

# ***Town of Peru Finance Committee Meeting***

*Town Hall Meeting Room/Gymnasium*

*Peru Town Hall*

*3 East Main Road*

*Peru, MA 01235*

## ***Meeting Agenda***

Wednesday, March 19, 2025

6:00 p.m.

1. Call to order
2. State Recording Status
3. Roll Call
4. Pledge of Allegiance
5. Review and Approval of Meeting Minutes for March 5, 2025
6. Presentation of proposed FY 26 Peru Town Clerk Budget by Town Clerk Kim Leach.
7. Presentation of proposed FY 26 Tax Collector/Treasurer Budget by Tax Collector/Treasurer Caryn Wendling.
8. Presentation of proposed FY26 Police Department Budget by Chief Bruce Cullett.
9. Discussion, Deliberation, and possible vote on Fiscal Year 2026 Budget Line Items and Departmental Requests.
10. Public Input
11. Adjournment

This Agenda includes matters reasonably anticipated by the Finance Committee which may be discussed and other items not listed may also be brought up for discussion to the extent permitted by law.

Official Posting at Town of Peru Website: [www.townofperuma.com](http://www.townofperuma.com)

Town of Peru Finance Committee, Approved by Bruce Cullett, Chair

## Finance Committee Meeting

Town Hall Meeting Room/Gymnasium, 3 East Main Rd. Peru, MA

Wednesday, March 19, 2025, 6:00 P.M.

1. **Call to order:** Fin Com Chairman Cullett called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.  
In attendance: Terry Walker-Recording Secretary, Bonny DiTomasso, Tax Collector/ Treasurer  
Wendling, Town Clerk Leach, Verne Leach, Jamie Leach

2. **Recording Status:** Verne Leach recording

### **Roll Call Finance Committee:**

- a. Paul Hickling-Present
- b. Bruce Cullett-Present
- c. Sam Haupt-Present
- d. Doug Haskins-absent
- e. Robin Wadsworth-Absent

3. **Pledge Allegiance to the Flag:** Led by Fin Com Chairman Cullett

4. **Review and approve minutes from March 5, 2025 Finance Meeting:**

Fin Com member Haupt motion to approve March 5, 2025, minutes, Fin Com Chairman Cullett second, 3-0.

5. **Presentation of proposed FY26 Peru Town Clerk Budget by Town Clerk Kim Leach.**

- Town Clerk Salary increased by \$4,391.00
- Town Clerk Expenses decreased by \$200.00
- Asst. Town Clerk Salary decreased by \$311.00
- Elections decreased by \$2,350.00
- Dog Licensing Maint fee \$595.00
- Ex-Officio Board of Reg \$50.00
- Dog Licensing Maint fee FY25 Free Cash

Town Clerk Leach is requesting a 41% raise to be more in line with towns with a comparable population. This information was obtained from the FY25 Town Clerk Association's yearly salary survey. Town Clerk Leach mentioned that in September 2025 she will have served the town as Town Clerk for 9 years. Her base salary covers everything except elections, and she is paid separately for. Clerk Leach also mentioned she receives fees for licensing dogs which are \$.75 per license and she sells 150-200 dog licenses per year. The Assistant Town Clerk Salary has been decreased because only 40% of the FY25 budget has been spent. Town Clerk Leach mentioned that her workload is increasing and

there is a huge turnover with clerks. Fin Com Chairman mentioned that the town clerk salary was adjusted 2 years ago, and she should be prepared to answer questions at ATM on such a significant increase. Fin Com Member Haupt and Fin Com member Hickling thanked Town Clerk Leach for her service to the town. Fin Com Member Hickling felt that it is important to retain good people but asked Town Clerk Leach if her raise could be spread over the course of a few years. Fin Com member Hickling and Fin Com member Haupt both supported the increase and felt that it was in line with other comparable Town Clerk salaries.

