

TOWN OF PEACHAM
MINUTES OF THE SELECTBOARD MEETING
Wednesday, June 2, 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,
Dave Stauffer, Ron Craig, Laurie Kozar, Cynther Greene, Jill Hurst, Stan Fickes, David Jacobs

1. The meeting was called to order by Chair of the Selectboard Beatrice Ring at 6:31pm.
2. Additions to the agenda
 - a. Tree Board update
 - i. Kozar explained that the Tree Board has been busy with the ash tree inventory. Of the 71 miles of roadway, a little more than three-quarters has been done. The equipment the Tree Board has been using had to be returned to Joanne Garton at the Vermont Urban and Community Forestry Program, but Garton has offered to come help finish the inventory in June.
 - a) Emerald Ash Borer has been detected in two bordering towns and Tree Warden Neil Monteith acquired two EAB traps to be set up near those towns.
 - b) At the May 13th Tree Board meeting, the Tree Board learned from Stauffer that the Conservation Commission has \$11,000 in a fund and Kozar wondered about collaborating with the Conservation Commission on funding the EAB work.
 1. Kozar offered to share a link to EAB municipal management case studies and mentioned Peacham's similarities with one in East Montpelier.
 - ii. The Tree Warden statutes were updated in January 2021 and provide more clear definitions. The statutes state that the Tree Warden shall control all shade trees within the municipality, but Peacham's Tree Policy from 2007 says that they are supposed to work with the Planning Commission, the Zoning Board of Adjustment, and the Conservation Commission. There are also tree duties associated with the Cemetery Committee, the Roller Barn, and the monument.
 - a) Kozar asked the Selectboard for oversight and defined boundaries for when the duties overlap.
 - b) The Selectboard recommended that the Tree Board meet with the other boards, committees, and commissions with overlapping duties to determine which group bears which responsibilities and to come back to the Selectboard with recommendations.
 1. Kozar shared concern that the Conservation Commission hasn't had a public meeting in years.
 2. Jacobs thought that the Selectboard should know what the defined roles are and should dictate those roles to the committees.
 3. If the roles and responsibilities cannot be determined amongst the committees, the Selectboard will help define them.
 - iii. Stauffer explained that he got guidance from Lydia Brownell at Vermont Community Foundation regarding the transparency of Peacham's Farm Support grants. Brownell suggested maintaining a list with descriptions of the projects and amounts of the awarded grants, but not the recipients' names. Since it is not public money, there is no need to make the names public.
 - a) Discussion followed on the Conservation Commission's role in the Farm Support program, the privacy of the grant applicants, the donated private money in the fund, the current Farm Support committee members, and the process for publicizing the grants.
 - b) Browne stated that Stauffer had given a clear explanation of the way the program is supposed to work and, in normal years, the program is explained at the end of Town Meeting. He recommended including a notice in future Town Reports.
 - c) Ring recommended that anyone with questions or concerns about the program should contact Stauffer privately.
 - b. Church septic agreement
 - i. See agenda item 13.
 - c. Conservation Commission
 - i. See agenda item 14.
 - d. Executive session for personnel
 - i. See agenda item 15.
3. Highway Department update
 - a. The Selectboard reviewed an update emailed by Road Foreman Jeremy Withers.
 - b. Ring will coordinate with Withers on putting up a stop sign in South Peacham.
 - c. The meeting at Worcester Road has not been scheduled yet.
4. Town Auditors update
 - a. Code of Conduct discussion

