

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN
TOWN OF PEMBROKE, NH
October 20, 2021 at 6:30 PM**

Present: Selectman Richard Bean, Selectman Ann Bond, Selectman Sandy Goulet, Selectman Peter Gagyi, Selectman Karen Yeaton

Staff: Town Administrator David Jodoin

I. Call to Order:

Chairman Ann Bond called the meeting to order at 6:32pm.

II. Citizens Comment:

None

III. Scheduled Meetings

Monica Hurley – Corcoran Consulting

Monica Hurley, Town Assessor from Corcoran Consulting, discussed Veterans Credits. As of right now, 246 residents qualify for the standard \$500 annual veteran's credit. In order to qualify for the credit under RSA 72:28, the veteran has to have served 90 days active duty within very specific time frames. This led to gaps of time that left out veterans. The current time frames were adopted by the state legislature and were not something that allowed for individual towns to change to accommodate the veterans in their communities. In 2017, the legislature adopted RSA72:28-b All-veterans Tax Credit which gets rid of those time gaps. Towns that have adopted this credit program, have not seen a large surge of applicants which was originally a major concern. It is unknown how many residents would qualify for the all-veterans credit in Pembroke.

Monica presented the Board with the equalization report that is submitted to the State of New Hampshire every fall. The report is the sales prices compared to current assessments. The last revaluation of the Town was done in 2019. Technically, the Town is not required to do another full revaluation until 2024. However, the Town wants to be between 100-110% of market value. In 2020, the ratio was 92.8%. In 2021, the preliminary equalization has fallen to 77.4%. There has been a softening in the real estate sales market over the last two months, however, the real estate market in Pembroke has increased 15.4% over last year which has put the town assessments 22.6% below market value. This is not an uncommon scenario across southern New Hampshire. Another market analysis will be available in April 2022. Any update at that time would be statistical or a desk analysis where they do not go out and measure all the properties.

Selectman Yeaton asked what is the State suggesting has to be done. Monica explained the State recommends that assessments be between 90-100% of market value. You cannot collect more taxes than the Towns approved budget. If universally across Town all assessments went up 22%, the tax rate would come down proportionate to that amount of increase. A 22% increase in assessments does not translate to a 22% increase in the individual tax bills. Commercial properties may have a different increase in value but they would see an increase or decrease dependent on the analysis. Selectman Yeaton asked for residents, how does this correlate to an increase or decrease in their tax bill. Monica answered it is the Town's budget. When a full revaluation is done it is common for 1/3 of properties to go up, 1/3 to go down, and 1/3 to remain the same. If the budgets stay the same, the tax bills would stay the same. David Jodoin clarified the last full revaluation was in 2019 but the last statistical update was in 2017 and did not include commercial properties because there was no activity in commercial sales. At that time, because commercial was flat, residential picked up the burden. Also at that time, the School District had their revenue shortfall so the tax rate should have gone down but it did not. If the ratio was to get too low, Department of Revenue may hold revenue from the Town until they do an assessment. Monica explained that they will do some analysis in April 2022 and report to the Selectmen where they are at. If they approved them to move forward, they would do some field work review and some desk top review, update the tables for building and land, come back in July 2022 and report the findings. If they gave approval, they would generate notice of new value letters at that point and offer a 2-week window for informal hearings. Values would then be finalized for September 2022.

Selectman Goulet made a motion to authorize the signing of the 2021 equalization certificate. Selectman Yeaton seconded the motion. Motion passed 5-0.

Energy Committee

Richard Wengenroth, Energy Committee, explained that from the last meeting with the Selectman, they found there were two main questions. Question one is if the community power could be structured in an opt in rather than opt out arrangement. The answer is yes, it can be. RSA 53-e governs community power in New Hampshire and it specifically states that they can be structured either way. It also structures the way the community is noticed of any changes. The second question is if the Joint Powers Agreement (JPA) contained language specific to that opt in opt out arrangement and would signing that lock them into one structure. The answer is it does not contain any specific languages regarding opt in or opt out and that is specifically done that way because the law contains all the structuring power for community power. The JPA is specific to items like membership and by-laws. It does not structure any agreements for the community and any structured agreements are voted in at Town Meeting by the registered voters. Richard also provided a table of savings for the Boston area versus the regular default Eversource rate. Selectman Gagy asked if they have any data for Towns close to the size of Pembroke. Richard

stated he does not know the specifics of the Towns listed in the chart. Matt Miller, Energy Committee, stated the Towns in the spreadsheet are aggregated as the State would be aggregated and they would likely be close in size at that point to be comparable. Richard explained that Eversource locks in a rate twice a year for 6-month blocks of time. The community power coalition would not do that which gives them the flexibility to buy according to the market. That makes the number of customers a little irrelevant because they are not getting a price based on the number of customers. The price is based on what is available in the market and you are not locked into a contract. Selectman Gagyi has reservations due to the lack of a track record on community power.

David Jodoin called the City Manager of Lebanon and he explained all residents of the City are already opted in and they have to take the step to opt out. Matt Miller explained that is how the City of Lebanon voters approved the community power plan with the opt out as the mechanism for enrollment. They had a committee create a plan, held multiple public hearings, and voted on it at Town Meeting. The law states that the Town has to decide that at Town Meeting. It is not the Committee's decision. Pembroke would go through the same process and the Town may like the idea of being automatically enrolled or they might not but whatever the Town votes on becomes the plan. David asked how they would opt out if they didn't want it. Matt explained residents would get a letter informing them of the change, how it works, and instructions on how to opt out.

