

TOWN HALL 3 EAST MAIN ROAD PERU, MA 01235

SELECT BOARD MEETING MINUTES: November 15, 2021: 6:00 P.M.

COMMUNITY CENTER

Verne Leach, Chair Selectman/ACO
Doug Haskins, Selectman/Finance Committee
Bruce Cullett, Selectman/Chief of Police
Caleb Mitchell, Town Administrator
Jim Kenney, Historical Comm
Nanette Mone, Board of Health
Jesse Pelkey, Fire Chief

Public Attendees

Kim Wetherell
Robin Wadsworth

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:** Caleb Mitchell recording

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

Item 4: **Review and Approve Meeting Minutes for 9-13-2021, 9-20-21, 9-27-21,;** Leach motions to approve minutes 09-13-21 pending changes, Cullett seconds vote 3-0.

Item 5: **Updates of Departments:** Highway Supt. Russell informs BOS that point of contact for Franklin Regional Council of Governments is Andrea Woods regarding the Mass works grant for East Windsor Road and that they are available to assist with procurement of the project. The cost is in the vicinity of \$1,500. Russell mentions that Request for bids should be sent to contractors in January. Lighting project wrong lights arrived new light will be delivered in a few days.. Expensive to repair cracks in snowplow used on East Windsor Road route. Plow needed to be sandblasted and welded before it was painted and approximate cost is \$5,500, but \$13,000 for a new plow. Waiting for Mack truck to come back from Springfield Mack.

Jim Kenney: Historical Commission cost of ordering batch of medallions has increased due to price of materials, 250th meeting this week, BOS decided to order 225 medallions. This may cost the town some money if they are sold at \$20.00 per medallion.

Nanette Mone reports that BOH mask recommendation for Town Hall is still in place.

Fire Chief Jesse Pelkey attending a grant writing workshop in Stowe, VT for fire departments, and on Saturday in Cheshire for ICS training for small towns, also Logan Brooks medical training officer, Dan Cochran fire training officer . Plus Nov 30, Dec 1 and Dec 2 online classes.

TA Mitchell informs BOS that RRG confirmed receipt of contract and they will be here next Monday, November 22nd, at 1 p.m. Opinion from Town Counsel regarding Board of Assessors was received. Town Counsel states that Board of Assessors can be 1, 3, or 5 members and it is up to BOS to set up Board of Assessors. Nothing prevents the BOS from appointing 1 member to the Board of Assessors we could go with one member. No bylaw governs the number of of Assessors so there is no need for a bylaw change. Robin Wadsworth from audience stated that the Board of Selectmen

do not hire and assistant assessor and does not appoint a contractor. Wadsworth also remarked that RRG is not hired by BOS according to MGL only the Board of Assessors can hire a contractor. Wadsworth also stated that town counsel must look at MGL. Selectman Cullett stated that the Board of Selectmen execute all contracts with vendors on behalf of the Town and mentioned that contract with RRG is through end of calendar year for \$4000. Cullett also pointed out that the Town of Dalton utilizes RRG and a single assessor. Wadsworth asked why the Assessors didn't do their job and get tax bills out. She questioned why the assessors didn't do their job but got paid. She also questioned why the position wasn't posted. Kim Wetherell questioned why the BOS couldn't find someone to fill position. Cullett stated that a joint meeting was held between the BOS and Board of Assessors following the resignation of the Asst. Assessor and it was agreed that the best path moving forward was to contract with a firm such as RRG for the services. It was also mentioned that this is likely the most cost-effective approach for the Town.

Item 6: Interview Terry Walker for Temporary Administrative Assistant at 6:30 p.m.

Terry Walker has been municipal finance for 40 years. Ms. Walker has worked for highway departments, fire departments, as a Treasurer, Accounting Officer, and secretary to several boards. Ms. Walker is currently serving as Town Clerk for the Town of Monterey (see cover letter/resume of Ms. Terry Walker).

