

TOWN HALL 3 EAST MAIN ROAD PERU, MA 01235

SELECT BOARD MEETING MINUTES: September 3, 2024 @ 6:00 P.M.

Town Hall Meeting Room

Verne Leach, Chair Selectman/ACO
Ed Munch, Selectman
Sam Haupt, Selectman
Justin Russell, Highway Superintendent
Dan Cawthron, Fire Chief

Public Attendees: Coralie Pelkey, Jay Jewell, Marc DelGrande, Dave Galt, Doug Haskins

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

Item 2: Roll Call: Chair Leach present, Selectman Haupt present, Selectman Munch present

Item 3: State Recording status: 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 8/19/2024.

Mr. Leach moved to approve the 8/19/2024 minutes as written, Mr. Haupt seconded; vote 3-0.

Item 6: Update of Departments:

Highway Superintendent Russell provided a brief report on the status of August Smith Road noting reconstruction would start on 9/4/24. He also wanted to bring to the Board's attention that plowing on Garnet Mtn. and Cornell Lanes will be an issue this winter due to the worsening conditions of both roads emphasizing that Cornell Lane needs gravel. He also requested that the water filters be changed at the fire house ASAP, which Chief Cawthron agreed to take care of.

Item 7: Discussion about the Use of Garnet Lake with Fire Chief Dan Cawthron and Marc DelGrande President of the Garnet Lake Association:

The Select Board noted the receipt of a letter dated August 3, 2024, from the Garnet Lake Association expressing various concerns regarding the fire department's use of Garnet Lake on or about June 11, 2024. Marc DelGrande spoke on behalf of the Association and further explained he had an opportunity to discuss the matter with Chief Cawthron prior to the meeting and was most concerned with the manner in which the department's interest in using the Lake had been communicated to him. He stated that many of the residents would appreciate a direct telephone call well in advance of any use of the Lake, absent an emergency, which he agreed would not warrant notice. Chief Cawthron explained that typically, in a non-emergency situation, Ashmere would be utilized as a water source; however, since Ashmere had recently been chemically treated, the option of using Garnet Lake that day made more sense. After further discussion, Marc agreed that 48-hour notice to an authorized Board member, such as himself, would be sufficient. Mr. Haupt noted that since Peru relies on Hinsdale as a mutual aid partner for fire suppression, Association members shouldn't be surprised to see Hinsdale Fire at the Lake as they need to be aware of all the available water resources in town. Mr. Galt expressed concern regarding the possible spreading of invasive species into Garnet Lake from water drawn from

Ashmere, then pumped out into Garnet Lake. Despite not ever hearing about such a case of cross “contamination” Chief Cawthron agreed to initially discharge water downstream of the Lake so as to mitigate any such risk.

Item 8: Possible Hire of Branden Mascolo as Spare Transfer Attendant:

Noting that Branden had previously been hired by the Town, Mr. Haupt asked if Mr. Leach had discussed this position and its requirements and expectations with Branden and whether or not Mr. Leach felt he would be a good fit. Mr. Leach responded affirmatively, so given that information, on behalf of the entire Board, Mr. Haupt agreed to hire Branden as the spare transfer attendant.

Item 13: Public Input: (This item was advanced, see other Items below)

Coralie Pelkey thanked the Board members and anyone else who participated in efforts related to the use of the Town Hall by organizations such as the Church. The Board noted that it had yet to receive the full report from the DPH, yet felt comfortable, given the verbal report that the air quality results were all within normal limits, the public should have no concerns about using the space. Coralie also asked about certain items such as the organ and certain dishes that were stored in the storeroom; however, the Board could not provide an inventory of what remained or the condition thereof.

Doug Haskins, on behalf of the Parks and Recreation Department noted that water was still draining into the ball field and queried where could a drainage swale be best located to eliminate the risk of flooding the field as it nears completion? Mr. Russell discussed various options and agreed to work with Doug on finding the correct solution.

