



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

SELECT BOARD MINUTES | February 3, 2020 6:00 P.M.
TOWN HALL MEETING ROOM

Present:

Verne Leach, Chairman
Ed Munch, Selectman/Historical Commission
Bruce Cullett, Selectman/Police Sergeant
Caleb Mitchell, Town Administrator
Jeff Henault, Police Chief
Justin Russell, Highway Superintendent
Karen Tonelli, Assistant Assessor
Tim Sears, Building Commissioner
Irene Morrison, Administrative Assistant

Residents:

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

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

Item 3: **State recording status:** Mr. Leach and Irene Morrison recording

Item 4: **Review and Approve Meeting Minutes for 1/13/20 & 1/27/20**

*Mr. Cullett motions to approve the 1/13/20 BOS Meeting Minutes. Mr. Leach seconds. All agree **VOTE 3-0**

*Mr. Cullett motions to approve the 1/27/20 BOS Meeting Minutes. Mr. Leach seconds. All agree **VOTE 3-0**

Item 5: **Report from Departments**

Highway – Supt. Justin Russell reporting

Supt. Russell said the septic is all done. He said Mark has a 1C Hoisting License and is interested in obtaining the 4G Hoisting License. Supt. Russell said he'll have him do one online in the office. He also indicates that Eric Crofton has been here over 6 months and that he would like to give him a 50¢ raise per hour in his pay. He said he's working out great.

*Mr. Leach motions to increase Eric Crofton's pay by 50¢ per hour. Mr. Munch seconds. All agree **VOTE 3-0**

Supt. Russell said the last he heard from Marcotte about the 550 is that they got a bunch of parts and that they're fixing what Johnson's did. They found bare wires, a control module that runs the knock sensor that should have been replaced a year ago when they replaced the sensor. At some point when Johnson's had it, they removed the hood insulation. He is assuming they had to remove the hood to work on something. When he opened the hood, the washer nozzles for the windshield washer fluid got caught and broke off the nipples on the bottom where the hose is attached. At that point he realized the hood insulation was missing because it holds all that stuff against the bottom of the hood. He called Johnson's about it, and they said they had no idea what he was talking about. It needs to be on there, so he asked Marcotte to get the insulation for it and put it on. He will then deal with Johnson's after that.

Mohawk Trail Woodlands Partnership – Ed Munch reporting

Mr. Munch discussed the MTWP Board Meeting he attended last Tuesday. They discussed a Grant in which we have already applied for. Bob O'Connor, EOEEA brought up examples of the best plans that were submitted by the different towns. One of them was about improving dirt roads so that you could get onto a gravel road to get into a State Forest. The announcement should be coming out within the next 2 wks. This Grant is going to be a yearly Grant.

Mr. Munch said he got a call from Melissa Patterson from the Franklin Land Trust. She indicates there's Grant Money out there and it's called PARC. It's through DCR. It's similar to what we're planning to do with Curtin Rd. at the entrance of Peru State Forest. She said we should apply for it. Mr. Munch was told by the State Rep. at the meeting that the Governor will be making an announcement in the next couple weeks about money being released and aimed in our direction. Peru seemed to fit in about everything that was discussed. At the same meeting, the Hazard Mitigation Plan we're developing, was brought up and he was told that we have to definitely get involved in that. They elected a Chairman of the Board, who's name is Hank Art, Professor of Ecology at Williams College. Currently they are in the organizational phase. They need a representative from the US Forestry Service, which they are working on that now.

Supt. Russell asked if the Hazard Mitigation Plan was the Pre-Disaster Hazard Mitigation Plan. He said we started this probably 4 years ago with BRPC where someone came up and brought a map to identify potential forest fire areas. Last year they were identifying possible flood areas. He said it was the FEMA Map. Supt. Russell said there's already something in the works with that through BRPC. Mr. Munch said it was Rick Carl who actually put it together. He said when we get into this, it's going to be Hwy. Supt. Russell, Fire Chief Dewkett, Police Chief Jeff Henault, the BOS, Rick Carl of Emergency Management, & Representatives of different Boards & towns to put it together. He was told that this is something we really need to get into because of the amount of Grants that are out there. TA Mitchell said all the Dept. Heads, Highway, Police Chief, Fire Chief you're going to have to spend time on this. "That's going to be our contribution toward the Grant. Our time spent on this will be an in-kind contribution. Mr. Munch said we'll have someone doing the planning whether it's BRPC or we get 3 bids.

