

**SELECT BOARD MEETING MINUTES | April 27, 2020 | 6:00 P.M.**

TOWN HALL MEETING ROOM

**Present:**

Verne Leach, BOS Chairman / ACO  
Ed Munch, Selectman / Historical Commission  
Bruce Cullett, Selectman / Police Sergeant  
Caleb Mitchell, Town Administrator  
Irene Morrison, Administrative Assistant

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; Live stream on Town Clerk Facebook page

Item 4: **Review and approve BOS Meeting Minutes of 3/30/20**

\*Mr. Leach motions to approve the 3/30/20 BOS Meeting Minutes. Mr. Munch seconds. All agree. **VOTE 3-0**

Item 5: **Discussion and Vote to approve Electrical Inspection Fees**

Both Mr. Leach and Mr. Cullett agree that the Electrical Fee Schedule is similar to surrounding towns. (*See Electrical Inspector Fee Schedule*)

\*Mr. Cullett motions to approve the Electrical Inspection Fees. Mr. Leach seconds. All agree. **VOTE 3-0**

Item 6: **Discussion of Fiscal Year 2021 Budget**

The BOS discussed the accounts from the Financial Report and the FY21 Budget at length. Mr. Leach has a list from Finance Chairman Pelkey of things that we were missing. One is computer supply & maintenance. Mr. Cullett said we're still waiting on one of those quotes. The accounts were discussed as follows:

**IT Services** – Bug Busters has provided a figure of \$15,000.00 for new computers and IT Services. TA Mitchell said he still waiting for another IT Service Proposal.

**Computer Supply & Maintenance** - On hold right now at \$15,000.00.

**Office Supplies** – We've spent \$700.00 of this account. Reduce the account by \$500.00

**US Postal Expense** – 47% of that account has been spent. Take \$500.00 off, leaving \$2,500.00

**Town Website** – Mr. Leach said the Town Website is the same. It's the third and last year for the installment.

**BOS Expense** – Level funded

**Officer Mileage** – Level funded

**Town Garage Mortgage** – TA Mitchell said it's the same as last year

**Fire Station Mortgage** – It decreases slightly each year

**Hinsdale Ambulance** – Mr. Cullett said there is a slight increase. He said it has gone up 5% - 10% over the last few years. TA Mitchell will call Hinsdale

**Board of Appeals Expense** – Keep at \$100.00

**Town Building Maintenance** – Mr. Leach would like to level fund this account for right now. He would like to see something done with the wiring in this building. Mr. Cullett questions if we want to use Free Cash to fund the Architectural Engineering Study for the building that's going to tell us what we need to do for ADA upgrades and other small projects that have been planned, or if we want to tie it to the Building Maintenance Account and raise & appropriate that money. Mr. Leach said he would like to use Free Cash toward the Wahconah School Project. Mr. Cullett said a very rough idea of costs from the budget estimates given him for the Assessment would be around \$25,000.00-\$30,000.00. That's for a complete assessment of the building from an architectural perspective; that's looking at ADA upgrades as well as limited structural upgrades if the space we're currently in (Town Hall Meeting Room/Gym) were converted into office space. He hasn't walked anybody through the building yet due to the COVID-19 situation. For the initial study, he doubts Green Community funds could be used unless HVAC upgrades were done. He said that we need an assessment of the entire building in order to make informed decisions on any small project within the building. "We need to know which direction things need to go and what we have to do to achieve ADA compliance in the building. To do a project in this building that will spend down the Green Community Grant, the assessment is a necessary component. We have to involve an Architect or an Engineer." Mr. Munch agrees but said, "At this moment to put this into the budget might be a mistake." The BOS agree to level fund this account.

**Town Insurance** – Insurance for town buildings, auto fleets are through MIA. They haven't determined what they will charge each individual town. Mr. Cullett said as a municipality, we're self-insured. He thinks they wait until the end of the Fiscal Year to see what type of claims come in before they have the numbers. TA Mitchell said we've spent \$32,000.00 at this point. Mr. Leach would like to go to \$45,000.00.

**Health Insurance** – The Treasurer has given a rundown of yearly cost, and then the cost that the town pays. TA Mitchell said with all the individuals who are covered under our insurance, the cost to the town is based on the percentage that we pay. It's \$123,241.92 if the town continues to pay 80% worst case scenario. Last year our cost was \$126,842.00. Mr. Cullett said last year we appropriated \$145,629.12 for Health Insurance. Currently, we have expended 37.5% of that. Mr. Cullett said he can't support cutting a benefit to our highway guys. He said, "We always talk about how we can't pay them what they're worth." Mr. Munch said, "That was going to be made up with a raise. If that were changed from 80% to 75%, the difference would be made up with a raise for the Highway Dept. to offset the difference they'd be paying. He said this is something we should bring up at the Finance Meeting. Mr. Leach said he'd like to leave it alone. Mr. Cullett said that Supt. Russell has told him that since he's been working here, he's seen the deductibles and the cost of the plan go up dramatically. Mr. Cullett said the amount of savings is pretty insignificant here. Their cost has already gone up, and the town cost has gone up as well. They're paying more for less coverage essentially."

**Interest on Loans** (70750) – TA Mitchell said only about \$100.00. Interest on loans from last year: \$1,000.00. The year of 2018-2019 was \$3,835.52 expended. This year we appropriated \$1,000.00, and to date haven't spent any.

