

TOWN HALL 3 EAST MAIN ROAD PERU, MA 01235

SELECT BOARD MEETING MINUTES: September 12, 2022 @ 6:00 P.M.

Peru Community Center

Verne Leach, Chair Selectman/ACO
Bruce Cullett, Selectman/Police Chief
Doug Haskins, Selectman/Finance Committee
James Welch, Town Administrator
Terry Walker, Administrative Assistant
Justin Russell, Highway Superintendent

Public Attendees: Jamie Leach

Item 1: Call to order: 6:00 P.M.

Item 2: Roll Call: Chairman Leach present, Selectman Cullett present, Selectman Haskins present

Item 3: State Recording status: Selectman Leach for personal use

Item 4: Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag: Led by Selectman Leach

Item 5: Review and Approve BOS Meeting Minutes for 08/29/2022, 09/06/2022

Selectman Leach motion to put 8/29 and 9/06 minutes on hold, Selectman Cullett second, 3-0

Item 6: Updates of Departments:

Police Chief Cullett mentioned that he will be attending a training conference on September 14th for 3 consecutive Saturdays. On October 9th, the Peru Police Department will be attending the Middlefield Days Celebration "Public Safety in Surrounding Communities" .

Highway Superintendent Russell mentioned that all gravel prep has been completed on East Windsor Road and LB Corp will be here next week. This should take 3 days then the shoulders and driveway prints will be completed. Highway Superintendent Russell stated that there is damage to pick up truck. He takes full responsibility for the damage to the fender and hood and is waiting for an appraisal of damages.

Tyler Equipment's quote for a new loader is \$159,037 with a \$28,000 trade in for old loader plus the cost of a used loader in \$109,100 with no warranty. There may be a possibility of using Chapter 90 funds to purchase the loader. At the present there is around \$463,554 in Chapter 90 funds.

Selectman Leach says he is definitely in favor of using Chapter 90 funds. Superintendent Russell mentioned that the loader purchase falls under state procurement and does not go out to bid. At the present the loader rental is costing \$3,900 per month. Selectman Haskins is waiting for Camarota to give a ballpark number to rebuild transfer case unit. Selectmen Leach motion to put on hold for 2 weeks. Superintendent Russell stated that is impossible to get through the winter without a loader.

Highway Superintendent Russell discussed employee raises. Employee Mark Bedard has been offered a job for the state at \$28.50 per hour. Russell mentioned that the Town of Windsor pays \$30.00 per hour, and he is afraid of losing two employees to other towns. Superintendent Russell requested paying Mark \$25.00 per hour which would be a salary of about \$52,000 per year. In addition, Superintendent Russell requested paying Erik Crofton \$23.50 per hour and mentioned these are two great experienced guys and he would hate to lose them. At the present, Mark gets \$21.60 per hour and Rick is at \$20.50 per hour. Superintendent Russell recommended using the Summer Help account to pay the two employees for the remainder of the fiscal year. Selectman Haskins mentioned that giving raises halfway through the fiscal year is very difficult. Selectman Cullett mentioned that it hard to find good employees and the Highway workers had done a lot of work in the last year. Selectman Cullett also mentioned that if the Board of Selectmen se

good faith they will keep good people. Highway Superintendent stated that the decision needs to be voted tonight because Mark Bedard will be accepting a job with the State on Wednesday. Selectman Leach motion to give raises to the two highway employees. Mark Bedard \$25.00 per hour and Erik Crofton \$23.50 per hour, Selectman Haskins second unanimous 3-0 vote.

TA Welch mentioned that the Town of Peru will receive a \$20,000 grant from Mohawk Trail Partnership for Pierce Road. TA Welch also mentioned that the Bureau of Forestry Forest Management Forest Tours will be on September 22, 2022 from 3:00 pm-4:00 pm which will be at the Peru State Forest, Middlefield and Peru. TA will put on website. TA Welch received an email from Mark Maloy from Berkshire Regional Planning Commission notifying Peru that a \$2,000 grant (Efficiency and Regionalization grant) is available for 13 municipalities and wanted to know if Peru wanted to participate. Also, the Wahconah Track repairs have been approved at \$900,000. TA Welch mentioned that a \$2,500 invoice has been received from Patriot Properties, but they have not begun working for Peru.

