

TOWN OF PEACHAM

Wednesday, September 18, 2024

Selectboard Meeting

Location: Hybrid In-person at the Peacham Library Community Room and via Zoom

Attendance

In-person: Alfred Dedam, Selectboard Chair, William Kempton, Selectboard, Peter Craig, Selectboard, Jeremy Withers, Road Foreman, Martha Winston, John Reiss, Dave Edwards

Via Zoom: Molly Willard, Selectboard, Janie Carle, Sheldon Ball, Robert Bartell, David Jacobs, Pete Wason

Minutes

1. Call to order by Alfred at 06:30PM on Wednesday, September 18, 2024.
2. Additions to the agenda - none
3. Highway Department Update – Jeremy Withers
 - a. Hollow Woods Road and Old Cemetery Road work wrapped up. Now working on Slack St. Discussion of stream along Slack St.
 - b. Grants-in-Aid project had been put on the back burner, but will be working on this in the coming weeks.
 - c. Hired two trucks under FEMA to help with hauling work.
 - d. Jeremy has met/is meeting with more contractors for the South Peacham project. He's still hopeful to hire one to get it done in time.
 - e. Trucks
 - i. The truck scheduled to be returned Oct 1 will have to have an extended lease because the new truck is not ready, but it will be ready by the end of Dec.
 - ii. For the new truck – Jeremy suggested buying out the truck that's lease is up next Oct. It would still have 2 more years of a warranty. Selectboard agrees the leasing option made sense in the beginning, but is no longer what's best for the town, so it may be time to switch back to purchasing.
 - f. Marth Winston asked Jeremy to have Rebecca reach out to her when he plans to do the digging on Peacham Pond Rd, since it's a one-way and will impact traffic flow significantly. She has an extensive email list to let residents know.
 - g. Alfred asked about the pavement by Ewell's Hollow. We are waiting for the large grant to replace it, but since that might be awhile, he asked about what to do in the meantime. Jeremy said he's been doing measurements and plans to put some numbers together to rebuild at least a section of it.
4. Town Clerk/Treasurer Update – Rebecca Washington email – nothing to update
5. Hazard Mitigation – removed – Neil Monteith – nothing to update
6. Peacham Pond Greeter Program - Martha Winston
 - a. Greeter program is a DEC grant that started in 2018. Greeter, Priscilla McCormick Sampson, sits at pond access site to inspect for and educate boat owners about invasive species. More bass fishermen with outboard motors than in the past. There is more grant money this year, so it will cover everything, so no balance is needed from the town. Martha thanked the town and Rebecca's effort to support the program.

7. Tent Fund:

- a. Discussion about town's tent needs and the best option:

Option 1 – buy Andrea's two 20x20 tents and accessories. Higher quality, but used.

Option 2 – buy one 20x40, newer one, but not quite the same quality.

Option 3 – Pop up tents. Not practical.

- i. **William moved to find the highest quality wedding-type 20x40 tent for \$1850, seconded by Peter, all in favor, so moved.**

8. Future of Roads Discussion

- a. Alfred and Molly met with Logan Perrin from VTrans about Cow Hill. Discussion about scheduling a site visit with Logan Perrin and Ben Matthews (rivers and streams) about Governor Maddocks and Mill Trace bridge as well. Molly explained that the takeaway from the meeting was that the town has a landlocked 183-acre forest, but with no legal access to it. The town could deem one end as the town access point through eminent domain, but without action from the town, there can be gates and they can be locked. However, anyone who owns land between those two points must have a key. This does not currently include the town. If the town takes legal access, there could still be a gate, but it would have to be unlocked, or the town would need a key. Molly finds it odd that we have a town forest without access. Will agrees that the people of the town should be able to access the town forest. Alfred feels it's the responsibility of the town to ensure access to the town forest, although it will be a significant undertaking. David Jacobs asked why Penny Street isn't an access to the forest. Molly clarified that it's only a town road up a specific point. Dave Edwards asked which properties would be impacted by eminent domain. Molly clarified that the town would not be taking over the properties, but that the roads to the access point would become a town road, which would require classification (class 3, 4, or a recreational trail). John Reiss commented that his understanding of state statues is that you cannot landlock state land. He asked if the Selectboard had had a lawyer review it yet, which Alfred responded that they had not engaged the lawyer yet. John commented that he thought that was a mistake, and they should present a lawyer with all the documentation showing way of necessity, and that we don't need eminent domain. He asked why the lawyer had not been engaged yet. Alfred explained that he had asked a lawyer for advice a while ago, but never heard back, and since then, he has made a recommendation for another lawyer. Molly asked what the next steps should be. She suggested having a special meeting with Logan, inviting the landowners, to give everyone the opportunity to ask questions. Will asked where the access was originally, or whether the road went straight through. Original landowners gave the land over to town due to delinquent taxes a long time ago. Molly will ask Logan about scheduling a special meeting. Dave Edwards asked about the private road sign on Penny St, and whether he would be allowed to drive up and park by the town forest gate. Molly and Peter confirmed you could not, unless you are a landowner or have permission from a landowner. However, Molly stated it's her understanding that in Vermont, if something is not posted, you can have access until asked to leave. Peter suggested speaking with the landowner for permission.

9. Public comment - none

10. Approve minutes

- a. **Peter moved to approve minutes from Wednesday, September 4th, 2024, seconded by William, all in favor, so moved.**

11. Review and approve bills

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

12. Review correspondence

- a. Tax abatement
- b. Videos and pictures of Peacham Pond from July 10th/11th, 2024.
- c. Steve Engle – update on signage – manager of sign shop left suddenly. The signs he had ordered remain undone, so unfortunately, he won't likely have them before the Fall Fondo as planned.

13. Peter moves to adjourn at 07:39PM, 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.