**Mass Unemployment** - \$600.00

**Town Share of Medicare** - \$5500.00

**Treasurer Tax Title Expense** – TA Mitchell said she brought it down to \$5,000.00

**Treasurer/Accountant Software** – Has gone up slightly to \$11,470.00

**Tax Taking Expense** – Level funded at \$1,500.00

**Tax Collector Software** - \$9,388.00

**Town Mowing** – \$6,300.00

**Communications** – Mr. Cullett has a call into Crocker Communications asking for updated numbers which include to increase the speed of our fiber connection on the MBI System. Another option is to switch to Spectrum. Given our phone system is through Crocker Communications, it may be best to stay with them. They act as a Middleman & connect us to the MBI System or connect us through Spectrum. The big thing that Howard (Bug Busters) mentioned was absolutely needing to have a static IP for our service. Mr. Cullett said we'll have to have some discussions with Spectrum and probably involve our IT Guy to see if everything that we currently operate would be compatible & Spectrum would be able to serve us. The big thing he mentioned was our phone system that we pay for is a proprietary system. We can't just take that Crocker System and plug it into just any internet service. We have to go through Crocker for that system. We purchased the hardware (phones), but the voice mail system is all housed through Crocker. The biggest concern he would have is ensuring, given the experience that some folks in town have had is ensuring is that we're able to keep our numbers & transfer them over if we were to switch.

**Library** – They asked for level funding. The Trustees gave the Director an increase.

**NBSWMD** – TA Mitchell will be talking with Linda Cernik tomorrow to see if the cost of our membership to the NBSWMD is the same as last year. He will talk to her about the NBSWMD budget to get an idea as to whether hauling fees will go up and if we should consider raising the amount of funds in the compactor account. Transfer Attendant Leach said we have the same hauler for the trash as well as for recyclables.

**Compactor Attendant Wages** – There are 2 Compactor Attendant wages that have been approved. One is a minimum wage position, and the other is \$1.00 over the minimum wage position for the Senior Compactor Attendant. As the Senior Transfer Attendant, Mr. Leach said he went by the hours as if he did all the hours including what he is assuming will be a \$.45 increase the first of the year, which comes out to equal \$6,610.50.

**CBRSD** – Town of Peru's proportionate share of the capital and operating budget for CBRSD for Fiscal Year July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2021 certified as voted 3/12/20. *Net Capital Assessment*: \$128,328.00; *Net Transportation Assessment*: \$44,113.00; *Net Operating Assessment*: \$849,072.00; ***Total Assessment***: \$1,021,513.00

Mr. Munch wants to know what's happening with the money we've already paid for this quarter. They don't have the expenses they budgeted for. Mr. Cullett said the towns should ask for an accounting of what they had for expenses from March 13, 2020 to the end of the school year. TA Mitchell will contact Bonny DiTomasso, Peru Representative to CBRSD School Committee to invite her to listen to the concerns of the town of what's going on with the school budget.

**Veteran Services** – TA Mitchell said we never received an Agreement back from the last FY or for this FY. That account will be level funded at \$10,000.00. Mr. Cullett said currently there is only 1 individual on that account.

**Public Health Nursing Services / Health Alliance** – Mr. Cullett said we have received a quote for the Public Health Nursing Services, but not from the Health Alliance Services. TA Mitchell will contact Laura Kittross, BRPC Public Health Program Manager.

Mr. Munch said "We shouldn't be hurt by the lack of state funding in our budget. We're not really depending on that. We're going to be hurt like everyone else. The numbers we're coming up with aren't going to be affected if the state cuts back on Chapter 90 etc." Mr. Leach said, "You won't see it here, but you'll see it in the tax rate. That's part of their formula." TA Mitchell said, "From the Cherry Sheets we get Governmental Aid that they give us which is \$120,000.00. Then we get from Pilot Payments we get \$45,000.00. We're getting less than \$200,000.00. We're really not that dependent on state aid." He said the only thing that could be affected is Chapter 90, but what we got this year is based on \$200 Million. Mr. Leach said if the question about plowing private roads is going to go to the town, and if it passes, we're going to need more money for the private roads. Mr. Cullett said all that plowing is going to come out of the Snow Roads Account. Mr. Cullett said the can of worms was open this year with the issue with Greylock Circle. He feels we have to deal with it head-on. "The proper way is either we adopt that MGL 40 Sec.50D or we don't." Mr. Cullett said even if the town approves the plowing of the private roads, they have to meet a certain condition. Mr. Leach said those conditions need to be in the Article so they can read them and know what's going on.

Mr. Cullett said one of the items the BOS tossed around a little bit and thought about putting on the wish list doesn't make a lot of sense right now. "We can put off the pick-up truck purchase for the Highway Dept. at least for another year. The books that we put off doing the town records the second portion of that, we kicked down the road last year. I guess we can see where the Free Cash ends up. That's not a huge expense. Maybe put it to town meeting to see if people want to fund it.

Item 7: **Adjourn**

Mr. Leach motions to adjourn the 4/27/20 BOS Meeting. Mr. Cullett seconds. All agree. **VOTE 3-0**

**The BOS Meeting adjourned at 7:30 P.M.**

**Articles used:**

- 4/27/20 BOS Meeting Agenda
- 3/30/20 BOS Meeting Minutes
- Electrical Inspector Fee Schedule
- Financial Report

Respectfully submitted

*Irene J. Morrison*

Administrative Assistant

Verne Leach, Chairman \_\_\_\_\_

Ed Munch, Selectman \_\_\_\_\_

Bruce Cullett, Selectman \_\_\_\_\_

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_

Date