



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

SELECT BOARD MINUTES | August 12, 2019 6:00 P.M.
COMMUNITY CENTER

Present:

Verne Leach, Chairman/ACO
Ed Munch, Selectman/Historical Commission
Bruce Cullett, Selectman/Police Sergeant
Caleb Mitchell, Town Administrator/Con Com
Jeff Henault, Police Chief
Irene Morrison, Administrative Assistant

Residents:

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

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

Item 3: **State recording status:** Chairman Leach & Irene Morrison recording

Item 4: **Review and Approve Meeting Minutes for 7/29/19 & 8/7/19**

Mr. Cullett motions to approve the 7/29/19 BOS Meeting Minutes. Mr. Leach seconds. All are in agreement. **VOTE 3-0**

BOS/Finance Committee Meeting Minutes of 8/7/19 will be reviewed at the next BOS Meeting of 8/19/19

Item 5: **Report from Departments**

BOS – BOS reporting

Mr. Munch informed Chief Henault that equipment for the Solar Project is coming tomorrow on W. Main Rd. He indicated that the last time they came with equipment; there were no cones in the road.

Mr. Cullett asked TA Mitchell if there was a file with the disposal receipt and copy of the Permit from the Fire Dept. for the removal of the underground storage tank. He said there were also pictures that Supt. Russell had taken that should be with that file. He said at some point if DEP does a follow up here, they will want to see that. He said a copy of that file should also be given to the Fire Dept. for them to keep. Irene said she thought we did have a file for that in the Fire Dept. Files.

Mr. Leach announced that our cleaning personnel resigned. He said there is an ad on the Town Website looking for someone. He said there is a resume which will probably be on our next meeting. He indicated that Irene has offered to fill in for cleaning until someone is hired. TA Mitchell said he would set up a job interview on the next Meeting Agenda.

Mr. Leach said the Chairman of the Finance Committee has questioned whether or not it was legal for us to raise the Revolving Fund for the Building Inspector and Electrical Inspector. He shared his concern to Mr. Leach and to TA Mitchell. Mr. Cullett read the legal answer from Joel of KP Law. (*See Legal Letter*)

Town Administrator – TA Mitchell reporting

TA Mitchell said the School Building Committee will be having a meeting on 8/22/19 at 5:00 P.M., at Wahconah High School. They will be making a decision on the preferred option of borrowing they want to go with. He said Treasurer Wendling will be out of the Office on this Tuesday. He also said that her hours will be changing on Mondays to 6:00 P.M., rather than 5:30 P.M.

TA Mitchell said the MASS Works Grant Application was completed and submitted on Friday. He said we received an acknowledgement in the mail confirming that they did receive the application. Mr. Munch asked when we would know if we get the Grant. TA Mitchell believes not until the beginning of October.

TA Mitchell said he posted the Legal Notice for the Planning Board for the Solar Array By-Law. They have a Public Hearing on 9/4/19. He said he asked Town Clerk Leach for information on scheduling a Special Town Meeting. He said we should be preparing for that ahead of time, as it has to be posted 14 days prior to the scheduled Special Town Meeting. Mr. Cullett said it should be on the next Meeting Agenda to select a date for it. Mr. Leach said there also has to be a Voter Registration date set, which is so many days in advance of the Meeting.

Item 6: Discussion, Review and possible Vote on letter from Mark Bedard requesting cost of living pay increase

Mr. Cullett said Mark Bedard is looking for a 2% Cost of Living pay increase. He thinks the BOS should consider 3% instead of 2%, being that the Social Security Administration cost of living adjustment for 2019 is 2.8%. He said Mark has done a great job and that Supt. Russell has indicated he's very pleased with Mark. Another thing mentioned in Mark's letter is the Cafeteria Plan so that his wages toward his Health Insurance are not taxed. Mr. Leach said as far as the cost of living raise, he has no problem with Mark getting it, but feels it should be across the board for everybody because some years we give it to some, but not others. He said it should be appropriated and done July 1, instead of halfway through the year. Mr. Cullett said he thinks with full time positions, and with Police Dept., they are done on an individual basis instead of across the board. He said it's Merit based. Mr. Leach said we're trying to raise the pay on the Highway Workers so that we can keep them. He asked Mr. Munch and Mr. Cullett if after Eric Crofton is off probation, they would consider giving him a 2% increase. Mr. Cullett said he thinks we should do what we did with Mark, and reward him for the 4G License once he gets it, by giving him a 50¢ increase. Mr. Munch said once Eric goes into winter, he'll be making more with the overtime. *(See letter from Mark Bedard)*

Mr. Cullett motions to give Mark Bedard a 50¢ pay increase. Mr. Leach seconds. All are in agreement. **VOTE 3-0**

Item 7: Discuss and Review Policy for Full-time Employees between 20-30 hours

Mr. Cullett indicates he has a copy of the Employment Contract for Treasurer Wendling. He said this is for 2 different positions right now. What he thinks we should do is to look at them as individual positions like this Employment Agreement is for Treasurer Wendling, and amend those appropriately. He said the other individual would be Chief Henault, who doesn't have one at this time, but make them similar and also include the differences. One is a 20 hour position, and the other is 25 hours. He doesn't feel there's any reason to have a General Policy across the board. "I think it should be individual, because it's "per position." He said Caryn has one that automatically renews every year. Mr. Munch said he thinks the Contract is an excellent thing, because it is more binding and would stand up if it went to arbitration. Mr. Cullett said it's not a position we can easily fill. Mr. Leach said maybe he'll sit down with the Chief with that Contract and modify it to suit him, and then bring it to the BOS. TA Mitchell asked if we should have done Contracts for other Part-time positions. Mr. Cullett said, "Maybe at some point, but I think right now we're just doing Full-time positions." Mr. Leach said that basically the same rules apply to the people under 20 hours. Mr. Cullett said it's important for the key positions to have an Agreement. "It's a 3 year Agreement, but it spells out if there's a problem, the steps that need to be taken." Mr. Leach said to carry this item on the next Agenda for further discussion.

