

TOWN OF PEACHAM
Wednesday, August 16, 2023
Selectboard Meeting
Hybrid meeting in the Peacham Library Community Room and via Zoom

Attendance

In-person: Richard Browne, Selectboard Chair, Peter Craig, Selectboard, Alfred Dedam, Selectboard, Jeremy Withers, Road Foreman, Anna Carvalho, Selectboard Clerk, Jeff Berwick, Fire Chief, Tim McKay, Margret Maclean, Andrea Otto

Via Zoom: David Stauffer, Dan St. Cyr, Allison Webster

Minutes

1. Call to order by Richard at 06:30pm, August 16th, 2023.
2. Additions to the agenda -none
3. Highway Department Update
 - a. Truck pricing discussion. Jeremy needs a decision so we can hopefully get the truck in the 3rd quarter. Two truck prices offered. Trucks are built the same, the terms are similar, interest rate is similar.
 - i. International truck from Allegiance Trucks has a \$255,816 acquisition cost, \$56,355.46 lease payment, and a final payout of \$115,000 for a 3-year, unlimited miles, full coverage warranty package except specific wear items plus 3-year towing policy with \$1100. Dan St. Cyr from Allegiance explained these terms.
 1. Alfred asked Jeremy about the service. Jeremy says we have been using International for the last 5 years and the service is good.
 - ii. Freightliner truck from R.R. Charlebois, Inc. has a \$256,170 acquisition cost, a \$52,496 lease payment, and a final payout of \$130,000 for a 3-year, 100,000-mile warranty with a \$1200 cap on towing.
 - iii. There is no trade-in on the vehicles, just a buy-back. The town could decide to buy the vehicle.
 - iv. Selectboard agrees that if the terms and prices are equal and service is good with International, they feel we should stick with International. Jeremy is ok with that.
 - v. **Alfred moved to accept and sign the International proposal to buy a truck, seconded by Peter, all in favor, so moved.**
 - b. Jeremy asked if the Peacham Pond plowing should go out to bid or if he should reach out to last year's plower. Peter thinks we should reach out, as last year's feedback from residents was good. The quality and convenience were worth it.

Selectboard agrees that if he's willing to offer the same price, Jeremy can offer it to him, but if his price is significantly higher, then we should put it out to bid.

- c. With the plan for the post office to be open 24/7, Bob, the post master, asked Jeremy about maintenance of the parking lot and driveway. Jeremy explained that he generally keeps it cleared, but not necessarily 24/7, so he wanted to make the selectboard aware due to the liability. Tim McKay commented that since they are renting from us, we should be clear about what we are able to offer for maintenance.
 - d. Regarding access permit policy – Jermey is coming across some driveway concerns because some have been installed without culverts. Policy says landowner is responsible for putting in culverts. Selectboard, Jeremy, and Town Clerk will look into policy and options.
 - e. Otherwise, the road crew is hauling sand, grading a lot, and will be ditching next week for the rest of summer and fall.
 - f. Jeremy will meet with Rebecca and FEMA next Thursday via phone, time TBD. A selectboard member will try to attend.
 - g. Tim McKay asked if they would reach Morrison Hill Rd. Jeremy said they are grading about one class 4 road per week, so they'll get there. Tim also commented that someone dumped some furniture on the corner of the road, and asked if they pick up stuff next to the road.
4. Town Clerk/Treasurer Update – via email from Rebecca Washington, Town Clerk
 - a. We had to borrow \$20,000 from the tax anticipation note. We shouldn't have to borrow again this year.
 - b. The tax bills have gone out, and there has been a steady stream coming in since.
 - c. The meeting with FEMA that Jeremy already mentioned.
 - d. One invoice to be discussed later.
 5. Jeff Berwick, Fire Chief – Rescue vehicle

He has exhausted used truck options, so he's looking prices for new cab and chassis with 5-man cab because it's safer. He has a price from Dodge. Ford and Chevy would be similar prices. He's waiting for those specs. It would cost about \$64,000 for cab and chassis, and we would use the current aluminum body, which they would switch over. Jeff has someone who can do the wiring. He got estimates from others or \$30,000-50,000 to do the full switchover, but he thinks we can do it for less. The cab and chassis should last 25-30 years, it is heavier, and it is gas. The current body is still doing well, but they could make some adjustments/updates later if need be. He hopes we can do it for a little less than \$90,000 total. Jeff can get more prices from Chevy and Ford with comparable gross vehicle weight. It will be 6-7 months if we order now. Jeff mentioned some budgeting options. Richard asked for quotes for next meeting on Sept 6th.
 6. Peacham Community Housing – update from Allie Webster