Town Administrator – Caleb Mitchell reporting

TA Mitchell said he received an e-mail from Linda Cernak of NBSWD who wants to come to one of our meetings and talk about the Mass DEP Grant Program. Through the Grant Program, we could have potentially gotten \$2,600.00 instead of \$500.00. When we give out 150 stickers, we don't meet the guidelines to qualify for that Grant. Mr. Leach recuses from the discussion. TA Mitchell will invite her to see what she has to say and see if it's an advantage to the town or not.

TA Mitchell said Peg McDonough from ADA contacted him via e-mail. They evidently have another Grant regarding the needs of elderly transportation. She also wants to come to one of our meetings to make a presentation to us about it. She seems to be aware of how we're addressing those issues through the Hilltown CDC. He will invite her also.

TA Mitchell said the keys, phone & laptop computer were returned to us from the former COA Director. Mr. Leach asked if that was all the equipment. Mr. Leach asked if all the folders were kept here. TA Mitchell said he didn't go through everything. All he has is one small folder. He hasn't looked yet to see what documents are in it. "It didn't look like much of anything."

Assessor – Karen Tonelli reporting

Karen Tonelli, Assistant Assessor said she tried to set something up for Friday at 1:30, but Howard didn't make it. The most recent e-mail she received is that he's working on it, and that she should e-mail him her password and leave her computer on. Mr. Cullett said when he was hired, we gave him a list of everyone's password, unless it's been changed since. TA Mitchell said we already have an invoice for set-up of Sequel Server. Karen said it hasn't been set-up yet. She is concerned with the delays. She said we still have to get all the data loaded, run property cards which have to be looked at by the Assessors before they can start the re-eval process. She said that would take all of February and March. She's having a hard time getting him moving on this. Mr. Cullett suggested she call Howard now and give him the information he needs. She feels that the BOS possibly could intervene. Mr. Leach asked Mr. Cullett to contact Howard regarding the importance of getting this done. She'd like to see it done by this Friday. She said with a conversion there is a lot of work

to do to satisfy the DOR. Mr. Cullett asked her when she put the budget together for the conversion, if she sent the scope of work to Howard. He also asked if Howard gave her a proposal on the scope of the work. Karen said he gave her costs for the workstation, which has been bought and paid for.

BOS – Mr. Leach reporting

Mr. Leach said he has a letter from the DEP about the Massachusetts Disaster Debris Management Plan. They are looking for a site plan. He will give the letter to TA Mitchell so he and Supt. Russell can discuss it.

(See Disaster Debris Management Plan)

Item 6: Discussion and Possible Vote to appoint Irene Morrison, James Kenney, and Daryl Darby to the Cemetery Commission

*Mr. Leach motions to appoint Irene Morrison to the Cemetery Commission. Mr. Cullett seconds. All agree. **VOTE 3-0**

*Mr. Leach motions to appoint James Kenney to the Cemetery Commission. Mr. Cullett seconds. All agree. **VOTE 3-0**

*Mr. Leach motions to appoint Daryl Darby to the Cemetery Commission. Mr. Cullett seconds. All agree.
VOTE 3-0

Item 7: Discussion and vote appoint Gladys Wheeler as Deputy Election Warden/Clerk

*Mr. Leach motions to appoint Gladys Wheeler as Deputy Election Warden/Clerk. Mr. Munch seconds. All agree.
VOTE 3-0

Item 8: Discussion and vote to approve the Police Detail Policy

Police Chief Henault said on number 9 of the Police Detail Policy there has been 1 change. That change is that Officers must work at least 5 hours the previous week to be eligible for details the next week. *(See Police Service Detail Policy)*

*Mr. Leach motions to approve the changes to the Police Detail Policy. Mr. Munch seconds. Mr. Cullett recused.
VOTE 2-0

Item 9: Discussion and vote to appoint the Berkshire Health Alliance to act as the Agent of the Board of Health

