

TOWN MEETING MINUTES
PERU, VT
MARCH 6, 2018

Peru's Moderator, Gary Ameden, called the meeting to order at 10:00am. Gary welcomed everyone to the 2018 Peru Town Meeting and asked all those who are new to Town to stand and introduce themselves. Leslie and Michael Bacon, Brian Goodro, and Genie McGuire all introduced themselves. John Birch introduced his daughter Lilly, a 7th grader at Flood Brook School. Gary asked all to stand and recite the Pledge of Allegiance. He then read a poem by Marshall Squier titled "Community".

Warning: As read by Gary- The legal voters of Peru are hereby warned and notified to meet at the Peru Town Center on Tuesday March 6, 2018 at the hour of 10:00am to act on the following articles:

ARTICLE 1: To hear and act on the reports of the Town Officers. John Maher made a motion to move the article and Ben Freeman seconded. As there was no discussion or comment Gary asked if those assembled were ready for the question. All in favor, motion passed.

ARTICLE 2: To elect Town Officers as the law directs.

Moderator: Todd Williams, Selectboard Chair, asked for nominations for Town Moderator. John Maher nominated Gary Ameden and Lorri Ameden seconded the motion. As no others were nominated all in favor, motion passed by voice vote.

- Moderator - 1 year Gary Ameden

Town Clerk: Donna Williams nominated Jill Braddish and Sally Ogden seconded the motion. Hearing no other nominations proposition B was moved by Garry Sharon and seconded by Jay Ouellette. All in favor, motion passed by voice vote.

- Town Clerk - 1 year Jill Braddish

Treasurer: Grant Braddish nominated Donna Williams and John Maher seconded the motion. Hearing no other nominations proposition B was moved by Roberta Baker and seconded by Lorri Ameden. All in favor, motion passed by voice vote.

- Town Treasurer - 1 year Donna Williams

Selectboard: Fran Stelz nominated Gail Acosta and Todd Williams seconded the motion. Hearing no other nominations proposition B was moved by Grant Braddish and seconded by Garry Sharon. All in favor, motion passed by voice vote.

- Selectboard - 3 year Gail Acosta

Lister: Jack Pennypacker nominated Brian Goodro and Rebecca Williams seconded the motion. Hearing no other nominations proposition B was moved by Grant Braddish and seconded by Garry Sharon. All in favor, motion passed by voice vote.

- Lister - 3 year Brian Goodro

Auditor: Chuck Black nominated Karen Utiger and John Maher seconded the motion. Hearing no other nominations proposition B was moved by Grant Braddish and seconded by Jillian Joyce. All in favor, motion passed by voice vote.

- Auditor - 3 year Karen Utiger

Cemetery Commission: Stewart Beattie nominated Robert Stelz and Jillian Joyce seconded the motion. Hearing no other nominations proposition B was moved by Todd Williams and seconded by Ben Freeman. All in favor, motion passed by voice vote.

- Cemetery Commission 5 years Robert Stelz

First Constable: Robert Stelz nominated Stewart Beattie and Garry Sharon seconded the motion. Hearing no other nominations proposition B was moved by Garry Sharon and seconded by Grant Braddish. All in favor, motion passed by voice vote.

- First Constable - 1 year Stewart Beattie

Second Constable: Todd Williams nominated Chis Felion and Gail Acosta seconded the motion. Hearing no other nominations proposition B was moved by Roberta Baker and seconded by Lorri Ameden. All in favor, motion passed by voice vote.

- Second Constable - 1 year Chris Felion

Delinquent Tax Collector: Donna Williams nominated John Maher and Chuck Black seconded the motion. Hearing no other nominations proposition B was moved by Grant Braddish and seconded by Garry Sharon. All in favor, motion passed by voice vote.

- Delinquent Tax Collector - 1 year John Maher

Grand Juror: Gail Acosta nominated Hope Richardson and Todd Williams seconded the motion. Hearing no other nominations proposition B was moved by Jillian Joyce and seconded by Jay Ouellette. All in favor, motion passed by voice vote.

- Grand Juror - 1 year Hope Richardson

Town Agent: John Maher nominated Tracy Black and Lorri Ameden seconded the motion. Hearing no other nominations proposition B was moved by Todd Williams and seconded by Jay Ouellette. All in favor, motion passed by voice vote.

- Town Agent - 1 year Tracy Black

Trustee of Public Funds: Barbara Petra nominated Mike Gayda and Ben Freeman seconded the motion. Hearing no other nominations proposition B was moved by Grant Braddish and seconded by Lorri Ameden. All in favor, motion passed by voice vote.

- Trustee of Public Funds - 1 year Mike Gayda

ARTICLE 3:

a) To see if the town will vote to defray the expenses of the town for the fiscal year of July 1, 2018 to June 30, 2019, as set forth in the budgets submitted in the 2018 Town Report, subject to such modifications as this meeting may vote. Chuck Black moved to accept the motion and Lorri Ameden seconded.

