

SELECT BOARD MEETING MINUTES: February 13, 2023 @ 6:00 P.M.

Peru Town Hall Meeting Room

Verne Leach, Chair Selectman/ACO
Bruce Cullett, Selectman/Police Chief
Doug Haskins, Selectman / Fin Com
Terry Walker, Administrative Assistant
Justin Russell, Highway Superintendent
Jesse Pelkey, Fire Chief
Darryl Darby-Board of Health
Tim Sears-Building Inspector

Public Attendees: Paul Bianco

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 reasons under Exemption E

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

Item 5: Review and Approve BOS Meeting Minutes for 02/06/2023.

Selectman Leach motion to approve 02/06/2023 minutes pending changes, Selectman Cullett second, 3-0

Item 6: Updates of Departments: Highway Superintendent Russell asked for an update on CMRK recycling. Highway Superintendent's thoughts are to have existing bins removed and contact CMRK recycling where the town would be paid by the pound for clothing, household items and books.

Selectman Leach will send a letter to all employees that they should purchase recycled materials as much as possible.

Darryl Darby will be resigning from all committees and boards positions that he holds in Peru. Selectmen Leach asked for a letter of resignation when he intends to resign. Darryl may continue as a member of the Board of Health, his Finance Committee position is up for election in May, and he definitely will be resigning as a Cemetery Commissioner.

Fire Chief Pelkey:

1. Fire Chief Pelkey thanked the highway crew for sanding Pierce Road so the Fire Department could respond to the fire call.
2. The Senior Grant for \$1,777.00 is on hold due to issues with resignations in Boston.
3. Fire Chief Pelkey asked about obtaining a Mass E-Z Pass. Chief Pelkey was instructed to check with the Town Treasurer so she can take money out of the correct appropriation for Fire Chief's Mass E-Z Pass. Selectman Haskins suggested that Chief Pelkey go to the Lee, Mass turnpike authority area to obtain an E-Z pass but to see Town Treasurer first.
4. Fire Chief Pelkey mentioned that there isn't any heat in the office side of the fire house. The circuit board will cost \$1,325.00 and the blower motor module was ordered Friday and will be installed tomorrow at 7 a.m.
5. Chief Pelkey mentioned that he spoke with a mechanic about the brakes on the fire truck and the mechanic has never seen this issue with brakes, plus the slack adjusters do not work. Selectman Leach stated that if equipment is failing the Selectboard cannot let this go and this needs to be corrected. Selectman Haskins mentioned that the vehicle does not pass inspection and Selectman Haskins does not want to spend thousands of dollars in repairs without the brakes being guaranteed. Selectman Leach mentioned that now that the

Selectboard has been made aware of the issue with the brakes, this cannot be ignored. Selectman Cullett stated now that Fire Chief Pelkey brought this to their attention the board agrees to put the engine out of service. Chief Pelkey will use the tanker as a fire engine. Chief Pelkey was asked to bring hard numbers to the Selectboard for repairs.

6. Fire Chief presented a letter to the Selectboard. Selectman Leach motion to sign a letter stating that (the Peru Volunteer Firemen's Association provides emergency services to the Town of Peru and has permission to use the Public Safety Frequencies.), Selectman Cullett second, 3-0
7. Chief Pelkey mentioned the need for mannequins and the Police department could utilize Logan Brooks for recertification. Selectmen Cullett asked if Logan Brooks was certified through County Ambulance. Chief Pelkey stated that Logan Brooks is certified through county.
8. The Fire Chief will also be submitting a bill for the fire house furnace for \$4,300.00.

Tim Sears, Building Inspector, discussed permit-eyes. The setup fee and annual cost for Building Inspector, Plumbing Inspector and Gas Inspector is \$4,900 plus an annual fee of \$2,300.00. Building Inspector Sears feels that he will recoup money and the efficiency for cross referencing between departments will be enhanced. The Fire Department cost is \$3,900.00 plus an annual fee of \$1,950.00. The annual fees do not include the first year. Sears was in favor of legal document fee schedules increased. Sears also felt that he could give back an extra 5% -the split is now 90/10. Selectman Leach mentioned that this purchase should go to the Finance Committee and would be a separate line item. Selectman Leach felt that this is a great tool all will improve the efficiency between departments. Building Inspector Sears will email the Finance Committee and Board of Selectmen the proposal for the March 1st meeting.

Selectman Leach motion to approve a bill for St. Pierre Cooling & Heating, Inc for routine maintenance on 3 existing units at Town Hall, Selectmen Cullett second, 3-0

Item 7: Discussion with Representative John Barrett regarding current state issues: Representative John Barrett mentioned that Broadband is a big issue_ and in order for Peru to gain access to the 50 million dollars for small towns the town needs to have a plan. Representative Barrett suggested the Selectboard write a letter to Peter Larkin the beginning of July 2023, and copy the governor showing the Town of Peru has an interest in having broadband available to all homes in Peru. Rep. Barrett felt that access to Broadband would help the town grow and make Peru a thriving town where people want to live. Rep. Barrett wants all information on streets and private roads emailed to him to help Peru get funding needed to have broadband in town. Rep. Barrett reiterated that he wants to assist with all programs that would help Peru. Representative Barrett and his assistant will remain in communication with the Town Administrator.

