



TOWN HALL | 3 EAST MAIN ROAD | PERU, MA 01235

SELECT BOARD MINUTES | AUGUST 20, 2018 at 6:00 P.M.
COMMUNITY CENTER

OFFICIAL

Present:

Ed Munch, Chairman/Historical Commission
Bruce Cullett, Selectman/Police Sergeant
Verne Leach, Selectman/ACO/Transfer Attendant
Caleb Mitchell, Town Administrator/Con Com
Brian Dewkett, Fire Chief
Caryn Wendling, Treasurer/Tax Collector
Karen Tonelli, Assessor
Evelyn Torrey, Accountant
Kim Leach, Town Clerk
Irene Morrison, Administrative Assistant
Susan Masino, Historical Commission

Residents: Michael Dewkett, Gary Stergis, Brad Torrey,

Guest: Library Trustees - Kathy Borden, Sharon Gruele, Ruth Calaycay

Item 1: **Call to order:** 6:00 p.m.

Item 2: **Roll Call:** Chairman Munch present, Selectman Leach present, Selectman Cullett present

Item 3: **State recording status:** Selectman Leach & Adm. Asst. Morrison recording

Item 4: **Review and Approve Meeting Minutes for 8-13-18**

Mr. Munch motions to approve the 8/13/18 Meeting Minutes pending changes. Mr. Cullett seconds. All in agreement. **VOTE 3-0**

Item 5: **Report from Departments**

Historical Commission, Sue Masino reporting

On behalf of the Historical Commission, Sue Masino gave an update of what the Historical Commission has done, and what they have in the works. Regarding the 75th remembrance at the Garnet Peak Memorial, she said she made copies of all the articles she had used, the text of the speech she had made, and has made a USB of the video that was filmed with professional video equipment. All that information is at the Library, for those who were not able to go to the event.

Sue Masino and Ed Munch Historical Commission Members, along with 2 other people have taken a couple field trips to the cemeteries in town. They have been interested in documentation and restoration. She said there's a program in Dalton where some of the Public Works employees were trained in their free time in how to deal with cemetery stones. She said there was an article published in the Berkshire Eagle about how successful the program was. On the tours of the cemeteries they noticed that things are in a deteriorating condition.

Sue Masino said that back in April 2018, DCR did a historical hike in Peru State Forest, called "Park Serve Day." The gentleman that led the hike is Mike Whalen who is very familiar with the cultural history in the area. They will be having another program this year about the Civilian Conservation Corp. Mr. Whalen includes Peru State Forest in his CCC talks, and said he's willing to bring the CCC Program to Peru as part of the 250th celebration.

Sue Masino said that she went to see a historical film at Harvard Forest called "The Lost Forest of New England." She saw the credits at the end, and it featured DNR Beefalo, where some of the filming was done. "The Lost Forest of New England" will be shown at the Berkshire Museum little Cinema on October 5, 2018.

Sue Masino submitted a project concept grant to DCR. It was basically for historical documentation of the 15 homesteads in Peru State Forest, and also for some trail work. She said that she was too late in getting that in, but she has that in mind for next year to get that piece in better shape for the 250th event.

Related to Peru State Forest, Sue said that there have been ATV's driving around the Monument. There are not supposed to be motorized vehicles in there. Mr. Munch said that it would be the Environmental Police that would be the enforcing agent.

Another thing that they talked about at the Historical Commission Meeting is the change in the number of members on the Historical Commission. She feels that the Historical Commission has been functioning fine with a 3 member board. Mr. Cullett explained that to get work done on the Historical Commission, the BOS thought it would be easier for 2 members to take a project and run with it without having to worry about violating the "Open Meeting Law."

Sue Masino said that there will be a workshop called Colonial Woodworking and Timber Framing. It's a workshop taught by 2 guys. They're going to teach log hewing and timber frame joinery for colonial buildings. She said that for the 250th event, this might be something that people would be interested in. The workshop will be at the Grange in the town where she lives in Connecticut.

Sue Masino said that the next Historical Commission meeting will be at the Library on 9/8/18. Town Clerk Leach said that the Library does not have handicap access, making it an Open Meeting Law Violation to have a meeting there. Mr. Munch said that he would be opening up the Community Center for their meeting on 9/8/18. Town Clerk Leach asked who the chairman was on the Historical Commission. Sue Masino said that Jim Kenney is still the Chairman.

Fire Dept. – Chief Dewkett reporting

Chief Dewkett reports that the base radio at the Fire Station got hit by lightening. It's the 2nd one that they've lost. He will be talking to an electrician to see about bonding the antenna if it was not properly bonded prior. He has sent the base radio to Pittsfield Communications, with hopes of a quick turn around time.

Chief Dewkett said that last week he met with Bergeron Protective Equipment, and ordered 2 full sets of new Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), and filled out a new order for new gloves. He hasn't yet seen the bill for that order. He indicated that the gear takes 45-60 days to get.