Highway Superintendent Russell gave an update on Route 143. The road project needs to have test pits and will not be paved until Spring of 2023. It may be more than a mill and pave because of water issues. Reflectors and mumble strips should be installed to guide vehicles during fog and snowstorms.

Item 7: Update and discussion on procurement cards and vendor accounts: Town Treasurer should have the cards in 10 business days and TA Welch will ask Town Accountant how Williamstown set up Amazon Account.

Item 8: Discussion and possible vote on updates to Town Owned Vehicle Policy: TA Welch provided a draft of the Town of Peru Town Owned Vehicle Policy. TA Welch added amendment on page 1 "Vehicle Use by Part Time Departments- Town Vehicles assigned to Department Heads who are "non-full-time" employees shall keep a "Mileage and purpose of Use Log" to clearly document vehicle use. "Non-Full-Time" employees and vehicles under this provision include the Animal Control officer Vehicle and the Fire Department Command Vehicle. The "purpose and use Log" shall be submitted monthly to the Board of Selectmen at or before the first official BOS meeting each month. Any use of vehicles not for official department purpose as described in this policy may result in disciplinary action including but not limited to written warning, suspension or termination. There have been complaints that the Fire Department Command Vehicle is being misused. Selectman Cullett needs clarification from Chief Pelkey where Command Vehicle will be housed. A policy needs to be set stating if the Command Vehicle is being housed at firehouse. It was also mentioned that the Fire Association agreed to pay for welding the area that needs to be repaired on the Command Vehicle, the lettering and have radios installed. Highway Superintendent Russell mentioned that there needs to be a better way of tracking fuel use.

Item 9: Discussion and possible vote on ESO Account with Fire Department: TA Welch has been in contract with ESO and explained that the Fire Chief and Board of Selectmen had not discussed the purchase. The Fire Chief entered a contract, and this must go through the Board of Selectmen first. It was noted that only the Selectmen have the authority to enter into contracts. The Selectmen did not pay the invoice because the contract has been terminated. Contract agreements needs to go through the Board of Selectmen and signed off by the Chief Financial Officer. The Selectmen stated there are too many unanswered questions and this needs to go through Board of Selectmen and Finance Committee. Selectman Cullett mentioned that \$5,000 for ESO software seems very expensive to manage 70 calls each year and then a yearly contract fee. TA Welch will notify ESO the contract is void and is a closed case.

Item 10: Discussion regarding Applicant 2 for Town Accountant position: Selectman Leach recused himself because applicant is a family member. TA Welch received an application last week from Jamie Leach applicant #2. Applicant #1 has not responded after meeting with TA Welch last week. TA Welch feels that by applicant #1 not staying in touch applicant #1 is no longer valid. A formal interview was not conducted with Ms. Leach but will be held at a later date when Selectman Cullett has time to review the application and resume. Selectman Cullett mentioned that the position is open until it is filled. He also plans to start interviewing in the near future. TA Welch spoke with Town Treasurer and Eric Kinshurf, CPA firm to fill the Town Accountant position. The Accountant salary for Kinshurf CPA's firm ranges from \$30-40 thousand dollars per year. Selectman Cullett is in favor of training the new Accountant and compensating the

instructor. Plus, the goal of the new Accountant is to reconcile on a monthly basis. TA Welch is meeting with Town Accountant Wednesday at 5:30 p.m. to discuss transitioning to UMAS and what the challenges may be when the new Accountant comes on board. Selectman Cullett questioned if the grant for the UMAS conversion will be spent on software or training as well. Selectman Cullett mentioned that in the next couple weeks interviews will begin.

Item 11: Public Input: N/A

Item 12: Review and Approve Accounts Payable, Treasury Warrants and Payroll Warrant: none

Item 13: Adjourn: Selectman Leach made motion to adjourn the 09/12/2022 BOS Meeting, Selectman Cullett second, Vote 3-0. The 09/12/2022 BOS Meeting adjourned at 7:54 P.M.

Articles used:

Town Owned Vehicle Policy

ESO

Application for Applicant #2 Town Accountant position

Email from BRPC

DCR

Tyler Equipment quote

Respectfully Submitted,

Terry Walker

Administrative Assistant

Verne Leach, Chairman



Doug Haskins, Selectman



Bruce Cullett, Selectman



Date Approved: _____