Discussion ensued.

Iwanna Reed questioned the dates in the article. It was so noted the article should read “2017 Town Report”.

Ben Freeman inquired about the increase in maintenance expense for the Town buildings. Todd replied that the increase was due to the budgeting of several upcoming projects. One being the painting of the Town Office and the second responding to the loss control report received from PACIF detailing several areas where the Town will need to invest money in order to maintain our insurance coverage. For example, the Town will be required to install a fire monitoring system in all Town buildings.

Stewart Beattie asked in regard to upgrade and safety when will the fire escape be replaced at the Community House. Todd replied that the Fire Inspector reported we did not need a fire escape and therefore it is not on the Selectboard’s agenda to replace it.

Jay Ouellette asked why there is a significant increase in line item 729, Equipment Rental on page 36. Todd explained that the Town has had trouble securing an outside contractor to do our road side mowing. As a result, the Town will be renting a tractor and mower to do our own mowing. The Road crew also plans to mow more frequently to combat the poison parsnip which has become very invasive.

John Birch questioned why the revenue from the Green Mountain National Forest is less. Chuck explained that the revenue is based on timber sales and the project is winding down.

Hearing no other questions, Gary ruled for a voice vote. All in favor, motion passed.

b) To authorize the selectmen to set the rate on the 2018 Grand List to meet the budgets voted. Chuck made a motion to move the article and Jay Ouellette seconded. All in favor, motion passed by voice vote.

c) To establish the date of payment of such taxes. Previous years dates July 1-September 30. Grant Braddish made a motion to move the article and Rebecca Williams seconded. All in favor, motion passed by voice vote.

ARTICLE 4: To see if the Town will vote to accept the provisions made by law for payment of taxes to the Town Treasurer. Grant Braddish made a motion to move the article and Garry Sharon seconded. All in favor, motion passed by voice vote.

ARTICLE 5: Shall the voters prohibit the Town constables from exercising any law enforcement authority, in accordance with 24 V.S.A. 1936a(a)(1)? Barbara Pierce asked how the statute reads and Gary proceeded to read it aloud. Iwana Reed made a motion to move the article and Garry Sharon seconded. All in favor, motion passed by voice vote.

Gary asked that if there were no objections that the Town recognize Linda Joy Sullivan, our State Representative for the Town of Peru at this time. Hearing none, Linda took the floor. Linda advised the Town that many issues are being addressed, primarily education and tax reform. She would love to speak with everyone and is at JJ Hapgood the 1st Sunday of each month. She has distributed a report of what has been going on at the State level.

ARTICLE 6: Shall the voters vote a sum of money to the following organizations which serve the community

Mountain Valley Medical Center	\$3,000.00
Londonderry Volunteer Rescue Squad	\$1,000.00
Visiting Nurse Assn. of VT/NH	\$2,700.00
South Londonderry Free Library	\$1,000.00
Bennington County Conservation District	\$ 300.00
BROC	\$ 200.00
VT Center for Independent Living	\$ 140.00
SW Vermont Council on Aging	\$ 200.00
Center for Restorative Justice	\$ 300.00
Neighborhood Connections	\$1,000.00
Green Up Vermont	\$ 50.00
The Collaborative	\$ 750.00
Flood Brook Athletic Association	\$1,000.00
Project Against Violent Encounters	\$ 150.00
Peru Cemetery Commission	\$3,700.00
Green Mtn. Club-Bromley lookout	\$1,000.00
Bennington County Coalition for the Homeless	\$ 500.00
Rural Fire Protection Task Force	<u>\$ 100.00</u>
Total	\$17,090.00

Garry Sharon made a motion to move the article and Jillian Joyce seconded. Discussion ensued.

John Birch asked why the Peru Cemetery Commission request is so much? Stewart replied that it covers raking leaves, mowing, maintaining and cleaning the stones, and cutting tree limbs. Stewart explained that the Cemetery Commission can only use the interest earned from the perpetual care fund and as interest rates are down they needed to request more in appropriations.

Sandy Birch expressed that Neighborhood Connections is a great organization and is happy to speak with anyone about it.

Grant Braddish pointed out that there was no request letter for the Bennington County Coalition for the Homeless in the Town Report. Todd said the money will be put aside if they request it otherwise it will be rolled back into the budget.

Gary asked for a vote to approve the article as written. All in favor, motion passed with a voice vote.

