

TOWN HALL 3 EAST MAIN ROAD PERU, MA 01235

SELECT BOARD / FINANCE COMMITTEE JOINT MEETING MINUTES:

MONDAY, JANUARY 12, 2026 @ 6:00 P.M.

Town Hall Meeting Room

Verne Leach, Chair Selectman
Samuel Haupt, Selectman
Edward Munch, Selectman
Terry Walker, Recording Secretary
Justin Russell, Highway Superintendent
Bruce Cullett, Police Chief/Finance Committee Chairman
Brandon Mascolo, Finance Committee
Doug Haskins, Finance Committee/Parks and Rec
Paul Hickling, Finance Committee
George Greule, Parks and Rec

Public Attendees: Greg Boino, Michael Henault, Rebecca Sawyer, Aaron Robb- CBRSD, Justin Kaczowski, Selectman Savoy

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

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

Item 3: State Recording status: TA Walker recording, Selectman Leach recording for personal reasons under exemption E

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

Item 5: Review and Approve BOS meeting Minutes for 1/5/2026. Selectman Leach motion to approve minutes pending changes, Selectman Munch second, 3-0

Item 6: Update from Departments:

Police Department:

Chief Cullett mentioned that due to the incident in Hinsdale he was asked to provide mutual aid to the Town of Hinsdale. Last Wednesday night, at the Hinsdale BOS meeting, Chief Cullett was asked to fill in as the acting Chief in Hinsdale since Hinsdale's Chief is on administrative leave. Chief Cullett mentioned that a draft Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is being drawn up. KP Law is preparing the MOU with the details and requirements in both towns for the Peru BOS meeting on Tuesday, January 20th.

Highway Department:

- Superintendent Rusell mentioned that he and TA Walker submitted 2 grants through Grant Central. One grant was written for a new \$250,000 plow truck and if awarded the town would need to fund the balance which is around \$5,000. The second grant was for engineering and permitted for a small bridge grant for \$150,000. Justin mentioned that the MassDOT bridge report stated that the substructure deteriorated, dropping from six to four in two years.

- Justin mentioned that a dog at 77 August Smith Road ran out as Rick was plowing. Rick got out of the truck to make sure the dog was ok. The owners notified Rick that the dog was vicious and he should not get out of the plow truck. Justin asked Dog Officer, Verne Leach, to check on the dog.
- Justin mentioned that the Fire Department moved the army truck and now Superior Propane can pick up the old propane tanks. Justin asked TA Walker to notify Superior Propane that the tanks are accessible for pickup.

Maintenance:

Ed Munch mentioned that he and the electrician are in the middle of a major electrical project to provide outlets for the new office cubicles.

Town Administrator:

TA Walker mentioned that the town will be notified in early Spring if the \$250,000 plow truck grant and \$150,000 small bridge grants are awarded. She mentioned there will be ample time to place the balance of the plow truck on ATM warrant.

Treasurer Wendling asked TA Walker how Jonathon Mejias, Primary Assessor, would be paid. The BOS agreed that Jonathon would be paid Susan Koziars's salary which was 12 hours per week @ \$35.00 per hour.

Item 7: Discussion with Superintendent Michael Henault from Central Berkshire Regional School District:

Michael Henault, Superintendent at Central Berkshire Regional School, met with the BOS mentioning he understands the budgeting constraints in small towns and that many residents are on fixed incomes. Supt. Henault drafted a letter stating the need for Chapter 70 funds and how this affects small towns. He invited the BOS to attend the Finance Committee meeting on January 22nd. He mentioned that the final budget should be available by February 12th. Supt Henault urged open communication between the town and school and that everyone needs to work together. Supt Henault is willing to attend another BOS meeting to discuss the school budget. Selectman Munch mentioned the ongoing issue with Peru paying tuition for students not living in town. Supt. Henault stated that the town must notify the school of residency fraud, the parents will be notified, and each student will be investigated. Supt. Henault reiterated that the BOS needs to send the name of the student, and he will make sure they live in town.

Greg Boino mentioned the 6-year capital plan for Peru and Hinsdale.

