

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

SELECT BOARD MEETING MINUTES | June 15, 2020 | 6:00 P.M.

COMMUNITY CENTER

Present:

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

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

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

Item 3: **State recording status:** Mr. Leach & Irene Morrison recording; Live stream on Town Clerk Facebook page

Item 4: **Review and Approve Meeting Minutes for 5/4/20, 5/28/20, 6/1/20 & 6/10/20**

Per Mr. Leach the 5/4/20 Executive Meeting Minutes will be reviewed on 6/22/20

Mr. Cullett motions to approve the 5/28/20 BOS Meeting Minutes pending changes. Mr. Leach seconds. All agree.
VOTE 3-0

Mr. Leach motions to approve the 6/1/20 BOS Meeting Minutes. Mr. Cullett seconds. All agree.
VOTE 3-0

Mr. Leach motions to approve the 6/10/20 BOS Meeting Minutes. Mr. Cullett seconds. All agree.
VOTE 3-0

Item 5: **Update of Departments**

Highway – Supt. Russell reporting

Supt. Russell said there's a new Grant opportunity that came out last week. It's being provided by Mass DOT in partnership with the Barr Foundation. The program funds quick build, quick launch, improvements to sidewalks, curbs, streets and parking spaces and lots. He said we should go after this Grant to get our parking lots paved. He said you can apply for between \$5,000.00 and up to \$300,000.00.

Supt. Russell said he rented a screener last week. He said it was \$1,000.00 to rent the screener but they probably made \$4,000.00 - \$5,000.00 worth of gravel if not more.

Supt. Russell said we were awarded the Grant for the beaver flow devices to attempt controlling the beavers on Baumann Rd. & Pierce Rd. that we can't get to in the winter. He said sometimes these devices work and sometimes they don't, but we have to make the attempt. For Baumann Rd. he applied for \$2,025.00 and we were awarded \$1,300.00. We'll have to contribute \$675.00. For Pierce Rd. he applied for roughly \$2,000.00 and we were awarded \$1,330.00. We'll have to contribute \$665.00. He said the culvert on that road completely washed out this past winter. Beaver Solutions is looking to do the work the first week of July.

Supt. Russell said the Mowing Contractor has not shown up to do any mowing. Mr. Cullett contacted them, and they said they would do it this week.

Supt. Russell said he talked with Kristopher Massini, Peru State Forest Warden about Curtin Rd. Kris indicates DCR isn't a big fan of us putting in a large parking area out there. Supt. Russell told him that we are just trying to make an area for cars to be able to pull off the road. Kris gave Supt. Russell a number for Chris Hajar, Dept. of Parks & Recreation regarding the signs from the Parks & Recreation. DCR is concerned with publicizing the Memorial up there, with people taking things off the Memorial and Metal Detection in the area. They don't want to draw unwanted attention to the Memorial. Mr. Cullett said if it's an area they're concerned about, we can talk with them and increase patrols in that area. He said we can also talk with the Environmental Police to increase patrols in the State Forest. He said we could also mount some trail cameras up high in the trees if needed and maybe a couple extra signs that warns people not to do that sort of thing. Supt. Russell said the Town does have the Right-of-Way through there. TA Mitchell said the whole purpose of this was to try to allow people to use the State Forest Land. Supt. Russell said, "To improve access to the State Forest." Supt. Russell said we have all the material now and have spent \$19,901.00 on dense grade.

Supt. Russell told TA Mitchell that they need to get going on re-doing the Mass Works Grant. The deadline is coming up quick. He spoke with David Stokes, Chapter 90 Engineer, who told him that this year the State wants him to do a grading system. Last year, 5 out of the 9 applicants in District 1 were awarded \$1M Grants. He told Supt. Russell that he used to be a Bridge Inspector and is familiar with East Windsor Rd. Mr. Stokes said the biggest thing is to emphasize Emergency Response.

Mr. Cullett said as a Board, we should commend our Highway Crew for toughing out everything through the COVID-19 situation when other DOT Agencies were paying their people to stay home. "We kept our crew going; they didn't complain." He said he'd like the possibility of a paid day or two off to thank them for what they've been doing and continue to do." Mr. Munch thought it was a good idea. Mr. Leach said he wouldn't mind giving them a Friday or Monday off with pay. Supt. Russell will talk with his crew about this and get back to the BOS at the next meeting of Monday, 7/22/20.

