

BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING

Town Hall Meeting Room 3 East Main Rd. Peru MA

Monday, March 7, 2022 @ 6:00 PM

1. Call to order
2. Roll Call
3. State recording status
4. Pledge Alliance to the Flag
5. Review and Approve BOS Meeting Minutes for 2/14/22 and 2/22/2022 and 2/28/22
6. Updates of Departments
7. Discussion and review of FY' 23 Town Budget Process
8. Update on the Town of Peru 250th Anniversary Celebration
9. Public input
10. Review and Approve Accounts payable, Treasury Warrant.
11. Adjourn

The list of matters are those reasonably anticipated by the Board which may be discussed and other items not

listed may also be brought up for discussion to the extent permitted by law.

Official posting: Peru Town website: www.townofperuma.com

Posted March 3, 2022 @ 4:20pm , Kim Leach, Town Clerk

TOWN HALL 3 EAST MAIN ROAD PERU, MA 01235

SELECT BOARD MEETING MINUTES: March 7, 2022: 6:00 P.M.

COMMUNITY CENTER

Verne Leach, Chair Selectman/ACO
Bruce Cullett, Selectman/Chief of Police
Doug Haskins, Selectman/Finance Committee
James Welch, Town Administrator
Terry Walker, Administrative Assistant
Justin Russell, Highway Superintendent

Public Attendees: N/A

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

Item 2: Roll Call: Chairman Leach present, Selectman Haskins present, Selectman Cullett present

Item 3: State Recording status: No

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

Item 5: Review and Approve BOS Meeting Minutes 02/14/2022 minutes, Selectman Cullett motion to approve, Selectman Haskins second 2-0 Selectman Leach recused himself he wasn't in attendance. 02/22/2022 minutes Selectman Leach motion to approve pending changes Selectman Cullett second 2-0 and 2/28/2022 minutes on hold.

Item 6: Updates of Departments: Highway Superintendent Russell received quotes for Fisher Steel Caster Sander. New Boston Crane Service and Sleds not in stock price quote was \$5,982. A.C.T. Vehicle Equipment, Inc. Sander has a rear camera, and a sand vibrator is included for \$5,981 A.C.T. has one in stock. Selectman Cullett motion to go with A.C.T. to purchase sander and use ARPA funds, Selectman Leach second, vote 3-0

Police Chief update none at this time.

Items to be sent to auction were photographed and the process has begun. Selectmen are considering sending more items to be auctioned off.

Selectman Cullett noted that Hazard Mitigation Grant Reimbursement is now in review.

Item 7: Discussion and Review of FY23 Town Budget Process

- Library Board of Trustees will be asked to meet annually to discuss Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Board of Selectmen to discuss expense accounts before making changes. A meeting to amend the MOU in the middle of year with an explanation to any increases or decreases in the Library Account is recommended. Selectman Haskins mentioned that all increases need to be brought before the Board of Selectmen and the Finance Committee. It was decided that the explanation for \$18,893 is sufficient and Selectman Cullett made a motion to approve, Selectman Leach second, all in favor 3-0.
- Admin comp Selectman Haskins recommended to keep the hours the same as last year which is 10 hours per week and increase hourly rate to \$17.00 per hour, Selectman Leach would like to go to the Finance Committee with a recommendation. Selectman Leach asked if this position is permanent. Selectman Cullett and Selectman Haskins agreed that this position will not be eliminated. The Selectboard made a fair attempt to bring the salary

where it should be. It was decided by the Selectboard that the Administrative Comp position would be 10 hours per week @ \$17.50 per hour.

