TOWN HALL 3 EAST MAIN ROAD PERU, MA 01235

SELECT BOARD MEETING MINUTES: October 28, 2024, 6:00 P.M.

Town Hall Meeting Room

Verne Leach, Chair Selectman
Sam Haupt, Selectman
Ed Munch, Selectman
Terry Walker, Town Administrator
Bruce Cullett, Police Chief
Justin Russell, Highway Superintendent
Caryn Wendling, Treasurer/Collector

Public Attendees: Jay Jewell

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

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

Item 3: State Recording status: Selectman Leach 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 10/21/2024
Selectman Leach motion to approve 10/21/2024 minutes pending changes, Selectman Munch second 3-0
Minutes for 10/15/2024 on hold.

Item 6: Update of Departments:

Highway: Highway Superintendent Russell mentioned that all the guardrail work for the paving job was finished, and the guardrail invoices would be the final invoice for Chapter 90. Once the guardrail invoice is paid, he will be submitting for reimbursement.

Police Department: Police Cullett mentioned that he attended a meeting with Sheriff Bowler and the 911 Department on Monday Morning - regarding the transition of Berkshire County Sheriff's Communication Center to the State 911 Department. This transition is expected on or about January 1st but no later than July 1, 2025. The State's 911 Department plans to maintain the same services for municipalities and many of the same personnel will stay with the communications center. Towns will not receive an invoice for dispatch services next fiscal year due to this transition. The 911 Commission will send a draft of an intermunicipal agreement for Towns to review, and he will provide the information at the November 12th BOS meeting. Chief Cullett mentioned that comments on the draft will need to be returned to the State 911 Department.

Emergency Department: EMD Cullett mentioned that the 2024 EMPG application was approved, and we will have been told that a contract will be coming in the next week.

Town Administrator:
TA Walker is working with the accountant in an attempt to correct expenditures and receivables on the Balance Sheet. For instance, when a grant is received a journal entry must be made to an expenditure account to zero expenditures and receivables. This will correct our Balance Sheet; therefore Free Cash will be more accurate.
The Town of Peru Request for Qualifications Town Hall/Community Center/ Library Feasibility Study ad was published in Commbuys, Central Register, Berkshire Eagle and scanned to the Town Clerk to be posted on the town website.
The accountant provided a General Ledger report for ARPA with a balance of $10,472.91 although one invoice has not been posted. The balance is around $9,000.
TA Walker finalized the FY25 Firefighters Safety grant with Chief Cawthron last Monday. The grant was written for 3 radios at $3,735.17 each totaling $11,205.51. The grant was written for $10,500 and the balance of $705.51 will be taken from the fire department budget.

Item 7: 6:15 p.m. Tax Classification Hearing: A Tax Classification Hearing was held at 6:15 p.m. with the Board of Assessors and the Board of Selectmen to set a tax rate. Assessor Koziara was hopeful that the tax rate for FY25 would be set at $15.95. Selectman Leach motion to set one tax rate, Selectman Munch second, 3-0. The increase in taxable properties in the Town of Peru for FY2025 is $135,472,660 which is an increase of $8,028,498 from last year. Assessor Koziara mentioned that the tax bills may go out the middle of November.

Item 8: Resignation letters from Recording Secretary Brian Forgue and from Police Officer Joseph Sniezek: Selectman Leach motion to accept the resignation letter for Recording Secretary Brian Forgue and the resignation letter from Police Officer Joseph Sniezek, Selectman Munch second 3-0

Item 9: Update on the Community Center: Reports have been submitted and the building is open to the public please see attached report.

Item 10: Review and approve Accounts Payable, Treasury Warrant and Payroll Warrant: V09-2025

Item 11: Public Input: Selectman Leach asked TA Walker if she took minutes for the meeting tonight. TA Walker mentioned that she was not asked to take minutes but had taken notes. Selectman Leach was recording but at some point, during the meeting his recorder stopped working. Selectman Leach mentioned that he would like to re-advertise the Recording Secretary position. Selectman Munch felt that if Terry Walker wants to take the minutes, he would like to have her take the minutes at $100.00 per set of minutes, in addition, Selectman Munch does not want to advertise position. When Selectman Munch asked Terry Walker why she resigned, Terry stated that she resigned because she didn't want to take any flak from a short Finance Committee meeting. She was asked by the Fin Com Chairman to take minutes because Robin Wadsworth, Fin Com member could not attend meeting. Since Selectman Leach had an issue and had concerns about paying the flat rate of $100.00, she resigned to stop all the confusion. Terry stated that she was not a thief and didn't think she did anything wrong. Selectman Leach agreed that Terry did nothing wrong. Selectman Munch reiterated that Terry's minutes were perfect, and he would like to have her back. Selectman Haupt wondered when the rate of $100.00 was set for Terry Walker as Admin Assistant to take minutes. Selectman Leach stated that on July 1, 2024, the $100.00 was for minutes, accounting and filing. TA Walker stated that as of July 1, 2024, the accounting and filing was part of her Town Administrator position. She also mentioned that FY23 admin assistant salary was $8,500.00, FY24 $5,500.00 and FY25 $5,000. Highway Superintendent Russell read from the minutes of May 6, 2024- the rate of pay was $100.00 per set of minutes, and it was reflected in the minutes a unanimous vote was held by the BOS to pay $100.00 per set of minutes. Selectman Munch asked Terry if she would like to continue as the Recording Secretary. Terry Walker agreed to continue taking the minutes and expressed how much she loved working in Peru. Treasurer Wendling mentioned how difficult it is to take minutes, and she felt that Terry takes wonderful minutes.