Item 9: Discussion and Possible Vote on the Town Hall Entrance:

The Board and Jay Jewell had a continuing conversation about options for the front entry given the objective of eliminating the causes of the water issues in the basement of the Town Hall. Jay suggested in the interest of conserving funds that the Board consider only the concrete work and gutter system for the entry as opposed to extending the roof over the entry as well. He reminded the Board inasmuch as the existing building committee would be considering substantial future changes to the building, he questioned spending too much money solely on the entry. Mr. Munch noted that the possibility of receiving funding for a needed new Town Hall would be years in the future, if at all. Mr. Haupt agreed stating there was no municipal building grant program in place that is equivalent to what the State offers for school reconstruction. He also felt in the interests of making the building more accessible to all citizens, especially in bad weather, the overhang in addition to the cement work would be preferable. After further discussion, it was agreed that Jay would provide a quote that includes the concrete work, front entry, and gutter system for the front of the building for the next meeting.

Item 10: Update on Community Center Possible Mold/Mildew Issue:

Mr. Haupt reiterated that the full report had not been received from DPH, only a preliminary report with suggestions on how to manage the spaces downstairs had been received. Jay mentioned he would like to finish the downstairs work ASAP but was encouraged to be patient until we received the full report.

Item 11: Discussion on new Tax Foreclosure Law:

The Board acknowledged receipt of the communication from Town Counsel regarding numerous substantive changes to Massachusetts foreclosure practices and procedures including the necessity of marketing properties through real estate agents prior to proceeding to auction. While the intent is for these changes to be implemented in November 2024, Mass DOR has yet to develop forms and guidance. The Board recommended that Tax Collector Caryn Wendling attend the next meeting to discuss what the Town should be doing in advance of the changes. Mr. Haupt offered to be a liaison to Town Counsel when appropriate.

Item 12: Review and Approve Accounts Payable, Treasury Warrant and Payroll Warrant:

No discussion.

Item 14: Adjourn: Mr. Leach moved to adjourn the meeting; Mr. Munch seconded; Voted 3-0. The 9/3/2024 BOS Meeting adjourned at 6:59 P.M.

Articles used:

- 8/19/2024 minutes
- Letter from Garnet Lake Association
- Appointment papers for Branden Mascolo
- Tax Foreclosure Law Updates document
- Department of Public Health Preliminary Report

Respectfully submitted:

Sam Haupt

Verne Leach, Chairperson

Sam Haupt, Selectman

Ed Munch, Selectman



Date Approved: 9-30-24

Received October 2, 2024 Kim Leach Town Clerk

August 3, 2024

Dan Cawthron, Peru Fire Chief
Town of Peru Board of Select Board
3 East Main Road
Peru, MA 01235

Dear Chief Cawthron and Members of the Select Board,

I am writing to you in my capacity as both the President of the Garnet Lake Association (GLA), and full time resident of Peru. I want to make you aware of an incident that took place at Garnet Lake on Dyke Road on June 11, 2024, which has led to some concern and bad feeling that I hope we can work with you to address.

I will lay out the timeline and our concerns below, but first wanted to provide some context about the GLA and its relationship to the Lake and the Town. The GLA was chartered roughly thirty years ago when a group of homeowners banded together to purchase Garnet Lake from the previous owner, who had plans to sell the Lake and the abutting land for development. The Lake is privately owned by the GLA and its constituent members, each of whom is also a taxpaying homeowner in the Town of Peru.

The GLA's purpose is to preserve the pristine nature and health of the Lake and the natural habitat that surrounds it. The GLA engages in monitoring and regular testing of the water, keeps the roads and other infrastructure around the Lake in good repair, maintains the beach areas located at either end of the Lake, and generally strives to be a diligent guardian of a place that we hold dear and want to preserve for generations to come. These preservation and maintenance activities are paid for by the GLA's members, through their annual dues. The GLA is in full compliance with all State and Town regulations, including 501 tax requirements. The GLA also strives to comply with reasonable Town requests. For example, in the past the Town has requested that the GLA apply for a semi-private beach application and post signs regarding swimming at one's own risk, no life guard on duty, etc., and the GLA promptly complied. In short, the GLA and its members strive to be good and responsible neighbors for the other residents of the town