Supt. Russell said he has an application coming tomorrow for Summer help who is a recent graduate of Wahconah. Mr. Cullett said he gives Supt. Russell the authority to hire someone as he sees fit.

BOS – Mr. Leach reporting

Mr. Cullett read a letter from Irene Morrison, Administrative Assistant informing the BOS that the end of her term is near, and her official date of resignation will be 6/30/20. (*See Letter from Irene Morrison*)

Mr. Leach said he received an e-mail from Bonny DiTomasso saying that it's Farmer's Market time again, and despite what's going on in the world, the coupons are still being provided this year. He said TA Mitchell will be acting as COA Director until that position is filled. (*See e-mail from Bonny DiTomasso*)

Accountant – Anna Osborne reporting

Anna said the Department of Revenue (DOR) came out with the Accounting Guidance for how we account for the CARES and the FEMA Reimbursement money. It's a "Special Revenue Fund Account" where all the accumulated expenses will be held. She informed the BOS that there will be a deficit in that account at the end of June. If we don't get the funding in within 30 days it will hit the Free Cash, but she knows CARES has been reimbursing the towns fairly quickly. She thinks we should be o.k. with that. TA Mitchell asked what the process was for reimbursement. She said the application he originally submitted should generate a check. He asked if it would be transferred electronically through the Treasurer. Anna said she doesn't know if it would be a live check or if it's going to be a Direct Deposit. TA Mitchell said we already have a deficit of \$2,000.00 for the 400 masks for adults and 100 for children that Town Clerk Leach purchased on behalf of the Board of Health (BOH). That invoice is pending. Currently we don't have the funds to pay for them, but we can deficit spend with this "Special Revenue Fund Account" and hopefully the funding will be coming shortly.

Town Administrator – Caleb Mitchell reporting

TA Mitchell said the Annual Town Meeting (ATM) Warrant was approved at the last meeting and was delivered to Town Clerk Leach and the Town Constable who posted it. The Annual Town Report has been completed. He said we printed out 100 copies to distribute at the Transfer Station on Saturday as required by law. There are 300 Official Annual Town Reports that have been completed by the Printer.

TA Mitchell said the application for the CARES ACT has been completed and signed by Chairman Leach. The Application Form and the Attachment have been submitted and we have received notification that it was accepted. Mr. Cullett said there was a note on the form about many of the expenses related to computer equipment and zoom type meeting equipment that wouldn't be reimbursed by FEMA. TA Mitchell said while filling out the form, it automatically sends a pop-up on the screen that "May or may not be eligible for reimbursement". Computers were one of the items that came up with that pop-up. Some items that we submitted there was a pop-up "May only receive 75% reimbursement". The biggest one, which was office modifications like the doorbell or buzzer, or shields came up as "Somebody from the DOR will be contacting you to review it." Mr. Munch said a lot of the modifications that we're doing to the building we have to do in order to fit into the guidelines. Mr. Leach asked if anything has been ordered to do this. Mr. Cullett said no, not specifically other than the masks. Mr. Leach said we have to be open by 7/1/20. TA Mitchell said what we have talked about is by appointment only. That's being open to the public. Mr. Cullett said he started contacting some Contractors to try to get them to come look at some of the work that needs to be done, but that takes time. He said one of things we should get is a Zoom, Google, or other license to run meetings for every department.

TA Mitchell discussed the trouble he encountered while trying to post the Administrative Assistant position on the website. Mr. Leach told him to send Town Clerk Leach the information and she would post it.

TA Mitchell said we're in the process to select a vendor for the Hazard Mitigation Plan for the Grant Application. He solicited for 3 bids, one of which isn't interested, one who hasn't responded, and one to BRPC. He said it looks like BRPC will do the plan. On the next agenda, we'll have them on to sign a contract. He said we'll have to go back to MEMA to ask for an extension. The current contract runs out the end of FY20. Supt. Russell told TA Mitchell that he could try reaching out to Franklin County Regional Government. Mr. Cullett said Pioneer Valley has a Planning Commission that comes out this far.