Selectman Haupt agreed that he would like Terry back and she does an exceptional job taking minutes. Treasurer Wendling asked if she was supposed to pay Brian Forgue for the two meetings he attended. Brian had mentioned in his resignation that he did not want to be compensated. Treasurer Wendling also asked why the board interviews a candidate and hires them at the same meeting. Treasurer Wendling asked who checked on Brian's qualifications before the board hired him. Selectman Leach said he had called Chester. The board agreed that if Brian stated that he did not want compensation that Treasurer Wendling should not pay him. Selectman Munch motion to rehire Terry Walker as the Recording Secretary for the Board of Selectmen and joint BOS and Fin Com meetings at $100.00 per set of minutes, Selectman Haupt second, 3-0.

Item 12: Adjourn: Selectman Leach made a motion to adjourn the 10/28/2024 BOS Meeting, Selectman Munch second, Vote 3-0. The 10/28/2024 BOS Meeting adjourned at 7:20 P.M.

Articles used:
V09-2025
10/21/2024 minutes
Tax Classification Hearing
Brian Forgue-resignation letter
Joseph Sniezek-resignation letter
Reports on town hall

Terry Walker
Town Administrator

Verne Leach, Chairman _____

Sam Haupt, Selectman _____

Ed Munch, Selectman _____

Date Approved: 11-12-24

Received November 15, 2024
Kim Leach , Town Clerk

Town of Peru

Tax Classification Presentation

OCTOBER 28, 2024 at 6:15 p.m.

MINUMUM RESIDENTIAL FACTOR

The Classification Act of 1978 allows for a shift of the tax rate which would place more of the tax burden on the Commercial, Industrial and Personal Property classes (known as CIP) from the Residential classes within certain limits. Peru can shift up to 150% from the residential to the commercial, industrial and personal property accounts.

The Board of Selectmen, at a public hearing, annually vote on the issue of selecting a residential factor which will determine the percentages of the tax burden for each class of property for the fiscal year. If a factor of 1 is chosen, it will result in a uniform allocation among all classes. If a factor of less than one is chosen, the burden will be greater on CIP (Commercial, Industrial and Personal Property) parcels.

The total assessment of all taxable properties in the Town of Peru for FY2025 is $135,472,660.00. This is an increase of $8,028,498.

which represents a 6.297% increase over last year's taxable value.

Residential properties continue to represent most of the total value in town (86.2958%) with commercial/industrial and personal property making up the remainder.

If a residential factor of **1** is chosen, the estimated tax rate for FY2024 would be $15.95/thousand which is a decrease of 56 cents from last years' rate of $16.51. With this rate, the average tax bill for a single family residence in Peru would be $4,429.15.

HISTORICAL TAX RATES

Fy2010	$15.33
Fy2011	$15.07
Fy2012	$15.40
Fy2013	$16.30
Fy2014	$17.30
Fy2015	$18.36
Fy2016	$20.15
Fy2017	$17.58
Fy2018	$18.70
Fy2019	$18.48
Fy2020	$18.76
FY2021	$19.21
FY2022	$18.32
FY2023	$17.50
FY2024	$16.51
FY2025	$15.95

Should the Selectmen choose to adopt a split rate, there are many options to choose from. For example,

If the maximum CIP shift factor of 1.5 is chosen, the estimated residential tax rate would be **$14.68** and the Commercial, Industrial and Personal Property rate would be **$23.93.**

The Selectmen may also vote to adopt the following:

Residential Exemption: This option applies an exemption up to 20% on principal residences only. Only a few cities/towns in Massachusetts have adopted this exemption. This allows a community to shift the burden away from certain lower valued properties to higher valued homes, apartment buildings and second homeowners. It reallocates the tax burden only within the residential class and does not increase the total tax revenue.

Small Commercial Exemption: This option applies an exemption up to 10% on commercial properties that meet certain criteria set by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. A recent report provided by the Division of Unemployment Assistance identifies ten employers in Peru with less than 10 employees, however, only 4 may qualify for this exemption with all owning mixed use parcels.

Open Space Discount: Peru has no such land designated as open space.

Lastly, the Board of Assessors hereby inform the Board of Selectmen that the town's excess levy capacity for FY24 is approximately $471,673.07.

Town Administrator

From: Brian Forgue <bforgue03@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, October 24, 2024 10:08 AM
To: Town Administrator; Select Men; shaupt@townofperu.com; kinderhaus1@verizon.net
Subject: [External Sender]My resignation as Recording Secretary

Good morning everyone,

I'm writing now to tender my resignation as Peru Recording Secretary, with the intention of it being effective immediately.

Fundamentally, this is largely as a result of developments in other aspects of professional life. My other role, which I commute from Chicopee for, has offered me full-time hours with flexibility around my part-time schedule as a student. The compensation offered here in Peru is more than generous, but my specific circumstances (having to commute over an hour for a role that has a high likelihood of paying $50 a week) makes it not economical for me. On top of this, not working Monday nights will allow me to become more involved in my own community, giving me the chance to become a Selectman in the Town of Chester again. Additionally, I feel as though the learning curve would be difficult to square, continuing to work in a brand new role where the administrative procedures are still generally a work in progress. I'm confident that these responsibilities can be handled by an in-house official at the Town Hall.

I had considered making the intention to leave this role apparent at the end of the 90-day trial period the Board had discussed, but I felt as though that would only make the remaining weeks be disingenuous on my part considering my level of commitment to the role. I apologize for the short nature of my tenure, and as an effort to put some weight behind the apology, I do not need to be compensated for the 2 Meetings I was present for. I've also attached the initial summary of the 10/21 Meeting Minutes to this email.

I wish you all the very best of luck, and I hope Peru continues to receive good fortune. Thank you for your time and for the opportunity,
Brian Forgue


10/21 Peru SB Meeting Minutes

Town Administrator

From: Bruce Cullett
Sent: Wednesday, October 23, 2024 11:23 AM
To: Town Administrator; Peru townclerk@townofperuma.com
Subject: Officer Sniezek resignation
Attachments: Sniezek resignation.pdf

As I mentioned in the October 15st BOS meeting, Officer Joseph Sniezek is returning to the Massachusetts State Police. His last day with us was yesterday. Attached is his letter of resignation.