With that as context, let me proceed to describe the incident that prompted this letter:

- On June 11th at 4:47 PM, I was contacted by Heather Brooks, who lives near Garnet Lake but is not a GLA member. Ms. Brooks requested permission for the Peru Fire Department to siphon water from Garnet Lake. I replied to her that I could not make this decision unilaterally, but that I would first need to consult with the other members of the GLA board. Ms. Brooks responded "no problem but I am doing it tonight any way."
- Peru FD and the Hinsdale FD (Hinsdale was never mentioned in this text message) arrived at the Lake with their trucks and commenced to draw water from the Lake. The former Peru FD Chief (who I believe is named Jesse Pelkey) and one of Ms. Brooks' sons were present. An eyewitness reports that the Hinsdale trucks drew water from the Lake several times and left with this water. It is not clear to me

where that water went, as neither Ms. Brooks nor anybody from the Town provided the GLA any further information.

- This same eyewitness reports that the former Peru FD Chief and Ms. Brooks' son were shooting off the fire cannon for some period of time.
 - During this time this activity was taking place, the trucks blocked road access, preventing some homeowners (including me) from reaching their homes.
- There was no advance warning and no posted signs other than a text message.
- Additionally, the coming and going these heavy trucks did significant damage to the roads, which the abutting owners had to repair without any contribution from the Town.
 - The heavy spray from the water hoses disturbed some of the natural habitat, especially where turtles breed at the edge of the Lake.

I hope you can understand why this incident caused concern. As I said above, the GLA and its members are committed to being responsible residents and neighbors, and the GLA will gladly work with the Town to ensure the safety and convenience of all Peru residents. In the future, we would be happy to allow the Peru FD to do pretty much whatever it needs to (within reason) in order to operate efficiently with advance discussion and proper planning from the acting fire chief. That is to all our benefit, and that's a fact.

But it is also a fact that Garnet Lake is the private property of the GLA, not Town property. In this case, other than the initial contact from Ms. Brooks, we did not receive any communication from any person with an official role at the Peru FDs. There was no explanation of what the purpose of this exercise was, or when or how long it would take. The FD did not wait for the consent of the GLA, even as a courtesy, or allow the GLA to raise concerns or ask questions beforehand. There was no attempt to ameliorate the inconvenience to the homeowners who were adversely affected. And there was nobody on site who could or would reasonably respond to requests for information or explanation.

I did send an email to you on July 10, 2024 but have had no response via email or phone as requested.

I realize that I may not have the full story, and I hope and expect that the problems in this case arose due to a good-faith misunderstanding or miscommunication. I think it would be helpful if we can have a face-to-face conversation, in order to clear up what happened during this event, and to ensure that future interactions will be more collaborative and less contentious. It's always better to communicate openly and honestly and cooperate with each other. After all, Peru is a small town and we are all neighbors.

Thank you for your kind attention to this matter.

Your neighbors,

Marc DelGrande (████████████████████)

Dave Galt

Stu Rosner

Kevin Beck

Lisa Vachon

Board Members of the Garnet Lake Association

Tax Collector

From: KP Law, P.C. <KPLAW@k-plaw.com>
Sent: Monday, August 26, 2024 2:39 PM
To: KP Law, P.C.
Subject: [External Sender]KP Law, P.C. eUpdate - Recent Changes in Tax Title Foreclosure Procedures
Attachments: KP eUpdate_-_Recent_Changes_in_Tax_Title_Foreclosure_Procedures.pdf

On July 29, 2024, the Governor signed into law the General Appropriations Act for Fiscal Year 2025, which in part amended portions of General Laws Chapter 60 relevant to the municipal tax title foreclosure process. These amendments are intended to directly address the U.S. Supreme Court's 2023 decision in Tyler v. Hennepin County, Minnesota, in which the Court found that "strict foreclosure" statutes, such as Massachusetts' tax title foreclosure statutory scheme, are unconstitutional. Our prior guidance on the Tyler case and its implications can be found here. The 2024 amendments to General Laws Chapter 60, which generally take effect on November 1, 2024, impose new requirements on municipalities in the tax title foreclosure process and make significant changes to the process to dispose of property following foreclosure, as well as the treatment of excess equity. We have summarized the amendments and new procedure to dispose of or retain tax title property in the attached eUpdate.