Chief Dewkett reports that this past Thursday there was an electrical fire on Garnet Mtn. Ln.

Chief Dewkett said he submitted a grant in the amount of \$3,900.00 for Forest Fire gear through DCR and through the Volunteer Firemen Assistant Grant that they do. They match 50% up to \$4,000.00. He said he is still waiting for the results from that. It was due 1 ½ weeks ago.

Chief Dewkett said the excess equipment that was supposed to leave this past weekend was not picked up. He is waiting to hear from Margaret on the status of that. She said that it may go back into the auction process, and it won't sit there for the winter. She had asked if he could hold onto it for a little bit longer. He said that the vehicle was bought by somebody that couldn't take the vehicle. They are trying to get refunded through GSA. Chief Dewkett is concerned that it could end up being abandoned property.

Chief Dewkett asked if there was gas in the fuel tank down at the Highway Garage. Mr. Cullett indicated that there is no fuel in the tank. Chief Dewkett said that a month ago, the Highway Superintendent said he was going to put the protection up, but it's still not up.

Town Administrator – Caleb Mitchell reporting

TA Mitchell reports that he is going to schedule a Conservation Meeting on 8/28/18 at 4 p.m. for the CVE Group of North America for the solar array project. The legal ad should be in the paper tomorrow morning in the Berkshire Eagle. He said that the ZBA will be meeting the following day. Mr. Munch asked if the Conservation Commission has seen the new specs for the project. TA Mitchell said he has not yet seen them. Mr. Munch said that when they did their presentation, they brought a map in here, but that map has not yet been updated to what they're doing now. TA Mitchell said that whatever map that's been submitted to the ZBA or Conservation Commission would be their updated plan. Mr. Leach indicated that the Chairman of the ZBA would like to know if there is somebody that would be available to do the minutes for the Public Hearing on 8/29/18. Adm. Asst. Morrison agreed to take minutes for the ZBA at the Public Hearing.

Item 6: Discussion and Possible vote to appoint Mike Frederick to the Conservation Commission

Mr. Cullett motions to appoint Mike Frederick to the Conservation Commission for a Term of 3 years. Mr. Munch seconds. All in agreement. **VOTE 3-0**

Item 7: Discussion of Town Audit Management Report with the Library Board of Trustees

Kathy Borden, Library Trustee stated "as a Board we do not accept the finding of the Audit Report. The 1st paragraph is totally wrong. There is no such thing as "Friends of the Library." We never reimbursed any expenses. We paid expenses. We pay the Director her payroll." Mr. Leach said that the Library is a non-profit. Trustee Borden said, "overseen by the town. We cannot separate ourselves from the town. If we do, we will lose our State Funds." She wants to know who the Auditors talked to, because they didn't contact the Library. Mr. Munch requests TA Mitchell to contact the Auditor and ask about what was said tonight, and the Library.

Mr. Cullett said "the town pays for Workman's Compensation Insurance. The BOS are trying to make things cleaner from their perspective. We understand that we appropriate a certain amount of money each year for the Library Budget. The state also supplies a certain amount of money every year. We also vote at Town Meeting to take some of the dog license fees, and put them toward the Library. We don't want to de-fund the Library. We want to continue to fund it going forward, but if it's operating as a separate entity which it is, we agree with the Auditor." Mr. Munch said "if we can't get an answer from the Auditor, then our next step would be to turn this over to Town Council and find out exactly their interpretation of this audit. He said that between the 2 of them, someone has to give us an answer that we have in front of us on paper with a law stating we can do it, or we can't do it." Sharon Gruele, Trustee said that as the former Accountant, it would make her feel very uncomfortable at year end having seen this money go out month by month, but not seeing the specifics of how it was being spent.

Mr. Munch said the BOS will get back to the Trustees once they find out what the answers are. They will set up another meeting where it can be discussed again. Mr. Cullett said he thinks the BOS should summarize any issues that they have with the report, including the issues that the Library Trustees brought up, the items that came up last week, and if the Accountant or Treasurer have any issues that they want to bring up with the Auditor so that we include them in 1 correspondence. TA Mitchell said if everyone submits their issues to him in writing, he can e-mail it to the Auditor.

Item 8: Discussion and Review of Town Audit

Kathy Borden, former Town Accountant and Town Accountant Torrey discussed the issue of the amount of training that current Town Accountant Torrey has had, and the urgency with getting the books closed and Free Cash Certified. Kathy has presented a professional teaching situation for Town Accountant Torrey where they space out the re-cap which is next. When she gets back after a month of vacation, they will then start closing the books. Kathy said she would go over step by step with Town Accountant Torrey sitting next to her, and teaching her where all the information that she's been processing will be all put together. She will see the scheduling, the re-cap, where the numbers come from, the trial balance and the balance and getting it certified. Kathy has proposed to close the books and teach at \$50.00 per hour. TA Mitchell said that Kathy will have to itemize what would be included in the training, what the schedule would be like, when this would be done, and what the compensation would be. Then, the BOS would be able to review that and determine if it's acceptable. Mr. Munch pointed out for the record that we're not faulting anyone. "We know this is something new. This Audit is totally something new for the Town." Brad Torrey said that when you're training someone, you have to do it in a secluded area. Adm. Asst. Morrison suggested that because she is only here for the meetings, TA Mitchell's Office could be used as a quiet place when needed. Mr. Cullett suggested that the Community Center could be used. Mr. Leach indicated that the Emergency Management room could be used as a quiet space for training. Mr. Cullett said that the BOS would have to see what Kathy has proposed so that they can look at the numbers.