Sincerely,

Bruce W. Cullett
Chief of Police / EMD

Peru Police Dept.
3 East Main Road, #106
Peru, MA 01235
Ph: 413-655-8377
Fax: 413-655-2144

To: Chief Cullett

From: Officer Joseph Sniezek

Chief my last shift will be October 22nd due to my returning to the State Police on October 24th . Thanks for allowing me the opportunity to serve the residents of Peru.

Respectively

Officer Joseph M Sniezek

Town Administrator

From: Sam Haupt
Sent: Monday, October 28, 2024 5:01 PM
To: Town Administrator; Select Men; 'kinderhaus1@verizon.net'; Peggy White
Subject: FW: [External Sender]Indoor Air Quality Report for Peru Town Hall
Attachments: peru-town-hall-oct-2024.pdf; peru town hall CV 2024.pdf

Please see attached

From: Alfasso, Ruth (DPH) <ruth.alfasso@mass.gov>
Sent: Thursday, October 24, 2024 9:55 AM
To: Sam Haupt <shaupt@townofperuma.com>; inspectors@berkshireplanning.org; Dagle, Stephen (DLS) <stephen.dagle@mass.gov>
Cc: Santora, Stefanie (DPH) <stefanie.santora@mass.gov>; Feeney, Mike (DPH) <mike.feeney@mass.gov>
Subject: [External Sender]Indoor Air Quality Report for Peru Town Hall

Mr. Haupt,

Attached is a copy of the general indoor air quality (IAQ) report by our IAQ Program on their visit to the Peru Town Hall. Please let us know if you have any questions about the report or need further assistance on this or another building.

Best,

Ruth Alfasso
Indoor Air Quality Program
Bureau of Climate and Environmental Health
Department of Public Health

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
Phone: 617-624-5757 Fax: 617-624-5777
TTY: 617-624-5286

MAURA T. HEALEY
Governor

KIMBERLEY DRISCOLL
Lieutenant Governor

KATHLEEN E. WALSH
Secretary

ROBERT GOLDSTEIN, MD, PhD
Commissioner

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

October 24, 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 the general IAQ assessment of Peru Town Hall. Please refer to the recommendations section for advice on how to correct any issues identified by this assessment. Please note that the previous report addressing water damage in Peru Town Hall is attached as Appendix A.

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,

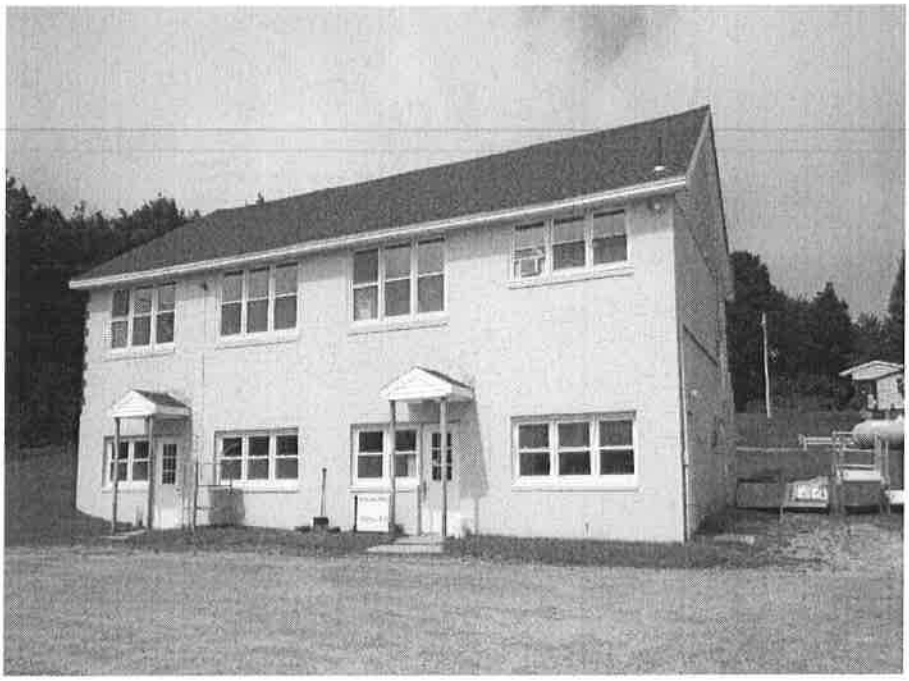
Michael A. Feeney, B.Pharm, R.Ph., J.D., C.H.O.
Director, Indoor Air Quality Program

cc: Valerie Bird, Health Agent, Peru Board of Health (electronic copy)
Stephen Dagle, Safety and Health Inspector, DLS (electronic copy)

(Enclosure)

INDOOR AIR QUALITY 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
October 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 to the public on the day of the assessment and there were three employees present.

Please note that a previous report was issued on September 3, 2024, which addressed issues of mold odors in the meeting hall and is included as Appendix A. This report is a comprehensive IAQ assessment with air sampling throughout the PTH.

METHODS

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

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The following is a summary of indoor air testing results (Table 1).

- ***Carbon dioxide*** measurements were below the MDPH recommended guideline of 800 parts per million (ppm) in all areas surveyed.
- ***Temperature*** was within the MDPH recommended range of 70°F to 78°F in all areas tested at the time of assessment.
- ***Relative humidity*** was within the MDPH recommended range of 40 to 60% in most areas tested, with the exception of three rooms which were slightly above. These conditions are typical during hot humid weather.
- ***Carbon monoxide*** was not detected (ND) in all areas tested.
- ***Particulate matter (PM2.5)*** concentrations measured were below the National Ambient Air Quality (NAAQS) level of 35 $\mu g/m^3$ in all areas tested.