ARTICLE 7: Shall the voters support the following resolution:

WHEREAS extreme and erratic temperatures, increasingly severe storms, flooding, a rise in tick borne diseases, and threats to farmers and maple sugar makers clearly demonstrate that climate change is one of the most urgent problems facing our state, nation, and world, and

WHEREAS the State of Vermont has a goal in the Comprehensive Energy Plan to achieve 90% of its energy from renewable sources by 2050, yet is making insufficient progress towards achieving that goal;

Now, therefore, be it resolved:

1. That the Town urges the State of Vermont to:
 - a. Halt any new or expanded fossil fuel infrastructure, including but not limited to energy pipelines;
 - b. Firmly commit to at least 90% renewable energy for all people in Vermont, with firm interim deadlines: and,
 - c. Ensure that the transition to renewable energy is fair and equitable for all residents with no harm to low-income people, people of color, or rural communities.

2. That the Town will do our part to meet these demands by committing to efforts such as:
 - a. Protecting town lands from fossil fuel infrastructure, denying easements or agreements for any pipelines crossing town lands;
 - b. Enlisting state support in weatherizing town buildings and installing alternative energy, such as roof top solar to town structures;
 - c. Other initiatives to improve the quality of life while helping to reduce overall use of energy. (By petition)

Jay Ouellette made a motion to move the article and Jillian Joyce seconded. Discussion ensued.

Ben Freeman publicly voiced his support of this resolution.

Barbara Pierce asked who wrote this resolution. Jillian explained it was a cooperative effort of concerned citizens all over the State.

Rob Tobia would like 2.b. of the article to mention wind. No motion was made.

Genie Mcguire wanted to know if there were any town initiatives going on regarding energy efficiency. Brian Goodro suggested the Town of Peru create an Energy committee to establish a town wide initiative. Hope Richardson commented that there was a committee and it dissolved because there was no interest. Sandy Birch asked if anyone would be interested in spearheading this committee.

Sandy Birch made a motion to move the article as written and Ben Freeman seconded.

ARTICLE 8: To transact any other business that may properly come before the meeting.

Todd Williams wanted to take a minute to publicly thank Margaret Cobb for her years of service. She always had the public interest in mind. There was a big round of applause.

Jack Pennypacker wanted to thank Jan Georgette for her 20+ years of service. He also wants to let the public know that the Listers will be meeting at 9 am every Wednesday as needed and invites anyone to come. Jack also shared that the Town of Peru will be taking part in a statewide mapping project where tax maps will be available online. However, many other towns have gone beyond the statewide requirements and have also made available more detailed information including lister cards and the availability to access bordering properties as examples. This comes as an additional expense to the Town but if you are interested in this please give feedback to the Selectboard.

Hope Richardson expressed her personal mission to ban plastic grocery bags and urged everyone to use cloth bags.

Iwanna Reed asked if the Selectboard would consider moving the meeting to 9am rather than 10am so people could return to work sooner.

Julie Bacon asked about the feasibility of paving Lovers Lane. Todd agreed that the road does get bad during mud season especially the end near Route 11. However, there are alternative routes people can use and the Selectboard has prioritized roads that do not have any other alternate routes.

Stewart Beattie pointed out corrections to be made to the Town report on page 4. The Emergency number for the fire warden was not listed and the state police emergency number is 911.

Jay Ouellete introduced himself as a member of the Taconic and Green Board and offered to answer any questions regarding the budget.

Bob Stelz would like to see candidate night restored 2 weeks before Town Meeting.

Mary Schwartz talked about Neighborhood connections and how they are conducting a transportation survey. She encouraged people to fill out and return the survey.

Fran Tobia announced she is in charge of the Peru Fair and invites anyone looking to get involved to speak with her or email the Peru Fair Committee at perufair@gmail.com.

Stewart Beattie made a motion that the Selectboard include a provision in next year's warning to include an Australian ballot. Peter Berman seconded. Discussion ensued. Gary ruled for a voice vote. Nay's won.

Jennie Freeman gave a brief update on the West River Sports Association.

Jim Potter spoke from the standpoint of someone who lives in the center of Town, to the blatant disregard of the stop signs and speed limit in Town. Discussion ensued on ways to resolve this problem.

Todd spoke about The Kelton Family Community Fund which has been created by Art and Elaine Kelton. The fund was designed for the benefit of the Town of Peru to enhance the well-being of the community and its citizen's. Grants made from the fund will benefit education, community building, beautification, or provide a needed service or facility improvement for the residents of Peru. Recently, Barbara Petra applied for and received a grant to have historic pictures restored and framed. There are now on display at the Town Office. Todd read the following statement from the Art and Elaine Kelton:

"Elaine and I were very pleased to help restore and reframe these photos. I remember looking at the pictures at the Community House when I was a boy. We look forward to doing other projects to benefit the Town."

Chuck made a motion to adjourn the meeting, Lorri seconded the motion. All in favor, Gary Adjourned the meeting at 11:31am.

Respectfully Submitted,
Jill Braddish
Peru Town Clerk
Dated March 7, 2018
