

TOWN HALL 3 EAST MAIN ROAD PERU, MA 01235

**SELECT BOARD MEETING MINUTES: December 21, 2020: 6:01 P.M.**

Town Hall Meeting Center

Ed Munch, BOS Chairman/Historical Commission

Bruce Cullett, Selectman/Chief of Police

Verne Leach, Selectman/ACO

Caleb Mitchell, Town Administrator

Justin Russell, Highway Superintendent

Nanette Mone, Board of Health Chair

Caryn Wendling, Tax Collector/Treasurer

Tonya Santaniello, Administrative Assistant

Item 1: **Call to order:** 6:01 P.M.

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

Item 3: **State Recording status:** Tonya Santaniello recording; Live stream on Zoom Meeting

Item 4: **Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag:** Lead by Selectman Munch

Item 5: **Review and Approve Meeting Minutes for 12/14/2020:** Munch made motion to approve minutes for 12-14-2020 As is, Leach seconds. All agree. **Vote 3-0.**

\*Discussion under Matters Not Anticipated by the Board: Selectman Cullett stated he wanted to go on record after reading the 12/14 minutes regarding last weeks meeting. Munch said there is nothing on the Agenda so this will fall under the matters no anticipated. Cullett said it had to do with the Finance Committee's announcement and he wanted to go on record about certain items that came up. Cullett said the BOS was informed that during the last Finance meeting on 11/5/2020 they voted against utilizing the reserve funds related to the compactor account anticipated overrun. It should be noted for the record that no formal request was made to Finance to consider a transfer from the reserve account for any compactor related account or any other account. Cullett stated it is too early in the Fiscal year for those types of requests. The Finance Committee on their own decided to preemptively vote against using the reserve funds relating to the compactor account, at least that is what the Finance Chair related to the BOS. As mentioned last week Cullett believes it is an absolute disservice to the Town taxpayers for the Finance Committee to preemptively vote against considering the use of the reserve fund. Cullett stated that in a Select Board meeting in late October or early November there was a discussion exploring some possibilities to fund the anticipated overrun of the compactor budget due to the possible rise in cost related to hauling and disposal of recycling waste. During the meeting they talked about how the BOS met with Finance in late winter/early spring and came up with a budget for the compactor which was increased by about 10% over what is normally done. This was done in anticipation of some additional costs due to litigation between the Teamsters Union and Casella Waste Management. The BOS had no way of knowing that after the Annual Town meeting the cost would rise as much as they did; they increased per haul and per disposal of recycling waste. At that time, the BOS held off signing with Northern Berkshire and tried to come up with another avenue for the Town. The BOS could not find another way so in August they signed with Northern Berkshire. If anything is a definition of unforeseen expenses the increase in cost for the Transfer Station would meet that definition. Cullett said they must do something with the Finance Committee such as a joint meeting to straighten out the situation. Leach recused from comment because he works at the Transfer Attendant, Munch stated he agrees with Cullett 100%, it is wrong what was done. Munch said the BOS will need to investigate the procedure that happened, Cullett said his understanding is that a department head would submit a formal request to Finance regarding an anticipated overrun and they would like it covered by the reserve fund. Then they would have a public meeting to debate and decide.

Item 6: **Update to Departments: Highway Dept:** Russell discussed getting quotes for Fuel Pumps Since they are not backed up by generator. Russell stated before gas pump was installed there was an extension cord plugged in which was not up to code. Russell received 2 Quotes so far. Discussed scheduled meeting tomorrow with Eversource Rep regarding separate Lighting Programs and weatherization, rep will provide quote for Garage and salt shed. Discussed Quote received from Guardian Energy. Discussed complaints received from Plowing during the storm. Bonnie Lane resident said the Highway Dept. only plows one side of the road; A mailbox was knocked over on North Road, resident said the town moved it. Russell stated the town Didi not move it, the resident moved it and put it to close to the road and the Box was falling off the Post. A New resident on Garnet Mtn. Lane off South Rd Ext. called about not being plowed. Russell said this New resident just purchased the house and the previous owner probably did not forward the letter about the conditions of the Road. Russell discussed overdue bills and he is getting a lot of calls from vendors. Treasurer Caryn Wendling said checks went out to vendors over the weekend so they should be all set.