Please contact Attorney Lauren F. Goldberg (lgoldberg@k-plaw.com), Attorney Thomas W. McEnaney (tmcenaney@k-plaw.com), Chair of our Tax Title Practice Group, or Attorney Jonathan G. Murray (jmurray@k-plaw.com) if you have any further questions. In the meantime, from all of the staff and attorneys at KP Law, take good care.

KP | LAW
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Boston, MA 02110
(617) 556 0007
www.k-plaw.com

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Recent Changes in Tax Title Foreclosure Procedures

August 26, 2024

On July 29, 2024, the Governor signed into law the General Appropriations Act for Fiscal Year 2025, which in part amended portions of General Laws Chapter 60 relevant to the municipal tax title foreclosure process. These amendments are intended to directly address the U.S. Supreme Court's 2023 decision in Tyler v. Hennepin County, Minnesota, in which the Court found that "strict foreclosure" statutes, such as Massachusetts' tax title foreclosure statutory scheme, are unconstitutional. Our prior guidance on the Tyler case and its implications can be found here. The 2024 amendments to General Laws Chapter 60 impose new requirements on municipalities in the tax title foreclosure process and make significant changes to the process to dispose of property following foreclosure, as well as the treatment of excess equity. These provisions, which generally take effect on November 1, 2024, include:

- G.L. c. 60, §65: The time period that a municipality must wait before filing a petition for foreclosure with the Land Court has been increased from 6 months to 12 months following the recording of an Instrument of Taking.
- G.L. c. 60, §62: The interest rate for balances held in the tax title account has been reduced from 16% to 8%. It is important to note, however, that the interest rate applicable to unpaid tax balances prior to being certified to the tax title account remains unchanged at 14%.
- G.L. c. 60, §62A: Payment agreements, which are currently capped at 5 years with a minimum down payment of 25%, can now be expanded to 10 years with a minimum 10% initial payment. Further, municipalities may waive any accrued interest. However, it should be noted that a municipality must adopt a bylaw or ordinance in order to implement these changes, as that requirement in G.L. c. 60, §62A was not changed by the new legislation.
- Demands and Notices for Residential Property: The amendments impose additional requirements for demands and certain notices under G.L. c. 60 for residential properties. Specifically, demands and notices must be prepared "in language understandable by a least sophisticated consumer" and in the seven (7) most commonly spoken languages in the Commonwealth. The Department of Revenue is tasked with developing standardized forms, which have not yet been released. Additionally, for residential properties, G.L. c. 60, §53 was amended to require mailing to the taxpayer at their last known residence or usual abode or place of business, posting at the property and publication on the municipal website, instead of newspaper publication. Newspaper publication now appears to only apply to non-Class One residential properties. Moreover, the notice for residential properties must also include specific information, including, but not limited to: the outstanding taxes and other municipal costs; that the taxpayer has a right to redeem; that a foreclosure complaint may be filed on or after a specific date; that the tax title

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may be sold; that non-response may lead to a default judgment; and that the property owner may be entitled to excess equity.

Most significantly, the amendments alter the procedure to dispose of or retain tax title property following entry of judgment. Specifically, following entry of judgment, a municipality will have 14 days to determine whether it wishes to dispose of the property or retain it. Given the short time frame to determine what the municipality wants to do with the property, we recommend that you carefully consider your options before judgment enters so that you are able to meet this deadline.

Selling Property After Foreclosure. If a municipality elects to sell the property following foreclosure, it will no longer proceed with an auction, at least initially. Instead, the municipality must list the property with a licensed real estate agent or broker within 180 days of the issuance of a final judgment. If after 12 months the property has not sold, the municipality must then seek to sell the property by public auction. A municipality cannot accept a bid that is less than 2/3 of the appraised value of the property. Therefore, while an appraisal is not required in order to list the property with a broker, municipalities will be required to obtain an appraisal from an independent, licensed appraiser prior to proceeding with an auction.

