

# TOWN OF PEACHAM

## MINUTES OF THE SELECTBOARD MEETING

Wednesday, May 6, 2020

APPROVED

Selectboard Members Present (all via phone/video conference): Mike Heath, Beatrice Ring, Peter Craig  
Public (all via phone/video conference): Town Clerk Thomas Galinat, Selectboard Clerk Rebecca Washington, Neil Monteith, Jan Monteith, Mel Reis, Ron Craig, Cheryl Stevenson, Tabatha Beard, Rob Cochran, Jennifer Perkins, Stanley Welch, Jeff Lamphere, Jock Gill, Frank Miller, Bob Hansen, Julie Hansen

1. The meeting was called to order by Chair of the Selectboard Mike Heath at 6:35pm.
2. Additions to the agenda
  - a. Tree Board appointment
    - i. See agenda item 13c.
  - b. Cemetery Administration
    - i. See agenda item 15
  - c. PAMfest update
    - i. See agenda item 6.
3. Highway Department update
  - a. The Road Foreman was not present but emailed the Selectboard saying it was business as usual at the Highway Department and that the older 10-wheeler was at Clark's Truck Center having a sensor repaired.
4. Covid-19
  - a. Covid-19 Response update
    - i. N. Monteith explained that there have been three food deliveries thus far but that the number of people who are signed up has dropped. Therefore, there won't be any more CSA food orders at this time. Volunteers will be organized to help people who are still not able to go out.
    - ii. Erin Lane has drafted a demobilization plan so that the emergency response team can either be moved into a standby mode or disbanded.
      - a) N. Monteith will base the decision on the governor's orders and will wait until at least May 15th.
      - b) By putting the response team in a standby mode, the town would still be eligible for FEMA reimbursement if there were flare-ups in the future that increased expenditures enough to qualify.
    - iii. Heath and N. Monteith complimented the team members on the amount of work they've done.
    - iv. Galinat suggested transferring the food system that the team put into place over to the Peacham Farmers Market so that it may continue through the summer.
      - a) Heath will work on arranging that.
    - v. Reis explained that, in an effort to keep Peacham residents safe, she has encouraged neighbors coming into town from out-of-state to self-quarantine but that not everyone has followed the guidelines.
    - vi. N. Monteith is currently working on this year's Emergency Management Plan and is using the long form this year.
  - b. Covid-19 Fund appointments
    - i. David Edwards has gotten the committee together and will soon send out letters to all residents requesting donations and explaining how to apply for aid.
    - ii. The fund already has \$2,700 in it and is being funded completely by donation. Payments will not be made to residents but will go directly to vendors to pay for things such as doctors' appointments, prescriptions, bills, etc.
5. Determine go/no go for the 4th of July
  - a. The Selectboard agreed to have the Outdoor Club gather ideas for reinventing the 4th of July celebration so that it can meet restrictions that might be in place at that time.
6. PAMfest update
  - a. Miller sent an email to all interested parties announcing the cancellation of the 2020 PAMfest. All of the performers have been asked to consider joining PAMfest in 2021, which will be held on August 13th and 14th.
7. Public nuisance issue
  - a. Ring read a letter from Andy Cochran which explained that "ATVs are illegal on Peacham highways and roads. Tearing up town roads and turning around in driveways has got to stop. Law enforcement has got to be readily available which in turn costs every taxpayer in town. One option could also be video-surveillance cameras in nuisance areas that might eliminate any un-guilty individuals."
  - b. There are a group of residents on Keiser Pond Road who drive ATVs on the road illegally and tear up the road, the banks, and people's driveways when turning around. Cochran has expressed concern about the safety of those walking along the road, including his young grandchildren.

