

TOWN OF PEACHAM
Wednesday, July 17, 2024
Selectboard Meeting

Hybrid meeting in the Peacham Library Community Room and via Zoom

Attendance

In-person: Alfred Dedam, Selectboard, Peter Craig, Selectboard, Molly Willard, Selectboard, Jeremy Withers, Road Foreman, Rebecca Washington, Town Clerk, Jeff Berwick, Fire Chief, Morgan Gold, Dave Edwards, Neil Monteith, Bruce Wescott, Dale Roy, Tom Ziobrowski, Jenny Mackenzie, Rachael Moragues, Benjamin King, Harriot King, Don Moore, Deane Moore, Alex Maclean, Catherine Clark, Dean Bornstein, John Mackenzie, Margaret Maclean

Via Zoom: Jan Calderara, Harry Vann, John Reiss, Jen Surat, Assistant Town Clerk, Patrice McDonough, Janie Carle, Laurie Kozar, Jake Thomas, Allie Webster, Elizabeth McCabe

Minutes

1. Call to order by Alfred at 6:31 PM, on Wednesday, July 17, 2024
2. Moment of silence for Dylan Kempton
3. Pumper bid selection
 - a. Understands the timing is very challenging. He looked over different bids and made notes. Fout's Brothers – custom or commercial cab ready for delivery. Neither meet the needs of a rural department. Four Guys more expensive and specifications don't meet our needs. Open-ended about overages, which is risky due to changing prices. Jeff recommends the Toyne bid at \$651,215, due to built-in overage consideration, preferable specifications, more local, and have already built our tanker in 2020.
 - b. Jeff provided a sheet of financing options.
 - i. Full pay saves \$13,718 in interest savings.
 - ii. Financed when it's delivered to 900-950 days. We'd need \$145,218 down payment in a year, which might be very challenging at the moment.
 - iii. Put away \$50,000 into the capital fund for the next few years to use as a down payment to lower the payments. Then tanker we are currently paying would be paid off, and new payment would be about \$20,000 more than we pay now. Fund would have to be established at Town Meeting.
 - iv. Or finance the whole thing, and overages are unknown due to upcoming emission changes. The hope is that if we can get one this fall, we won't be required to have those new emission regulations.

- c. The need is urgent. We cannot replace parts on current tanker. Jeff says the salesmen might be able to sell our current tanker to help a bit.
 - d. **Peter moved to accept the bid from Toyne for a 2027 Fire Engine for \$651,215, seconded by Molly, all in favor, so moved.**
 - e. **Peter moved to go with Jeff's recommendation for the option that waits to finance \$90,000 overages if they occur, seconded by Molly, all in favor, so moved.**
4. Flood Recovery
- a. Dave Edwards – Peacham Emergency Relief Fund administrator (non-voting member)
 - i. Fund was established 2020 during Covid to help residents. There is some remaining money left in the fund, and the fund as been revitalized to help. It's pushing about \$80,000 so far, which is excellent, but losses are likely in the millions. Thanking folks helping to raise money, like Red Barn and Morgan Gold. Committee trying to find a fair and equitable way to distribute the funds. The process:
 - 1. Alex Maclean and Rose Dedam have identified 8 families/people to help some folks with some funds immediately, pending Selectboard approval.
 - 2. Previously, personal info was redacted. Now suggesting collecting applications by Aug 15th, then review and prioritize and distribute as best as they can. This date would allow time to get quotes and
 - 3. Committee is willing to start a social media campaign and mailings to get the word out.
 - 4. Once the committee has met, they will bring it to the Selectboard, but they want to use all the funds and as quickly as possible.
 - 5. Molly suggested a very clear rating criteria, potentially with tiers. Alfred suggested pro-rating the dollars available rather than rating the loss. Laurie Kozar explains that grant funds may impact FEMA settlements. Vermont Disaster Recovery Fund has agreed to open \$25,000 in grant funding. She offered to talk with PERF committee. Vermont Community Foundation stewards these funds. She suggested talking to John Stewart from State for FEMA. Molly clarified and encouraged to continue this discussion.
 - b. FEMA hazard mitigation buyout process –
 - i. Rebecca Washington explained that properties not impacted by 2023 can apply for that round of funding through the State by Aug 16th, and will be processed much faster. The funding for *this* storm would take much longer.
 - ii. Jenny Mackenzie shared her conversation with a FEMA rep who told her a State of Emergency had been declared. She described the Federal level