6. Presentation of proposed FY26 Tax Collector/ Treasurer Budget by Tax Collector/Treasurer Caryn Wendling:

- Treasurer Salary increased by \$2,487.00
- Treas/ Account Exp. Increased by \$0.00
- Bank Service Charge increased by \$0.00
- Tax Collector Salary increased by \$2,487.00
- Tax Collector Exp increased by \$0.00
- Tax Taking Charges increased by \$500.00
- Mass Unemp/DUA increased by \$0.00

Treasurer Wendling is requesting a 19% raise in both Treasurer and Tax Collector Salaries. She is basically asking for \$30.00 per hour, 10 hours as Tax Collector and 10 hours for Treasurer. Caryn also mentioned that this is her 24th-year working for the Town of Peru. Caryn mentioned that \$30.00 per hour is being paid to inexperienced assistants in other towns. Caryn mentioned that with new laws parcels taken in tax title must be listed with a real estate company. The tax title account may need to be increased since property cannot be auctioned off and must be handled through a real estate company. She explained that with new laws it is very complicated to dispose of town property. Fin Com Haupt asked Tax Collector Wendling if there had been any progress on collecting past due taxes. Caryn mentioned that there is still a large amount owed to the town, but she is actively pursuing back taxes. Fin Com member Haupt stated that the town cannot lose Caryn.

7. Presentation of proposed FY26 Police Department Budget by Chief Bruce Cullett:

In order for, Fin Com Chairman Cullett to recuse himself with two people being absent, the Fin Com would lose a quorum. Therefore, no presentation or discussion occurred. This was tabled until the next meeting..

8. Discussion, Deliberation and possible vote on Fiscal Year 2026 Budget Line items and Departmental Requests:

The Board of Health budget was revised from \$16,000 to \$12,862. The Board of Health can use the town credit card for postage; therefore, postage was reduced by \$100.00. Finance Committee in agreement with revisions.

- Conservation Commission \$ 500.00
- Assessor Koziara Salary increased from \$18,720 to \$21,840
- Patriots 3-year contract \$25,000
- Fin Com Chairman Cullett explained that it is tough to come through for everyone, and Sue is excellent at what she does. Plus, the Assessor's office has turned around with her leadership.

Transportation of the student going to McCann was discussed briefly and Fin Com Chairman Cullett mentioned that the town could purchase a van to transport students to vocational schools which would save money in transportation costs. Fin Com Chairman Cullett mentioned that a 15-passenger van would be very easy to maintain. If the driver was not able to drive, then a Peru Police Officer or Highway Dept employee could be substitute drivers. Fin Com Chairman mentioned that the if the town owned the van the COA could utilize the van in summer months. Fin Com member Haupt does not object to the town purchasing a van.

Fin Com Chairman Cullett felt that Chapter 90 funding could be used for the new truck on the Highway Department Wish List.

CBRSD Operating and Transportation increase 8%  
CBRSD Capital increase 36%

9. **Public Input-** Justin Russell mentioned that more detailed bids are needed for the new roof on the salt shed. Plus, the bids must include prevailing wage. Bonny DiTomaso was concerned about property owners not registered to vote in Peru sending their children to school and Peru paying the tuition. Bonny mentioned that she believed 4 students' tuition was paid by Peru and they are not living in town.

10. **Adjourn:**

Fin Com Chairman Cullett motion to adjourn meeting at 7:34 p.m., Fin Com member Hickling second, unanimous vote to adjourn 3/19/2025 meeting at 7:34 p.m. 3-0.

Articles used:

Finance Committee minutes from 7/9/2024  
Budget request Treasurer/ Tax Collector  
Budget request Town Clerk  
Patriots 3-year contract  
Conservation Commission Budget Request  
Assessor's Budget Revision

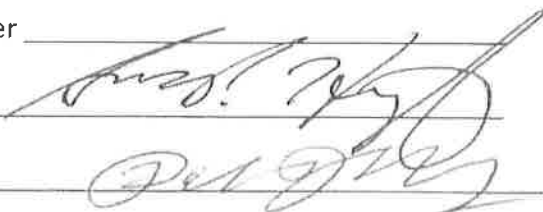
Respectively submitted,

*Terry L Walker*  
*Recording Secretary*

Douglas Haskins, Fin Com Member \_\_\_\_\_

Samuel Haupt, Fin Com Member \_\_\_\_\_

Paul Hickling, Fin Com Chairman \_\_\_\_\_



Robin Wadsworth, Fin Com Member \_\_\_\_\_

Bruce Cullett, Fin Com Member *Bruce Cullett*

Date: 5/5/25

RECEIVED  
MAY 05 2025  
*Kim Leach*  
TOWN CLERK  
TOWN OF PERU

INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM

*Treasurer / Tax Collector*

TO: Town of Peru Department Heads  
 FROM: Board of Selectmen  
 SUBJECT: Fiscal Year 2026 Yearly Budget  
 DATE: 16-Dec-24