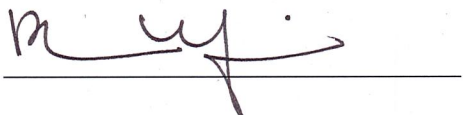


- c. Discussion ensued on the issue and the steps that could be taken.
  - i. Three of the meeting participants described experiences similar to Cochran's and added that, in addition to ATVs, it has also been snow machines and dirt bikes. They've all called the police multiple times and have not gotten any help.
  - ii. Two of the other meeting participants described an additional issue they've been having with the same group of residents, which is a noise disturbance issue caused primarily by mud bogging and gunshots.
    - a) A recording was played of the mud bogging to demonstrate the level of the noise.
    - b) Heath explained that the advice the last Selectboard got when the issue came up was to pursue the public nuisance issue and have neighbors continually call the police. That Selectboard also discussed looking into a noise ordinance but were worried that a noise ordinance would be difficult to enforce. More research will have to be done to see what can be applied to the noise issue.
  - iii. Discussion ensued on the number of structures and cars on the property, as seen on Google Earth.
    - a) Zoning Administrator B. Hansen will do some research to determine whether or not the residents are out of compliance with zoning bylaws, septic requirements, or state guidelines.
  - iv. Heath will reach out to the state police as Selectboard Chair to see what can be done about both issues.
  - v. P. Craig will see what he, as Second Constable, and Constable John Sheehan can do.
  - vi. Galinat will reach out to Town Attorney Bill Cobb and ask him to draft a letter to the residents.
  - vii. Other ideas, such as a neighborhood watch, video surveillance, and a community conversation, were discussed.
  - viii. Those concerned about the issue were encouraged to document any violations, keep calling the police, and send documentation and letters to the Selectboard.
- 8. Town Clerk update
  - a. The Town Office is still closed to the public and Galinat has been assisting with remote title searches as well as scheduling short, in-person appointments.
  - b. Galinat has stopped selling dump cards.
  - c. The Covid-19 expenditures are at \$1,700 and that does not account for revenues.
  - d. There is \$105,000 in the General Ledger and Galinat is looking at doing a spread bid for borrowing this year.
    - i. According to Property Valuation and Review, it is likely that education tax rates will be delayed and, therefore, tax bills will go out later than usual this year causing a potential increased need for borrowing.
  - e. Assistant Town Clerk Rebecca Washington has been doing projects from home.
- 9. Delay of tax billing
  - a. Galinat explained that many towns have multiple tax bill installments and that there is an option for those towns to delay the timing of taxes to a single installment within the current year.
    - i. Peacham borrows off of a Working Capital Fund, is already a single-installment town, and can't really delay any longer.
  - b. There is pending legislation that would give Selectboards and Schoolboards the option to revisit budgets that were voted on at Town Meeting to lower tax rates to better reflect the year's actual spending.
- 10. Tax map update contract
  - a. The Selectboard reviewed a contract from Russell Graphics to keep Peacham's tax maps updated, which would include scanning new surveys and updating owners, acreages, etc.
  - b. The Selectboard agreed that Ring would go sign the contract in the Town Clerk's office.
- 11. Hiring procedures
  - a. Heath stated that there is no hiring allowed or budgeted for without Selectboard approval.
  - b. The Selectboard hires for all positions under its purview, which includes the Transfer Station, Highway Department, and Cemetery. Anyone in those departments looking to hire someone should first consult with the Selectboard.
  - c. The Board of Auditors, the Board of Listers, the Town Clerk, and the Town Treasurer have their own hiring authority but the Selectboard still has authority over the money and how it's spent.
  - d. The hiring procedure isn't defined in an existing document and the Selectboard plans to work on both the Personnel Policy and the Purchasing Policy to get them up-to-date.
- 12. Website procedure for comments/answering questions
  - a. There is not a policy currently in place because there historically hasn't been an active website where people have the ability to post comments. Currently the Town Clerk's office receives the comments and distributes them to the appropriate departments.

- b. Discussion ensued on procedures for handling website comments and questions.
      - i. The Selectboard would like to keep updated on the comments that come into the website in case there are issues that need to be addressed.
- 13. 2020 Selectboard appointments
  - a. Cemetery Preservation Committee
    - i. **Ring nominated Karen Lewis for the Cemetery Preservation Committee. P. Craig seconded. All in favor. Appointed.**
  - b. Appropriations Committee
    - i. There haven't been any volunteers for the Appropriations Committee.
  - c. Tree Board
    - i. **Ring nominated Laurie Kozar for the Tree Board. P. Craig seconded. All in favor. Appointed.**
- 14. Old business
  - a. Summer mowing for town properties
    - i. Before Covid, Galinat and Mark at VOWP were trying to finalize the mowing contract. Before the contract is signed, there are a few details that need to be worked out as well as two properties, the triangle in East Peacham and the Peacham-Groton Cemetery, that need to be added.
    - ii. P. Craig asked if VOWP was mowing all town properties and Galinat confirmed that they were and read the list of sites included in the contract.
    - iii. Discussion ensued on maintenance of the monument area, the Ewell Mill Historic Park, and the Roller Barn.
  - b. Paint Town Hall-Katelyn Langham
    - i. Galinat will check with VLCT on the town's liability in the case of a volunteer painting the gym.
  - c. Town Hall renovation/ADA improvements
    - i. No update.
  - d. Town solar project
    - i. No update.
- 15. Cemetery administration
  - a. According to a conversation that Heath had with Annette Lorraine, the Cemetery Preservation Committee is willing, able, and prepared to take on any of the responsibilities that a Cemetery Commission would, other than managing the endowment.
    - i. The Selectboard is on board with that.
    - ii. Moving forward, the Selectboard will defer any issues or concerns with the cemetery to the Cemetery Preservation Committee and the committee will make recommendations to the Selectboard for action.
- 16. Approve minutes
  - a. April 15, 2020
    - i. The Selectboard was fine with an addition that Washington made.
    - ii. **P. Craig moved to approve the minutes of April 15, 2020. Ring seconded. All in favor. So moved.**
- 17. Review and approve bills
  - a. The Selectboard reviewed the bills and agreed that Ring would go sign all of the warrants in the Town Clerk's office.
- 18. Review correspondence
  - a. Washington read a letter from Wendy Mackenzie which complemented Mel Reis and Mike Heath. The letter will be recorded with these minutes.
- 19. Adjourn
  - a. **Ring moved to adjourn. P. Craig seconded. All in favor. Meeting adjourned at 8:40pm.**

These minutes were approved as written by the Peacham Selectboard at its regular meeting on 5/20/20.

Rebecca Washington, Selectboard Clerk





## Response to #7 on agenda

ATV's are illegal on Peacham highways and roads. Tearing up town roads and turning around in driveways has got to stop. Law enforcement has got to be readily available, which in turn costs every taxpayer in town. One option could also be video surveillance, cameras in nuisance areas, that would eliminate any unguilty individuals.

*Andy Cochran*

April 29, 2020  
931 Greenbay Loop  
Peacham, VT 05862

Dear Peacham Select Board,

I had the great fortune to work closely with Mary Ellen Reis and Mike Heath recently. Let me tell you, they are awesome. They are both super communicators who are dedicated to helping others, despite being very busy with their own families and careers.

I can't say enough good things about them. They repeatedly went above and beyond. It is a privilege to have worked with them. We are lucky to have them live in our town.

Sincerely,

Wendy Mackenzie