process for a home buyout, noting there is a \$250,000 cap on an individual home. She emphasized that FEMA *will* help again, unlike they previously believed. The cost of the repair must be 50% and a penny of fair market value of the house. Alex explained the State offers fair market value, and that there are two buyout options through the State.

- iii. Alfred asked about property transferred to municipality, aka town would own it. It cannot be built on again. It becomes a green space. What happens to these two houses affects the whole towns.
- iv. Alfred asked what they need from the town to help them with this process. They will let the Selectboard know so they can call an emergency meeting.
- c. Ben Gauthier from Dept of Environmental Analyst for Conservation Waste Management & Preservation – call to cleanup heating oil releases to for free.
- d. If there is hazardous waste that needs to be cleaned up, the Town can assign a staging area, and can be picked up for free. Discussion of type of hazardous waste. Jenny's cars will be picked up Friday. Discussion of timeline. Homeowners not completely sure if/what they have for hazardous waste.
- e. Borrowing money – Rebecca Washington
 - i. VLCT suggested getting a line of credit from our bank. Big question is how much. Borrowing money without voter approval can only be for a year (refinance). Is the line of credit ok, or should Rebecca explore other options? FEMA will pay for interest paid on borrowed money. Rebecca doesn't have an interest rate yet. The numbers are just not ready yet. Tax anticipation note is lined up, which we have not used, which can be used until we determine what other loans we need. But Tax anticipation note must be paid back by end of this year. Rebecca will look into some numbers.
- f. Roads – with Jeremy Withers, Road Foreman
 - i. Looked at map together. Jeremy highlighted areas in dire need. Trying to get them passable and safe first. Most of them are safe already. Working on Thaddeus Stevens and Green Bay Loop. Met with Logan Perrin from State, who reminded Jeremy that they will have to stop emergency work to get prices and Request for Proposals out. Will try to get a contractor out to Rake Factory before the weekend because there are residents are stranded.
 - ii. Met with Federal Aid System about two projects on class 2s (paved roads in South Peacham: South Main St and Peacham/Barnet Rd) and need to get RFPs out quickly. Not funded by FEMA and will be paid 100%. Discussion of South Peacham projects, which are significant. Getting input to determine needs and how to divide up the projects. Rachael

commented that the relocation of the brook will impact the intersection, river data will be coming.

- iii. Macks Mountain Rd, Gov Wentworth Grant, Maple Tree Ln, are smaller projects that are FEMA reimbursable if meets the \$3200 minimum.
 - iv. Hollow Woods will be a larger project, which will be contracted out.
 - v. Willow Brook is not quite as bad as they thought. Shane Stevenson already pulled out about 30 loads of logs, but road isn't too bad. Alfred wants to discuss the long term of this road due to the series of culverts. Molly commented that 75% of the State culverts are undersized.
 - vi. Jan Calderera asked about New Discovery Rd. Not accessible by EMS. Neil clarified that this road is owned by the State because it's part of Groton State Forest. Molly gave a contact to reach out to and confirmed that New Discovery is on the State's list, they just haven't gotten to it yet.
 - vii. Ethan Allen Corner – 700ft only, but gone. Class 3, needs to address. Dean asked if FEMA cares the class of the roads.
 - viii. RFPs are the next step. Molly offered to help because the State process is specific and must follow a timeline. Jeremy commented that they need some more input from the State engineers to be very specific about the needs. Mill Terrace is a FEMA project, not a FAS project. Rachael commented her concern that the river flow doesn't compromise the rebuilding work. Jeremy explained they only have 280 days to get the work completed to get 100% refund, so they will balance as best as they can. Need one more meeting before the RFPs can get out on the two federal jobs in South Peacham.
 - ix. Some roads are done and need paperwork done. Some other safely passable, but need to go out to bid for FEMA.
 - x. Discussion of getting RFP draft together ASAP. Molly will help Jeremy once he has the info he needs. Anything over \$15,000 has to go out to bid.
 - xi. Redirecting South Peacham Brook – Received the permit to move the stream. Have to get Rachael's house red tagged in order to do that. It will happen at 8am Thursday. Engineer wanted to be there when they do it and wanted to go upstream to try out some ideas while they are doing it. It will be a slow process to do it safely. Concern about filling up culvert in South Main. The river diversion will happen after Jenny and Rachael have gotten their contents out.
- g. Possibility of discontinuing Gov Maddocks
- i. Jeremy said Logan Perrin said we have to rebuild roads back to its original state before we can reclassify it. Currently a class 3. Alex Maclean will reach out about that policy, and more research will be done to see if there

