



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

SELECT BOARD MINUTES | February 24, 2020 6:15 P.M.
TOWN HALL MEETING ROOM

Present:

Verne Leach, Chairman
Ed Munch, Selectman/Historical Commission
Bruce Cullett, Selectman/Police Sergeant
Caleb Mitchell, Town Administrator
Justin Russell, Highway Superintendent
Irene Morrison, Administrative Assistant

Residents: Coralie Pelkey, Jesse Pelkey, Rick Nelson

Guest(s): Linda Cernik, NBSWD

Item 1: **Call to order:** 6:15 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 2/18/20**

*Mr. Cullett motions to approve the 2/18/20 BOS Meeting Minutes pending changes. Mr. Munch seconds. All agree
VOTE 3-0

Item 5: **Report from Departments**

Highway – Justin Russell, Superintendent reporting

Supt. Russell said his budget has been pretty level up until the past few weeks. He had to buy more material because of the constant ice we've had. The F550 had gone back to Marcotte for a second time. They replaced some of the stuff that Johnson's had replaced, but they've got to follow a certain order that Ford makes them follow so that everything will be covered under the Warranty. Supt. Russell said the 08 that's been back for a few weeks now with the new body is in pretty good shape, with a couple minor things that have happened to it, but Zwack has taken care of anything that needed to be taken care of. That truck has been outfitted with new snow tires. He indicates that all the plow trucks are in pretty good shape right now, except for damages sustained on the private roads. There is another broken mirror bracket on the 08 from one of the roads near the lake. The cost of a new bracket was \$113.00. It was the same one that broke on Greylock Circle last year due to trees catching and breaking. Supt. Russell said that with the 550 when we have wet heavy snow, it's hard to get snow off the private roads because there's not enough room for them. A large ball of snow had rolled off a bank and crushed the side of the fender in. He said it's not an emergency to have it fixed, but he thinks he'll be getting it fixed after July 1, because the door is binding up every time you open it. Mr. Leach said we need to come up with how wide the roads should be and how far back the clearing should be. Supt. Russell said he thinks the roads should be 20 ft. wide. They get narrower as they get the wet heavy snow, making it very difficult to plow. Mr. Munch said we need to send letters out to address each road with a list of problems. If it's not fixed with an absolute ending, the town will not plow that road next year. No further notices will be sent. Mr. Cullett said we should bring it to the Annual Town Meeting (ATM). Mr. Cullett said, "We should make a recommendation as a Board to the people at the ATM if we agree on it that we're against continuing to plow the private roads for this very reason. You're going to continually chase people and property owners. You're going to have a handful of people that will attempt to rectify the situation, and attempt to

improve the roads, but unless they work together, it's not going to happen. We should have an Article at the ATM that either votes to adopt maintaining the private roads or plowing private roads. At least, we would have a town meeting vote. We can and need to set the conditions. I can't see continuing like this. There will be a handful of people that will go out of their way to try and improve the situation and the roads. There are a few who have. There's going to be the majority of folks either they're not here in the winter or they don't have the capacity to do anything to improve the road." Mr. Leach asked Supt. Russell what he would like to see on these roads. Supt. Russell said we could set a baseline, and work on it from there. He said Cornell and Garnet Mtn. got a lot cut back. Mark Pensivy and Paul Pharmer spent a lot of time, but it was stuff done on the sides, but nothing in the air. "With the amount of ice we've had this year, it's right in your face when you go through. Even with the 550, the branches are bouncing off the roof." Mr. Cullett said another option if the vote goes in favor of plowing private roads is to put them out to bid and have a private contractor do the plowing. Mr. Munch asked if it would be economically feasible. Mr. Cullett said you may get somebody who lives on the private road who would want to take care of it and has a truck.

Supt. Russell said he was putting some sand away & the chimney on the old building was just about falling over and the ice was sliding down. It pushed the chimney out. He said Jeff Bolduck was going by in his log truck, stopped and took it down for us. He said they would have to patch the hole that it left.