Ventilation

It can be seen from Table 1 that carbon dioxide levels were below 800 parts per million (ppm) in all areas tested, indicating adequate air exchange at the time of the assessment. Heated air is provided by air-handling units (AHUs) located in sheds (west furnace shed and east furnace shed) attached to the PTH exterior walls (Pictures 1 and 2) that are attached to ductwork located in the crawlspace beneath the building. Once air is filtered, it is heated and delivered to occupied areas via ducted supply diffusers (Picture 3). Return air is drawn through floor return vents (Picture 4). No fresh air supply for the AHU could be located. Air within the building is recirculated only. The sole source of fresh air is opening windows.

Window-style air conditioners were mounted in the windows of several office spaces (Picture 5). These units can supply some amount of fresh air while operating. They are equipped with filters that need to be cleaned periodically. When these air conditioners are operating, windows should be closed in addition to closing interior doors to individual office spaces.

To maximize air exchange, the MDPH recommends that both supply and exhaust ventilation operate continuously during periods of occupancy. In order to have proper ventilation with a mechanical supply and exhaust system, the systems must be balanced to provide an adequate amount of fresh air to the interior of a room while removing stale air from the room. It is recommended that HVAC systems be re-balanced every five years to ensure adequate air systems function (SMACNA, 1994). The last system balancing date was unknown at the time of the assessment.

Return ducts to the AHUs have filters. The slot where the filter is inserted is missing its cover. In this configuration, basement air can bypass the filter and be distributed to occupied areas.

The AHUs also have furnace components that combust propane to provide heat. The AHU furnace has flues that terminate through the exterior wall of each shed (Pictures 6 and 7). Each AHU has two PVC pipes, one that serves as the combustion exhaust flue and the other being the source of combustion air. Both PVC pipes are joined for a single pipe-inside-a-pipe configuration (Picture 8) that terminates outside the AHU shed. Typically, the combustion air pipe and exhaust flue would be separated to prevent the draw of combustion air into the furnace. If combustion air has reduced oxygen levels, products of incomplete combustion may occur when the furnace is operating during certain wind conditions. In addition, exhaust vents for combustion are normally configured to terminate above the roof peak, such as a typical house chimney. Since these flues are below the roof edge, products of combustion may be directed towards exterior walls during certain wind conditions. If any gaps exists in the exterior wall, such as around window frames, this may allow for products of combustion to enter the PTH.

Microbial/Moisture Concerns

Hot humid summers are becoming more frequent due to climate change. Massachusetts has experienced hot, humid, and rainy summers in 2018, 2021, and 2023. July of 2021 was the wettest ever recorded in Massachusetts, and the three-month period from June through August,

known as the meteorological summer, was the fourth wettest on record, according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) Centers for Environmental Information (NOAA, 2021). The summer of 2023 was also hot, and wet, being measured as the second rainiest on record (WBUR, 2023). The summer of 2024 has also had significant stretches of hot, humid weather. These conditions are challenging for buildings, particularly those without central air conditioning.

Under these weather conditions, public buildings experienced extended periods of water vapor exposure from high relative humidity. When exposed to these conditions, porous materials such as gypsum wallboard, cardboard, carpeting, and other materials may become moistened and colonized with mold, particularly if located in areas that are prone to developing condensation, such as floors and walls in contact with the ground (e.g., below grade space).

The guideline "Preventing Mold Growth In Schools During Hot, Humid Weather" https://www.mass.gov/info-details/preventing-mold-growth-in-massachusetts-schools-during-hot-humid-weather should be used to minimize the impact of such weather on porous materials. This includes the use of air conditioning and dehumidifiers, ensuring exhaust vents are on and operable, keeping windows closed, and ensuring air can circulate around porous materials.

The humidity inside the PTH ranged from 53-68%, which is higher than the comfort range recommended by the IAQ program for relative humidity. When relative humidity is elevated, the air can feel uncomfortably damp, clammy, or sticky. Excess humidity for a significant period of time can also lead to water damage in porous materials, particularly in areas with a lower temperature, such as ventilation equipment, or exterior windows or walls, due to condensation. In addition, high relative humidity will cause paper to absorb moisture, which in turn cause paper jams in photocopiers and computer printers (Fisher, N., 2024).

There is significant water accumulation around the exterior of the building which leads to water infiltration of the PTH. Due to the lack of gutters and downspouts on roof edges to capture water, water sheds off the roof edge to impact the base of the exterior walls. Signs of chronic moisture can be seen from the dark staining, accumulation of moss, and erosion to the brick and mortar on the front of the PTH (Picture 9) and the dark staining and accumulation of moss in the rear of the building under the fire escape (Picture 10). The lack of gutters and downspouts along the roof edge of the PTH causes water to penetrate into the sheds that contain the furnaces/AHUs (Pictures 1 and 2). Water from the main roof empties directly onto the roof of the west furnace

shed (Picture 11), which in time can damage roof shingles and result in water penetration. Water runoff from the fire escape corner of the PTH travels downhill to impact the exterior walls of the east furnace shed (Picture 2). This condition causes the eastern furnace shed to become moistened (Picture 12) with possible standing water after rainstorms.

Water infiltration impacts the PTH building interior as well as areas on the perimeter of the PTH. Water-damaged ceiling tiles were found in various locations including the storage room and the men's bathroom. This can indicate current/historic/roof leaks or other water infiltration/ Water-damaged ceiling tiles can provide a source of mold and should be replaced and repaired after a water leak is discovered.

The interior wall of the community room downstairs shows signs of efflorescence (Pictures 13 and 14). Efflorescence results when rainwater penetrates into brick and mortar. A suspension of water and salts forms in the brick and mortar, which then travels to wall surface. As the water evaporates, a white, powdery material is formed (efflorescence). While efflorescence is a sign of water exposure to brick, it is not mold growth.