- Website -Town Administrator Welch did not have a figure.
- Accountant Salary 3% agreed cost- of- living raise bring forward
- Treasurer/Tax Collector 3% agreed cost- of- living raise bring forward
- Town Clerk – Selectman Leach recused himself. Selectman Cullett mentioned that the issue for an increase in salary is because it is an elected stipend not an hourly rate. Selectman Cullett mentioned that the Town Clerk in Windsor receives \$8,511, Hinsdale \$7,034, Middlefield \$6,400, Cummington \$8,000, Washington \$8,198, Worthington \$10,754 and the Town of Peru is \$8,511 plus fees of \$500.00 per year. Selectman Cullett felt that the Town Clerk in Peru is in line with surrounding towns.
- Selectman Haskins stated that an elected position receives what is budgeted at Annual Town Meeting and it's your choice to run for re-election. Selectman Cullett mentioned that an 87% raise is tough, Leach recused himself. It was decided that Town Clerk Leach would be invited to speak to the Selectboard about the increase she proposed. The Town Clerk will receive a cost-of-living increase.
- Assistant Town Clerk- Selectman Leach recused himself -3% cost- of- living raise recommended by Selectboard.
- Police Wages- Selectmen Cullett recused himself 40% proposed increase in wage account since there will be no part time officers and they will have to maintain certification. Officers must take 4 weeks off fulltime job to complete training. Proposal to increase hourly rate from \$16.48 to \$21.15. \$21.15 is far below what surrounding towns pay their officers and this will be an incentive to keep our officers. Selectman Haskins made a recommendation of 7.5% cost-of-living raise which would bring \$16.48 to \$17.14, Selectman Haskins then suggested a 7.5% increase for the Police Department.
- Chief Cullett recommended a 40% increase in hourly wage to avoid having a single person police department
- Chief Salary 2% unless town adopts a higher cost -of -living increase,
- IMC separate line-item annual software support to be purchased with Free Cash easier to explain
- Internet need the amount
- Berkshire County Sheriff's Control Dispatch \$11,116
- Fire Dept Salary /Forest Warden Salary- it was agreed by the Selectboard that 300% increase for the Fire Chief Salary and 67% for the Forest Warden Salary was too drastic an increase. Selectman Cullett mentioned that the Fire Chief is underpaid and is willing to work towards an increase of 3% and will bring it before the Finance Committee. The Selectboard discussed combining both jobs and Selectman Haskins mentioned that \$2,750 was a good increase at 30%. Selectman Leach was in favor of 3% raise, Selectman Cullett agreed they were moving in the right direction but 30% was too much. Selectman Haskins then changed the increase to 15% for the Finance Committee to consider with both jobs combines and a salary of \$2,450.00.
- Ambulance hold
- Inspector of Animals Selectman Leach recused himself-3% cost-of-living increase
- Vocational School Hold

- Highway Department- Highway Superintendent Russell proposed a wage increase of 11% across the board. He felt that he has been very proactive as Highway Superintendent, he has made improvements to several town roads and another priority was adequate training for the highway department employees. Superintendent Russell mentioned that Hinsdale has 5 guys, Peru has 3 guys, and Hinsdale is paying their guys \$23.00 per hour. An hourly pay increase would help keep the trained employees from seeking employment in neighboring towns that are paying more per hour. Selectman Cullett praised Highway Superintendent Russell saying Russell has been here 7 years and has done more in the last 7 years than other Superintendents have done in the last 15 years. Selectmen Cullett mentioned the town had a good crew and the Selectboard will do whatever they can to retain good people. Selectman Haskins suggested 7.5 % for the highway department-increasing one employee to \$21.50 per hour. Highway Superintendent stated that the jump is justifiable because he was not hired to do administrative work. He not only does all the administrative work for Chapter 90 etc but received a \$1,000,000 MassWorks grant for road construction and now he is doing all the administrative paperwork for the MassWorks grant.
- Temporary Summer Help for Highway \$8,000
- Compactor Wages Selectman Leach recused himself, it was decided 9 hours per week @ \$16.00 per hour.
- COA Salary \$750
- Cemetery \$350
- Town Hall Cleaning- Town Administrator Welch does not have a quote.
- MIIA Town Insurance was sent but quote was for the wrong town. We still do not have exact figure.
- Highway Superintendent Russell noted that he wants to be certain that the wording for the Mass Works Grant (GAN) loan is correct on ATM warrant.

Item 8: Update on the Town of Peru 250th Anniversary Celebration -meeting with Selectboard on Wednesday 16th at 6:30 p.m.

Item 9: Public Input-N/A

Item 10: Review and Approve Accounts Payable, Treasury Warrant: V18-2022

Item 11: Adjourn: Selectman Leach made motion to adjourn the 03/07/2022 BOS Meeting, Selectman Cullett second, Vote 3-0. The 03/07/2022 BOS Meeting adjourned at 8:37 P.M.

Articles used:

Minutes-2/14/2022, 2/22/2022

Warrant V18-2022

ACT Vehicle Equipment Sander Estimate

FY23 Budget Spreadsheet

Respectfully Submitted,

Terry L. Walker
Administrative Assistant

Verne Leach, Chairman



Doug Haskins, Selectman



Bruce Cullett, Selectman



Date Approved: 3-28-22

RECEIVED
MAR 28 2022
Kim Leach
TOWN CLERK
TOWN OF PERU