Please submit your Preliminary Budget for FY26 no later than February 11, 2025 using the format shown below. Please submit electronically to: [townadmin@townofperuma.com](mailto:townadmin@townofperuma.com)

Account Number	Account name	FY25 Budget	FY26 Budget request	
10145.00	Treasurer Salary	13112.72	15,600.00	
10145.02	Treas/Account Exp	1,500.00	1,500.00	
10145.03	Bank Service Charge	100.00	100.00	
10145.04	Treas Tax Title Exp	6,000.00	??	Need to discuss
10145.05	Treas/Acct Software	13,941.87		waiting for numbers
10146.00	Tax Collector Salary	13,112.72	15,600.00	
10146.01	Tax Collector Exps	1,500.00	1,500.00	
10146.02	Tax Taking Charges	1,500.00	2,000.00	
10146.05	Tax Coll An Comp Spt	11,411.17		waiting for numbers
70750.90	Interest on Loans	1,000.00		Need to discuss
70750.90	ATM Interest on Loan	15,000.00		Need to discuss
90912.00	BC Retirement Assmt	62,960.00	63800	waiting for numbers
90913.00	Mass Unemply/DUA	600.00	600	
90915.00	Medicare/Twn Share	6,300.00		need to discuss
90919.00	Health Insurance	142,450.56		need to calculate

Submitted by: \_\_\_\_\_ Caryn E. Wendling

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ 18-Mar-25

Should your department require a major purchase in FY26, please submit separately along with description, justification and estimated cost.

Thank you,  
 Peru Board of Selectmen

Town Clerk

TO: Town of Peru Department Heads  
FROM: Board of Selectmen  
SUBJECT: Fiscal Year 2026 Yearly Budget  
DATE: 16-Dec-24

Account Number	Account name	FY25 Budget	FY26 Budget request	
<b>10161</b>	<b>Town Clerk Salary</b>	<b>10,609</b>	<b>15,000</b>	<b>4,391</b>
<b>10161.01</b>	<b>Town Clerk Expense</b>	<b>2,200</b>	<b>2,000</b>	<b>-200</b>
<b>1016.02</b>	<b>Asst Town Clerk Salary</b>	<b>2,811</b>	<b>2,500</b>	<b>-311</b>
<b>10161.03</b>	<b>Elect &amp; Bd. Of Reg Exp</b>	<b>5,850</b>	<b>3,500</b>	<b>-2,350</b>
	<b>Dog License Program</b>	<b>3,100</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>-3,100</b>
	<b>Dog Lic Prog.Maint.Fee</b>	<b>595</b>	<b>595</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>MGL-Chapter 41, Section 19G</b>	<b>Ex-Officio Board of Reg.</b>		<b>50</b>	<b>50</b>
<b>Total Budget Amount</b>		<b>25,165</b>	<b>23,645</b>	<b>-1,520</b>
				<b>Less than FY 2025</b>

I ask that the Select Board and Finance Committee review the salaries of the comparable towns to Peru and increase the Town Clerk salary to be in line with those salaries.

I've attached the Massachusetts Town Clerks' Association FY25 Salary Survey with a list of comparable towns

3/3/2025

Date: 3/3/2025

Revised 3/19/2025

Massachusetts Town Clerks' Salary Survey -

	Population	Number of Registered Voters	Current Hired Status	What is your annual salary as a City/Town Clerk?
Tolland	471	384	Elected	\$ 17,473.98
Alford	486	371	Appointed	\$ 14,000.00
Heath	723	556	Elected	\$ 19,422.00
Leyden	734	620	Appointed	\$ 15,000.25
Peru	828	679	Elected	\$ 10,609.00
Cummington	829	701	Elected	\$ 15,810.00
Windsor	838	678	Elected	\$ 10,102.00
Huntington	865		Elected	\$ 18,723.00
Goshen	960	799	Elected	\$ 19,673.00
Monterey	1095	796	Appointed	\$ 23,036.00
Worthington	1098		Elected	\$ 18,000.00
Chesterfield	1186	996	Elected	\$ 29,363.00

