

TOWN OF PEACHAM  
Wednesday, August 21, 2024  
Selectboard Meeting  
Hybrid meeting in the Peacham Library Community Room and via Zoom

Attendance

In-person: Alfred Dedam, Selectboard, Peter Craig, Selectboard, William Kempton, Selectboard, Andrea Kane, Selectboard, Jeremy Withers, Road Foreman, Rebecca Washington, Town Clerk, Neil Monteith, Andra Hibbert, Morgan Gold, Dave Edwards, Allen Freund, Ryan Chapell, John Guilmette, Michelle Risley, Barb Spaulding, Leslie Spaulding, Tory Ellis, Dave Spaulding, Scott Beck

Via Zoom: Dave Stauffer, Janie Carle, Amy Nixon

Minutes

1. Call to order by Alfred at 6:35pm, on Wednesday, August 21, 2024
2. Additions to the agenda
  - a. Executive Session for personnel
  - b. Andrea Hibbert – after item 7 – using Peacham School in Emergency
3. Highway Department Update – Jeremy Withers
  - a. FEMA declared a disaster
    - i. Questions: Gov Maddocks, Willow Brook, Mill Trace Bridge
    - ii. Will be continuing work on the rest of the roads
  - b. Interviews went well. Shane Drinkwater, who has experience on another highway department accepted the position and will start Sept 3<sup>rd</sup>.
  - c. Crew has been working on projects other than FEMA the last couple of weeks (grating, ditch flushing, culvert work, tree clean up), but will get back to FEMA work. FEMA requires a lot of documentation, so they will be working on that too.
  - d. New truck order – Sales rep, Dan, would like to come to next meeting. Ordering is open. Jeremy will reach out to a rep from Freightliner/Western Star to come as well. William asked if it was possible to order ahead for the following year. Jeremy doesn't think so, but we should ask.
  - e. Federal Aid System projects in South Peacham: South Main St and Peacham/Barnet Rd. Jeremy met with one contractor. He will provide a price. Jeremy has not been in touch with the other contractor yet. The contractor that is hired will do all the elements of the project.
4. Town Clerk/Treasurer Update – Rebecca Washington
  - a. FEMA declaration for public (roads and infrastructure) assistance and individual (property owners and residents with flood damage) assistance. Working with Bob Hansen on substantial damage determinations for two buy applications that were submitted. She needs a signed "statement of assurances" from the town for them.
  - b. Debris removal – emailed pictures to Steve Young at the State. No date scheduled for removal yet.
  - c. Working closely with Jeremy for FEMA paperwork. FEMA covers 75% reimbursement. State will cover an additional 17.5% because we have Hazard Mitigation Plan, Emergency Management Plan, and road and bridge standards all in place.
  - d. Zoom applicant briefing on Friday at 10:00am that Rebecca, Jeremy, and Neil will attend. Invited any interested Selectboard members to attend.
  - e. Rebecca will publish a notice that individual assistance has been approved and provide links.

- f. The brought the FEMA contracts to sign for all the contractors who have done work since the flooding.
  - g. We were approved for the line of credit. She has not borrowed yet, but she will keep the Selectboard updated.
  - h. Tax bills went out last week, and payments are coming in, which has helped cash flow.
  - i. August primary election went very smoothly. 151 voters turned out. She thanked the workers who helped out. She expects the November election to have a higher turnout.
  - j. Rebecca asked about the Jean Berwick tent fund, which has been sitting since before her time in the Town Clerk's office. There is \$1850 in the fund. Meant for buying a tent that residents could borrow for functions/events. Children of Jean Berwick would like to see it used. Rebecca is meeting with them, and invited any Selectboard member to attend.
5. Hazard Mitigation Update – Neil Monteith
- a. Received the FEMA declaration. Will attend the Zoom meeting with Rebecca. There is another in-person next Wednesday that he can attend if he has more questions. Other information has already been shared.
6. Rec Committee Update - tabled
7. Peacham Pond roads - Allen Freund
- a. Allen commented that road has continuously improved over the last 27 years. In general, he is satisfied with the road condition and improvements. He will be in touch with Emily Finnegan about upcoming project. He and the other residents are trying to find avenues of support for some of the projects that need to be done around Peacham Pond, especially now that FEMA has declared the disaster. He requested a specific line of communication with the Selectboard to facilitate what is happening around the Pond. Alfred requested that Peacham Pond residents itemize areas of concern, both general maintenance and areas vulnerable to severe weather events. Alfred suggested a site visit to familiarize themselves with the roads and raise the Selectboard's awareness of their needs. He recognizes the importance of mitigating for road resiliency. The group scheduled an 8:00am meeting for Tuesday, August 27<sup>th</sup>, 2024 at Peacham Pond. Allen offered to be a part of the exploratory recovery auxiliary group discussed at previous meeting.
8. Andra Hibbert – Vice-Chair of the Peacham School Board
- a. The school is a Red Cross designated emergency site, but it lacks a generator. On the morning of July 10<sup>th</sup>, Andra met with Peacham School principal, Sam McLeod, a GMP representative, and an Efficiency of Vermont representative to discuss how to make it a more resilient site. Efficiency VT is running a pilot program to work with municipalities to define the parameters of resiliency for specific emergency sites, and they would then suggest paths for achieving that resiliency and finding funding to make it happen. Andra requested a Selectboard member be apart of that working group. They will be looking for short-term fixes, but also a long-term sustainable plan. William volunteered.
9. Public comment
- a. Tony Ellis – property owner on Peacham Pond Rd. – He had extensive damage after July storms due to wash over and a lack of culvert. He provided photos and an explanation of the damage. Tony has discussed it with Jeremy. Tony is asking if it's possible to get a culvert and some ditching in this location. He will bring it up at the Special Meeting. Rebecca encouraged him to apply for FEMA assistance.