Treasurer Wendling said that one recommendation the Auditor made in the report was instead of scanning the checks in to the bank when they come in, there has to be a way to link that to Softrite so that she doesn't have to manually post it to the entry. She said that Softrite might have a scanning wand, where everything you print is barcoded, then you would use the wand to scan it in. She said that is very expensive. She said that under #6, the Auditor thought she should do as Treasurer is a policy for turnover procedure. Assessor Tonelli and Treasurer Wendling discussed #8 where to avoid a compromising situation they suggest that the Treasurer forwards a list of credits to the Assessor on a quarterly basis. Then the Assessor can verify them against abatements. She said that they can do that. Assessor Tonelli said as far as checks & balances, the Assessors do a monthly summary of all rates, and they give that to the Accountant. Mr. Munch asked that everything they've brought up, to put it in writing and give it to TA Mitchell.

The discussion will be carried to the next BOS Meeting of 8/27/18

Item 9: Discussion and Possible vote to appoint Gary Stergis as Commissioner to the Northern Berkshire Solid Waste District to represent the Town of Peru

Mr. Cullett motions to appoint Gary Stergis as Commissioner to the Northern Berkshire Solid Waste District to represent the Town of Peru for a Term of 2 years. Mr. Munch seconds. Mr. Leach recused. **VOTE 2-0**

Item 10: Discussion of Cannabis Policy/By-Law for the Town of Peru

Mr. Leach said, "we should have a by-law in place before somebody comes knocking at the door." Mr. Munch said before the BOS can do anything, this has to go before the Planning Board. Mr. Munch said that with the Planning Board coming up with a plan, then they would present it to the BOS, where they would make any necessary changes, then it would go back to the Planning Board. Mr. Munch said we're open for discussion on

this. Mr. Cullett thinks the BOS should send some correspondence to the Planning Board asking them to start looking at this issue. If we haven't done it already, we've talked about getting the Planning Board together to work on the by-law related to solar. Mr. Munch said right now they need to concentrate on the project that's going on. Mr. Cullett said we should get some official correspondence from us to the Planning Board Chair, and ask them to start formulating something. We would like to formulate our own town by-law. Mr. Munch said the solar array is the main priority right now, because that's one of the 5 legs of the Green Community. The cannabis would be a second item.

Item 11: **Update on Draft Letter to Residents/Property Owners on Private Roads**

TA Mitchell said he generated a list of property owners on all the private roads. It was decided last week that letters would go out only to property owners on private roads that we actually plow. Assessor Tonelli is generating another new list just to residents on those roads, then the letters will be sent out. Mr. Cullett said that as a Board, we have to decide if these roads aren't taken care of, what we are going to do. Mr. Munch said that all the people on the private roads have to get together and sign a petition. It has to equal 20% of the total registered voters in order to adopt the MGL.

Item 12: **Discussion, Review and Possible vote to amend the Town of Peru Highway Department Policy & Procedures**

The BOS reviewed and discussed the revisions to the Town of Peru Highway Dept. Policies and Procedures. Mr. Cullett said he would add a 2nd sentence after "any suspicion of alcohol or drug use" the town reserves the right to require on the spot testing. That addition would be: "Any accident or near miss will require immediate on the spot testing at a location determined by the Town. Transportation will be provided by the Town." Also, Mr. Cullett said to add into the document, "any violation of this Policy & Procedure will result in potential disciplinary action in accordance with the Town of Peru Disciplinary Policy."

Item 13: **Review and approve accounts payable, treasury warrants**

Item 14: **Adjourn**

Mr. Munch motions to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Leach seconds. All in agreement. **VOTE 3-0**
The BOS Meeting adjourned at 8:40 P.M.

Articles used:

BOS Meeting Minutes of 8/13/18

8/20/18 Meeting Agenda

8/20/18 Sign-in sheet

Auditor Report

Appointment Form of Mike Frederick to Conservation Commission

Appointment Form of Gary Stergis as Commissioner to NBSW as Representative of Peru

Town of Peru Highway Dept. Policy & Procedures

Vendor Warrants

Respectfully submitted,

Irene J. Morrison

Administrative Assistant

Ed Munch, Chairman _____

Verne Leach, Selectman _____

Bruce Cullett, Selectman _____

Approved: _____