As far as someone being sworn in as Health Agent, Mr. Cullett said, "It's no different than the Veteran's Service. We don't actually appoint the Veteran's Agent. The City of Pittsfield does that. We sign a contract like we do with the Health Alliance, but we don't actually have them get sworn in. Mr. Leach indicates Laura Kittros from the BOH Program said she would come up to get sworn in until we get a permanent replacement. Mr. Cullett said we need to put some pressure on the Health Alliance to get somebody in place. Mr. Leach said he has talked with them, and they are going to send a couple fill-ins until they get someone trained. "Laura said we would be covered, maybe not by the same person, but by several different inspectors." TA Mitchell said they have received a Grant, and they're going to hire an Administrative Assistant. The job of that person will be to schedule Inspectors for all the different towns that they serve when they're short a person. TA Mitchell said she would have to come up here and sign the appointment papers on behalf of the Alliance. Mr. Cullett doesn't think that's necessary. TA Mitchell indicates he received an e-mail from Laura Kittros today saying they are going to re-advertise the position of Health Agent.

Mr. Cullett said he saw an e-mail from a Member of the BOH regarding Online Permitting. The Health Alliance has offered to fund the initial set-up for the first year up to somewhere in the neighborhood of \$2,300.00. "There's an annual fee of \$300.00 per year which is reasonable and is something that would be the expense of the BOH that they could put in for every year."

Tim Sears, Building Commissioner joined the meeting to update the BOS on the cost associated with On-line Permits.

In preparation of budget talks for the next fiscal year, Mr. Cullett asked if it's worth considering the On-line Permitting Program for the Town and what the costs would be to get involved, and what the annual upkeep is. Tim said as long as we're under 75 Permits a year, it's under \$1,000.00 to get in, then under that amount every year to stay in. He indicates the biggest year we ever had was just under 40 Permits. He said that's just for Building Permits for the minimal software support. He said you could expand on that any time you want. You could do the Health Permits, Dog Licensing or any licensing that the Town does. Mr. Cullett told him that the Health Alliance that we contract with for Health Agent services has offered to set up On-line Permitting. He doesn't know what program they use. They said the initial set-up they were going to cover was about \$2,300.00, then \$300.00 per year to maintain it. Tim said they're using Permiteyes, however there are 2 major problems. One was the annual inspections, which we don't do that a lot of that here, and the size of the uploads that the Contractors could do. He said you don't do that in the small towns. He said Permiteyes would be nice for this town. Mr. Cullett asked if you go over the 75 threshold, if the costs went up a lot. Tim said it does. Mr. Cullett asked if because we're not on-line right now, we're probably missing out on a lot of revenue for folks not pulling permits because of the hassle. Tim will provide the Permiteyes numbers for us. He doesn't think we need the Annual Inspection side of it. That's a whole different side of it. He said he'll talk about the licensing, health side, and building permit side.

Item 10: **Discussion and vote to enter into a contract with the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to develop a Hazard Mitigation Plan for the Town of Peru**

TA Mitchell said we have a contract from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to provide us with a Grant to develop a new Hazard Mitigation Plan for the Town of Peru. He said, "We need to get this contract signed and get it back. We'll have to get a notice of approval from the Commonwealth after we submit it to them. There will then be some kind of notice to proceed. We would then have to put it out to bid to 3 different bidders. You don't have to put an ad in the newspaper. You don't have to put in a request for a bid or proposal out. It's just a matter of soliciting 3 bids from 3 different vendors/contractors. He said BRPC would be one of them. Mr. Munch said Peggy Sloan is on the MTWP who is in charge of the Franklin County Regional Planning Board. He suggested that TA Mitchell contact her. Her information can be obtained through Tom Matuszko of BRPC. If she's not eligible to do that, he's sure she could give us someone to contact. TA Mitchell said they wouldn't be able to bid on it because they're not going to go against another Planning Authority. TA Mitchell stated that he's the Contract Manager, so the authorized signatory. The BOS would sign this contract, then TA Mitchell would sign it as the Contract Manager. *(See Commonwealth of Mass Hazard Mitigation Contract)*

*Mr. Cullett motions to enter into a contract with the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Mr. Leach seconds. All agree.
VOTE 3-0

