

TOWN OF PEACHAM  
Wednesday, April 16, 2025  
Selectboard Meeting

Hybrid meeting in the Peacham Library Community Room and via Zoom

Attendance

In-person: Alfred Dedam, Selectboard Chair, Peter Craig, Selectboard, William Kempton, Selectboard, Christian Snow, Selectboard, Jeremy Withers, Road Foreman, Rebecca Washington, Town Clerk, Melissa Hough, Allen Freund, Norman Patenaude of Pike, Tim Cramer of Blacktop, EJ Blondin of J Hutchins, Inc, Ian Boswell

Via Zoom: Emily Finnegan

Minutes

1. Call to order by Alfred at 06:38pm, on Wednesday, April 16th, 2025
2. Additions to the agenda
  - a. Moving the paving bids to part of the Highway Department update
3. Highway Department Update with Jeremy Withers
  - a. Paving bids. Discussion of width needed. Jeremy recommends 0.5in for stability, however, it's slightly grittier. Town received 3 bids: Blacktop, J Hutchins, and Pike
    - i. Blacktop - \$96/ton
    - ii. J Hutchins – \$97/ for 1/2in for \$100 for 3/8in
    - iii. Pike - \$85/ton Totaling \$193,205.00.
    - iv. Jeremy noted he has been pleased with the recent experiences he's had with Pike. His understanding is that any of the companies could start soon. Jeremy introduced the representatives from each company and thanked them for being there.
      1. **Peter moved to accept Pike's bid at \$85 per ton, seconded by William, all in favor, so moved.**
  - b. Jeremy met with Logan Perron from VTrans for the financial plan, which needed signatures. Logan pulls the numbers from our budget reports.
  - c. Continuing to turn over roads with grader to keep them as smooth as possible until the weather turns.
  - d. Brought backhoe out to do some ditch work- reshaping and cleaning.
  - e. Submitted a paving grant for a different section to Logan Perron at VTrans. He's not hopeful we will get it this year.
  - f. A new contact reached out about roadside mowing. We have no specific roadside mowing policy. Jeremy has asked the new contact and Walt (from last year) to give him a price but asked the Selectboard if they want him to put it out to bid officially. Discussion about mowing process for the last two years. It needs to be put in place soon. Discussion about whether to put it out to bid, and if so, the range. Rebecca confirmed it isn't against the town purchasing policy to skip putting it out to bid for this size contract. Plan to finalize at May 7<sup>th</sup> meeting.
  - g. 4-day schedule for the road crew starting April 28<sup>th</sup>.
4. Town Clerk/Treasurer Update with Rebecca Washington, Town Clerk
  - a. Upcoming renovation grant opportunity to pay for upgrade to fire alarm system. Board agreed to apply for it again.
  - b. Guest Wifi at Town Hall is not working. She will reach out to IT person, who had cautioned against guest wifi. She's hesitant about removing it as it is frequently accessed. Also, the Farmers

Market has asked about putting an extender of the guest wifi outside for payment transactions. The extender that used to be out there no longer works. Agreement that it's good for the community to have it the guest wifi. Rebecca will reach out to the IT person to get it fixed and find out if the extender needs to be repaired or replaced.

c. Budget status report:

- i. No red flags so far. Balance sheet shows \$227,730 in bank for operating expenses; however, fund balance current year is \$348,346 over budget, which is because we don't collect taxes until later in the year. She explained that we borrow from ourselves (from the larger funds), and that she will be setting up the tax anticipation notice soon. Because we will be spending the capital building fund this year, it has implications for next year's borrowing flexibility, so we'll probably have to get the tax anticipation note earlier next year.
- ii. 80% of delinquent taxes have been collected.
- iii. The FHWA flood repair money (for fixing the paved roads) has not been refunded yet, and it may be another month before we do. It's about \$2000/month in interest which is non-refundable. There's nothing we can do, but it's an unbudgeted expense. Peter asked about FEMA. Rebecca explained we received the federal side but have not gotten it from the State. The shares were adjusted at the end of 2024, so more is coming from the State.

5. East Peacham Schoolhouse, Inc – Melissa Hough

- a. Background: 2018 purchased the building from PHA to save it. It was in danger of collapsing, so they secured it first. Had a conditions assessment with Preservation Trust of Vermont to find out if it was worth saving. The report said it was, but it needed a new foundation. They put the new foundation in and started the wastewater plan. They wanted to save it because it was the last of 14 schoolhouses in town, but they still wanted it to be functional. She showed the survey that discovered half of the building was sitting on a neighbor's property. The Morgan's donated the land. Worked with fundraising consultant, who recommended documentation in place: architect, structural engineer report, cost estimates. Ryan Edwards for Cabot is the architect. He did a feasibility report which shows the current condition, and the renderings, including making it handicap accessible. The goal and mission are to make it available to the community. There will need to be more structural reports. Insurance didn't allow any events in the last two years. Asbestos testing was less than they expected and has been removed. Windows were removed and replaced. Historic preservation reports were done to ensure they are honoring the integrity of the building. Updated cost estimates, and architect is preparing bid documents. Will focus on replacing the roof and the structural issues this year and do the rest next year to give time for fundraising. They recently received a grant which should cover the roof and structure repairs. They are launching a capital campaign, looking for more board members, and recently applied for non-profit status.
- b. Action item: Applied for ready grant for about \$7500, but it needs a letter of support from the Selectboard. Discussion of layout and history of building since it stopped being used as a schoolhouse. The building is eligible for the historic register. Some documents require an easement. Occupancy is estimated to be 60-70. She discussed parking with the architect.
  - i. **William moved to sign the letter as presented, seconded by Peter, all in favor, so moved.**

