

Town of Pownal
Public Hearing and Select Board Meeting
April 24, 2023

PUBLIC HEARING

Select Board Members Present: Jon Morris, Andy O'Brien Excused: Heidi Curry
Town Administrator: Becky Taylor-Chase CEO: Ginifir Giddinge Note Taker: Kathy Hogue
Public Present: Matt Nielsen (Road Commissioner), Jesse Peters (Fire Chief), Susan Peters, Bo Chesney, Matt Altieri, Marcia Bowen, Matt Welch, Dick Hogue, Kate Day, Wellens King, Janet Lynch, Todd Mellin, Mike Pascarella, John Libby, Alix Hopkins, Julie Baird, Carol Cyr, Missy Burt Libby (RRCT)

- I. Chair Morris called the Public Hearing to order, 5:30pm.
- II. Pledge of Allegiance
- III. Public Hearings
 - a. BERLIN CORRIDOR (Rail to Trail) / Mary Angela King: The Maine Department of Transportation (MDOT) is looking at dormant railways and gathering community input. The Berlin Corridor runs 25 miles from Portland to Auburn, a quarter mile of that goes through Pownal. The Advisory Council for this project is looking for input from each town that the corridor passes through. Should the rail be put back in to use; be just a trail, or a be a trail with the potential of being put back in to rail? It would be preferable for Pownal to state their position/preference. (New Gloucester also has not submitted their position.) Chair Morris noted that the Select Board (at a previous meeting) had no vote nor position because, at the time, they had no input from residents or abutters. It was suggested that Mary Angela have a straw-vote ballot ready for June 26 Town Meeting to be passed out to voters. This will not be a warrant article but the votes will be tallied giving the Select Board input to enable them to state the Town's position. This straw vote will also be recorded in the Town Meeting minutes.
 - b. TOWN-OWNED LAND / CONSERVATION COMMISSION: Matt Welch (Chair) provided maps and information regarding Pownal's Large Woodlots, (copies of handouts are available at Town Hall) At this time, The Conservation Commission is looking at exploring ways of conserving town-owned land through possible easements, woodlot management, and exploring potential conservation opportunities with local land trusts such as Royal River Conservation Trust and Land for Maine's Future. Although a Town Meeting vote in 1972 indicated that residents wanted to keep town land for open space and recreation, making the right decisions for tax acquired properties has often been difficult. In 2005, a policy was created to assist the Select Board in the decision-making process of selling/disposing of town acquired property. Committees, boards and abutters are given the opportunity to weigh in on whether a certain parcel should be sold or not. With that, no town-owned property can be disposed of without going to Town Meeting for vote. At this time, the Conservation Commission is looking

for input from residents with the idea of “keeping our forests forever in the best way we can”. Residents can attend meetings or review minutes on the Town’s website. If the CC has an easement proposal ready, it could be voted on at a possible Special Town Meeting in the fall.

c. PLANNING BOARD / Land Use Ordinance Town Warrant Articles:

- i. Chair Matt Altieri briefly explained that the Planning Board is making a change to the Major Sub-division Ordinance which will be called the Conservation Ordinance. This would be for a subdivision of 5 or more parcels (previously it was 6), where a portion of the parcel would not be able to be developed – but to be kept as open space To offset this, the lot size will be reduced. Other considerations include being mindful of existing trails and connectivity and making sure decisions compliment the Comprehensive Plan. This process hasn’t been completed but the PB will continue to make residents aware of this new ordinance through meetings and recorded minutes available on the Town’s website. It is the hope to make a presentation/vote at a possible Special Town Meeting in the fall.
 - ii. Town warrant articles (#4-9) and Warrant Narratives for the Planning Board (Land Use) were reviewed. It was noted that the article regarding Home Occupations was missing. Becky (TA) will check with North Star and make the correction. Heidi Richards noted that under “Accessory Dwelling” there are 2 conflicting statements in that ordinance. Although it will not be on this year’s Town Meeting Warrant, Matt made a note and will look to make the correction for the future.
-

d. SELECT BOARD / TOWN WARRANT ARTICLES: *Bo Chesney guided the group through the proposed warrant articles:*

NOTE: All exhibits and handouts can be viewed on the Town’s website.

