

**TOWN OF PEACHAM**  
**MINUTES OF THE SELECTBOARD MEETING**  
Wednesday, April 7, 2021  
APPROVED

Selectboard Members (via phone/video conference): Beatrice Ring, Peter Craig, Richard Browne  
Public (via phone/video conference): Town Clerk Thomas Galinat, Selectboard Clerk Rebecca Washington,  
Road Foreman Jeremy Withers, Mark Elliot, John Reiss, Ron Craig, Dave Stauffer, Tim McKay, Richard  
Witt, Dart Thalman, Becky Jensen, Bruce Maclean, Don Marsh, David Jacobs, Jonathan Kaplan, Neil  
Monteith, Jeff Berwick

1. The meeting was called to order by Chair of the Selectboard Beatrice Ring at 6:30pm.
2. Additions to the agenda
  - a. Key to the city
    - i. The Selectboard agreed to present a “key to the city” to a person in the community who is about to celebrate his 104th birthday.
  - b. Roller barn-Dart Thalman
    - i. Because of all of the time and effort Dick and Dotty Hovey put into restoring and maintaining the town’s snow roller museum, Thalman requested that it be named the “Richard and Dorothy Hovey Snow Roller Museum”. Thalman offered to raise funds to procure a sign to install above the main doors.
    - ii. **Browne moved to name the snow roller museum the “Richard and Dorothy Hovey Snow Roller Museum”. P. Craig seconded. All in favor. So moved.**
3. Church septic system
  - a. The Selectboard reviewed the modified draft of the proposed septic system maintenance agreement prepared by John Marshall, on behalf of the church.
  - b. Marsh, the septic engineer, explained the complexities of linking the church to the town septic line.
    - i. The church has already gotten a wastewater permit from the state.
  - c. Discussion followed related to the appropriate apportionment of costs between the two entities based on historical and current usage.
    - i. P. Craig expressed concern that the agreement as written did not benefit the town and would require the town, in time, to support a larger system when the current one failed.
    - ii. Ring expressed concern that the increased effluent after linking the two entities might cause the system to fail more rapidly, which would mean an increased tax burden to the town when replaced.
    - iii. Maclean and McKay pointed out that the Meeting House serves the town as well as the church and represents an important civic asset to the entire community.
    - iv. McKay pointed out that the current septic system is unpermitted and tenuous and expressed his belief that the town's system is a good system with the capacity to accommodate both entities and is worth the taxpayers' contribution.
    - v. P. Craig stated that the town was doing the church a favor and he would not support the agreement as modified. He questioned what it would cost the church to build a new system.
    - vi. Browne agreed with P. Craig that the agreement, as written, was not in the town’s benefit.
    - vii. Marsh suggested that the appropriate way to apportion costs between the two entities, if and when reconstruction is required, is either with the percentages stated in the document (94%/6%) or by actual meter readings and not to rely on historical data usage.
      - a) The Selectboard agreed that installing meters would be beneficial.
      - b) Browne liked Marsh's idea and suggested that, if historical usage data is used for cost breakdowns, there be a limit, such as 10 years instead of 40.
    - viii. Discussion ensued with different individuals pointing out the benefits that the Meeting House provides to the town.
  - d. Browne had no other issues with the agreement as modified by Marshall.
  - e. Ring will work with McKay and Marshall to amend the agreement.
4. Highway Department update
  - a. Withers met with Green Mountain Power’s Kevin Matte about putting power under County Road near the intersection of Maple Tree Lane. Withers does not have a problem with it since that intersection is scheduled to be moved this summer anyway.
    - i. **P. Craig moved to allow Green Mountain Power to go under the road with buried power lines near the intersection of County Road and Maple Tree Lane. Browne seconded. All in favor. So moved.**
  - b. Withers met with Laurie Kozar, Browne, and VTrans’ Shauna Clifford in front of Kozar’s house to discuss the drainage issue previously discussed at the March 17, 2021 Selectboard meeting.
    - i. They came up with a few ideas to help mitigate the problem such as putting in a catch basin at the upper end of Steve Engles’ driveway, restoring the ditch, and running a drive culvert to dump into the catch basin below. The Selectboard could also consider doing a shim and overlay through the village.