**Transfer station:** Leach speaking as Transfer attendant said he received an application for new attendant. Current asked if they still had 3. Russell suggested they go through a formal interview process, so they know their responsibilities

**Town Administrator:** Mitchell discussed COVID Relief Program reconciliation report. Deadline for expenditures is 12-30-2020 and reconciliation deadline is 1-29-2021. Cullett discussed Building Modifications have not reached \$5,000.00 Yet. Discussed contract from Valley Communications. Requires Chairman Munch's signature and several corrections need to be made. Mitchell will follow up with Valley Communications.

**BOH:** Nanette was not able to attend meeting no phone, so she texted the Administrative Assistant and asked that she convey the following message; "I have nothing new to add, Peggy forwarded information for vaccinations for First Responders; I had a brief encounter with a guest who later called to inform my manager that he tested positive for COVID so I am spending the next few days watching for symptoms although I am told by the hospital that I am not considered a direct contact because of the short time I interacted with that person." Highway Super Russell stated that there is a push to have Highway employees moved up the list as First Responders for the COVID Vaccine.

Item 7: **Discussion and vote to appoint Wallace G. Morrison Jr. to serve as veterans Graves officer for the Town of Peru:** Discussed Letter of interest from Wallace Morrison for Veterans Graves Officer. Letter was read aloud at previous meeting. Cullett made a motion to appoint Wallace G. Morrison Jr. as the town of Peru Veterans Graves officer, Leach seconds. All agree. **Vote 3-0.**

Item 8: **Discussion and possible vote to revise the Dog License Fee and Kennel Fee:** Leach as Animal control officer would like to put this on hold until next year. Cullett stated he was okay with putting on hold until next Fiscal Year. Munch asked TA Mitchell if he heard back from Town Council with the Legal opinion, Mitchell said no he has not gotten anything yet. Cullett would like to put adding the link for payments online on hold and leave everything as it is now. All Bos members agreed.

Item 9: **Discussion of legal opinion for Conservation Fund:** TA Mitchell stated that Legal Council has not provided opinion yet. Continued to next meeting.

Item 10: **COVID-19 Updates:** Leach discussed ordering room dividers from Amazon and 3 shields, they should be delivered before 12-30-2020. Cullett stated that these expenses need to be brought to the Board at the next meeting for payment approval. Discussed any funds not used will need to be returned to the state but there is a possibility of an extension for the CARES Act.

Item 11: **Discussion and possible vote to approve proposals by Guardian Energy for new lighting for Highway Garage and Town Hall through the Green Community Program:** Munch said this is on hold because Eversource is coming to give the Town a Quote which may be lower than Guardian's quote. continued to next meeting.

Item 12: **Public Input:** No public logged in to Zoom meeting. No public input.

Item 13: **Review and Approve Accounts payable, Treasury Warrants:** No Accounts payable Treasury warrants to sign.

Item 14: **Adjourn:** Munch made motion to adjourn the 12/14/2020 BOS Meeting. Leach seconds. All agree **Vote 3-0.** The **12/14/2020 BOS Meeting adjourned at 8:34 P.M.**

**Articles used:**

12/21/2020 BOS Meeting Agenda

12/14/2020 BOS Meeting Minutes

Guardian Energy Email for Peru Energy Audit

Appointment Papers for Wallace Morrison Jr for Veterans Graves Officer

Email for Part Time as needed Transfer Station Attendant

Memorandum from Commonwealth of MA for COVID-19 Reconciliation Period Guidance

Accounts payable, Treasury Warrants


Respectfully Submitted

*Tonya Santaniello*, Administrative Assistant

Ed Munch, Chairman

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ed Munch", is written over a horizontal line.

Verne Leach, Selectman

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Verne Leach", is written over a horizontal line.

Bruce Cullett, Selectman

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bruce Cullett", is written over a horizontal line.

Date Approved: 12/28/2020