In conformance with Tyler, the new legislation bars municipalities from retaining any “excess equity” beyond what is owed in unpaid taxes, interest, and fees following foreclosure. “Excess equity” does not include any “taxes, interest, fees and charges of keeping, as reflected in the tax title account balance as of the date of the foreclosure judgment, and the fees, expenses, charges and costs actually and reasonably incurred in selling or appraising the property.” When a property is sold, excess equity is calculated by subtracting from the gross sale proceeds:

- The tax title balance as of the date of foreclosure judgment;
- Any unpaid taxes or fees, such as water and sewer charges, insurance or condominium fees, accruing from the date of foreclosure; and
- Any documented post-judgment costs incurred, including but not limited to:
 - Attorneys’ fees
 - Real estate agent or broker fees and commissions
 - Listing fees
 - Appraisal fees
 - Cost of notifications and publication
 - Property management

Retaining Property After Foreclosure. If, instead of selling the property, a municipality elects to retain it following foreclosure, the municipality must use “reasonable best efforts” to have the property appraised within 120 days of the court’s issuance of final judgment. The appraisal must be performed by an independent, licensed real estate appraiser and must be based on the highest and best use of the property as of the date of final judgment. We understand this raises issues, as the value based on highest and best use may not be consistent with the assessed value of the property, which is typically based on the actual use of the property. Excess equity is then calculated by subtracting from the appraised value the tax title balance as of the date of foreclosure judgment and any documented post-judgment costs of the appraisal.

Treatment of Excess Equity Following Sale or Appraisal. Once the property has been sold or appraised, any excess equity must be placed in escrow in a segregated interest-bearing account. The municipality must provide a written itemized accounting of the excess equity and how it was calculated to any parties entitled to claim excess equity. If the identity and mailing address of a party entitled to claim excess equity is not known, the municipality is required to “provide a notice.” The statute does not define what form of notice is acceptable if the identity and mailing addresses of interested parties are unknown, but presumably, notice by publication would be sufficient. Parties eligible to claim excess equity have 18 months from receiving the municipality’s accounting to claim any excess equity. The amendments do not address how funds are to be paid out or what procedure should be followed if there are multiple claimants. If funds are not claimed within 19 months, the funds must be transferred to the Unclaimed Property Division of the State Office of the Treasurer and Receiver General pursuant to G.L. c.200A.

****Warning* If your municipality holds a judgment issued by the Land Court after May 25, 2021, former owners may seek the return of excess equity. Under Section 212 of the Act, a former owner or successor in interest may file a complaint in Superior Court within 12 months of the effective date of the Act. It should be noted that certain provisions of the Act are effective as of July 1, 2024, but the majority of the provisions become effective as of November 1, 2024. Therefore, it is not entirely clear whether claims must be filed in Superior Court by June 30, 2025 or October 31, 2025. What is clear, however, is that claims for excess equity based on judgments that entered on or before May 24, 2021 are time barred.***

Disputes and Challenges. The Superior Court has jurisdiction to hear any disputes that arise between any party who at the time of final judgment held an interest in the property and a right to redeem, including judgment holders, former owners, mortgagees, lienholders and heirs. These disputes and challenges may include, but are not limited to, the sale of the property, valuation, calculation of excess equity, and the distribution of excess equity. Any suit must be filed in the Superior Court within 12 months of the date of notice of the municipality’s itemized accounting of excess equity following sale or appraisal of the property. Parties bringing such suit in the Superior Court have the right to a jury trial, unless this right is waived by all parties.

If you have any questions regarding the amendments to Chapter 60, pending tax title foreclosure sales, or other tax title issues, please contact Attorney Lauren F. Goldberg (lgoldberg@k-plaw.com) Attorney Thomas W. McEnaney (tmcenaney@k-plaw.com), Chair of our Tax Title Practice Group.

Disclaimer: This information is provided as a service by KP Law, P.C. This information is general in nature and does not, and is not intended to, constitute legal advice. Neither the provision nor receipt of this information creates an attorney-client relationship with KP Law, P.C. Whether to take any action based upon the information contained herein should be determined only after consultation with legal counsel.