- b. Morgan Gold – PCH – Regarding the tree that fell on 641 Bayley Hazen Rd (the old red store). PCH owns the adjoining building. PCH attempted to contact the owner multiple times. There are concerns for the PCH portion of the structure and safety on the sidewalk. They are looking for options and help from the Selectboard. Alfred checked that the majority is not in the right-of-way, but some limbs are over the sidewalk that are entangled in the powerline, which should be addressed by the power company. Peacham does not currently have an abandoned property ordinance. Andrea contacted the assistant fire marshal. A certified letter has been sent. Peter said he knows the owner is aware of the tree and is trying to get her to Peacham to deal with it. Dave Edwards reported the group he has been working with has made contact with the owner. They have a willing buyer. There was some initial interest from the owner to sell the store, but her husband has just passed, so everything is on hold. She got a quote to remove the tree for \$5000. The buyer found someone local who could remove it for \$2800. The owner said she might just throw tarps over it for the winter. The group is continuing to have a conversation with the owner and hope to continue to make progress, but they recognize that it's a sensitive conversation.

10. Approve minutes

- a. **Peter moved to approve minutes from August 7<sup>th</sup>, 2024 seconded by William, all in favor, so moved.**
- b. **William moved to approve the minutes from Mon, Aug 12<sup>th</sup>, seconded by Andrea, all in favor, so moved.**

11. Review and approve bills

- a. **Peter moved to approve bills as presented by the treasurer, seconded by William, all in favor, so moved.**

12. Review correspondence

- a. New highway map with correction. Peter suggested laminating it so it can be used in emergencies to mark areas.
- b. Flickering light to be resolved in the Town Hall building.
- c. FEMA contracts to be signed.
- d. Email - Megan Albert – 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Coordinator – planning for the event.
- e. Dick Browne is willing to accept the position for UST A/B operator for the underground storage tank. They will make the appointment next meeting.
- f. Steve Engle gave an update on his signs project. He's been working away at it. He took the main sign and the field sign to work on, in case anyone is concerned about their whereabouts.
- g. Laurie Kozar – concerned about water runoff on her property. Rebecca spoke to Laurie, who requested putting in a pre-app for the Hazard Mitigation program for one or two culverts where the runoff is happening. She referenced the site visit from a couple years ago. Andrea asked clarifying questions about the changing nature of our weather and whether there is something that can be done in these situations. Peter and Alfred noted that an engineer site visit had happened and the road was deemed compliant. Andrea asked what was allowed, and Alfred and Peter explained that no structure is allowed within 15 ft, but that she could build a drain or some other means of diverting the water. She could potentially ask for permission or permitting if it were to involve the town right-of-way. Alfred expressed his frustration because they have been over this conversation many times, and he feels there are systems she could put in place to mitigate the issue, but has not. Discussion about what would be advisable. Jeremy explained the goal of the road, and while they do not want to cause damage to anyone's property, channeling

the water would not be advisable. Jeremy suggested further discussion with Laurie to clarify options she could take. Discussion broadened to proactivity with the changing weather related to Peacham Pond road and in general. What used to be adequate is not longer adequate. The budget is no longer adequate. Alfred noted that he recognizes there will need to be a discussion for the budget at the end of the year. There is a Hazard Mitigation pre-app in for the Peacham Pond section, but the projects were too small for FEMA public assistance. One Peacham Pond resident suggested an appropriation strategy previously used by other towns that supported upsizing culverts.

- h. Request to use the Town Offices parking for overflow parking in anticipation of Dave Magnus's funeral. Board agrees.
- i. Email from Morgan Gold regarding the tree (previously discussed).

13. Executive Session for personnel

- a. **Peter moved to go into executive session for personnel at 7:59pm, seconded by Andrea, all in favor, so moved.**
- b. Exited executive session at 8:10
- c. Board reported moving to accept Shane Drinkwater's 2-year contract and set his rate of pay.

14. Peter moves to adjourn at 8:11pm, seconded by William, all in favor, so moved.

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