TA Mitchell has handed out the Northern Berkshire Solid Waste Districts (NBSWD) FY21 Contract that eventually we have to sign off on. Mr. Cullett said the outcome of negotiations with NBSWD could impact us by an increase of \$10,000.00 in hauling fees. He recommends before signing anything, to get Tom Garrity from Valley up here. Let him see the facility and give us a proposal and we'll see how it compares. It may save us a lot of money. "It might be time to break free from the District." They're handcuffed with this contract. Mr. Leach said he's seeing where they're going to be charging \$97.00 a ton for recyclables. Supt. Russell said there's a calculation based on how much tonnage might be in that box. It may be less per ton if we get more tonnage in that box. There's a threshold to meet. He tries to pack it, so we at least get a ton out of it to make the haul fee of \$365.00 worth it. He will pull some records on the average tonnage per month for trash, recyclables, bulk waste, paper to present to Tom Garrity to give him a ballpark idea.

(See NBSWD FY21 Contract)

Item 6: Discussion and Vote to designate Caleb Mitchell to represent the Town of Peru on the Berkshire Regional Transit Authority Advisory Board

Mr. Leach motions to designate Caleb Mitchell to represent the Town of Peru on the Berkshire Regional Transit Authority Advisory Board. Mr. Cullett seconds. All agree. Mr. Leach signed and dated the document from the BRTA. **VOTE 3-0**
(See Delegation to BRTA)

Item 7: **Discussion and Vote to appoint Brian Dewkett as Fire Chief; Brian Dewkett as Forest Fire Warden**

RULE OF NECESSITY - Mr. Leach said he wants to invoke the Rule of Necessity for the reasons that both he and Selectman Munch are on the Fire Dept.

Mr. Leach motions to appoint Brian Dewkett as Fire Chief. Mr. Munch seconds. All agree. **VOTE 3-0**
(See *Appointment of Fire Chief*)

Mr. Leach motions to appoint Brian Dewkett as Forest Fire Warden. Mr. Munch seconds. All agree. **VOTE 3-0**
(See *Appointment of Forest Fire Warden*)

Item 8: **Sign Election Warrant**

Mr. Leach motions to sign the Annual Town Election Warrant. Mr. Munch seconds. All agree. **VOTE 3-0**
(See *Annual Town Election Warrant*)

Item 9: **Discussion and Vote for Town Hall/Community Center Electronic Sign stone base for Town's 250th Anniversary Celebration**

Mr. Munch said he went to 2 stone dealers today, one being Goshen Stone and the other George D. Judd & Sons LLC. He said Goshen Stone was \$50.00 more per ton for their stone and their service was terrible. He spoke with Linda Judd from Judd & Sons, who was very knowledgeable and helpful. The most expensive part of this is the cutting and trimming of the cap stone which is \$800.00. The outside dimensions will be 8'x5'. The capstone is 1 ft. wide. We're getting 2.66 ton and she rounded it off at 3 ton for waste. It's what they call small wall stone which is 1"- 4" inches thick. She said the cap stone can't be picked up in the dump truck, so it would have to be picked up with a wood body because of the length of it and it's brittle and could break. The second will be 3', 2' and 1½' sections of the capstone. He said the capstone will take 2 weeks. Mr. Munch told her we need to get the invoice before 6/30/20. The rest can be picked up. Mr. Munch asked Supt. Russell if he could pour a 5'x8' slab. He also said we need to get the sign out of the crate. Mr. Cullett said we need to see if it's a solid cabinet to set on something solid support. Mr. Munch said we'll have to get the conduit run in the ground and up through the slab. He said they had 2 pressure treated posts with the sign mounted on. Mr. Munch said he knows it would be expensive, but they had 2 posts, and we could use 2 pressure treated 6'x6'. They had 2 posts on the outside of the entire flower bed that was holding the sign up. Supt. Russell suggests if extra money is looking to be spent somewhere, maybe improve the Town Green around the Veteran's Memorial. Mr. Leach agrees with him.
(See *Stone Estimate/Prices*) Mr. Cullett motions to purchase the stone. Mr. Leach seconds. All agree. **VOTE 3-0**

Item 10: **Discussion and possible Vote to install mini split climate control system for Server Room, Police Station and Highway Department utilizing the Green Community Grant**