6. Stormwater Project at Peacham Pond - Emily Finnegan

- a. Emily is the district manager for Caledonia County Natural Resources Conservation District working on the stormwater project at Peacham Pond access area. Put project out to bid and hired Stephen Hogan of Hogan Excavating for the project and still working with Fitzgerald Environmental for construction oversight. May 12<sup>th</sup> is the tentative start date to finish before Memorial Day. Met with VT Fish and Wildlife and Peacham Pond Association to coordinate closing the access for that time and road signage indicating that. She's spoken to Jeremy, as well as folks in Marshfield. She and/or representatives from Fitzgerald will be on site during the work. She needs to notify VT Fish and Wildlife within certain timeframe, so she will finalize with Stephen to make sure she fulfills that obligation. The project will grade the access to the North side to a stone line ditch and include a retention area and a rain garden with wildflowers. Peacham Pond Association plans to sign an operation and maintenance agreement, and Fish and Wildlife will do any major work. She will see how fast it fills in. Fish and Wildlife may post some parking signs as well. Any area that can't be driven on will have boulders around them. She will put her contact info on some of the signage. She is considering posting the closure to Front Porch Forum. Alfred suggested posting it to For the Love of Peacham page on Facebook. William asked if Fish and Wildlife posts on their website, which Emily believes they do. Allen Freund of the Peacham Pond Association says they will alert all of their members, and he can communicate with Jeremy as well.

7. Rec Committee – Ian Boswell

- a. Fund for soccer field still has a little money in it, so they are looking at getting some portable soccer nets and a frisbee golf set. Need to remove current soccer nets to do so. Thinking about a few other projects.

8. Fall Fondo – Ian Boswell

- a. Scheduled for September 27<sup>th</sup>, 300 riders with a similar setup. A Farmers Market will happen on the same day, but it will require some coordination, especially for parking.
  - i. **Peter moved to approve having the 6<sup>th</sup> Fall Fondo, seconded by William, all in favor, so moved.**

9. Paving Bids (see Highway Dept update)

10. Committee appointments

- a. Will talked to Nichole Wolfgang and Neil Monteith. Neil will stay on as assistant, but he does not want to be in charge. Robert Starbuck is the lead.
  - i. **Peter moved to appoint Neil Monteith as assistant emergency management coordinator, seconded by Christian, all in favor, so moved.**
- b. Tree Board
  - i. **Peter moved to appoint Ryan Chappel to the Tree Board for a term of 3 years to end in 2028, seconded by Christian, all in favor, so moved.**
  - ii. Discussion about moving forward with Tree Board agenda.

11. Public comment

- a. Allen Freund asked about posting on the town website to find a new greeter for the Peacham Pond access. Rebecca said it could, since they are technically a town employee and asked if the Selectboard wanted to have any part in hiring one. In the past the Peacham Pond Association has done the hiring, so all in agreement that can continue. The position is grant funded or town funded, depending on the year. Discussion about the role, boat usage, and water drawn down on the pond.

12. Approve minutes

- a. **Peter moved to approve minutes from Wednesday, April 2, 2025, seconded by Christian, all in favor, so moved.**
13. Review and approve bills
  - a. **Peter moved to approve bills as presented by the Treasurer, seconded William, all in favor, so moved.**
14. Review correspondence
  - a. Request for documents from John Reiss
  - b. Message from Earl Morrison about building a chicken barn, asking about issues about heavy trucks on Keiser Pond Rd. Rebecca believes he has already spoken to the Zoning Administrator. It's Agricultural and road limits not posted. Jeremy cautioned that it might be a difficult road for big equipment. Alfred doesn't believe we have any grounds for objection. He will reply to Earl.
  - c. VLCT and RSCA emails
  - d. Peter noted that he saw the Caledonian Record article about the Peacham School looking into the town buying the building. Alfred explained that if the current legislation moves forward, it would allow for the town to determine what happens with the building. William explained that it would cost the town nothing if the school remained, but if it doesn't, we'd be responsible for the upkeep until another use is determined.
  - e. Pumpkin growing contest made the news.
15. **William** moves to adjourn at 8:12pm, seconded by **Christian**, all in favor, so moved.

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