- a. Allie wanted to make everyone aware of the upcoming 3rd Peacham Community Housing meeting regarding rehabilitation of the Science building and the Academy apartments, which will take place Aug 24th at 7:30pm at the library and on Zoom.
 - b. Allie requested the Zoom link for the meeting be shared in the minutes: <https://fb.me/e/16El2YyMn?mibextid=RQdjgZ>
 - c. More information can be found on the PCH webpage on the town website, including background information, materials from all previous meetings, and instructions for how to get in touch with board members with questions or concerns.
7. Democracy Committee – results – Tim McKay, Andrea Otto, Margret MacLean
- a. Tim provided a synopsis of where we are at. (Extra copies can be found at the Town Clerk's office)
 - i. Recap of the process so far, which started with a presentation by Susan Clark to the Selectboard, the formation of the Peacham Democracy committee, two workshops, a local assessment survey, and then a full report provided by Susan Clark and Rebecca Sanborn Stone. Richard requested that Tim provide a printed copy of the full report to be left at the Town Hall.
 - ii. Basic issue: quantity vs quality of votes. Relatively speaking, we have a good turnout, so the recommendation is to focus on making sure we have a diverse turnout by focusing on eliminating barriers, both physical and psychological.
 - iii. 2 key facts affect turnout: issues and power (i.e., decision-making)
 - iv. Six categories of elements of Peacham democracy were assessed in survey, expressed as our strengths and weaknesses.
 - v. Appendix 1 of the report details action items that came out of workshops (page 19-25)
 - vi. The Democracy committee came up with possible action steps:
 1. Selectboard appointed committee to survey the broader community. Felt the small group that met was too small, and that reach should extend further. Focus on in-person conversations. Volunteers have shown interest, including Jean Dedam and Bruce MacLean
 2. Selectboard appointed committee to create a Peacham's "Operator's Manual" that would explain local governance and how to navigate it to help people feel empowered to participate. Would probably not be available by next Town Meeting, but idea is to include a digital and printed version. Volunteers who have agreed to participate are Rebecca Washington and Julie Lang, also

potentially Andrea Otto, and Richard Browne after his term on the Selectboard has ended.

- a. Anna asked how they are finding volunteers, and Margret explained that now that the report is out and information is being shared, they hope to find more interested volunteers, should the Selectboard decided to appoint the committees.
3. Effort to build *both* quantity and quality for democratic participation.
 - a. If there are issues, list them as separate items on the warning, as this encourages participation.
 - b. Try changing the time of town meeting to Monday afternoon/evening for better participation, while still allowing ballot counters to complete their work on Tuesday. Then request feedback.
 - c. Discuss notion of going from 3 to 5 selectboard members. Researching other towns who have made this change. This option decreases work load, diversifies members, and allows for conversation outside of a meeting. Schoolboard move from 3 to 5 has been positive.
- vii. Richard requested a list of volunteers for committees so far. Tim commented that this specific committee will dissolve once the new committees are appointed. Selectboard can come up with more action steps based on report.
- viii. Selectboard expressed their appreciation for the information, and feels the town will benefit from it. Discussion about the importance of informed decision-making, constructive participation, and the importance of participants not being self-selecting.
8. Town Hall update
 - a. We filed for the zoning variance to put shed on the back of the building for HVAC units. DRB date not set, but likely early September.
 - b. Received correspondence from Bob, the post master, saying they will put an AC out the wall. Selectboard agreed that they would like Bob to come to the next meeting with Rusty Barbar to make sure everyone is on the same page.
 - c. Rusty is still gathering quotes to dig and waterproof foundation.
9. Public comment - none
10. Approve minutes
 - a. **Peter moved to approve minutes as posted from August 2nd and 9th, 2023, seconded by Alfred, all in favor, so moved.**
11. Review and approve bills

- a. Regarding the warrant for a special meeting, which they already agreed on, and approve of how the Town Clerk is handling it, so it's approved as is.
 - b. **Alfred moved to approve and pay bills as presented, seconded by Peter, all in favor, so moved.**
12. Review correspondence
- a. Emails regarding post office.
 - b. VLCT regarding town fair
 - c. Email regarding the boat access at Peacham Pond, informing Selectboard that the plans for repair have been delayed.
 - d. Selectboard received a Freedom of Information request for correspondence regarding ARPA, PCH, and the subdivision. Richard forwarded all emails he had to Rebecca Washington.
 - e. Richard asked other Selectboard members about the idea of putting the Declaration of Inclusion on the warning for town meeting to let the town decide, either as a Selectboard item to be voted on or a petition. Peter thinks it should be a petition to determine if it's something that should be voted on. Alfred asked about the organization that provided the declaration, but agrees it should be a petition because he feels without meaningful change in how we conduct ourselves, adopting it feels like theatrics. Peter feels we are already welcoming, so why adopt a policy if we are already welcoming. Richard feels he's not clear that's the way we are. Peter feels that people should be able to move about without being told they should be a certain way. Selectboard agreed to ask organization to put together a petition. Alfred requested more information about the organization. Richard provided the address vtdeclarationofinclusion.org/
13. **Peter moved to adjourn at 7:37pm, 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.