Other Conditions

The PTH has wall-to-wall carpeting in its office space. Aging carpet can produce fibers that can be irritating to the respiratory system. In addition, lifting carpet can create tripping hazards. Carpets should be cleaned annually (or semi-annually in soiled/high traffic areas) in accordance with Institute of Inspection, Cleaning and Restoration Certification (IICRC) recommendations, (IICRC, 2012). Regular cleaning with a high efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filtered vacuum in combination with an annual cleaning will help to reduce accumulation and potential aerosolization of materials from carpeting.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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

Short Term Recommendations

Ventilation Recommendations

1. Install carbon monoxide detectors in the main office as well as both floors of the PTH.
2. Examine the feasibility of separating the AHU flue and combustion air vents. It is recommended that the furnace exhaust flue terminate at a level above the roof peak to prevent combustion air from entering the roof via soffit vents.

Water Damage Recommendations

3. Install gutters and downspouts to reduce water accumulation on building exterior and gutters on the roof edge above the west furnace shed to reduce water impact.
4. Install weatherstripping around exterior doors to seal doors from water infiltration, unconditioned air, and pests.
5. Seal around window-mounted air conditioners to prevent water infiltration.
6. Replace water-damaged ceiling tiles. Repeated water damage to ceiling tiles indicates leaks from the roof or plumbing system which should be repaired.
7. Address drainage around the exterior of the building by re-grading the apron around the PTH to direct water away from exterior walls.
8. Reduce rainwater impacts on the interior of both furnace sheds by regrading ground uphill from the east furnace shed to drain away from exterior walls.
9. Continue to work on remaining recommendations from the previous report (Appendix A).
10. 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).

Other Recommendations

11. Consideration should be given to replacing carpeting with a different type of floor covering that can be readily cleaned. Until that time, clean high traffic areas frequently in accordance with IICRC recommendations (IICRC, 2012).

REFERENCES

Fisher, N. 2024. How Humidity Affects Your Copier and Paper Quality. Cobb Technologies, Richmond, VA. https://www.cobbtechnologies.com/blog/how-humidity-affects-your-copier-and-paper-quality.

IICRC. 2012. Carpet Cleaning FAQ 4 Institute of Inspection, Cleaning and Restoration Certification. Institute of Inspection Cleaning and Restoration, Vancouver, WA.

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.

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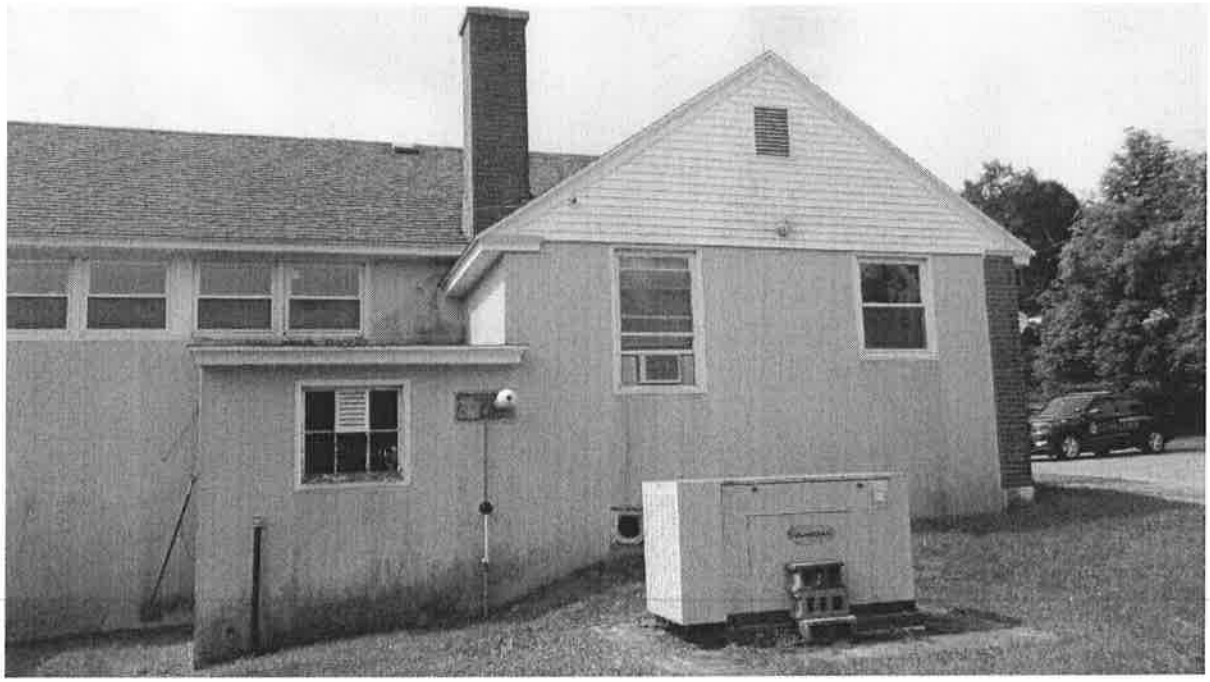
SMACNA. 1994. HVAC Systems Commissioning Manual. 1st ed. Sheet Metal and Air Conditioning Contractors' National Association, Inc., Chantilly, VA.

