if the Town will vote to exempt Teago Grange Hall Building and lot, now owned by the non profit corporation known as the Teago Community Hall Association from taxes for a *one* year period. Moved by Hazel Harrington. Seconded by Jay Potter. YES-15 NO-31 The amendment did not pass.
- 3) To see if the Town will vote to exempt Teago Grange Hall Building and lot, *now* owned by the non profit corporation known as the Teago Community Hall Association, *or owned by another community non-profit corporation*, from taxes for a five year period. Moved by Michael Reese. Seconded by Kevin Geiger.

This amendment passed by unanimous voice vote.

The original motion as amended, passed by unanimous voice vote.

17. Kevin Geiger moved that the Town of Pomfret increase the property tax exemption available to all qualified people, to include all veterans 50% or more disabled, from \$10,000 of appraisal value to \$40,000 of appraisal value in accordance with 32 V.S.A. #3802(11) to be effective on April 1, 2013. Frederick Staples seconded. There was a handout on "Property tax exemption for Vermont Veterans" available and passed around. There was a discussion and an amendment.

Shall the Town of Pomfret increase the property tax exemption available to all qualified people from \$10,000 of appraisal value to \$40,000 of appraisal value in accordance with 32 V.S.A. #3802(11) to be effective on April 1, 2013.

Moved by Kevin Geiger. Seconded by Frederick Staples. **The amended motion passed by unanimous voice vote.**

18. Kevin Rice moved that the voters authorize the Selectboard to borrow money, if necessary, for the payment of current expenses of the Town pending receipts of payment of taxes. Anne Bower seconded. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

19. Orson St. John moved that the Town vote the budget of \$1,870,350 for town and highway expenses as shown in the town report. Hazel Harrington seconded. There was a lengthy discussion on the budget. Douglas Tuthill expressed concerns on how the highway equipment was being maintained and how and where the money was going. Neil Lamson said we had a very bad mud season last year. Jay Potter commented on the winter account on page 15 about the mild winter and the town only saved \$8,000.00. Norwood Long wanted to know if the items in the budget included Article 6, \$3,950.00 for VNA, etc. The Selectmen indicated that the budget included the amount of \$3,950.00 in Article 6 as well as all other money articles previously passed today. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote.
20. Hazel Harrington moved that the Town to raise \$887,263 in taxes. Frederick Staples seconded. Hazel Harrington had a handout at Town Meeting that read "Corrections to the 2012 Town Report". The motion passed by unanimous voice vote.
21. Kevin Lessard moved that the Town will have the treasurer collect taxes in two installments August 5th, 2013 and November 5th, 2013. Late payments will be subject to interest of 1% per calendar month or part thereof. All taxes outstanding on November 6th, 2013 will be delinquent and subject to a penalty of 8% for the Town. Neil Lamson seconded. There was a discussion on the 8% penalty going to the Town or to the Collector of Delinquent taxes.

Amendment #1:

There was a motion to amend the Article on the floor:

That the Town will have the treasurer collect taxes in two installments August 5th, 2013 and November 5th, 2013. Late payments will be subject to interest of 1% per calendar month or part thereof. All taxes outstanding on November 6th, 2013 will be delinquent and subject to a penalty *up to* 8% for the *tax collector*.
The amendment was Moved by Jay Potter. Seconded by Andrew Mann.

Then there was an amendment to the 1st Amendment to delete the words "**up to**" from the 1st Amendment.
This amendment to the 1st Amendment passed. **YES-30 NO-12**

Then we voted on the amended 1st Amendment to the Article on the floor, which was to change the penalty payment from the town to the *tax collector*.

To see if the Town will have the treasurer collect taxes in two installments August 5th, 2013 and November 5th, 2013. Late payments will be subject to interest of 1% per calendar month or part thereof. All taxes outstanding on November 6th, 2013 will be delinquent and subject to a penalty of 8% for the *tax collector*.

The 1st Amendment was defeated by unanimous voice vote.

Amendment #2

That the Town will have the treasurer collect taxes in two installments August 5th, 2013 and November 5th, 2013. Late payments will be subject to interest of 1% per calendar month or part thereof. All taxes outstanding on November 6th, 2013 will be delinquent and subject to a penalty *2% for the town; all taxes still delinquent on December 6th, 2013 will be subject to an additional 3% penalty to the Town; any taxes still delinquent on January 6th, 2013 will be subject to an additional penalty of 3% to the Town - all provided the multiple penalty dates are allowed by the Vermont Statutes; if not so allowed the penalty will be 8% for the taxes outstanding on November 6, 2013.*

This 2nd Amendment was Moved by Andrew Mann. Seconded by Anne Bower. The amendment was defeated, YES-10 **NO-28**

Then a vote was taken on the original motion with no changes. The original motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

22. To do any other proper and necessary business.

Judge Jack Anderson spoke about the Windsor County Bond Vote Special Election. He explained how the courthouse was in need of being compliant with current standards for court facilities, accessibility, security, etc. for a cost of \$2,000,000.00. Robert Merrill said the recording of the Town Meeting ran out at 5 hours and 47 minutes.

Jay Potter was concerned about the taxpayers having to pay for the mold issue in the Town Offices last year.

Andrew Mann made a motion "That the Selectboard record all Selectboard Meetings and put on them on the website"

Anne Bower seconded. The non-binding motion passed. Robert Merrill said that is a limited amount of disk & bandwidth space on the website and if we go over the limit there is extra charge to the Town.

There was a discussion on the benefits of having the Selectboard Meetings recorded and put on the website.

Elizabeth Rhodes thought it would be nice for people to be able to listen to a recording of the Meetings, if they cannot attend. The non-binding motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

Scott Milne expressed how he didn't think the Selectboard should put the names of delinquent taxpayers in the Town Report.

Representative Teo Zagar spoke about the School spending being up 6% statewide from last year. He had a lot of question from concerned taxpayers/residents over the high costs of gas, school and small business owners expenses.
He can be contacted anytime 234-9125 / 802-558-3966 / tzagar@leg.state.vt.us

Frederick Staples moved to adjourn and Joan Staples seconded. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote.
The meeting adjourned at 5:10 P.M.

Several new officers were sworn to their duties by Lynne A. Leavitt.

Lunch was served by the Lamson Family to benefit the 4H Group.

Respectfully submitted,

Lynne A. Leavitt, Town Clerk

Minutes approved by:

Date:

NOTE: A recording of the Town Meeting minutes are available on our website @ www.pomfretvt.us