are any other possibilities. Rebecca will ask VLCT for insight. Molly will reach out to VTrans.

- ii. Willow Brook culverts need to be addressed. Shane Stevenson suggested building a rise down the hill so water is forced across instead of down the road into East Peacham. Also, further down on Willow Brook. This is a long-term discussion.
 - h. Laurie Kozar sent a lot of information about resources for flood recovery and hazard mitigation. Dave Edwards asked about making the resources public on the town website. Some of them are town related, some or individual related, so they will wade through it and then share.
 - i. Vegetation debris pick-up – Rebecca has a contact to reach out to. It's a lower price. We need to sign a memorandum. This cost should be covered by FEMA, but has to be highly tracked, with a specific site.
5. Public Comment
- a. Dean Bornstein- grateful to the town. Making progress at his house. He feels more secure because he can drive his car up the road a little, making access a little easier.
 - b. Jenny and John Mackenzie thanked the Selectboard and Jeremy and emergency personnel, and neighbors for info, and being physically out there to be supportive and help for all the hours and hours of work. Glad to be a part of this community and can't imagine living anywhere else.
 - c. Ben and Harriot King echoed what has been said, especially for the Peacham Fire Department for helping with the HMAT issues. Chief Jeff Berwick was organized and kept him informed. This is irreplaceable. Community support has truly come out. Thanked community for all the help and support. Fortunate to live here.
 - d. Donnie Davis – commented that he left for 15 minutes, and when he came back and a group of people were scooping out mud and finished quickly. Deanne Davis was trying to work out front, and people stepped in instead. There was a roving group of people who just stepped in where it was needed.
 - e. Jenny Mackenzie– thanks to Alex Maclean and Rose Dedam for coordinating the strategy and for all of the organization and communication. Alfred acknowledged Rose and Alex's amazing coordination efforts. He would like to bring the idea of forming a committee for this exact purpose to provide structure for the future, including necessary assets. Thanks to the work they've done, we can confront it more effectively. Their efforts were so remarkable that it should and could become a model for the rest of the State. He feels that we already have the framework and localizing the efforts which is critical moving forward. Dave Edwards commented that this is true, but we need to prepare the funding in advance.

- f. Ben and Harriot King have documentation of volunteer efforts and movement. Harriot would like to share it to show how important the process and the people are.
 - g. Morgan Gold will be hosting a 24-hour live stream as a fundraiser, so he asked for photos and videos to help share that story for that event.
 - h. Dean Bornstein called Rick Witt for a generator and had it by his door immediately, so personal communication was online but intense and effective.
 - i. Marget said she has dehumidifiers for Ben and Harriot
 - j. John Reiss commented on the tragedy and how the town needs to be more prepared for more disaster events.
 - k. Neil commented that he will be using the map to update the Hazard Mitigation plan. Molly asked if we could include sizing for culverts as part of that plan. He will discuss it with the consultant.
 - l. Jeremy needs an add in the paper for a new employee. Selectboard is ok with putting it in for a week and on the website.
6. Review and approve bills
- a. **Peter moved to approve bills as presented, seconded by Molly, all in favor, so moved.**
7. Peter moves to adjourn at 8:34pm, seconded by Molly, all in favor, so moved.

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