Mr. Munch asked Supt. Russell if the Solar Project people got in touch with him. Supt. Russell said he's been going back & forth with them since last summer about putting a culvert in where the concrete waterway is before they cut the driveway in. The minimum culvert should be 24 inches, with the waterway being 30-36". Their initial plan came back with a culvert that was going to be 100' off the road. Their plan was rejected, and they were told the culvert has to be where the concrete waterway is. Supt. Russell told them a blacktop apron had to be put in first to protect the road from the vehicles going in and out of there. He let them know that by mid-November the blacktop plants would be closed. A few weeks ago, they sent a revised plan with a 15" culvert in place. Supt. Russell told him that was not what they had talked about. John stopped to talk to him today, and they want to start work this week. Supt. Russell reminded him that they're not going to be able to get blacktop until April. Supt. Russell said they're supposed to meet again tomorrow and take a look at it.

Supt. Russell said there's a house on South Rd. in which the guy will not pay for his driveway permit. He e-mailed Tim Sears, Building Inspector 2-3 months ago but has had no response from him about it. "They've done all sorts of work building that house; doing the septic; and trucks going in and out. They're breaking up the edge of the road. The guy is refusing to file for a permit or do a blacktop apron in there. There was an entryway that was there from the previous owner. Now, the current owner started working in there. Supt. Russell told him he had to file driveway permits for the 2 entries that are there. The owner said, "The previous owner can pay for them." Mr. Cullett said he has to be close to getting a Certificate of Occupancy (CO) if he doesn't have a temporary CO. He said there should be a sign off work with Tim on it. There's a Conservation sign off, Town Clerk sign off, and Tax Collector sign off. He told Supt. Russell that he should be the first sign-off if there's a driveway cut. Mr. Munch said next week we'll have Tim on the Agenda.

Town Administrator – Caleb Mitchell, TA reporting

TA Mitchell said we received a Nursing Contract with an invoice for the budget. We should get an invoice and a Contract for the Board of Health and we have the invoice for the budget from the Sheriff's Dept. for emergency communications. There's an agreement that we have to process and sign off on for that also. We have several Grant Applications that are being processed and are in different stages at the moment. We have to have a communication plan, and that has already been done. We've got the 250th, Green Community Designation approval. We have been notified that MTWP Grant has been awarded to us. TA Mitchell said it is required that he has to watch a Webinar before they give us notice that we can proceed. As far as the Green Community Designation, Lauren Garrity of BRPC will be at the BOS Meeting of 3/2/20. Before we can process what will go into that Grant Application, we have to decide what we want to do first. We could do something simple, then proceed to something more involved. He talked to the Western Regional Coordinator in a conference call Friday morning. He said we still haven't established any drop-dead date as to when we have to submit the application. When you first get the Green Community Designation, you get the initial funding that they give to you. Mr. Munch asked when they were going to make an official announcement. TA Mitchell doesn't know.

TA Mitchell has had communication with a Doctorate Student for a PhD at UMAS School of Engineering. Both he and Supt. Russell are going to meet with her on 4/10/20. She's going to do her dissertation for her Doctorate on road safety.

TA Mitchell has inquired about the Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Program (MVP). He said he thinks we originally thought it was for the Hazard Mitigation Plan. He also contacted the Program Manager for the State Council on Aging (COA) Program. He said we do have funds, and Accountant Osborne will check the balance of the account. He also received information on how we can spend the money. We might even be able to use this money if somebody needs transportation to a grocery store. We could pay someone and reimburse them for their mileage. He indicates that the Schedule A has been submitted, and that Karen Tonelli is waiting on the Treasurer. She has to do a cash reconciliation and see how the numbers match up. She's supposed to be doing it this week. Hopefully, if the numbers are close, they'll be able to submit that, and we'll get our Free Cash Certified.

BOS – Mr. Leach reporting

Mr. Leach said the website was down for about an hour, and they just let us know that according to MGL Chapter 30A, Section 20B that if the website is not restored within 6 hours the postings have to be re-scheduled.