**Part I**

ADMINISTRATION OF THE GOVERNMENT

**Title VII**

CITIES, TOWNS AND DISTRICTS

**Chapter 41**

OFFICERS AND EMPLOYEES OF CITIES, TOWNS AND DISTRICTS

**Section 19G**

ADDITIONAL COMPENSATION FOR SERVING AS MEMBER OF REGISTRARS OF VOTERS

Section 19G. A clerk of a city or town who also serves as a member of its board of registrars of voters shall, in addition to any compensation to which he may be entitled as city or town clerk, receive the sum of fifty dollars, and, if the number of registered voters exceeds one thousand, an additional fifty dollars for each additional thousand of registered voters or major fraction thereof, provided, however, that the total payment for such service as a member of said board shall not exceed fifteen hundred dollars in any year, except as provided in section nineteen H.

**Peru, MA**

3 East Main Road  
Peru, MA 01235

**PROPOSAL**

Date: 3/17/2025

Susan Koziara  
Ph: 413-655-8312  
[assessors@townofperuma.com](mailto:assessors@townofperuma.com)

Jeff Leone  
(781) 476-2035  
[jeff.leone@catalisgov.com](mailto:jeff.leone@catalisgov.com)

**1. Scope of Agreement**

In consideration of the compensation set forth herein, the COMPANY agrees to provide the following services in compliance with the Massachusetts Department of Revenue regulations, as they currently exist:

**A. Certification – Fiscal Year 2026:**

1. Provide an on-site update of the progress of all building permits and will make the necessary changes to the property record cards. Catalis will enter all changes into the AssessPRO System.
2. Analyze and evaluate the data on those improved parcels located throughout the Town that have sold in Calendar Years 2023 to 2025. The purpose of this analysis is to validate arm's-length sales and inventory status as of date of sale.
3. Analyze all vacant land sales that occurred during calendar years 2023 to 2025.
4. In the event that there are not enough valid land sales to help determine the value of land as of January 1, 2025, then development of land residuals to conform to any Department of Revenue requirements will be provided.
5. Analyze all available income and expense statements for the purpose of applying the income approach to the Commercial and Industrial properties. A minimum of two (2) approaches to value will be utilized on the Commercial and Industrial property where applicable.
6. Adjust all value tables, depreciation tables, land tables, and any other requirements of the system, to insure equitable assessments on all Real and Taxable Personal Property for fiscal year 2026.

7. Field review Real Property for valuation consistency and make the necessary property valuation changes to reflect the following: location, quality of construction, condition of improvements, depreciation, or any other obvious physical changes not previously recorded.
8. Generate all required spreadsheets, reports, or other documentation necessary for the "Certification" by the Massachusetts Department of Revenue for the valuation date of January 1, 2025.
9. Complete all the above on or before October 1, 2025.

**B. Taxable Personal Property for Fiscal Years 2026, 2027 and 2028**

1. Analyze the Forms of List returned by the owners of the existing Taxable Personal Property and validate the information by reviewing the data in the Personal Property system and making the necessary changes to the tax base.
2. Review the telecommunication and gas line companies listing submitted by the Department of Revenue and update the taxable inventory accordingly.
3. Manually research local phone book and business listings for verification of existing and potentially new Taxable Personal Property accounts.
4. All potentially new Taxable Personal Property accounts will be visited for determination of taxability status each fiscal year.
5. All new Taxable Personal Property accounts discovered will be listed, priced and added to the tax base each fiscal year.
6. All businesses determined to be exempt from taxation during the discovery program will be entered into the Personal Property system for future reference.
7. If the MUNICIPALITY requires additional Personal Property inspections of the existing accounts, quotes will be provided upon requests.