Item 8: Discussion and possible vote on Funding Options and Purchase for new Police Cruiser: Selectman Haskins mentioned that the Finance Committee is in favor of using ARPA funds to purchase the police cruiser and they need to know the balance in the ARPA Account. Selectman Leach motion on behalf of the Finance Committee's recommendation to use ARPA funds to purchase a police cruiser, Selectman Haskins second, 2-0. Selectman Cullett recused himself.

Item 9: Discussion of FY24 Budget:

- Salt shed doors need to be fixed because they are a safety hazard. Different options will be discussed. These doors are hard to move and very difficult to close.
- Conservation Commission Expense- \$400.00 same as last year
- Fire Department budget request -the Fin Com did not make a decision because they had questions. The Fire Chief Salary will be discussed at the March 1st meeting, the matching grant will be a line item and funded from Free Cash.
- Hinsdale Ambulance same as last year.
- Mortgage Payment-need amount from Town Treasurer.

- Volunteer Fire Department stipend -Selectboard will get legality from town counsel.
- Selectman Leach asked Fire Chief Pelkey to go to several towns and get in writing the procedure for stipends for other Volunteer Fire Department members. Chief Pelkey agreed and mentioned the stipends would be around \$5,000 annually.
- Three accounts are overdrawn: tree removal, COA and the Retirement account.
- Finance Committee Pelkey has requested and is waiting for a condition of accounts from the accountant.

Before the Executive session began, Fire Chief Pelkey asked if there was ever a notice of intent to negotiate the Police Chief's contract. Police Chief Cullett mentioned that he had sent notice in October 2022.

Item 10: (7:30 P.M.) Executive Session pursuant to purpose #2 of Section 21 of Open Meeting Law to conduct contract negotiations with non-union personnel, specifically Police Chief Bruce Cullett: Chief Cullett called for Executive Session pursuant to G.L. c 30A Sec. 21A. Selectman Leach motion to go into Executive Session with Chief Cullett pursuant to M.G.L. Part 1, Title 3, C.30A, Sec 21A Reason #2 and reconvene in open session after the Executive Session. Reason #2, To conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with nonunion personnel or to conduct collective bargaining sessions or contract negotiations with nonunion personnel, Selectman Haskins second, 2-0 Selectman Cullett recused himself. Open session paused at 7:30 p.m.

The executive session on 2/13/2023 was called to order at 7:32 P.M. Roll call Present Selectman Leach, present Selectman Haskins, Present Police Chief Cullett. Selectman Leach recording.

The regular Board of Selectmen's meeting was reconvened at 8:29 p.m. Roll call Selectman Leach present, Selectman Haskins present, Selectman Cullett present.

No votes were taken during Executive Session – Selectboard and Chief of Police are still in negotiations.

Public Input: Paul Bianco- 23 Bonnie Lane discussed his violation at the transfer station. He mentioned that is a 33 year resident and he is aware of the hours of operation. He said he is a senior citizen and didn't realize what day of the week it was when he brought his trash to the transfer station. Mr. Bianco stated his violation did not justify a letter so heavy handed and he feels a phone call was a better way to deal with this. Selectman Cullett agreed but a civil citation violates a town by-law, and it was just a friendly reminder to bring this to his attention that this occurred. Mr. Bianco brought up DEP regulations and Board of Selectmen referred Mr. Bianco to the Conservation Commission. Darryl Darby instructed Mr. Bianco to file a complaint with the Conservation Commission and they will go investigate. Selectmen Cullett will contact KP Law regarding stipends for Fire Department members. Also, Selectman Cullett will discuss KP Law's opinion regarding the Board of Assessors going to a single member board. The town received a letter from the DOR stating that the town cannot change the Board of Assessor's to a single member board unless it is voted at Annual Town Meeting.

The Selectboard will have quotes next Monday on securing the Assessor's Office and Town Clerk's office by installing doors.

Item 12: Review and Approve Accounts Payable, Treasury Warrants and Payroll Warrant: N/A

Item 13: Adjourn: Selectman Leach made motion to adjourn the 02/13/2023 BOS Meeting, Selectman Cullett second, Vote 3-0. The 02/13/2023 BOS Meeting adjourned at 8:46 P.M.

Articles used:

Minutes- 02/06/2023,

Letter Peru Volunteer Firemen's Association

Invoice St. Pierre Cooling & Heating, Inc.

Expenditure Report

Respectfully Submitted,

Terry Walker
Administrative Assistant

Verne Leach, Chairman



Doug Haskins, Selectman



Bruce Cullett, Selectman



Date Approved: 2-21-23

RECEIVED
FEB 22 2023
Kim Leach
TOWN CLERK
TOWN OF PERU