Item 6: Presentation of MASS DEP Small Scales Initiative Grant by Linda Cernik, NBSWD

Linda Cernik of NBSWD presented the BOS with information regarding Grants and how we can possibly get the Town of Peru Recycling Dividends Grant Money. Last year we would have gotten \$2,400.00, but we were only eligible for the Small Scale because of the Pay as you throw Program. She gave the BOS information on recycling facts. She said just about everything that comes into the Transfer Station can be recycled in some way, shape or form. She said the amount of trash should be reducing, and recycling should be going up. She praised Supt. Russell, Transfer Attendant Leach and Richard Nelson on the great job they are doing. With the paper compactor, we've reduced our hauls to 4 last year, so that brought the cost of recycling way down. We still have hauls every month for the glass and plastic. There were 9 hauls over the calendar year. Supt. Russell said sometimes that changes because some of the new dumpsters are 30-yard dumpsters. He said lately, we've been getting the small 20-yard dumpsters, and they fill up fast. She said they are trying to come up with creative ways to separate the glass and do a glass crushing component. With the scrap recycling, we did 15 tons, so we generated \$850.00 for the town. With scrap, you generate \$55.00 per ton. Our trash for the calendar year was 185.75 ton which values around \$20,000.00. Our recycling for the town was around \$5,000.00. She said when she starts to work on the grants in April, she goes down to the checklist. If you've never got an RDP, which is 6 points in the achievement program. You would qualify for a recycling dividend. You have 7 points. This would have brought us to \$2,400.00 instead of \$500.00. Because the Pay as you Throw Program, you give 150 free bag tags, does not deem Pay as you Throw because that's off the limits of what DEP wants. They consider 50 to 52 bags for the Pay as you Throw. She said we could do a survey with the residents. She thinks a lot of the money is wasted on the bag tags. She doesn't think people are using 150 bag tags. She thinks we could reduce it to 50. If somebody needs extra bag tags, you sell it to them. We can sell the bag tags, but our Pay as you Throw is still meeting the guidelines. Those are 30 gal. bags, which is 35-40lbs of trash. Supt. Russell said people could take big contractor bags and put more bags in. We aced our inspection 3 years in a row. She said because we sold the tags for \$75.00 last year, we sold 30 less permits. She said most towns have a haul every month for paper. Right now, the contract is per haul. It's \$366.00 per haul, 1 ton or 10 ton. A double haul is a little less. Trash is \$110.00 per ton. Your recycling is per haul. She suggested a Textile Recovery Bin. Through DEP, Linda said NBSWD is applying for a glass crusher. Coralie Pelkey asked if we get money back. Linda said we (NBSWD) doesn't make any money on recyclables right now. *(For further information, see Municipal Recycling newsletter)*

Item 7: Discussion and possible vote on Transfer Station Permit Program

Mr. Cullett said a typical household can't utilize 150 stickers in a given year. Especially if they're using larger bags or a trash barrel. He thinks it's a good idea to lower the number of stickers that come with the permit to 50 stickers. Mr. Munch said If you need another 25 stickers, it will cost \$25.00. Mr. Cullett said if we maintain the permit price at \$75.00,

50 stickers would be \$1.50 per bag. If we kept it at \$1.50 per bag, and sold them in groups of 10, \$15.00 for 10. The person who disposes of trash the most will be paying the most. Mr. Leach, speaking as Transfer Attendant asked how that would work with the punch card? Right now, each punch is \$1.00, and they can use that instead of a sticker. Mr. Cullett said bulk waste should be going into the bulk dumpster. Mr. Munch said to do the permit and 50 stickers and \$1.00 per bag if you need to get more. That would be for the first year. Supt. Russell said that would force recycling up pretty quickly. Especially with bottles & cans. He said between Linda and Casella we get the bigger dumpsters when they come here. The last time they came here, they left 2 20 yarders. They're paying the same to haul it as the big ones. Mr. Cullett asked if we want to go back to the flat fee by permit, then do it by bags. \$25.00 permit fee for your vehicle to access the Transfer Station, then \$1.00 a bag. He said we're trying to avoid 3 different households using the same permit. Mr. Munch said we're trying to get less hauls. That's the bottom line. At the same time, we don't want to put people into shock the first year. He said you can't buy bags if you're not on the list. TA Mitchell said he wonders how that meshes with what Linda was talking about with the Grant that we would get if we had a sticker price based on 50 bags. If we don't give 50 bags with the permit, then he's wondering how that affects the grant. Mr. Cullett said we can ask Linda. Coralie asked if the BOS has thought about asking for a volunteer committee to look into things like this. See what's going on other communities. Jesse wants to know how many more weeks we're getting out of the 30-yard dumpster. Supt. Russell said he just knows it's a lot more.