Cullett asked is Monterey Town Clerk elected or appointed. Walker states that It was elected up until she filled the position. Since 2016, it has been appointed. There had been 7 elected Town Clerks in 7 years that had resigned so there were issues. I have been appointed every year since 2016. Cullett asked Ms. Walker "without putting you on the spot and naming names", there number of recent articles (Berkshire Eagle) regarding Monterey and we would like your take what is going on there. Walker stated that I am the one that is being abused, my car vandalized, it's a hard situation to talk about because there are a lot of lies. Walker states that she has been threatened, coerced, intimidated and on one occasion not being able to escape town hall when she was being yelled at. She states that people have come into her office and have said they can kill people with their bare hands. Cullett stated that there appears to be more going on than what he has read. Ms. Walker stated that she is not running from Monterey, and that she is not quitting until this is resolved. Walker states that the Town of Peru needs a position filled and that she has the ability to do the job. That's why she is here. Walker stats that she is not dragging anything from Monterey into Peru. TA Mitchell asked if Ms. Walker had resigned in Monterey and Walker replied that she had not. Walker states that there is a pending investigation going on and that she must stand strong. Walker states that compaints were mailed to the Berkshire Eagle anonymously before the investigation started. Cullett explained that Town Administrator and Administrative Assistant positions may be combined and inquired if Ms. Walker would be amenable to performing the minutes on a contracted basis and Walker replied that she is open to doing that. Walker explained that she previously did work for Peru with Highway Superintendent, Ron Radwich. Walker stated that she wrote a STRAP grant and traveled to Boston to do a presentation. The officials said instead of a STRAP grant Peru will be awarded TIP program for road construction on Skyline Trail. Monday evenings are fine for Terry Walker to work. Leach mentioned Walker's experience noted on her resume. Walker stated that when she worked in Tolland as a Treasurer, she invested \$100,000 and rolled it over every 14 days. The interest on that investment paid her salary for the year. TA suggested Terry Walker can come in early on Mondays and will be here for the minutes. Leach wants to hire Terry Walker for more than the minutes.

Item 7: Discussion and possible vote to hire Terry Walker as Temporary Administrative Assistant. : Leach motion to hire Terry Walker as temporary Administrative Assistant, Cullett second, vote yes 3-0. Terry Walker will be set up with an email address.

Item 7 Public Input: Superintendent of School would like to attend Board of Selectmen's meeting.

Dept of Public Utilities notice of filing a public hearing. Eversource 3 year energy efficiency plan. TA did not have any comment on this issue. Caleb Mitchell, TA, made an attempt to update our DUNS number, Rick Carl tried a few times, it can not be updated. Notarized letter rejected because address is a Hinsdale address, TA contacted a federal employee and they updated. Email from Rick Carl that he needed an expiration date on DUNS number. TA was told by a federal employee that it was not updated. Another attempt on Friday, went online SAM.gov and got a phone number. TA recommended retaining the services of Justin Jones, a contractor that specializes in straightening out these issues and has previously performed this service for the Town of Peru. TA states this is extremely urgent. Cullett made a motion to

hire Justin Jones (contractor has previously assisted the Town with DUNS issues in the past) for \$599.00 to update DUNS number, Leach second, vote 3-0. Caleb Mitchell, TA, MIIA grant may not be awarded because it wasn't submitted on lined, however it was submitted.

Item 8: Public Input: Nanette Mone asks about ownership of Garnet Lake and the Beach associated with the lake. The BOS state that the lake is private and is owned by the Association. Nanette is directed to Jay Jewell, a resident at the lake for Association contact information.

Item 9: Review and Approve Accounts payable, Treasury Warrants, Payroll Warrant:

A brief discussion regarding what needs to be on next meeting agenda took place. TA will post position on MMA website. Books need to be closed; Annual Town Reports need to be done. Treasurer and Accountant will be notified that there is an urgency that the books need to be closed. If a special town meeting is to be held (only if necessary) date needs to be set. Minutes need to be completed, report from RRG when tax rate set, we have to set classification hearing and get tax bill out.

Item 11: **Adjourn:** Leach made motion to adjourn the 11-15-2021 BOS Meeting, Cullett seconds, Vote 3-0. The 11-15-2021 BOS Meeting adjourned at 7:53 P.M.

Articles used:

- Warrant
- Resume/cover letter of Terry Walker
- Town Counsel opinion (email) regarding Board of Assessors

Respectfully Submitted

Terry L. 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