Town Administrator

From: Sam Haupt
Sent: Tuesday, September 3, 2024 6:00 PM
To: Select Men; Town Administrator; 'kinderhaus1@verizon.net'
Subject: FW: [External Sender]Indoor Air Quality Report - Peru Town Hall WD - Sept 2024
Attachments: peru town hall CV 2024.pdf; peru-town-hall-sept-2024.pdf

From: Santora, Stefanie (DPH) <stefanie.santora@mass.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, September 3, 2024 1:24 PM
To: Sam Haupt <shaupt@townofperuma.com>
Cc: inspectors@berkshireplanning.org; Feeney, Mike (DPH) <mike.feeney@mass.gov>
Subject: [External Sender]Indoor Air Quality Report - Peru Town Hall WD - Sept 2024

Mr. Haupt~

Attached please find the Indoor Air Quality report from our visit to Peru Town Hall.
A subsequent report detailing comprehensive indoor air quality measurements is forthcoming.

Please let us know if you have any questions.

Best,
Stefanie

Stefanie Santora, R.M.P.
Environmental Analyst
Senior Radon Technologist
Western MA Hospital
MA Dept of Public Health
Bureau of Climate and Environmental Health
Indoor Air Quality Program
91 East Mountain Road
Westfield, MA
Mobile: 781-540-7816



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Health and Human Services
Department of Public Health
Bureau of Climate and Environmental Health
250 Washington Street, Boston, MA 02108-4619
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TTY: 617-624-5286

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ROBERT GOLDSTEIN, MD, PhD
Commissioner

Tel: 617-624-6000
www.mass.gov/dph

September 3, 2024

Sam Haupt, Town Administrator
Town of Peru
3 East Main Road
Peru, MA 01235 (electronic copy)

Dear Mr. Haupt:

Enclosed is a copy of the report by our Indoor Air Quality (IAQ) Program on their mold/water damage assessment of Peru Town Hall. Please refer to the recommendations section for advice on how to correct any issues identified by this assessment. A subsequent report detailing comprehensive indoor air quality measurements of the town hall is forthcoming.

If you have any questions regarding the report or if we can be of further assistance in this matter, please feel free to call us at (617) 624-5757.

Sincerely,

Michael A. Feeney, B.Pharm, R.Ph., J.D., C.H.O.
Director, Indoor Air Quality Program

cc: Valerie Bird, Health Agent, Peru Board of Health (electronic copy)

(Enclosure)

MOLD/WATER DAMAGE ASSESSMENT

**Peru Town Hall
3 East Main Road
Peru, Massachusetts**



Prepared by:
Massachusetts Department of Public Health
Bureau of Climate and Environmental Health
Indoor Air Quality Program
September 2024

BACKGROUND

Building:	Peru Town Hall (PTH)
Address:	3 East Main Road, Peru, MA
Reason for Request:	Mold odor in kitchen/meeting hall
Date of Assessment:	July 30, 2024
Massachusetts Department of Public Health/Bureau of Climate and Environmental Health (MDPH/BCEH) Staff Conducting Assessment:	Michael Feeney, Director, and Stefanie Santora, Environmental Analyst, Indoor Air Quality (IAQ) Program
Building Description:	The PTH was constructed as a school that had a one-story over a dirt floor cellar. An addition was made to the building that included a two-story wing with a kitchen/cafeteria at ground level.
Building Population:	Approximately ~10 employees
Year of Construction:	1950s
Windows:	Openable

INTRODUCTION

At the request of Mr. Sam Haupt, Peru Town Administrator, the MDPH/BCEH provided assistance and consultation regarding indoor air quality concerns at the PTH. On July 30, 2024, MDPH/BCEH staff, Michael Feeney and Stefanie Santora, visited the building to conduct an assessment. The request was prompted by concerns about intermittent odors and potential mold growth in the kitchen and adjacent meeting hall on the ground floor of the building. The building was not open for business on the day of the assessment and there were three employees present.

This report addresses the issues of mold associated odors in the meeting hall. A full IAQ assessment with air sampling throughout the PTH will be the subject of a separate report.

