

*Town of*  
Peru, Massachusetts



**OFFICIAL**

February 26, 2018

Community Center, 3 East Main Rd.

Minutes to Board of Selectmen's Meeting

**Present:**

Bruce Cullett, Chairman BOS/ Police Sergeant  
Ed Munch, Selectman / Historical Commission.  
Verne Leach/Selectman/ACO/Transfer Attendant  
Caleb Mitchell, Town Administrator  
Irene Morrison, Selectmen's Secretary  
Justin Russell, Highway Superintendent

**Residents:**

**Guest(s):** Tom Callahan, Co-Chair Mass School Building Asso.; Gary Campbell, School Building Committee Member; Bonny DiTomasso, School Committee Member & School Building Committee Member

Item 1: **Call to Order**

Meeting called to order at 6:00 P.M.

Item 2: **Roll Call**

Chairman Cullett present; Selectman Munch present, Selectman Leach present

Item 3: **State Recording Status**

Recording: Selectman Leach, Secretary Morrison

Item 4: **Review and approve Meeting Minutes of 2/12/18**

Cullett made a motion to approve the Meeting Minutes of 2/12/18 pending changes. Leach seconded the motion.  
All in agreement

**VOTE 3-0**

Item 5: **Report from Departments**

**School Committee / School Building Committee Update**

Gary Campbell, School Building Committee Member stressed the importance of having clear information between the School Building Committee and Town of Peru BOS. He has offered to be a contact person if there are questions and can be reached via his e-mail address of [gcampbell@cbrsd.org](mailto:gcampbell@cbrsd.org). “Whatever we say or do, is up front and out in the open, and I want to make sure we have as many resources that you need to get some answers to what’s going on with our school.” He said every month there will be a Newsletter to keep everyone up to date on the things going on at the school. The Newsletter is on the CBRSD website, and is being sent to all Central Berkshire families. There will be a meeting at Kittredge School on March 29, 2018 at 7:00 P.M. for the communities of Hinsdale and Peru. “Our Superintendent, Co-Chair of the School Building Committee, Architects, and a Representative from Skanska who is the General Contractor will be there. Bonny DiTomasso, School Building Committee Member said that there were 2 Visioning Sessions that were held on 1/16 and 1/30. She said that there was a suggestion at the School Committee Meeting to have those meetings video recorded. That has now come into fruition. It’s on the CBRSD website.

Tom Callahan, Co-Chair of the School Building Committee said when he was asked to Co-Chair, he soon realized what the Massachusetts School Building Authority Program process is. “There are new rules, particularly in finance and formulas in every step of this process. What we learned and what they continue to emphasize is that communication is the most important aspect of this whole process. The construction companies Skanska and the Architects Drummey RA will attend public meetings. The first thing we have to do now is decide what kind of curriculum and instructional method we will use. That is a rule with them. Then we’ll design a building around it. It’s not the opposite. What are instructional programs going to be like and what our curriculum will offer.

Munch asked if they are working with the Berkshire County Educational Task Force that’s trying to come up with recommendations for regionalization in a different way than what we’re looking at right now. Mr. Callahan said, “we have little to do with them other than acknowledge that they are an educational agency.” Munch said “even though there’s no model for it, it’s time that there’s a big change. The population is going down in Berkshire County. The School Districts are really in trouble, and Taconic was a big mistake. I personally think we should go bigger than we are as far as Regional Districts, and have 3 Districts in the whole county. This town and the other towns in the District cannot afford any more tax increases. Most of our budget goes to the school and we try to run the town with what’s left. What’s left has to pay the Highway Dept., Police and Fire. We really don’t have many services here.” Cullett asked when the feasibility study was going to be complete, and when would it come to vote. Mr. Callahan said they’re hoping to have a vote next April (2019) in all the towns, and have both the feasibility study and the votes all in the same day. Cullett asked “in the next year, 2 months when is the feasibility study going to be complete. Will the Building Committee make a recommendation to the School Committee and the School Committee will ultimately accept the recommendation from the feasibility study, then it will be put to a vote? Mr. Callahan responded, “until

the vote, that's when the feasibility study officially ends. There's no progress beyond studying what our curriculum is going to be, and possible adjustments to that. There is no building design."

Mr. Callahan can be reached at tomcal1963@gmail.com.

#### **Highway Dept. – Highway Superintendent Russell Reporting**

Superintendent Russell said that the biggest problem in the past couple weeks has been the mud, particularly on Andes Rd., Spruce Rd. and Curtin Rd. He has used 300 ton of 3/4" stone that was in the town yard. That didn't work, so they had to order 1 1/2" stone, which did work. The gravel road budget is below \$3,000.00, and he doesn't have the bill yet for what he just ordered. He orders gravel in the Spring. He asked if when they purchase stone for the roads in the winter if that could come out of the Snow Roads Account, or if it has to come out of the Gravel Roads Account. Cullett thinks it could be taken out of the Snow Road Account, because it's the winter months that is causing the problem. He indicated that George Gruele, Chairman of the Finance Committee should be able to answer that. Mr. Russell said that it's difficult to get sand right now. Munch said, "you have to be somewhat frugal with the salt and sand both budget wise and due to the shortage of sand." Cullett agrees that we have to watch our budget.

Mr. Russell discussed with the BOS the conditions of some of the roads in town. He said that South Rd. is terrible. He said that it's beyond just maintaining the road, and that there's no blacktop to recycle. Munch asked Mr. Russell if he had plans to do sections of roads during the summer. Munch said "seeing that we don't have the money to do entire roads, start making plans, thinking ahead this year or even 2 years ahead. We may not get the money from the state the way we used to. Let's start doing sections of the road."