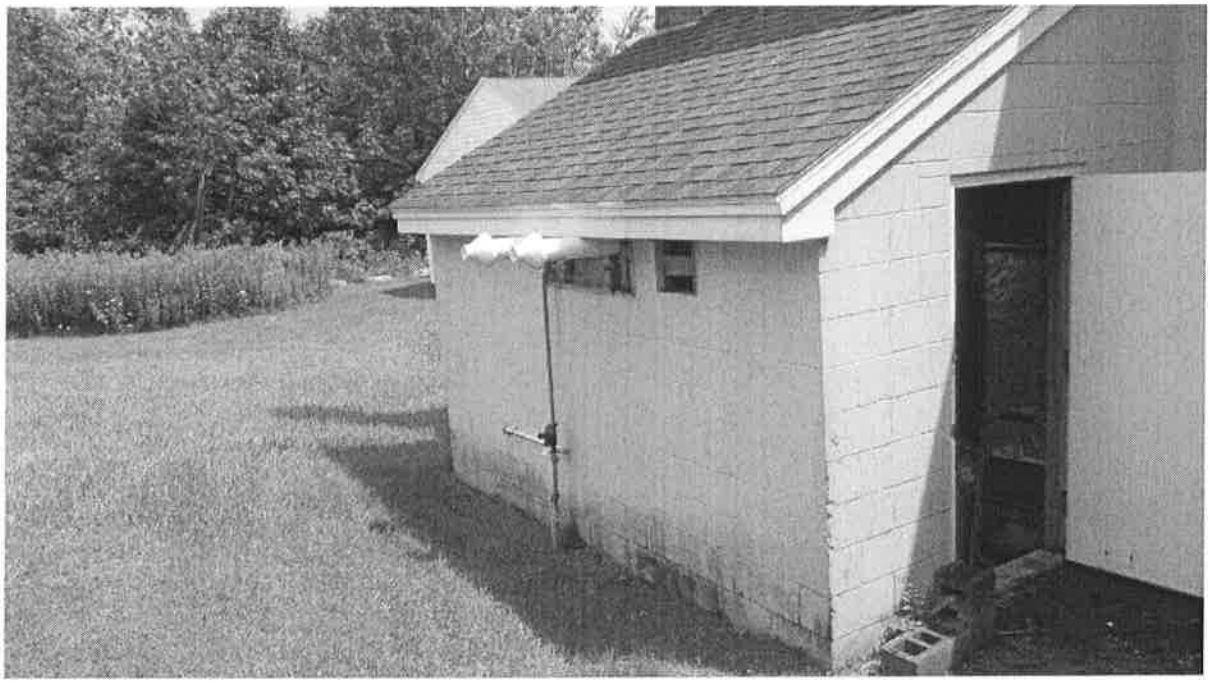
WBUR. 2023. "It's been a summer of rain and flooding misery in Mass." WBUR local news. September 12, 2023. https://www.wbur.org/news/2023/09/12/summer-flooding-rain-massachusetts