- i. The Auditors have been reviewing town policies and decided to focus on the Personnel Policy and the Purchasing Policy, as well as the process for putting together the Town Report. They are focusing on the Personnel Policy and Code of Conduct right now, the Town Report process next, and the Purchasing Policy in the fall.
 - ii. To draft the Code of Conduct, the Auditors pulled from the behavior policies that are spread throughout the existing Personnel Policy and added details from VLCT's model Code of Conduct.
 - iii. Discussion followed on the details of and the need for a Code of Conduct.
 - a) Galinat recommended that a mechanism for removal of appointed officials be added as an added level of protection and oversight for the elected Selectboard.
 - b) Hurst explained that the behavior sections in the current Personnel Policy are spread out and hard to find. The Code of Conduct contains common-sense standards, all in one place, that should apply to all town officials, not just the employees.
 - iv. The Auditors recommended that, when an amended Personnel Policy is adopted, the Selectboard include a Code of Conduct and require it to be signed by all employees and request that it be signed by all elected officers, statutory assistants, and members of town boards or commissions.
 - a) Browne will send the Code of Conduct along with the revised Personnel Policy to VLCT for review.
5. Personnel Policy discussion
- a. Greene detailed the issues that the Auditors would like to see address in the amended Personnel Policy.
 - i. The policy doesn't detail the process for reimbursements for small purchases. The Auditors recommend adding a referral in the Personnel Policy to the reimbursement section of the Purchasing Policy.
 - ii. The policy has inconsistent adoption dates.
 - iii. The Equal Employment Opportunity section should reflect VLCT's model policy language and classification of employees should be made clear.
 - iv. The sections on vacation, holiday, and sick time should be consistent.
 - v. Sick leave for the Transfer Station Attendant needs clarification.
 - vi. The hours for the Transfer Station and the Highway Department should be included in Job Descriptions, not the Personnel Policy.
 - vii. References to pagers should be taken out.
 - b. Discussion ensued on whether the Transfer Station Attendant should be paid from a timesheet or paid for a flat 10 hours per week.
 - i. The Auditors recommended paying a flat 10 hours per week and not using a timesheet that would need approval.
 - ii. Galinat suggested getting rid of the timesheet other than for extra hours and mileage. Those timesheets would only be paid after approval.
 - c. Discussion ensued on the reimbursement of mileage.
 - i. The Auditors recommended having the procedure for mileage reimbursement added to the policy.
 - d. Browne will take the current draft of the Personnel Policy, pull out the sections that are reflected in the Code of Conduct, make the recommended changes, and send both the Personnel Policy and the Code of Conduct to VLCT for review.
6. Community solar project update
- a. The Selectboard reviewed a Letter of Intent from Wolfe Energy.
 - b. Jacobs explained that Frank Miller and Patrice McDonough are considering putting in a community solar project on their property. The Energy Committee has collected usage and cost data for the past two years from the Town buildings, the Fire District, the Church, Peacham Community Housing, and the Library. The community solar project would be mainly intended to give those entities a reduction in the cost of their electricity and there would also be an opportunity for other households to sign on as well. There is still a process to go through with Green Mountain Power to determine feasibility.
 - i. The Energy Committee is looking for a no-obligation sign-on by the Selectboard as the support anchor of the project.
 - ii. It's important to the committee that the project is equitable.
 - iii. The net meter credits that are created would go to Wolfe Energy, who does all of the permitting, installation, and maintenance, and the Town would get a 10% reduction in its electric bill.
 - c. P. Craig and R. Craig asked about a potential site for the community solar project on town property near the cemetery that out of sight and faces south.
 - i. R. Craig plans to meet with Jacobs to show him the site.
 - d. Jacobs will ask Wolfe if this LOI will take the place of the LOI that the Selectboard signed in 2019.
 - i. The Selectboard plans on making a decision about signing the LOI at the June 16th Selectboard meeting.
7. Wednesday Frisbee on soccer field
- a. There is already pick-up soccer scheduled for Wednesday evenings on the soccer field. Ring will contact Andrea Kane to make sure their schedules don't conflict.

8. Fire Department: regional approach being proposed for NEK
 - a. Ring spoke with the Fire Chief and learned that the Fire Department is in good shape and that there isn't currently the need to join a regional approach.
9. Discussion on resuming in-person meetings
 - a. The Selectboard discussed possible locations for resuming in-person meetings.
 - i. The gym is big enough.
 - ii. The Library is not available yet.
 - b. The Selectboard will resume in-person meetings in the gym on July 7, 2021. There will still be the option to participate over zoom.
 - c. The June 16, 2021 meeting will be on-site at the intersection of Maple Tree Lane and County Road and, unless something urgent comes up, the Selectboard plans on conducting the whole meeting there.
10. Approve minutes
 - a. **P. Craig moved to approve the minutes of May 19, 2021 as presented by the Selectboard Clerk. Browne seconded. All in favor. So moved.**
11. Review and approve bills
 - a. **P. Craig moved to pay all bills as presented. Browne seconded. All in favor. So moved.**
12. Review correspondence
 - a. Correspondence included the VLCT News.
 - b. Galinat suggested putting a discussion of the American Rescue Plan Act on the agenda for the June 16th Selectboard meeting.
13. Church septic agreement
 - a. John Marshall and Galinat have been working on finalizing the septic maintenance agreement.
 - b. Galinat has been working on the necessary easements.
 - c. The June 16th agenda will include an approval of the agreement and a note that says copies of the agreement will be available by request from the Town Clerk's Office.
 - i. Discussion followed on making materials discussed at Selectboard meetings available. Galinat explained that for in-person meetings, extra copies of materials are typically made available for the attendees and by request.
14. Conservation Commission
 - a. Jacobs asked about an email he sent to the Selectboard regarding the Conservation Commission.
 - i. In response to Jacobs' question about the Farm Support Grant money, Galinat confirmed that the Farm Support money is reflected in the Town Report as both a revenue and an expense. The money passes through the town's account because the town is an auditable, unbiased third party that disperses the funds for the Vermont Community Foundation.
 - ii. Jacobs asked about getting an active Conservation Commission going and asked about his and Jeff Lane's name being taken off the town website's Conservation Commission page.
 - a) Washington explained that she had been updating the town website to reflect the current Selectboard appointments.
15. Executive session for personnel
 - a. **P. Craig moved to enter executive session for personnel. Browne seconded. All in favor. Executive session entered at 8:06pm.**
 - b. The Selectboard came out of executive session at 8:17pm.
 - c. No action taken.
16. Adjourn
 - a. **Browne moved to adjourn. P. Craig seconded. All in favor. Meeting adjourned at 8:18pm.**

Peacham Selectboard:






