

Town Hall 3 East Main Road Peru MA, 01235

## Select Board Meeting Minutes: October 15, 2024 @ 6 PM

Town Hall Meeting Room

### Public Official Attendance List:

Verne Leach, Chairman/ACO

Sam Haupt, Selectman

Bruce Cullett, Police Chief/EMD

Dan Cawthron, Fire Chief

Justin Russell, Highway Supervisor

Terry Walker, Town Administrator

Brian Forgue, Recording Secretary

### Public Attendees:

Paul Bowlby

Item 1: Call to Order: Chairman Leach called the Meeting to order at 6 pm

Item 2: Roll Call: Chairman Leach present, Selectman Haupt present, Selectman Munch absent

Item 3: State Recording Status: N/A

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

Item 5: Review and Approve Board of Selectmen Meeting Minutes for 9/16/24 and 9/30/24

### Item 6: Updates from Departments:

#### Police Department/Emergency Management/Building Committee:

- Chief Cullett reports that the Police Department completed Fall Firearms Qualification and Skills Training on October 5th. Officer Sniezek will be returning to the State Police later this month and his last day with us will be October 22nd.
- EMD Cullett reports that the Bobcat UTV was picked up from Southside Sales last week and thanked Highway Supt Russell for assisting with this. The Bobcat UTV invoice is in this week's payables. EMD Cullett provided a quote from Kimtek Corporation for a skid unit for the UTV that everyone had agreed upon. The Quote was \$6575 including \$325 for crating and shipping. EMD Cullett explained that the UTV grant will have just over \$4,278 remaining after the purchase of the UTV and he is including the skid unit in the FFY 2024 EMPG Application which is due October 30th. EMD Cullett stated that the skid unit purchase could not take place until the EMPG had been awarded.

Building Committee Chairman Cullett reports that the Committee hopes to have the RFQ for the Feasibility Study completed during their meeting tomorrow night (October 16th). It includes KP Law's standard contract for architectural/engineering services as the contract for the project. The Committee requests that the BOS meet next week to review and approve the RFQ so that we can get it advertised and listed in Central Register and Comm-Buys. The advertisement will also run in the Berkshire Eagle. There will be a pre-bid walk-through of the Town Hall building as part of the process.

#### Highway Department:

- Department got their scheduled pavement and road reclamation done
- Supervisor Russell received an invoice of \$8,000 for their Ford 550, stating the HD needs to replace the starter, the vehicle is frozen out of 4-wheel drive, and they would like to get the frame and body painted along with the tailgate repaired. The DPF filter in the truck was also subject to a recall from Ford, which helps the repair situation even though they weren't originally notified. invoice of \$8,000
- The HD put in a turn-around for a couple who recently got a driveway permit in the near future

#### Fire Department:

- The Fire Department is applying for the EFS grant, similar to last year
- Replacing radios is a high priority, with Chief Cawthron estimating they will each cost \$3,517, with about \$705 needing to be covered by the Town, and final numbers being known by Friday. Selectman Haupt asked if that amount would come out of the Selectboard budget or Fire budget, Chief Cawthron said the Fire budget. The department is hoping to get 3 radios.
- Chief Cawthron would like a contact information change on the website, as resident emails are going to Town emails instead of Fire dispatch inboxes. Chairman Leach suggested contacting Clerk Leach on this issue.

#### Town Administrator:

- Working with the accountant to fix the FY21 Green Community Grant lighting project balance sheet, which appears in deficit and could lower Free Cash. TA Walker clarified that \$10,000 was entered into the wrong account, so the invoices were paid from one account and the receivable was receipted in another account.
- TA Walker attended the Elder Services Meeting, which had over 250 members in attendance, including Rep. Pignatelli. Throughout the meeting, it was recognized that over 200,000 meals on wheels have been served, with SHINE services helping over 4,000 residents. Peru was recognized for their work, but it was requested a COA Director be appointed in Town soon; the Board agreed that was a priority.
- TA Walker, as Peru's Grant Writer, announced that Peru has been awarded a \$1M MassWorks grant, citing its competitiveness and potential benefit to the Town. TA Walker also thanked Supervisor Russell for his help and expertise on this application. Selectman Haupt asked if an announcement of the award can be placed on the website, TA Walker said not yet, the award can't be posted until Boston does a press release.

#### Item 7: Discussion of Buildings and Vehicles coverage for MIA with Paul Bowlby:

- Paul Bowlby from MIA is happy to help Peru with our questions, and although he started in June is very familiar with Berkshire County problems. Paul believes that either Deb or Jordan is our MIA representative, and that our rep will reach out and do inspections in the next few weeks
- Chairman Leach and Supervisor Russell asked when values were determined, Paul responded that Jordan could answer and provide an assessment/inspection.
- Supervisor Russell discussed the Highway garage valuations, mentioning that one garage has personal property inside and the other is worth \$300,000 with no personal property; Paul will relay this to Jordan
- Selectman Haupt thinks the list is not clear with replacement/indemnity costs, and wants someone to do an appraisal to guarantee insurance coverage; Paul responded that only the number on the list can be the maximum.
- TA Walker asked about the initial 10/7 deadline on the MIA paperwork, Paul said just to get it signed and sent to him and Jordan and the deadline will be revised.
- Paul advised to add the serial number/VIN number of a vehicle to add it to the list, but mentioned that it is general MIA policy to help cover Town vehicles not on the list in emergency situations.
- Selectman Haupt mentioned the 2005 International, which is owned by the FD, shouldn't be on the list because it is already covered by the Town vehicle policy. Paul said to cross it off the list, the Town shouldn't be paying for something already insured.
- Chief Cullett asked if a used vehicle should be listed as the price the Town bought it for new or the cost of the vehicle new; Paul advised to list the cost new
- The Board discussed police vehicles on the list, with Selectman Haupt not seeing the command vehicle on the list; Chairman Leach mentioned there are 2 police explorers, a '17 and a '22, and the Town auctioned off the Expedition.
- Supervisor Russell mentioned the list doesn't have the Cat Roller the Town bought a few years ago, Paul concurred that it isn't on the registered vehicle list. Paul advised that should vehicles go up in value after use, add it to special property covered.
- TA Walker will follow up when MIA comes to do inspections/appraisals
- Paul asked about the Building Committee effort to look for an RFQ of the Town Hall building, and the potential replacement/repair; he mentioned that MIA has a building risk policy that covers buildings up to \$3.1M in value. Paul asked to be kept in the loop about this project.
- Chief Cullett asked if MIA has certain contracting requirements; Paul said following state/industry standards is good

**Item 8: Discussion and Possible Vote on Civic Plus Invoice:**

- TA Walker has had success in getting the \$250 interest waived, considering the Town never received the notice. As the Town has only \$1,938 in the website account, TA Walker would like the remaining \$95 to come out of the Selectboard Miscellaneous Spending Account.
- TA Walker further clarified that she let CivicPlus know we didn't receive the annual invoice, to which they replied they sent it to our Accountants, and mentioned she checks the Selectman's mailbox 3 or 4

times a week. Chairman Leach mentioned this company has done some training for Town employees in the past, and that it's unclear if we have a written contract now. Chairman Leach suggested Terry ask IT to allow her to access the Accounting email.

- Chairman Leach made a motion to pay the remaining \$95 out of the Selectmen's account, Selectman Haupt seconded, 2-0

**Item 9: Discussion and Possible Vote on signing State Election Warrant:**

- Reviewed warrant, Chairman Leach motioned to approve the State Election Warrant, Selectman Haupt seconded, 2-0

**Item 10: Update on Community Center:**

- Still no report from DPH, front entrance cement work scheduled for the morning of 10/22.

**Item 11: Review and Approve Accounts Payable, Treasury Warrant and Payroll Warrant:**

- The Board and Chief Cullett continued to discuss pay rates for police officers working the election, with Chairman Leach mentioning the grant only covers officer overtime, and there is normally no overtime in part-time Police Departments. Chief Cullett said this was brought up in his Homeland Security Meeting this morning, and they are not sure how this will affect small departments. Chief Cullett will be finding out reimbursement rates for individual Towns.
- Chairman Leach asked if the Chief had promised anyone specific rates yet, and the Chief responded that it was agreed upon at the last Meeting. Selectman Haupt mentioned that they agreed on rates for the primary and Chief Cullett stated that the detail rate was for all state and federal elections. Chairman Leach said the Town can go with what was in the letter, reimbursed up to \$1,000, with the awareness from Chief Cullett that other local small Towns are already filling up election staff from outside of Town.
- Selectman Haupt asked about backfill, with Chief Cullett responding that backfill is forced overtime on someone else to fill a vacancy in the department (e.g., a traffic officer is taken to work the election, someone else outside of the Department has to work overtime to fill the traffic vacancy)
- Selectman Haupt asked if the Chief was confident the issue can be resolved, Chief Cullett responded that it is still unclear on needed documentation, and there is conflicting info being given to the Franklin County Council of Governments, but he thinks this will be clarified. Chief Cullett also believes collective bargaining makes backfill an issue, with Chairman Leach wanting to confirm that if this pay is not reimbursable the Police Department budget has enough to cover the cost.
- Selectman Leach mentioned that it has been 3 years since the upstairs of the Town Hall had warm water, and it would be \$300 to fix that. The Board agreed that was a good use of funds
- Chairman Leach asked about the lock on the front door, Selectman Haupt said it hasn't been delivered yet but will check LockShop. The Board also agreed that a sliding window that can lock should be placed for the Town Clerk Office after the recent break-in.

**Item 12: Public Input:**

- Chief Cullett mentioned the new UTV is in the police garage if anyone is interested in seeing it.
- The Board agreed to look into shared files/new email for the Recording Secretary position, and to check if there is an extra computer.
- Chairman Leach asked about our call-out policy, TA Walker can't find our policy but is looking at other Town's to help with a rewrite

**Item 13: Adjourn:** Chairman Leach made a motion to adjourn the Meeting at 7:22, Selectman Haupt seconded, 2-0

- The Board confirmed there will be another Selectboard Meeting on Monday, 10/21/24..

**Articles Used:**

9/16/24 and 9/30/24 Minutes

Payroll/Warrants

MassWorks grant award letter

Civic Plus invoices

Submitted by,  
Brian Forgue

Verne Leach, Chairperson: \_\_\_\_\_

Sam Haupt, Selectman: \_\_\_\_\_

Ed Munch, Selectman: \_\_\_\_\_

Date Approved: 11-25-24

Received 11/26/2024  
Kim Leach, Town Clerk