1. Trim around the building \$50,000 (Kittridge)
2. Gym floor at Kittridge water running in on the gym floor- doors are higher than gym floor. \$75,000.
3. 3 roofs in 5-6 years for Washington School, Kittridge and the middle school. Supt. Henault mentioned that the roof at Kittridge is not an emergency.
4. Parking Lot at Nessacus - not in the 6-year plan- just spot maintenance.

Supt. Henault will send TA Walker a draft letter to review and send to the governor regarding Chapter 70 funds. The BOS agreed to sign and send the letter to Governor Healey.

Item 8: Discussion with Savoy Selectman Justin Kaczowski about Town Web Design, LLC, Company as a possible choice for Peru's website:

Justin Kaczowski Selectman in Savoy, mentioned that they solicited several website companies for Savoy. He mentioned that Town Web was the most economical website. Savoy needed a simple website that was user friendly, Web Design was affordable and easy to use. Justin mentioned that after a year of using Web Design everyone is very happy with it. Selectman Munch asked if Web Design could look at our town's website and give a demo. Bruce Cullett mentioned that Web Design had already looked at CivicPlus and the quote from Web Design for the Town of Peru was \$1,500.00 annually for 4 years. Also, Web Design could be up and running in 8-12 weeks. Bruce mentioned that the Town of Cheshire uses Web Design. TA Walker was asked to get an opinion from the TA in Cheshire, and the BOS will make a decision once TA Walker gets an opinion from the TA in Cheshire.

Bruce Cullett motion to adjourn Finance Committee meeting at 6:55 p.m., Brandon Mascolo second, 5-0

Item 9: Discussion and possible vote on Job Description for Town of Peru Assessor: The BOS made a few changes and asked TA Walker to revise and bring back to the BOS. placed on hold

Item 10: Discussion and possible vote on a letter to State Legislators about Proposition 2 ½ and Local Aid: Selectman Haupt motion to sign and send letter to the state legislatures, Selectman Leach second, 3.0.

Item 11: Public Input:

- George Greule had concerns about removing the basketball hoops from the gymnasium/meeting room at town hall. He mentioned that the public should have a place in town where they can exercise and play basketball. George wanted to know why the basketball hoops are being taken down.
- Selectman Munch, speaking for the BOS, mentioned that they are making offices in the gymnasium/meeting room because the employees lack office space. Selectman Munch mentioned that he had removed the cages off the windows because this is no longer a gymnasium.
- Doug Haskins asked the BOS when they voted to use the gymnasium for office space and why the Parks and Rec was not invited to the meeting.
- Selectman Leach mentioned that no one had used the gymnasium for quite a few years and the town needed more office space.
- Doug Haskins Parks and Rec felt that the gymnasium/meeting room should be open to the public for activities, especially in the winter. He mentioned that his grandson practices basketball in the gymnasium/ meeting room and by removing the basketball hoops they are taking away from the kids in town.
- Fin Com member Paul Hickling was concerned about the basketballs hitting the cubicles and who would be monitoring the activities if items were damaged or items taken.
- Selectman Haupt mentioned that George Gruele and Doug Haskins' concerns would be taken under advisement.
- Selectman Leach will put on a BOS agenda in the future.

Item 12: Adjourn: Selectman Leach made a motion to adjourn 1/12/2026 BOS Meeting, Selectman Haupt second, Vote 3-0. The 1/12/2026 BOS Meeting adjourned at 7:08 P.M.

Articles used:

1/5/2026 minutes
Web Design packet
Assessor job description
Letter to legislators

Terry Walker
Recording Secretary

Verne Leach, BOS Chairman _____

Samuel Haupt, Selectman _____

Edward Munch, Selectman _____

Date Approved: _____

Bruce Cullett, Chairman Finance Committee 

Paul Hickling, Fin Com 

Doug Haskins, Fin Com _____

Brandon Mascolo, Fin Com 

Samuel Haupt, Fin Com _____

Date Approved: 3/4/2026

Received 3-7-2026
Kim Leach, Town Clerk