Selectman Bean asked how it would work with solar energy. Matt Miller explained they are unable to buy solar energy from local plants but they did say they would be open to doing business with CPCNH. If you are generating more solar than you consume, there a mechanism to sell back to the grid. Pentti Aalto, Energy Committee, stated the question is what is the power worth? Utility companies are not in agreement with consumers and the issue is at this point unresolved.

Selectman Gagyi would like to see a comparison with what one person in one of the towns in the Boston area received each month with community power vs. what they would have received with Eversource. Matt Miller stated he would work to get that information.

Selectman Yeaton clarified that signing the JPA obligates the Town to nothing and costs nothing. All it does it allows the Energy Committee to use their working knowledge of the industry to put together a plan that may save the residents of Pembroke money each month on their electric bills. Richard Wengenroth explained the hard work absolutely starts after the JPA is signed and now is the time to get into the program and learn alongside the other towns going through the same process.

Selectman Yeaton made a motion to allow the Town Administrator to sign the Joint Powers Agreement proposed by the Energy Committee to partner with the CPCNH Organization. Selectman Bond seconded the motion. Motion passed 4-0. Selectman Gagyi abstained.

Selectman Goulet made a motion to appoint Matt Miller to the CPCNH Board
Selectman Bond seconded the motion. Motion passed 4-0. Selectman Gagyí abstained.

Selectman Goulet made a motion to appoint Jackie Wengenroth as an alternate to the CPCNH Board
Selectman Yeaton seconded the motion. Motion passed 4-0
Selectman Gagyí abstained.

DPW Director – Mowing Bids

Tabled to next meeting.

IV. Old Business:

None

V. New Business

Approve Assessing Contract – Corcoran Consulting

Selectman Goulet made a motion to approve the Town Administrator to sign the 2022 assessing contract with Corcoran Consulting. Selectman Yeaton seconded the motion. Motion passed 5-0

Approve 2022 Health/Dental Rates

Selectman Goulet made a motion to approve the Town Administrator to sign the agreement with HealthTrust. Selectman Yeaton seconded the motion. Motion passed 4-0. Selectman Bond abstained.

Manifests/Abatements

Selectman Goulet made a motion to accept the manifests and abatements as presented. Selectman Yeaton seconded the motion. Motion passed 5-0.

Minutes - 10/6/21

Selectman Goulet made a motion to accept the minutes of October 6, 2021 as presented. Selectman Bond seconded the motion. Motion passed 4-0. Selectman Yeaton abstained.

Non-Public – 10/6/21

Selectman Goulet made a motion to accept the non-public minutes of October 6, 2021 as presented. Selectman Bond seconded the motion. Motion passed 4-0. Selectman Yeaton abstained.

VI. Town Administrator Report:

Women's Clubs is looking to have Christmas in the Village on December 5th from 12:30pm-4:30pm.

Selectman Goulet made a motion to approve the permit for Christmas in the Village pending favorable results from the Police Department and Emergency Services. Selectman Yeaton seconded the motion. Motion passed 5-0.

Selectman Bean made a motion to approve the 2021 State of NH MS-535. Selectman Goulet seconded the motion. Motion passed 5-0.

Selectman Goulet made a motion to present the 2022 Police Department wage scale as presented. Selectman Yeaton seconded the motion. Motion passed 5-0.

Solid Waste Committee met to review the three bids they received. Bidders were given three options to bid; operations continue as is with DPW picking trash, the vendor picks up one route a week, and/or the vendor takes over the complete operation. The Committee is going to be asking additional questions of the vendors and checking references. They plan to meet with the Selectmen and present the findings on November 18th. Casella will be at household hazardous waste day on October 30th handing out a brochure regarding recycling.

VII. Committee Reports:

Selectman Bean – Recreation met and is trying to purchase a zero-turn lawn mower. David stated they have the money in the current year budget and the funds would need to be encumbered for next year since mowers are currently out of stock. Any funds needed next year not covered by the encumbered \$6,000 and would come out of the revolving fund.

Selectman Bond – None

Selectman Yeaton – Conservation met Monday to discuss Pembroke Pines. ZBA variances were granted for the new condos. The concerns for Conservation are that the land promised to them is not valuable conservation land. They will be doing a site walk on October 27th. Selectman Bond expressed concerns for the type of plans they have for the condos due to open space developments being removed by the taxpayers in March. Conservation is looking for information on how discretionary easements work and what the formula for the fee is. The new Range Roads signs had come in wrong and there is ongoing discussion on the new wording with the Chief of Police. There is confusion on which RSA it all falls under. The Commission is looking at language in the deeds for their properties which may need to go to Town Meeting. The Historical Society is doing a historical walk starting at Memorial Field and going through the Village on Saturday.

Selectman Goulet – None

Selectman Gagy – Budget Committee met and discussed the schedule and an update from the Town and School. David Jodoin stated November 10th the Committee can pick up budgets and then meet on the 18th. They will start meeting weekly December 2nd. They want the school budget before Christmas break.

VIII. Other Citizen Comment:

None

IX. Adjourn:

Selectman Goulet made a motion to adjourn at 8:17 PM. Selectman Bond seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.

Ann Bond, Chairman

For more detailed information, the meetings are now taped and can be seen on www.townhallstreams.com click on Pembroke NH and look for the day of the meeting under the month.