

TOWN HALL 3 EAST MAIN ROAD PERU, MA 01235

SELECT BOARD MEETING MINUTES: December 13, 2021: 6:00 P.M.

COMMUNITY CENTER

Verne Leach, Chair Selectman/ACO
Doug Haskins, Selectman/Finance Committee
Bruce Cullett, Selectman/Chief of Police
Terry Walker, Administrative Assistant
Justin Russell, Highway Superintendent
Bonnie Ditomasso- School Committee Member , ADHOC Member

Public Attendees
Kathie Boucher

Call to order: 6:00 P.M.

Item 1: Roll Call: Chairman Leach present, Selectman Haskins present, Selectman Cullett present

Item 2: State Recording status: Verne Leach recording

Item 3: Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag: Led by Selectman Leach

Item 4: Review and Approve Meeting Minutes for 11-15-2021, 11-29-2021, 12-6-2021; Leach motions to approve minutes of meeting for 11/15/2021 pending changes, Cullett seconds, Vote 3-0. Cullett motion to approve minutes for 11/29/2021 pending changes, Leach second, vote 3-0, 12/6/2021 minutes on hold.

Item 5: Updates of Departments: Highway Superintendent-Justin Russell mentioned that the new truck has been delivered and is at Marcotte Ford. MassWorks Grant contract- first 4 pages need signatures and it needs to be notarized. MassWorks project will go out to bid January or February. Since there is a lot of prep work needed on the road project, the timeline to finalize project is September 2022. Town Administrator needs to sign contract so FRCOG can get bids out. Highway Superintendent mentioned that the Treasurer may need to obtain a (GAN) Grant Anticipation Note to pay the upfront costs of the MassWorks Grant. Once Invoices are submitted to Boston reimbursements will occur.

Bonnie Ditomasso-Central Berkshire Regional School District gave an update on the ADHOC committee. 7 towns belong to the ADHOC committee with 2 representatives per town. The document being revisited hasn't been updated since 1992. It was noted that anything discussed by the ADHOC committee is not binding. Caleb Mitchell, TA, and Bonnie Ditomasso are the two ADHOC members from Peru. Since Caleb Mitchell is retiring and Bonnie Ditomasso cannot vote because she is a member of the school committee, the Selectboard should consider appointing two members to the ADHOC committee. The ADHOC meetings are zoom meetings and are held the second Wednesday of every month. Bonnie stressed the benefits for the town to be represented and have a vote for financial considerations. Document will be brought to Annual Town Meeting for a vote by the town hopefully by 2023.

Police Chief , Cullett asked permission to advertise open police department position. Applicants will need be fully trained with 3-5 years' experience, Leach and Haskins agreed to post on **website**

Town Administrator, report for 12-13-2021

Item # 8 on Agenda: You will basically be extending the current contract with RRG to the end of the fiscal year. You still need to get cost estimate or cost from Regional Resource Group, Inc. Harald Scheid will be available via zoom for tonight's meeting at 7PM.

Item # 9 on Agenda: Tax Classification Hearing: Mr. Scheid provided materials outlining the Tax Classification Hearing. (Please see Tax Classification Hearing Materials in your box)

Opioid Settlement: I left the forms that need to be filled out if you decide that you want the Town of Peru to be part of the settlement. Both forms must be filled out and submitted.

Congratulations Anna! The Town of Peru has received IT Grant for \$25,000. I left the Grant Application in Verne's box to sign; I put markers where you must sign, and one of the pages must be signed in front of a Notary (Amy) and stamped.

MassWorks Grant Contract: Justin and I will need to make an arrangement to sign the Contract in front of Notary (Amy) and have it stamped and return.

Leach mentioned that: Board of Selectmen received an email and two assessors rescinded their resignations. This will be put on next agenda. Leach recused himself. Cullett mentioned the Selectboard will discuss modifying number of Assessors on Board and vote on it at a later time.

Highway Superintendent, Justin Russell will contact David Stokes Mass DOT regarding the proper procedure on resurfacing the bridge on East Windsor Road.

Item 6: Discussion and Vote to appoint Kathie Boucher to the Peru/Hinsdale Cultural Council: Cullet motion to appoint Kathie Boucher to the Peru/Hinsdale Cultural Council, Leach second, vote 3-0. Kathie Boucher is also interested to be on ADHOC committee. ADHOC positions will be posted Kathie can then apply.

Item 7: Discussion and possible Vote to deem the ACO Vehicle and the Highway Ford 250 Truck as surplus property: Leach recused himself because he is the Animal Control Officer. It was decided that an estimate on repairing the ACO vehicle was needed. Once new truck is here the Highway Superintendent will take old 250 truck off the road. Auctioning off these vehicles is a possibility.

Item 8: Discussion and possible Vote to extend Regional Resource Group, Inc. contract to the end of the Fiscal Year. Need a proposed scope of services.

