

TOWN OF PEACHAM  
Wednesday, August 2, 2023  
Selectboard Meeting  
Hybrid meeting in the Peacham Library Community Room and via Zoom

Attendance

In-person: Richard Browne, Selectboard, Peter Craig, Selectboard, Alfred Dedam, Select Board, Jeremy Withers, Road Foreman, Anna Carvalho, Selectboard clerk, John Reis, Ron Craig, Laura Tobin

Via Zoom: David Stauffer

Minutes

1. Call to order by Richard at 6:32pm, Wednesday, August 2, 2023
2. Additions to the agenda - none
3. Highway Department Update
  - a. Catching up on some road grading. Moving into regular ditching maintenance.
  - b. Spending on gravel will be significantly over budget. Though he is overspending for a necessary purpose, Jeremy is looking for guidance. Some quarries don't have gravel, but he is still able to get some. Selectboard encourages him to request anything that is a result from the storm be covered by FEMA to help.
  - c. A truck is going to Jericho tomorrow due to a belt issue, and should be back by next week.
  - d. Salesmen are working on truck prices for next meeting. He has two competitive ones he prefers, but he can get more quotes. They should be ready for Aug 16<sup>th</sup> meeting. Discussion on rotating 3-year truck lease program.
  - e. He has been fielding calls about class 4 roads, including roadside mowing requests. Roadside mowing is class 3 only and already done for the year. Jeremy wanted to clarify that we don't have a budget for class 4 roads, so the work on them is minimal.
  - f. Rebecca and Jen are working on FEMA, so he's been in contact. Hoping to get response from FEMA so he can finish up on Macks Mtn Rd.
  - g. Whole crew back, but one guy will be out 2 weeks, and Jeremy will take a few days break next week.
  - h. Hookerville cutoff is open.
4. Town Clerk/Treasurer Update
  - a. Town quarterly highway money from state was issued early.
  - b. Selectboard agrees to have Town Clerks file for FEMA with Jeremy.
5. Tax Rate
  - a. Selectboard agrees there should be no penalty for late homestead filing this year because it wasn't announced at Town Meeting.

- b. The tax rate has increased by \$0.35 because the budget was so much higher this year and because it went down last year.
    - i. **Peter moves to approve the tax rate as presented by the listers, seconded by Alfred, all in favor, so moved.**
- 6. Northeast Kingdom Audubon Property – Laura Tobin
  - a. Laura was at meeting at request of board of NEK Audubon, which was incorporated in 1970. While there is a lot of broad support, there are only a few members left. They are trying to figure out plans for the future. NEK Audubon is responsible for taxes of the Windsong site that was Thelma White’s property and has an observation platform, but they are not sure if it’s sustainable. They spoke with VT Land trust, but they aren’t interested because it’s only about 5 acres, and it can’t be developed or distributed. NEK Audubon wants to know if the town is interested in the property as conservation piece or other use. It’s a swampy area, so it’s not very accessible for walking. Charlie Browne used to help care for and document it. He provided all the species lists and land information to Laura. The adjacent property owners have reached out about purchasing their land, but NEK Audubon is too small and too few to be able to take that on. NEK Audubon chapter might have to close. They are open to ideas.
  - b. Selectboard will look into this more and get back to Laura.
  - c. Dave Stauffer asked to get in touch with Laura as a Conservation Commission member.
- 7. Ongoing items updates
  - a. John Reis asked about the transparency of this agenda item. The Selectboard explained that this item is just a placeholder for small comments on ongoing items to make sure the whole Selectboard is up to date. If there is any significant information to discuss or if decisions need to be made, they will be added to the agenda as a separate item.
  - b. Richard reported that there is no update on the town hall.
  - c. Alfred reported that he reached out to Toby Balivet, who says there is no update regarding Cow-Hill yet.
- 8. Public comment
  - a. John Reis wants to do away with executive session.
- 9. Approve minutes
  - a. **Peter moved to approve minutes as present at the meeting from July 19<sup>th</sup>, 2023, seconded by Peter, all in favor, so moved.**
- 10. Review and approve bills
  - a. **Peter moved to all approve bills as presented with the exception for the 5 Seasons bill that is pending decision, seconded by Alfred, all in favor, so moved.**
- 11. Review correspondence

- a. Ron Craig – received a Washington Electric refund of \$38 for Steven’s Valley Men’s Club. Peter will contact them to let them know it’s not in existence anymore.
- b. Allie Webster – town needs to sign up for free energy assessments for town buildings if we want to apply for \$500,000 historic preservation grant. Peter will stop in Town Clerk’s on Thursday.

**12. Peter moves to adjourn at 07:11pm, seconded by Alfred, all in favor, so moved.**

Documents provided to the Selectboard and discussed at this meeting are available by request to the Town Office.