METHODS

Please refer to the IAQ Manual for methods, sampling procedures, and interpretation of results (MDPH, 2015).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The PTH was originally constructed as a one-story school that had a two-story wing containing a gymnasium on the top floor with a kitchen and a cafeteria below. The cafeteria now serves as the meeting hall in the building. A door in the west wall opens to a room that was reported to be formerly occupied by the Peru Police Department (PPD). Inside the former PPD space is a door that opens into a cellar area that has a stone foundation and dirt floor with exposed ledge outcrops. It was noted windows are openable throughout the building.

MDPH/BCEH staff performed a visual inspection of building materials for water damage and/or microbial growth. As previously mentioned, the assessment was prompted by concerns of odors and possible mold growth in the meeting hall. The door leading to the former PPD was closed and had its seams sealed with painter's tape (Picture 1). At the time of this visit a dehumidification unit was operating in the former PPD area (Picture 2). A plastic tube (Picture 3) was attached to the dehumidifier to vent exhaust air through the basement window and then to the outside of the building (Pictures 4 and 5). As reported, the mold odor associated with the dirt cellar was reported in the meeting hall.

A series of ducts with air diffusers exist in the meeting hall. The ducts enter the former PPD space and the dirt cellar to connect to air handling units that exist in sheds attached to the exterior walls of the building. Both fresh air supply and exhaust vent ducts were observed in the cellar, former PPD office and the meeting hall (Picture 6). The meeting hall did not appear to have seams sealed with mastic or permanent foil tape. Accumulated dust and debris were noted along duct seams in the meeting hall (Picture 7). Without the sealing of duct seams, air and water vapor in the crawlspace may enter the interior of ducts which may in turn exit the HVAC system through diffusers and duct seams in the hall. Use an appropriate material to seal seams in the ductwork in the meeting hall. Please note that duct tape is a temporary sealing solution, since its

adhesive will dry out and loose adhesion over times. A fire-rated mastic or foil tape to permanently seal the duct seams is recommended.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In view of the findings at the time of the visit, the following recommendations are made:

1. Seal all seams between the cellar meeting hall door as well as the doorframe and wall seams to eliminate cellar odors from entering. Placing polyethylene tape over the entire door and its frame would provide a temporary seal.
2. In order to permanently seam the cellar from the meeting hall, installing an outdoor entrance door/frame outfitted with weatherstripping and solid door sweep is recommended.
3. Use an appropriate material to seal seams in the ductwork in the meeting hall. Please note that duct tape is a temporary sealing solution, since its adhesive will dry out and loose adhesion over times. A fire-rated mastic or foil tape to permanently seal the duct seams is recommended.
4. Continue to operate the dehumidifier. If possible, relocate this equipment as close to the cellar window to maximize the draw of the dehumidifier to eject air directly outdoors.
5. Identify all fresh air supply and exhaust vent openings in the meeting hall and temporarily seal with plastic and tape in a similar manner as the cellar access door.
6. The use of box fans to direct outdoor air into the meeting hall will pressurize this space to force air into any open seams in walls that may serve as a cellar air migration pathway. Use of box fans may be rendered impractical due to weather conditions, but they could be used during temperate/low relative humidity weather.
7. Consider replacing plastic tubes used for dehumidifier exhaust air with a more durable material.
8. For more information on mold consult with the US EPA's "Mold Remediation in Schools and Commercial Buildings". Available at: <http://www.epa.gov/mold/mold-remediation-schools-and-commercial-buildings-guide> (US EPA, 2008).

REFERENCES

MDPH. 2015. Massachusetts Department of Public Health. Indoor Air Quality Manual: Chapters I-III. Available at: <https://www.mass.gov/lists/indoor-air-quality-manual-and-appendices#indoor-air-quality-manual->.

US EPA. 2008. "Mold Remediation in Schools and Commercial Buildings". Office of Air and Radiation, Indoor Environments Division, Washington, DC. EPA 402-K-01-001. September 2008. Available at: <http://www.epa.gov/mold/mold-remediation-schools-and-commercial-buildings-guide>.