Item 9: Tax Classification Public Hearing 7 PM: The FY2022 Tax Classification Hearing was called to order at 7:04 p.m. on 12/13/2021 at the town hall to set the FY2022 tax rate via a zoom meeting by Harold M. Scheid, Regional Tax Assessor. Each year the Select Board holds a public hearing to determine the percentage of the Town's property tax levy to be borne by each major property class. This responsibility and procedures are described in Chapter 40, Section 56 of the Massachusetts General Laws. Mr. Scheid explained the **Steps in Setting Tax Rates:**

Pre-classification Hearing Steps:

Step 1: Determination of the property tax levy (Budget Process)

Step 2: Determine assessed valuations (Assessors)

Step 3: Tabulate assessed valuation by class (Assessors)

Classification Hearing Steps:

Step 4: Classification hearing presentation (Assessors & Selectboard)

Step 5: Voting a tax shift factor (Selectboard)

Post Classification Hearing Steps:

Step 6: Sign the LA-5 Classification Form (Selectboard)

Step 7: Send annual recap to DOR for tax rate approval (Assessors)

Step 8: Obtain DOR approval of tax rate (DOR)

The Board of Assessors recommends that the Selectboard adopt a single tax rate to be applied to all classes of property in Peru. The estimated tax rate for fiscal year 2022 is \$18.32 per thousand of valuation. Leach made a motion to adopt a single tax rate, Cullett second, single tax rate was a unanimous 3-0 vote. The public hearing ended and the Selectboard Meeting resumed.

Item 10: Discussion of Condition of Accounts: Selectboard will ask Treasurer why two accounts were overdrawn, the next step is to request a Reserve Fund Transfer from the Finance Committee.

Item 11: Discussion of American Rescue Plan: Cullett has been reviewing the guidelines for this grant and a there is a possibility the grant will be used to bring fiber connect to homes that need it.

Item 12: Discussion of DEP Grant: Leach recused himself because he is the Transfer Station Attendant. Town Administrator did not provide information needed. It was decided that this item is on hold until they get more info.

Item 13: Public Input: none

Item 14: Review and Approve accounts payable, Treasury Warrant, Payroll Warrant:

Treasurer questioned Terry Walker's payroll sheet regarding the 2 hours Terry worked for the Fire Department. Leach mentioned that he had approved 2 hours for Terry to work on the FEMA grant. The Fire Chief met with Terry Walker and asked if she would assist with the Community Section of the grant. Fire Chief gave Terry a copy of the FEMA grant and she did assist him. Treasurer questioned if Terry Walker would get paid out of Administrative Assistant budget or Fire Department budget. Leach said Terry Walker would get paid out of the Administrative Assistant budget. Verbiage is not on ATM warrant to allow Treasurer to borrow money for a (RAN) Revenue Anticipation Note and this has not been an article at Annual Town Meeting since 2006. This \$300,000 RAN was to pay school tuition. Since the tax bills have not been mailed, a loan is required to keep the town functioning. Hampton Savings Bank won the bid for \$300,000 at .45 % interest for 3 months. Town Council will be contacted regarding whether ATM needs to give Treasurer permission to borrow Revenue Anticipation Notes. Treasurer will call school and explain what is happening and a partial payment will be sent. Town Treasurer will also call Bill Agagile at the DOR for guidance.

Highway Truck was going out to bid next week but now this is impossible because an article allowing the Treasurer to borrow a (RAN) Revenue Anticipation Note for the new truck purchase was not an ATM Warrant article. Justin asked if he should reach out to Ford Credit. Selectboard said to wait until they spoke with town council.

Treasurer actively working on credit cards for 3 departments heads. Using personal credit cards is not good business practice. Treasurer mentioned that guidelines should be set using personal credit cards. Each department should have a credit card with a different cap on it. After the first of the year, then the Selectboard will revisit the credit card issue.

Leach motion to sign grant for Anna, Cullett second, all in favor 3-0.

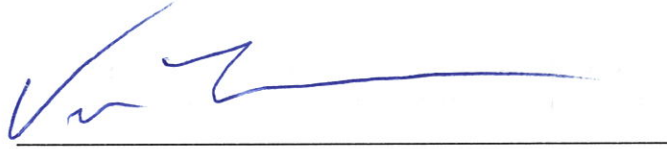
Item 15: Adjourn: Leach made motion to adjourn the 12-13-2021 BOS Meeting, Cullett seconds. All agree Vote 3-0. The 12-13-2021 BOS Meeting adjourned at 8:25 P.M.

Articles used:

Warrant # W11-2022 and W12-2022
Kathie Boucher appointment letter
MassWorks Grant contract
IT Grant Award for Town Accountant
Tax Classification Hearing documents
Legal Notice for Public Hearing
Minutes for 11/15/2021 and 11/29/2021

Respectfully Submitted
Terry Walker
Administrative Assistant

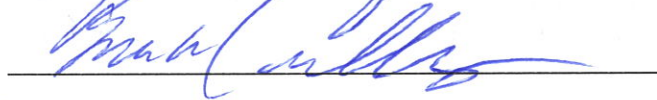
Verne Leach, Chairman



Doug Haskins, Selectman



Bruce Cullett, Selectman



Date Approved: 12-27-21

RECEIVED
DEC 27 2021
Kim Leach
TOWN CLERK
TOWN OF PERU