Item 7 will be tabled until we get an answer from Linda, then finalize the permit price.

Item 8: **Discussion of 250th Anniversary Celebration**

Mr. Cullett said he has sent some RFB's out for the sign. Unfortunately, he doesn't have the names of the other companies other than Callahan in front of me. There's one in Pittsfield, and the other in Springfield. He gave March 23 as the date of the response for sealed bid.

Item 9: **Discussion of Fiscal Year 2021 Budget**

TA gave the BOS information on the Berkshire Retirement Systems. We got the Berkshire County Sheriff Emergency Communications, and Nursing. Those are additional budget items from the previous ones from the Fire Dept., Police Dept., Assessors, and Highway. Supt. Russell said he was looking for a little increase in the highway wages. "Right now, we're just under the \$83,000.00." He feels that we're still very low on the scale for wages for the Highway Dept. He said we are at the bottom of the scale for wages around the county for what highway workers are being paid. He said the guys he's got right now are great and he would hate to see them see an opportunity in another town after we've spent all this time training everybody and they leave because they want to make more money. He also would like to have room in the budget for projects in the summertime. Supt. Russell said the Road Machinery Maintenance Budget has not seen an increase in a long time. The boom mower needs a new motor for the mowing deck. It's a \$5,000.00 motor. He probably can't buy that until after July 1. That's ¼ of the budget for just 1 motor going. If a rear end goes on a truck, that's close to \$5,000.00. Once again, he's getting quotes for a hydraulic hose machine. They're under \$3,000.00, and he bets we've spent that on hoses this year. He said if we could make these in-house, and buy the fittings and hose for cost, it would pay for itself. Mr. Cullett asked what we spent on Maintenance Hard Surface Roads. Supt. Russell said usually our sweeping is close to \$4,035.00. He said he has \$5,100.00 right now. He said there is roughly \$8,500.00 on the HB Road Account. There was a problem with the Road Machinery Maintenance Budget. It should have been taken out of the money that was appropriated for that truck. Sweeping has to come out of Hard Surface Roads. That's generally around 3 ½ days @ around \$125.00 per hour, so it's around \$3,500.00 a year. He wants to get the lines painted on Skyline Trail. Mr. Cullett said we need to get a mowing bid. We're covered until the end of the Fiscal Year.

Supt. Russell said he has quotes for a new F250 or F350 Pick-up truck. He said this is all under government pricing. He has had the current truck for almost 4 years now. He paid for that out of one of his regular accounts. He said Marcotte Ford is giving him the most phenomenal price he could imagine on buying a new truck. Full drive extended cab with foot beds so when they go to classes, everybody can fit in the same truck. He said the F250 would take an 8' plow. The F350, you could put a 9' plow. You could put a polycaster sander on the back of it. Mr. Leach said at this time, "I know you need the truck, but with school taxes coming up I can't support it. Supt. Russell said this is something that would come out of Free Cash or Future Equipment or a portion of it. He also said it could be financed. Mr. Munch said we need to bring this to the Finance Committee and come up with some numbers. Mr. Cullett said, "Taking a close look at it and seeing where our Future Equipment Budget is going to be after Free Cash, if it's a purchase we can make without

touching the tax rate, using the Future Equipment Account. Looking down the road 2-3 years, see if there's any other equipment we need to be saving for. Supt. Russell said this is part of our energy reduction plan, is to get a second pick-up that gets 15-16 miles per gal. compared to 4-6.

Mr. Cullett said we need to get the vocational transportation bid request in the works and on Combuys

Item 10: **Review and approve Accounts Payable, treasury warrants**

Item 11: **Adjourn**

*Mr. Leach motions to adjourn the 2/24/20 BOS Meeting. Mr. Munch seconds. All agree. **VOTE 3-0**

BOS Meeting adjourned at 9:05 P.M.

Articles used:

2/24/20 BOS Meeting Agenda
2/18/20 BOS Meeting Minutes
Sign in sheet
Municipal Recycling Newsletter
Quotes for F250 & F350
Financial Report
Vendor Warrants
Payroll Warrant

Respectfully submitted

Irene J. Morrison

Administrative Assistant

Verne Leach, Chairman _____

Ed Munch, Selectman _____

Bruce Cullett, Selectman _____

Approved: 3/2/2020