- ii. Browne explained that, in addition to the lack of an effective ditch and culvert, the shape of the road is also part of the issue. A shim and overlay would help, but the solution starts with the ditch and culvert so that there's somewhere for the water to go.
- c. The Selectboard reviewed prices for a new backhoe to replace the current 2008 Caterpillar backhoe.
  - i. A John Deere backhoe with a quick-attach broom would cost \$130,400, a Caterpillar backhoe with a quick-attach broom would cost \$115,000, a Case backhoe without an attachment would cost \$91,600.
  - ii. **P. Craig moved to purchase the Caterpillar backhoe with the quick-attach broom for the front.**
    - a) Discussion ensued on leasing to own or buying outright.
    - b) Withers will get the paperwork together for the Caterpillar backhoe and consult with Galinat on financing options.
    - c) The Selectboard plans to make a decision at the April 21st Selectboard meeting.
    - d) **P. Craig retracted his motion.**
- d. The new chipper is in the garage. Discussion ensued on selling the old chipper.
  - i. The Selectboard agreed to sell the old chipper by sealed bid to a Peacham taxpayer. The bid announcement will be posted on the usual posting sites around town and the town website. Withers will set the minimum bid price and bids will be opened at the April 21st Selectboard meeting.
  - e. Withers is working with NVDA's Doug Morton to apply for a backroads grant for stone-lined ditching and culvert replacement. The grant will total \$17,240.
- 5. Covid leave
  - a. Discussion ensued on whether or not the road crew members have to use their sick time for Covid-related absences from work.
  - b. Because quarantines for active cases and testing are mandated by the state, the Selectboard agreed that the highway crew should not have to use sick time for Covid-related absences and would still be paid.
- 6. Town Clerk update
  - a. The Selectboard reviewed the Town Clerk update and discussed further in agenda item 18.
- 7. Local Emergency Management Plan (LEMP) adoption
  - a. **Browne moved to approve the LEMP as presented by Neil Monteith and to follow the adoption procedures on the adoption form. P. Craig seconded. All in favor. So moved.**
- 8. Town Hall renovation/ADA improvements
  - a. The Selectboard approved the draft of the RFP and scope of work presented by P. Craig.
  - b. The RFP information will be posted on the usual posting sites around town, the town website, and Front Porch Forum. There will be directions to contact the Town Clerk's Office for the full RFP, drawings, and scope of work.
  - c. Proposals will be due on April 21, 2021.
- 9. Recommendation for reserve fund for legal cost of zoning enforcement
  - a. The Selectboard agreed that there was not a need for a reserve fund and that an attorney can be hired as needed.
- 10. EV station in Peacham
  - a. Ring already responded to Jock Gill that the road between Peacham and Groton, as opposed to a major thoroughfare, might not need an EV station. If someone wanted to fully pay for it, she wouldn't stop it.
  - b. Browne pointed out that people in the business of selling electrons through those systems struggle with how to pay for the power. He didn't think it was a cost that the town should take on, but that it would be great to have one in Peacham.
  - c. Browne will respond to Gill by email to get more information.
- 11. Cemetery maintenance
  - a. R. Craig wondered if he should put up the signs in the cemetery that explain that there is currently no mowing. He would take the signs down if the work crew started mowing again.
  - b. R. Craig also asked if he could coordinate with Withers to clean up the remnants from one or two large maple trees that were removed a few years ago.
  - c. Ring recommended that he go to the Cemetery Committee with questions prior to coming to the Selectboard.
- 12. Town Clerk term length
  - a. Ring read the state statute regarding Town Clerk term length which explained that the term length could only be changed by the voters at a town meeting. The Selectboard agreed that it was a good idea and to address it at next year's Town Meeting in March.
- 13. Personnel Policy draft discussion
  - a. The Selectboard reviewed the draft of the Personnel Policy that Browne has been working on.
  - b. Some sections of Peacham's policy, such as the benefits section, are longer than VLCT's model policy, and some sections, such as the discipline section, are shorter than VLCT's model policy.
    - i. Browne explained that, as an at-will town, it's good that Peacham's policy doesn't have a discipline section spelled out.
  - c. Discussion ensued on the wording of the sections of the policy that have to do with the Town Clerk and Assistant Town Clerk.

- i. Browne explained that, although the elected Town Clerk and Assistant Town Clerk are not required to follow the Personnel Policy, they can be asked to follow certain guidelines. They are explicitly included in the benefits section of the policy and the Selectboard discussed clarifying the section by replacing a few commas with the word "and".
    - d. Browne will continue working on the policy.
14. New approach to old business
  - a. The Selectboard agreed to take the "old business" section off of future agendas. Individual Selectboard members will agenda ongoing items as needed.
15. Approve minutes
  - a. It was noted that the February 27, 2021 Informational Hearing minutes were originally posted with an incorrect date.
  - b. **P. Craig moved to approve the minutes from February 27, 2021 and March 17, 2021. Browne seconded. All in favor. So moved.**
16. Review and approve bills
  - a. **P. Craig moved to approve the bills as presented. Browne seconded. All in favor. So moved.**
17. Review correspondence
  - a. The Selectboard reviewed correspondence regarding a grant opportunity for the Fire Department.
    - i. Washington will put it in Berwick's mailbox.
18. Town Clerk update
  - a. Galinat explained that the town is at roughly 25% of spending at the end of the first quarter, so it's right on track.
  - b. Regarding the backhoe purchase, Galinat explained that, because state statute prohibits the town from purchasing equipment without a vote from the town, the backhoe could be leased to own with a down payment of \$100,000 and two yearly payments of \$7,000 each.
    - i. Galinat will email the Selectboard the state statute.
19. Personnel
  - a. No discussion.
20. Executive session for personnel
  - a. **Browne moved to enter executive session for personnel. P. Craig seconded. All in favor. Executive session entered at 8:40pm.**
  - b. The Selectboard came out of executive session at 9:06pm.
  - c. No action taken.
21. Adjourn
  - a. **Browne moved to adjourn. P. Craig seconded. All in favor. Meeting adjourned at 9:07pm.**

These minutes were approved as written by the Peacham Selectboard at its regular meeting on 4/21/21.

Rebecca Washington, Selectboard Clerk



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