Picture 1



North AHU shed, note gable attic vent above furnace exhaust

Picture 2



South AHU shed that contains two furnaces/AHUs

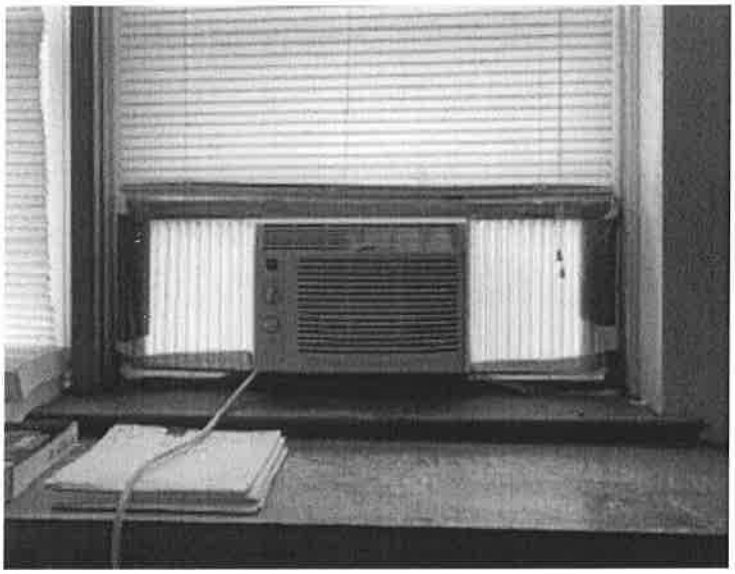
Picture 3

Fresh air supply vent

Picture 4

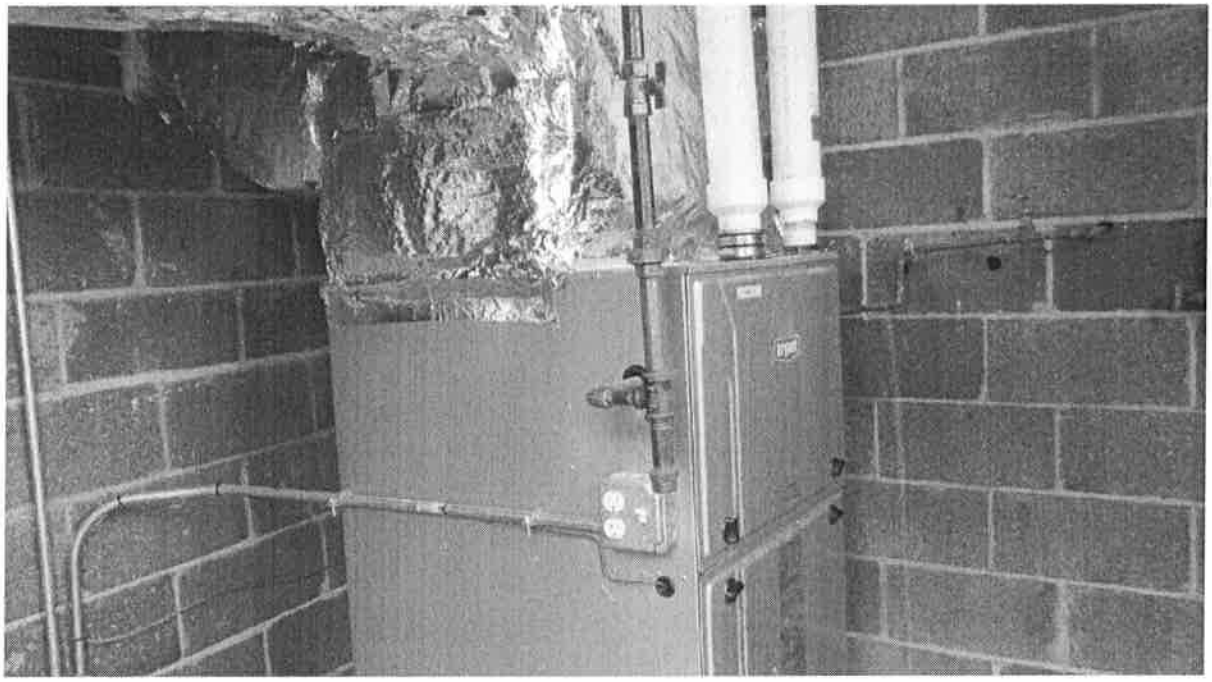
Return air vent

Picture 5



Window-mounted air conditioner

Picture 6

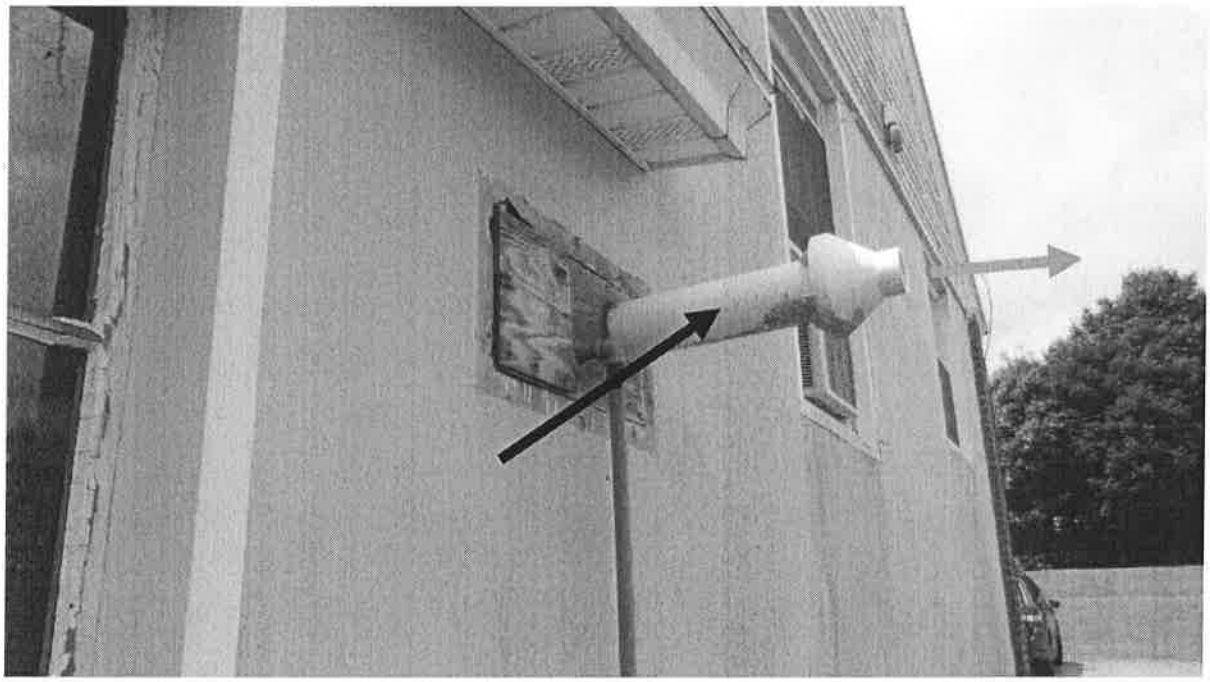


PVC pipes that are combustion air and combustion exhaust vent

Picture 7

Joined PVC pipes that are combustion air and combustion exhaust vent

Picture 8



Combination flue terminus with combustion air intake. Black arrow indicates likely combustion air intake, blue arrow indicates likely furnace exhaust flue.

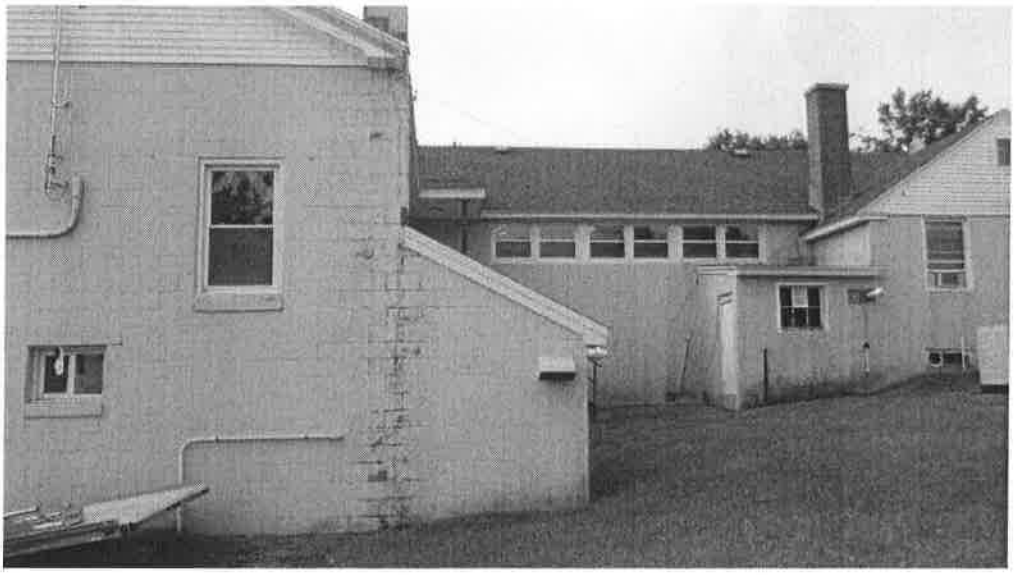
Picture 9

Water accumulation on exterior of front of PTH indicated by dark staining, moss growth, and erosion to brick and mortar

Picture 10

Water accumulation on exterior of rear of PTH indicated by dark staining and moss growth.