Item 8: Discussion and possible Vote to appoint Jeffrey Cranston as Alternate Zoning Board of Appeals

Mr. Leach said Jeffrey Cranston lives in Worthington, and has shown interest to be an Alternate on the ZBA. He plans on moving to Peru shortly. Both Mr. Cullett and Mr. Munch said they don't know him. Mr. Leach said right now he's an

Elected Assessor in Worthington. He said he has met him and talked with him. Mr. Cullett said if they wanted to appoint him they could, but that he was going to abstain.

Mr. Leach motions to appoint Jeffrey Cranston as Alternate Zoning Board of Appeals Member for a term of 2 years ending 6/30/2020. Mr. Munch seconds. Mr. Cullett abstained. **VOTE 2-0**

Item 9: Discussion of Public hours for various Departments

Mr. Cullett said there were some issues last Monday where someone needed assistance from the Assessors. He said there were no Assessors in the office on Monday night. He said the posted hours are every Monday. He thought at least one Assessor was going to be there even when they didn't have a meeting. Someone was looking for information on their abutters. They had to notify their abutters that they're doing a Chapter 61 Plan. It took time for TA Mitchell to help them. Mr. Leach said before we go too far with that, we need to look at what the job description is. He believes the Assessors meet as needed. He said the Assistant Assessor is the one that shows public hours. Mr. Cullett said he doesn't think the Assistant Assessor necessarily has to cover all office hours. Mr. Leach said if it's in the job description as that, then we need to change it if that's what we want. Mr. Cullett said there needs to be an Assessor available during those hours to help people out when they come in. Mr. Leach said he would like to see them have a meeting at least every other week. Mr. Cullett said they may not need to have a meeting. Mr. Leach said, "You have walk-ins." Mr. Cullett said, "That Office is particularly important to the public. Lots of folks are always looking for information." Mr. Munch said, "I think if we just put the word out that we want someone on duty in that office, between all of them they can work something out." Mr. Leach said, "If nobody is going to be here in the office that has public hours, mainly Monday night, it should go on the website as soon as possible."

Item 10: Discussion of Green Community Designation regarding Solar Array By-law

Mr. Munch said we're running out of time, and there has been a lot of procrastination on this whole thing. He said October is when we have to file. TA Mitchell said he hasn't received a copy of a draft of the report. He said there was some e-mail communication between our Representative from BRPC and Sam Haupt, Chair of Planning Board. It was communicated that we have to start thinking about getting this done as soon as possible because we're running out of time. He received an e-mail from Sam to schedule the legal notice for the Public Hearing. Mr. Munch said we need to have a Representative from BRPC once that's taken care of. "Is all the other paperwork in order? We don't have our 20% Plan yet." TA Mitchell said that's done differently. They would set that up. Mr. Cullett said we need our audit to demonstrate where our starting point would be. TA Mitchell said that's a good question to ask if you have to do that prior to submitting the application. He doesn't think we have to do that. He thinks once we submit the application for the Green Community Designation, it would be set up to track and monitor our energy usage. Mr. Munch requested that TA Mitchell get an answer by next week on who's who and what we need to have in place. He said if we could get these people together and all the paperwork before the Planning Board goes to their meeting, so that once they give us the green light we've got everything in order. Mr. Leach requested that TA Mitchell draw up a Warrant so the BOS can look at it and put a date on it. Mr. Cullett said the only thing that would need to be plugged in would be the By-Law. The BOS will discuss and set a date and time for the Special Town Meeting at the next BOS Meeting of 8/19/19.

Item 11: Discussion and possible update of Charter/Spectrum

Mr. Leach said he talked to Frank Boehlke, Regional Director for New York and Western Mass, who told Mr. Leach he would like to start coming to a few BOS Meetings. He is looking at mid-September and mid-October. All they're doing is waiting for the splicing to be done, which takes time. After that, they're going to have their meeting for sign-ups. Mr. Munch said what we had discussed with them when we started this whole procedure was that they were going to come in and do a public presentation so that all the people who are asking questions will have answers. Mr. Cullett said there's one thing we need to make clear to people, is that we are not promoting Spectrum; we're not the middle man for Spectrum; if they have trouble with Spectrum Service, we're not the first line of defense. All we do is give Spectrum a license to operate in this town and to put stuff on the poles. That's it.

Item 12: Review and approve Accounts Payable, Treasury Warrants, Payroll Warrant

Item 13: **Adjourn**

Mr. Leach motions to adjourn the 8/12/19 BOS Meeting. Mr. Munch seconds. All are in agreement. **VOTE 3-0**

The BOS Meeting adjourned at 7:51 P.M.

Articles used:

7/29/19 BOS Meeting Minutes

8/12/19 BOS Meeting Agenda

8/12/19 Sign in sheet

Letter from Mark Bedard

Legal Letter

Vendor Warrants

Payroll Warrants

Respectfully submitted,

Irene J. Morrison

Administrative Assistant

Verne Leach, Chairman _____

Ed Munch, Selectman _____

Bruce Cullett, Selectman _____

Approved: **8/19/19**