Item 11: **Discussion of 250th Anniversary Celebration**

Mr. Cullett said last week he was given a contract form from the State that he started filling out, but he has to see Treasurer Wendling to get some bank information. There is an authorized signatory form listing that will have to be signed and notarized. Another option is that one of the signatures needs to be the Contract Manager who is Town Clerk Leach.
(See contract from the State in regard to 250th Celebration funds)

*Mr. Leach motions to let Mr. Cullett sign for the BOS. Mr. Munch seconds. All agree. **VOTE 3-0**

Mr. Leach gave an update on the 250th Committee Meeting that was held last Thursday. He said at their meeting, he gave them an update on what the BOS has discussed at their meetings. Mr. Munch asked what the feeling was on the sign that has been discussed by the BOS. Mr. Leach said, "Definitely. If it's something that we can use later on, it makes a lot of sense." Mr. Munch also asked if it was explained to them that we may have to take some money out of the 250th allocated funds to make up the difference if we were to go with the color. Mr. Leach indicated that he did explain that. Mr. Munch indicates that it will go out to bid, and that we could do better on the price. Mr. Leach said that the services have to be rendered before the beginning of the next Fiscal Year. Regarding the base of the sign, Irene Morrison said she would take pictures of the base of the sign at the VA (Soldier On) in Leeds. Mr. Cullett said we could try to come up with something in-house for the base portion of the sign. Mr. Cullett said that where the current sign is, there's not a lot of room between the front steps and the road. "We may have to move it up a little bit." Mr. Munch said he'd like to see the current steps taken out of the front of the building and put a set of steps in the front of the door. Mr. Leach said, "Before we go too far, we've got to become ADA compatible. Would it be easier to put a ramp there and make that entrance handicap accessible?" Mr.

Cullett said, “We’d still have to make the front entrance handicap accessible, even if the ramp is over here. No matter what, we have to do something. Before we do anything to any of the egress’s, the whole building needs to be looked at as a whole.” Mr. Cullett said he will look at a couple other sign companies to send a request for proposals.” Mr. Leach said the 250th Committee isn’t going to meet again until 3/5/20. He asked Mr. Munch about a fly-over. Mr. Munch said we have 2 possibilities; Air National Guard and the Air Force. Mr. Leach asked Mr. Munch to see how much lead way we’d need.

Item 12: **Discussion of Fiscal Year 2020 Budget**

TA Mitchell said it looks like we’re under-spending the Health Budget for health coverage. Mr. Leach said, “By about \$100,000.00.” TA Mitchell said the budget is looking pretty good at this point. The only account he sees with negative spending is the old Town Audit Account. TA Mitchell said the reason for it is we still have Sharon Gruele working to close the books. He said they will be meeting next Monday, hopefully to wrap that up. Mr. Leach is under the impression that she’s going to finish up closing the Schedule A. Mr. Munch said we’re going to get hit with the School Bond. “As much as I’m opposed to this, once we do get the Free Cash Certified, we’re going to have income coming in from the Solar Field which is going to off-set that somewhat. Mr. Cullett said we don’t have big capital expenses this year on the docket. TA Mitchell said the only budget requests he’s received thus far is Police and Fire. Depending on what the Free Cash situation is, Mr. Cullett said it may be a good year to consider some appropriations for long term capital improvements. “Maybe setting aside a substantial chunk of money that we can coincide with the Green Communities Grant. Also, to set aside money for new equipment if we can. He also said as far as spending a little bit toward the future, maybe this is the year to set aside a chunk of money for getting an Architect to take a look at the needs of this building as a whole and putting together recommendations.

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

Item 14: **Adjourn**

*Mr. Leach motions to adjourn the 2/3/20 BOS Meeting. Mr. Munch seconds. All agree. **VOTE 3-0**

BOS Meeting adjourned at 7:51 P.M.

Articles used:

1/13/20 BOS Meeting Minutes
1/27/20 BOS Meeting Minutes
2/3/20 BOS Agenda
Police Service Detail Policy
Commonwealth of Mass Hazard Mitigation Contract
Contract form the State for 250th Celebration funding
Massachusetts Disaster Debris Management Plan
Financial Report
Warrants

Respectfully submitted

Irene J. Morrison-

Administrative Assistant

Verne Leach, Chairman _____

Ed Munch, Selectman _____

Bruce Cullett, Selectman _____

Approved: _____