

TOWN OF PEACHAM
MINUTES OF THE SELECTBOARD MEETING
Wednesday, November 17, 2021
APPROVED

Selectboard Members: Beatrice Ring, Peter Craig, Richard Browne
Public: Town Clerk/Treasurer Thomas Galinat, Road Foreman Jeremy Withers, Selectboard Clerk Rebecca Washington, Janie Carle, Dave Stauffer, Ron Craig, John Reiss, Jock Gill, Laurie Kozar, David Edwards, Neil Monteith, Bob Ring

1. The meeting was called to order by Chair of the Selectboard Beatrice Ring at 7:01pm.
2. Additions to the agenda
 - a. Peacham Emergency Relief Fund (PERF)
 - i. The Selectboard reviewed a memo from PERF Administrator David Edwards requesting that the Town Clerk's Office be allowed to administer the fund while Edwards is out of town from early January to early April. This would allow continued confidentiality of the applicants.
 - ii. The Selectboard agreed.
 - b. Trees
 - i. Tree Warden Neil Monteith explained that, at the last Tree Board meeting, Stauffer volunteered to cut down a tree that is in the town's right-of-way leaning over the road. Monteith is not against it but wanted to make sure that a volunteer would be covered by the town's insurance.
 - ii. Galinat explained that volunteers are covered by the town's insurance. Browne is going to confirm that with VLCT, the town's insurance carrier.
 - iii. After looking at the tree again, Stauffer decided not to cut it down.
 - c. Parking for December 4th music presentation
 - i. The Selectboard reviewed a request from Frank Miller to use the field owned by the town for additional parking on December 4th.
 - ii. The Selectboard agreed to let the field be used for parking. The town will not plow the field if there is snow.
 - d. Town Auditors
 - i. Discussion ensued on possible candidates for Town Auditor. One of the auditors recently resigned and another one is not planning to run for reelection in March.
3. 2022 budgeting
 - a. Discussion ensued on the following budget items:
 - i. Withers is waiting on an estimate for paving East Peacham Road. The current estimate is expected to have gone up since the last estimate. If a paving grant is received from the state, up to \$175,000 of the project will be paid for.
 - ii. Withers is waiting on an estimate to shim and overlay the road through the village. Galinat explained that there may be enough money in the Retreatment Fund to do both paving projects without raising taxes. Galinat will also look into doing a bond vote.
 - iii. The Peacham Childcare Center (PCC) may take over the afterschool program and would then request an appropriation from the town instead of being part of the town budget. Galinat will reach out to PCC to find out more.
 - iv. The town currently does not have a town attorney on retainer and it may be a good idea to have one.
 - v. P. Craig and Washington will work on putting out an updated RFP for the Town Hall front entrance project in order to get on a contractor's schedule for 2022.
 - vi. The Selectboard and Galinat discussed next year's Town Meeting. As it stands now, Town Meeting will be by floor vote. The Selectboard could choose to call a special town meeting before the end of the year to vote on switching to Australian ballot, which would be indefinite unless the voters voted to switch back to a floor vote. Galinat also explained his idea for a hybrid Town Meeting where articles would be discussed and amended from the floor and then voted on by Australian ballot at a later date.
 - vii. The town may need to subscribe to monthly IT safety services to comply with VLCT's requirements for insurance coverage. Galinat is getting estimates.
 - viii. The Social Security Administration announced that the cost-of-living adjustment for 2022 will be 5.9%. Galinat recommended across-the-board adjustments, which would amount to an \$18,000-\$19,000 increase in the budget.
 - ix. Galinat, P. Craig, and Withers will meet next week to lay out the framework for the rest of the budget to bring to the December 1st Selectboard meeting.
4. Highway department update
 - a. The new backhoe should be coming in December.
 - b. The plow equipment is ready for winter.
5. Committee updates
 - a. Energy Committee
 - i. Gill presented an update from the Energy Committee, as prepared by Allison Webster.
 - ii. Gill is planning on stepping down as chair and Webster has agreed to become the new chair.

- iii. The solar project is currently at around 18% of solar shares claimed and they hope that it's operational by next fall.
 - b. Planning Commission
 - i. Rescheduled for January 5, 2022.
 - c. NVDA Representatives
 - i. Rescheduled for January 5, 2022.
- 6. Conservation Commission updates
 - a. Stauffer explained that he installed the basic guts of a kiosk at Mill Creek Park. He is working on getting the plot plan in order to create a trail map for the kiosk.
 - b. Stauffer is working on putting together maps for the Town Forest to paint on the Town Forest kiosk and eventually put on the town website.
 - c. The village trail map and the Peacham Pathways map are now up on the town website.
 - d. Stauffer complimented the work that P. Craig and R. Craig did, cleaning up the area around the Roller Barn. He plans to put a picnic table in next year near the kiosk.
 - e. Stauffer plans to include information on the Farm Support Grant program in the next town report.
- 7. Appropriations process discussion
 - a. Discussion ensued on the process by which nonprofit organizations request appropriations from the town.
 - b. In the past, the Appropriations Committee mailed the current appropriations guidelines to the nonprofits that received appropriations the previous year. The committee would then review the applications that were received by the Town Clerk's Office and follow up with any nonprofits that did not submit all of the requested material.
 - i. Edwards questioned the need to both send out the guidelines and follow up to ask for missing materials.
 - c. Because the Appropriations Committee members recently resigned, Browne volunteered to review the applications this year and to examine the current process.
 - d. Reiss questioned the reason that nonprofits don't have to petition every year. Browne explained that a previous Selectboard decided to only require petitions of nonprofits requesting a different amount than the previous year or nonprofits who had not requested an appropriation the previous year.
- 8. Approve minutes
 - a. **Browne moved to approve the minutes of November 3, 2021 as presented. P. Craig seconded. All in favor. So moved.**
- 9. Review and approve bills
 - a. **Browne moved to approve and pay the bills as presented. P. Craig seconded. All in favor. So moved.**
- 10. Review correspondence
 - a. There is a publication on ARPA from VLCT that is available for review at the Town Office.
 - b. Because of the rise in COVID cases, the Selectboard discussed going back to mostly-zoom meetings, with the exception of one person being in a designated physical location.
 - i. **The Selectboard decided to change the designated physical location of Selectboard meetings to the Town Hall, starting with the December 1, 2021 meeting. Attendees will be encouraged to attend the meetings remotely.**
- 11. Adjourn
 - a. **P. Craig moved to adjourn. Browne seconded. All in favor. Meeting adjourned at 8:25pm.**

These minutes were approved as written by the Peacham Selectboard at its regular meeting on 12/1/21.

Rebecca Washington, Selectboard Clerk

