

TOWN OF PEACHAM
Wednesday, September 3, 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, Andrea Otto, Selectboard, Jeremy Withers, Road Foreman, Rusty Barber, Mark Clough, Eric Page, Ron Craig,

Via Zoom: Rebecca Washington, Town Clerk, Rick Scholes, Janie Carle

Minutes

1. Call to order by Alfred at 06:30pm, on Wednesday, September 3, 2025
2. Additions to the agenda
 - a. School building – Mark Clough
 - i. The School Board would like to deed the school building and property to the town in order to prevent losing control of it due to Act 73. He would like to bring the vote to the town at the next Town Meeting. They would transfer it for a dollar. The school would then lease it from the town, but continue to do the maintenance on the building and pay for the insurance. As there is no mortgage on the building, so there would be no cost to the town. Mark emphasized that he hopes we do not lose the school, but that if we do, or if we get absorbed into another district, we wouldn't lose the building and land as a community asset. As an emergency center it could still be utilized. Mark will get the attorney in touch with Alfred to explain the details. The building is in excellent condition. The board supports this.
 - b. Cemetery Deed
 - i. Peter recused himself from this item as he is the recipient of the lot.
 - 1. William moved to approve the deed, all in favor, so moved.**
3. Highway Department Update with Jeremy Withers
 - a. Gravel roads are rough due to how dry it has been. Even chloride does not work well enough in such dry conditions. He understands the challenges, but there is little they can do until it rains.
 - b. Guardrail was installed on Peacham-Danville Road on Tuesday.
 - c. Rented roadside mower will be here the week of Sept 15th.
 - d. Slack Street project will happen around the same time. The road will be closed for the first couple days. It will be announced.

- e. Peter asked about the State the missing sections of line painting. Jeremy has reached out to both the State and the company doing the painting.
 - f. Peter asked about the sand pile. Jeremy said they are working on trucking it, and it's looking good.
 - g. Alfred explained he had asked Jeremy about moving some of the school bus stop signs around to better suit the current route.
- 4. Town Clerk/Treasurer Update with Rebecca Washington
 - a. Cemetery Deed- see addition
 - b. Home buyout info to be discussed later.
- 5. Home buyouts update
 - a. FEMA approved the buyouts of the properties on Governor Mattocks and made offers. Alfred signed the necessary documents, as the board has already approved the sales. The environmental assessment is recommended, and will decide whether they close right away, or hold off until it's complete. Rebecca explained that it's a liability protection precaution, not funded by FEMA, at \$3,000-\$5,000 per property. Board agrees to air on the side of caution, and do the phase 1 environmental assessment. Rebecca voiced her concern for being cognoscente of property owners desire to finalize the buyouts as soon as possible. She has a list of potential companies she can reach out to find one who can do it sooner rather than later.
 - i. **Peter moved to move forward for the phase 1 assessments for the home buyouts in South Peacham on Governor Mattocks, seconded by William, all in favor, so moved.**
- 6. Town Hall renovation – Rusty Barber
 - a. Submitted the application for a permit 3 weeks ago. Met with fire marshals twice. They are concerned about the gymnasium. They pointed pit that we are not allowed to have a place of assembly on the second floor of a wooden building without certain protections in place. They said we need a sprinkler system. Due to his experience in Peacham with buildings in Peacham, Rusty knows this won't work because we don't have enough water pressure, so there would have to be a water tank underground. After discussion, the fire marshals agreed to accept some fire door adjustments if they got approval from their boss. It did not get that approval, but it was suggested that we might be able to apply for a variance. Rusty met with the general contractor to discuss options. The first would be to apply for a variance, limiting the occupancy of the space to 50-100 people, do the fire door upgrades, and then claim economic hardship. The second would be apply for a variance limiting the occupancy to 100, upgrading the exits, and adding material to below the gym floor that would increase the fire separation

rating. The installation would have to happen during this renovation. The last option is to do the sprinkler system and upgrade the exits. We'd have to present a plan for that installation over time. This renovation would including adding the branch piping only. If the town continues pay into the Capital Building Fund, this could help pay for this options. Discussion about the tank size and location, and types of sprinkler systems.

- b. Rusty explained that our general contractor has been following along with the whole process. If we can get a permit in September, he can start with the back wall waterproofing work, then do the interior, even when it's cold. He can then do the front in the spring. The painter may start soon.
 - c. Additional costs – an extra window for the post office in order remain open during construction, some rotted trim and siding that needs to be replaced, upgrading the exits in the gym, and finally the costs (depending on the option they choose) for the gymnasium fire protection and its related permitting.
 - d. Possible saving – ask the painter to paint the windows as opposed to removing them to restore them.
 - e. Alfred commented that he's inclined to look into option 3, as it's the safest and it doesn't limit capacity. Rusty will look into pricing to see if it's something we could manage if we spread it out over enough years.
7. Tree Board update
- a. No updates. Christian still working on getting in touch with the necessary people.
8. Public comment
- a. Rick Scholes – regarding the planning commission minutes. There is a regionally produced land use plan, that has been shown to the board. Someone at the meeting asked to see the plan on a parcel map. He says the Planning Commission didn't feel like that was necessary, according to the minutes. He has concerns about how the Peacham Pond residents and Mack Mountain will be affected. Some residents may benefit, but others may lose from it, so he feels they should be concerned by this and look into it.
 - b. Janie Carle – She shares Rick's concerns. She also feels the possibility of the town taking over the school is a good thing, however, she feels that the discussion about using the school as an emergency shelter is unrealistic. She feels people would not be inclined or able to leave their homes in the winter. Peter explained that it could be used in flooding events as well, or any other events.
 - c. Peter apologized and explained to Eric Page that they would be delaying opening a bid for the transfer station slab, as he is waiting for some correspondence from Casella to confirm the requirements.
9. Approve minutes

- a. Peter moved to approve minutes from Wednesday, August 20, 2025, seconded by William, all in favor, so moved.**
- 10. Review and approve bills
 - a. Peter moved to approve bills as presented by the town treasurer, seconded Christian, all in favor, so moved.**
- 11. Review correspondence
 - a. FEMA letter – Alfred read a letter he received about the flood insurance rate map. USGS has updated the engineering analysis on several of our rivers and streams and wants to discuss it with him. The work map meeting will occur on Sept 30th at 9am.
 - b. VLCT Municipal event on Oct 17th.
- 12. William moves to adjourn at 7:32pm, 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.