Mr. Russell indicated that the Hall property is pretty much done. There are gravel piles from when Mr. Hall had dug the pond. Cullett said we could put some top soil down. They want to find the septic tank and make sure that's disconnected. Mr. Russell said that he would do that in the Spring.

Mr. Russell said he got the numbers from Chapter 90, and said it's the same amount of \$144,000.00

#### **Town Administrator – TA Caleb Mitchell Reporting**

Mitchell contacted the Town Administrator in Hinsdale regarding us sharing the COA between the 2 towns. There is a meeting being held in Hinsdale with the COA 3/5/18 at 6:00 P.M. Individuals that are part of any activities on the COA here in Peru are welcome to go to that meeting in Hinsdale. He thinks if we were to combine the 2 towns to share services for COA, we'd have to have an Inter-Municipal Agreement. BOS have asked Secretary Morrison to attend the COA meeting in Hinsdale on Monday.

Mitchell said that he tried to order the flags, but we must pay for the flags before they even send them. Leach said that's what he had to do the first time, and he's hoping to set up an account. Those flags do seem to last a lot longer.

Mitchell indicated that the generator at the Fire Station wasn't working because someone turned the switch off on the generator. He did get estimates for the 2 block heaters. One is liquid cooled, and the other is air cooled. Cullett said one of these items will have to wait to see what we end up with some of our budgets for this fiscal year.

Mitchell said that we don't have the books closed yet for the FY 2018, which means that until that's done, we're not going to have the numbers on free cash. Cullett said that Kathy Borden, our former Town Accountant agreed to close the books. Cullett said it's critical that we get that done. The books must be closed before we can schedule the audit. We must put out a request for a bid soon. Mitchell said we do have a lot of budget request.

**Item 6: Update on Cable Television License Agreement by Charter Communication**

Munch said, "the Agreement needs to be seen by Charter. Before we can do anything, it should go to Charter to look at it and make a decision if it's acceptable." Mitchell said we can tell them we'd like to see the following changes made based on the recommendations of our Town Council.

Mitchell called a gentleman Michael Neal, who works for the Dept. of Telecommunications and Cable, and gave him a summary of where we were with Charter. Mitchell asked if we'd have to have a public hearing. Mr. Neal indicated that he thinks we do have to have a hearing. Mitchell will send him an e-mail to find out what the schedule needs to be. To finalize it, we have to resolve the issues in the Agreement with Charter. We then have to put an ad in the newspaper for 2 successive weeks in a row. If no one protests the Agreement as we have it with Charter, at that point we could issue a report saying that the Agreement we have with Charter is adequate, and we don't need to make further changes.

Munch asked what was going on with Charters engineering. Cullett said that they anticipated the design being complete by the end of this month.

**Item 7: Update on Green Community Designation**

Mitchell and Cullett met with Carolyn Kirk, Deputy Secretary of Housing and Economic Development. She is the person who sits above Peter Larkin in between Evaluation and Planning Grants for handicap accessibility. Both Mitchell and Cullett said we were basically guaranteed that we were going to get that money. We're signed up for the Community Compact handicap accessibility for the Green Community. Cullett said that as time goes on, you can let them know what your priorities are in the town that you're looking to get in place, and update them periodically. At that point, you can apply for grants.

Mitchell said that he was in contact with Guardian. They do contract work for Eversource, and Eversource has approved them to do the energy audit for us. The gentleman from Guardian said he would schedule an energy audit for this Spring, and indicated that they usually start doing them between March and May. He said even if you couldn't reach that 20% reduction that he's never seen any community turned down for this Green Community Designation based on that. Mitchell said he found all the data that we had done through the BRPC from UMASS. "It's all related to the Mohawk Trail Partnership." We shouldn't have much difficulty adopting the stretch code at Town Meeting. He thinks it will be an uphill battle with the zoning by-law changes.

**Item 8: Discussion, Review and Vote to approve Agreement by and between The Town of Peru & BRPC for Public Health Nursing Services for FY 2019**

Cullett said the cost is pretty much the same as it has been for the past few years. Mitchell indicated that the cost has gone up slightly. Cullett said that this agreement is strictly for the public health nursing services.

Cullett makes a motion to approve the Public Health Nursing Services Agreement for FY2019. Leach seconded the motion. All in agreement.

**VOTE 3-0**

Item 9: **Discussion, Review and Vote to approve Agreement by and between The Town of Peru & BRPC for the Berkshire Public Health Alliance for FY 2019**

Cullett makes a motion to approve subject to approval of this budget at Town Meeting. Leach seconded the motion. All in agreement

**VOTE 3-0**

Item 10: **Review and approve accounts payable, treasury warrants, payroll warrant**

Item 11: **Adjourn**

Cullett made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Leach seconded the motion. All in agreement

**VOTE 3-0**

**Meeting adjourned at: 8:13 P.M.**

**Articles used in meeting**

Meeting Minutes of 2/12/18

Agenda of 2/26/18

Sign-in Sheet from 2/26/18

February 2018 Wahconah Building Project Update Newsletter

Agreement for Public Health Nursing Services for FY 2019

Agreement by and between Peru & BRPC for Berkshire Public Health Alliance for FY 2019

Vendor Warrants 17V2018

Payroll Warrants 35P2018

Respectfully submitted,

*Irene J. Morrison*

Irene J. Morrison

Selectmen Secretary

Chairman, Bruce Cullett

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Selectman Verne Leach

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Selectman Ed Munch

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Approved: \_\_\_\_\_