

**SELECT BOARD EXECUTIVE SESSION MEETING MINUTES:**

**March 28, 2022: 6:24 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: Lucas Waters

**1.Call to order:** 6:24 p.m.

**2.Roll Call:** Chairman Leach present, Selectman Haskins present, Selectman Cullett present

**3.State Recording status:** Chairman Leach, Lucas Waters

Selectman Leach called the executive session to order at 6:24 p.m. Selectman Leach -Yes, Selectman Haskins -Yes, and Selectman Cullett -Yes. Unanimous vote.

Complainant is Lucas Waters, 142 South Road, Peru, MA against Highway Superintendent Justin Russell

Recording: Lucas Waters and Selectman Leach

Mr. Waters stated that ever since he moved to Peru he feels that Highway Superintendent Russell is after him. Mr. Waters said he was given spools from the utility company. When he went to pick up spools from Highway Department yard, he said he was confronted by Highway Superintendent Russell and Russell said to get out of the yard. Waters said the gate was open and he assumed he could pick up his spool. Waters also said Russell again asked when he would get a curb cut for his driveway. Waters said he called Russell out for plowing his personal driveway with town equipment. Waters had reported Russell to the Board of Selectmen and Ethics in Boston stating that Superintendent Russell was using town equipment to plow his personal driveway. Waters said, on the night in question, it snowed, and he drove down Highway Superintendent Russell's Road and he can do that because the road is public. Waters states that he was parked in front of his house and Russell would not let him in his own driveway. He said Russell got out of his vehicle and said he would hurt him. Waters states that Highway Superintendent Russell, a town employee, was threatening him and again was telling Waters that he still hadn't gotten a curb cut. Waters spoke with TA, Jim Welch and Selectman Leach on how to settle this issue. Waters said that Russell threatened him. Waters said he will call the state, put complaint on social media, print out the complaint and put on people's doors. Waters complaint was verbal and when Selectman Leach asked Waters to put his complaint in an email he refused. Lucas Waters has a video of the confrontation with Highway Superintendent Russell but refused to let anyone on the Selectboard view the video.

Police Chief, Cullett mentioned this was reported to police and it was reported as suspicious activity on Haskell Road. Police Chief Cullett stated that if Lucas Waters' car had been parked outside the Russell house when he arrived, he would have questioned Waters.

Highway Superintendent Russell stated that when he pulled up in the Highway Department yard he never swore at Waters. Russell explained to Waters that no one is allowed in the yard and the spool Waters took was the one the

highway employees were using as a picnic table. According to Russell, the gates to the highway department are always closed.

Russell stated that he hadn't spoken to Waters about the driveway curb cut for over a year. On one occasion Waters had asked Russell to clean up his driveway with the town truck. As the Highway Superintendent, Russell stated that he must question driveway permits because he represents the town and enforces the bylaws. Russell mentioned that for the past three years Lucas Waters follows him home and watches Russell go in the house. Russell asked Waters, "why are you stalking my house while my wife and kids are home?" Russell also stated that he never threatened Waters nor did he say he would hurt him. Russell mentioned that plowing his personal driveway was reported to ethics and the complaint was dropped by Ethics.

Selectman Cullett stated that the Selectboard had formally give permission to Highway Superintendent Russell to plow snow at the Russell residence with the town truck. The incident is concerning because it is a dead-end street and Russell's wife, and children were frightened enough to call the police. Waters said I can see where this is going.

Selectman Haskins asked if there was a driveway before Waters purchased the property. Russell stated there was a horseshoe driveway already in but never a curb cut, and it needs a blacktop apron. Selectman Haskins mentioned that Highway Superintendent Russell is doing his job.

Selectman Cullett again asked Lucas Waters to let the Selectboard view the video. Waters refused to show the video to anyone. Selectman Cullett asked Waters how he expected the Selectboard to discipline an employee without sharing a video to support his allegations. Refusing to share evidence against an employee makes it impossible for the Selectboard to do anything about the complaint. Waters stated I am leaving because I can see where this is going. Lucas Waters left the executive session.

Selectman Cullett, motion to deem complaint unfounded because Lucas Waters was unwilling to provide evidence to support unfounded complaint. Lucas Waters complaint was unfounded because complaint was unsubstantiated, Selectman Leach second, All in favor 3-0.

Selectman Leach motion to adjourn executive session at 6:52 p.m., Selectman Leach-Yes, Selectman Cullett-Yes, Selectman Haskins-Yes. Executive session was adjourned at 6:52 p.m. vote 3-0

Items used:

MGL: Chapter 30A section 21

Respectfully Submitted,

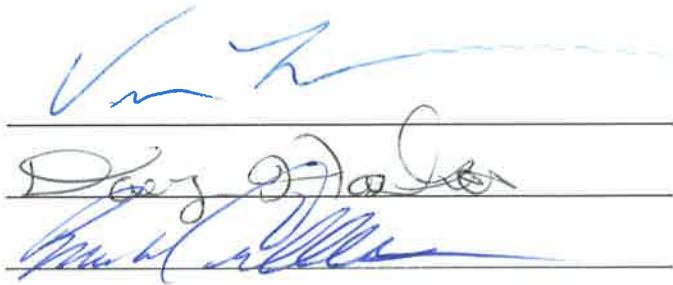
*Terry L. Walker*  
*Administrative Assistant*

Verne Leach, Chairman

Doug Haskins, Selectman

Bruce Cullett, Selectman

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



RECEIVED  
APR 25 2022  
Kim Leach  
TOWN CLERK  
TOWN OF PERU