Mr. Cullett said he has reached out to four Contractors and was able to get two quotes. He said we got quotes from Pioneer Plumbing & Heating and St. Pierre Cooling & Heating. Starting with St. Pierre, Mr. Cullett asked that they look at the Server Room upstairs and all the associated rooms including the Police Station. He said right now the only cooling that the Server Room gets is from a small window air conditioner. In the Police Station it's drawn through a 6" x 6" louver in the wall with a thermostat control fan that kicks on and draws in the air. They took a look at that as well as the upstairs in the Police Station which is storage right now. He said it gets to be about 120° in the Summer up there. These units are heat pumps so they would work for heat as well. They did the sizing and measured everything and recommended an 18,000 BTU indoor wall mount, and a 9,000 BTU unit outside wall mount. He said one would be in what's called the Interview Room/Server Room, and the other in the Police Station area. That quote is \$14,065.07. Mr. Cullett talked to them about mounting the condensers on the wall. They recommended a 9,000 BTU unit with indoor wall mount which would heat and cool the office area in the Highway Garage for \$5,078.68. They say they have an air scrubber for mini splits, which is basically a filter. The quote from Pioneer for the Highway Garage area is \$3,400.00. It's a Fujitsu unit instead of a Daikin unit that St. Pierre had proposed. It's capable of heating to -15° outside air temperature and is capable of cooling. In the Police Dept., they looked at it a little differently. RJ recommended one just for the Police Dept. at \$4,300.00. He estimated one for the Interview/File Server Room at about the same cost. He recommends having fans

installed in the wall of the Server Room to bring cool air into the room from the Interview Room in the Summer because the Server Room itself is too small to put a wall mount in there. TA Mitchell asked if this is something that would be covered under the Green Community Grant. Mr. Cullett said, “Yes. right now we’re running a window air conditioner that’s undersized, not adequate and running around the clock 24/7 to try to keep up.” TA Mitchell said we have to get approval from Green Community Grant Program before you can award the bid. Mr. Cullett said he thinks it’s a matter of submitting an application. We have a month and we talked about it with Lauren Garrity about doing some small stand-alone projects and this was one of them. TA Mitchell said the last time he sent an e-mail to her and Tom Matuszko and got no response. Mr. Munch said, “If we award this contract they’re not going to start tomorrow. We have 30 days at least to pay the invoice, so you’re talking maybe 60 days before anything happens.” (*See St. Pierre and Pioneer bids*)

Mr. Leach said to carry Item 10 for further discussion at 6/22/20 BOS Meeting.

Mr. Munch motions that we award the contract to Pioneer Plumbing Inc. for the 2 mini-splits. Mr. Leach seconds. All agree. **VOTE 3-0**

Item 11: **COVID-19 Updates**

Mr. Cullett said we need to get our procedures in order and manage people coming in. Per request of Mr. Leach, TA Mitchell will send an e-mail out to all the Departments to see what hours they would like to hold. Mr. Leach said before all this started, on Monday nights you had the Health Inspector, Building Inspector, Tax Collector, all 3 Assessors and the Town Clerk. Mr. Cullett said the Assessors know with the space they have they need to move their meetings into a larger area like the gym or Community Center. Mr. Munch said, “The way we open is up to us, and the appointment only is the only way we can do it right now in this building until we get all the things we’re trying to get through the Grant.” He asked what we are being told we have to do to open up on July 1st? TA Mitchell said, “To set parameters as to what the policy will be. One is that you have to wear a mask, and by appointment only.” Mr. Cullett said, “We haven’t yet been told by the Governor that the suspension of the Open Meeting Law requirements has been rescinded. Mr. Leach said he has the guidance for the Town Meeting to address COVID-19 as of 6/11/20, and he will give those to TA Mitchell.

Item 12: **Review and approve Accounts Payable, Treasury Warrants, Payroll Warrants**

Item 13: **Adjourn** Mr. Leach motions to adjourn the BOS Meeting of 6/15/20. Mr. Cullett seconds. All agree **VOTE 3-0**

The BOS Meeting of 6/15/20 adjourned at 8:24 P.M.

Articles used:

6/15/20 BOS Meeting Agenda
5/28/20 BOS/BOH Meeting Minutes
6/1/20 BOS Meeting Minutes
6/10/50 BOS Meeting Minutes
Letter from Irene Morrison
E-mail from Bonny DiTomasso
Warrants

NBSWD Contract
Delegation to BRTA
Appointment to Fire Chief
Appointment to Forest Fire Warden
Stone Estimate/Prices
St. Pierre/Pioneer Bids

Respectfully submitted

Irene J. Morrison

Administrative Assistant

Verne Leach, Chairman _____

Ed Munch, Selectman _____

Bruce Cullett, Selectman _____

Approved: 6/22/20
Date