**C. Interim Year Valuation Adjustments - Fiscal Years 2027 and 2028:**

1. Provide an on-site update of the progress of all building permits and will make the necessary changes to the property record cards. Catalis will data enter all changes into the AssessPRO System.
2. Analyze and evaluate the data on those improved parcels located throughout the Town that have sold in the previous year and are pertinent for each of the "Interim Year" valuation adjustments. The purpose of this analysis is to validate arm's-length sales and inventory status as of date of sale for proper analysis and calculation table adjustments.

3. Analyze all applicable vacant land sales
4. Analyze all available income and expense statements for the purpose of adjusting, if necessary, the income approach on all Commercial and Industrial Properties where applicable.
5. Adjust all value tables, depreciation tables, land tables, and any other requirements of the system (LA-15) to insure equitable "Interim Year" valuation adjustments on all Real Property for fiscal years 2027 and 2028.
6. Generate all required documentation necessary to support the "Interim Year" valuation adjustments" of the Real property in compliance with the Massachusetts Department of Revenue regulations, as they currently exist.

2. **General Conditions:**

1. The COMPANY will meet and work with the Chief Assessor as necessary in gathering, analyzing, and inputting data.
2. The COMPANY will be responsible for the data entry of all changes to residential property and Personal Property record cards, including the annual Income and Expense statements and Forms of List returned by the Commercial, Industrial and Personal property owners.
3. The MUNICIPALITY will be responsible for all mailings and postage.
4. The services shall be rendered for a contract period of 36 months, beginning on July 1, 2025, and ending on June 30, 2028. Dates may be changed by mutual written agreement between the MUNICIPALITY and the COMPANY.
5. The COMPANY's work will reflect a complete knowledge of the requirements of the Commissioner of Revenue for "Certification", "Interim Year" valuation adjustments and Massachusetts laws, whether of statutory or judicial origin, and any other law or regulation relating to property tax assessment administration.
6. 504 Valuations are not included in this project and will be quoted separately upon request.

3. Compensation

In consideration of the services to be performed by the COMPANY, the MUNICIPALITY shall pay the COMPANY the following amount:

**Seventy-Five Thousand Dollars  
\$75,000.00**

Level funded over (3) fiscal years

**FY2026: \$25,000.00**

**FY2027: \$25,000.00**

**FY2028: \$25,000.00**

**Optional/Additional:**

- **ATB: \$3,500.00 per day**
- **504 Valuations: \$2,000.00 per account**



INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM

TO: Town of Peru Department Heads  
 FROM: Board of Selectmen  
 SUBJECT: Fiscal Year 2026 Yearly Budget  
 DATE: 16-Dec-24

Please submit your Preliminary Budget for FY26 no later than February 11, 2025 using the format shown below. Please submit electronically to: [townadmin@townofperuma.com](mailto:townadmin@townofperuma.com)

Account Number	Account name	FY25 Budget	FY26 Budget request
10141	Assessors salaries	25631.73	28380.63
10141.01	Assessors Expense	1000	1000
10141.04	Tax Map Maintenance	1600	1600
10141.12	Assessors Annual	2400	2400
	Computer support		
10141.25	Assessors Utility	3500	3500
	Appraisal		
10141.25	Assessment Services	25000	25000

Submitted by: \_\_\_\_\_ Susan Koziara

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ 10-Feb-25 3/17/2025

Should your department require a major purchase in FY26, please submit separately along with description, justification and estimated cost.

Thank you,  
 Peru Board of Selectmen

Interoffice Memo

Revised

To: Finance Committee

From: Susan Koziara

I have attached an updated budget request showing two changes. The first is to level fund the Assessors's expense account to \$1000 as in previous years. The second is changing the Assessors salaries total. The breakdown is now: Assessors #1 – adding a 3% increase from last year to now being \$3888.38 ( the same ). Assessor # 2 – adding a 3% increase to that would now make it \$2652.25 (the same). Assessor # 3 – would be for me. I am still asking for an hourly rate of \$35.00/hr for 12 hours for a total of \$420.00 per week which would be a yearly salary of \$21,840. I initially said I would take on doing building permits but have decided against it and will leave it for Patriots to continue to do it. So, the total corrected salary amount will be now \$28,380.63.

Please let me know if you have any further questions.

18720 → 21840