- i. It was noted that on Article # 18 – Public Safety, the Budget Committee and Select Board recommended different amounts because the new figures received regarding an update of Fire Reporting Software came if after the Budget Committee had made their recommendation.
- ii. Article #25 regarding \$25,000 for professional services needed by the Economic and Sustainability Committee cannot come from ARPA funds because we would have to demonstrate that a process was interrupted due to COVID. That was not the case in this instance (this committee hadn’t even been formed at that time). Becky suggested that the funds come from either undesignated funds or taxation. The Board will make that motion when they go in to the regular Select Board meeting.
- iii. Article #26 recommended the requested amount is on hold until the RFP’s for Future Facilities Committee have been opened to determine the amount needed to fund the needs assessment and cost estimate study.

- iv. Article #37 is a place holder regarding the possible sale of property listed as Map 8 Lot 9. Still waiting for input from some boards/committees and any abutters – this will be discussed/decided at the May 8 Public Hearing.
- v. Becky noted a few grammar corrections during the review that she will correct.

SELECT BOARD MEETING

IV. Accounts Payable & Payroll Warrant

- a. AP Warrant #24 in the amount of \$303,260.98 was approved.
- b. Payroll Journal #314 in the amount of \$6,943.74 was approved.

V. Minutes of April 10, 2023, were approved as written.

VI. Public Comment / non-agenda items: None

VII. Department Head reports can be viewed on the Town's website.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

- a. It was moved and seconded to swear in Kathryn Levesque as the new Deputy Clerk, Deputy Treasurer, Deputy Tax Collector and Deputy General Assistance Administrator. All voted in favor and oath was signed.
- b. Recreation Committee discussion with Select Board:
 - i. Parking concerns for public use when there is an event at Town Hall? How do we prevent any conflicts? Board will have a sandwich board created to put out until the time we have our municipal sign.
 - ii. The committee would like to reorganize the upstairs small rooms off the Stage Rooms for storage, a work space, and a "back room" for events. The Select Board gave them the go-ahead.
 - iii. The Select Board is happy to have Dick Hogue try to repair the old broken benches located in the old "kitchen".
 - iv. It was noted that it will be helpful to have our WIFI capabilities extended for future events/use with the AARP funds.
 - v. It was agreed by all that owning a portable sound system for recreation and municipal events would be helpful.
 - vi. A professional piano tuner has assessed the piano and found that it is broken and not worth tuning. We should try to dispose of it – Chair Morris will check in with the Grange to make sure this is OK.
- c. Amendments to Town Meeting Warrant:
 - i. It was moved and 2nd to amend warrant Article #25 to use monies from the unassigned fund balance to fund the article rather than from ARPA funds. All voted in favor.
- d. Chair Morris moved to accept and approve the RSU5 Town Meeting Warrant. Selectperson O'Brien begrudgingly seconded. All voted in favor and signed.
- e. Jon Morris and Andy O'Brien will serve as this year's GPCOG Delegates.

IX. Old Business / none

*Public Hearing & Select Board Minutes
April 24, 2023
Page 4*

X. Correspondence

- a. Becky reported that she had received 4 phone calls from Royal Road residents that trash had not been picked up.
- b. Becky noted that Julie Mueller has contacted her that she has a picture of Thomas Pownal that she would like to donate to Pownal for the town hall.

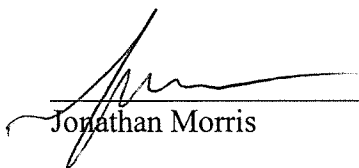
XI. Any Other Business

- a. It was decided that the Town Report will be dedicated to Sherry Dietrich. Andy will write the article.
- b. Jesse Peters would like a dedication for Scott Pollock for serving 30 years in the Fire Department.
- c. It was noted that there is a Facebook page for Public Works that is quite outdated. Matt Nielsen will look at it.

Meeting Adjourned: 8:30pm


Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen A. Hogue
Deputy Clerk



Jonathan Morris

Heidi Curran



Andy O'Brien