Picture 1



Cellar access door in meeting hall

Picture 2



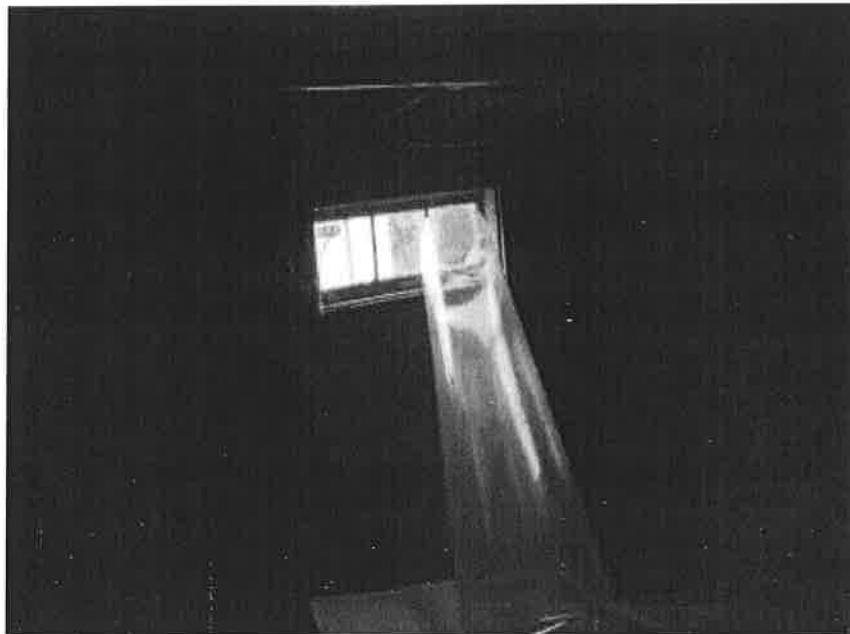
Dehumidification unit in cellar

Picture 3



Plastic tube used to vent exhaust air from dehumidifier

Picture 4



Plastic tube used to vent exhaust air from dehumidifier connected to cellar window

Picture 5



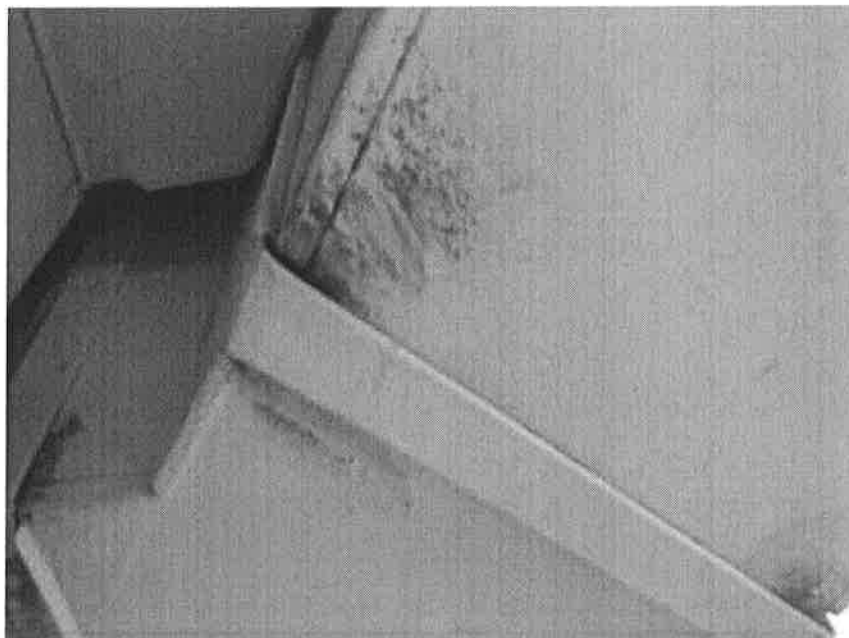
Exterior view of cellar window, (blue arrow pointing to plastic tube in window)

Picture 6



Vent opening in meeting hall

Picture 7



Seam with debris, indicating an opening in meeting hall