Picture 11

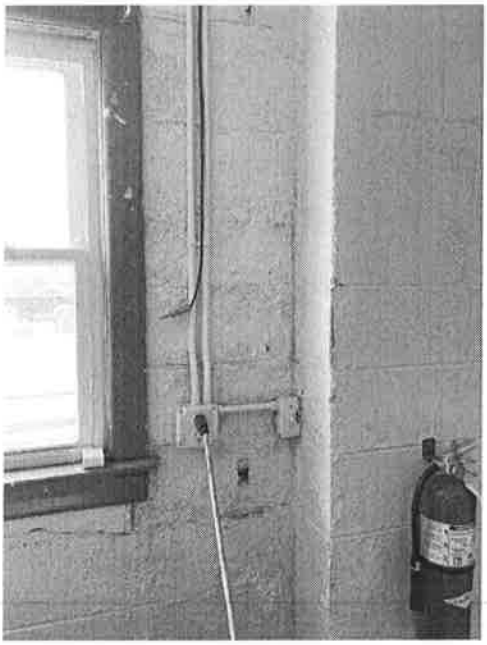


Water from the main roof empties directly onto the roof of both east and west furnace sheds. Note dark stains at the base of both furnace sheds, indicating chronic water exposure and possible water penetration

Picture 12

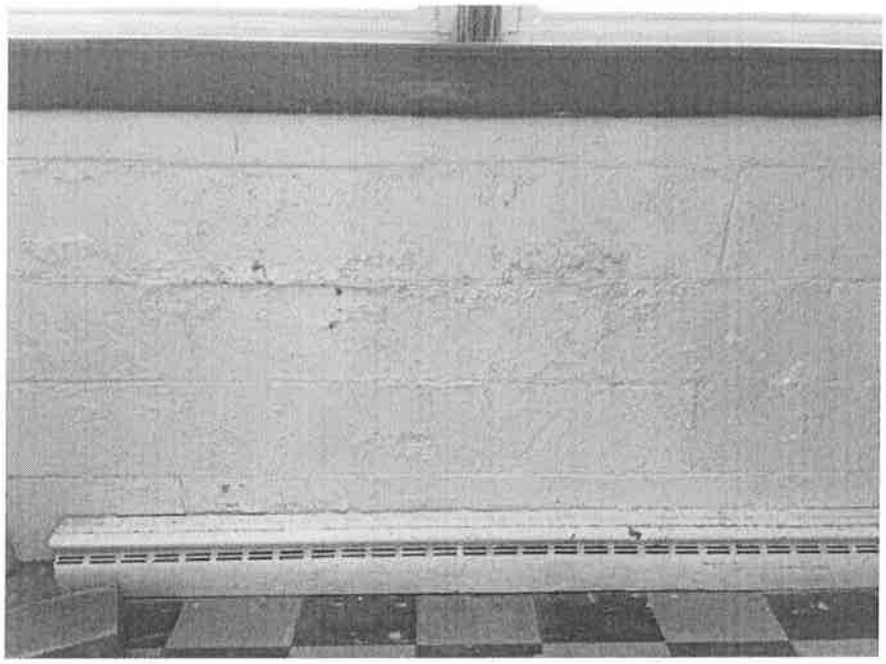
Moistened cement floor of east furnace shed

Picture 13



Efflorescence on interior wall of community room

Picture 14



Efflorescence on interior wall of community room

Location: Peru Town Hall

Address: 3 East Main Rd, Peru, MA

Table 1

Indoor Air Results

Date: 7/30/24

Location/ Room	Carbon Dioxide (ppm)	Carbon Monoxide (ppm)	Temp (°F)	Relative Humidity (%)	Dew Point	PM2.5 (µg/m³)	Occupants in Room	Windows Openable	Ventilation		Remarks
									Supply	Exhaust	
Background (outdoors)	340	ND	82	62	68	22					Sunny, warm
Gym	467	ND	77	55	60	14	0	Y	N	N	Tile floor
Storage Closet	462	ND	76	56	60	16	0	N/A	N	N	
Entrance (next to storage closet)	463	ND	77	56	60	16	0	N/A	N	N	Book storage, ceiling WD, efflorescence
Board of Selectmen	484	ND	78	59	62	18	0	N	N	N	WAC, W2W
Cube 1 Area	509	ND	78	59	62	18	0	Y	N	N	
Cube 3 Area	484	ND	77	62	63	21	2	Y	N	N	WAC, W2W
Tax Collector	414	ND	75	68	64	19	0	N	N	N	WAC, W2W, clutter
Health Agent	420	ND	76	64	62	18	0	Y	N	N	W2W
Common Room (downstairs)	434	ND	75	58	60	19	0	Y	N	N	Tile floor
Police Department	444	ND	77	53	58	20	1	Y	N	N	WAC, vinyl flooring

µg/m³ = micrograms per cubic meter ND = non detect WAC = window air conditioner

ppm = parts per million WD = water-damaged W2W = wall-to-wall carpet

Comfort Guidelines

Carbon Dioxide:	< 800 ppm = preferred > 800 ppm = indicative of ventilation problems	Temperature: Relative Humidity:	70 - 78 °F 40 - 60%

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

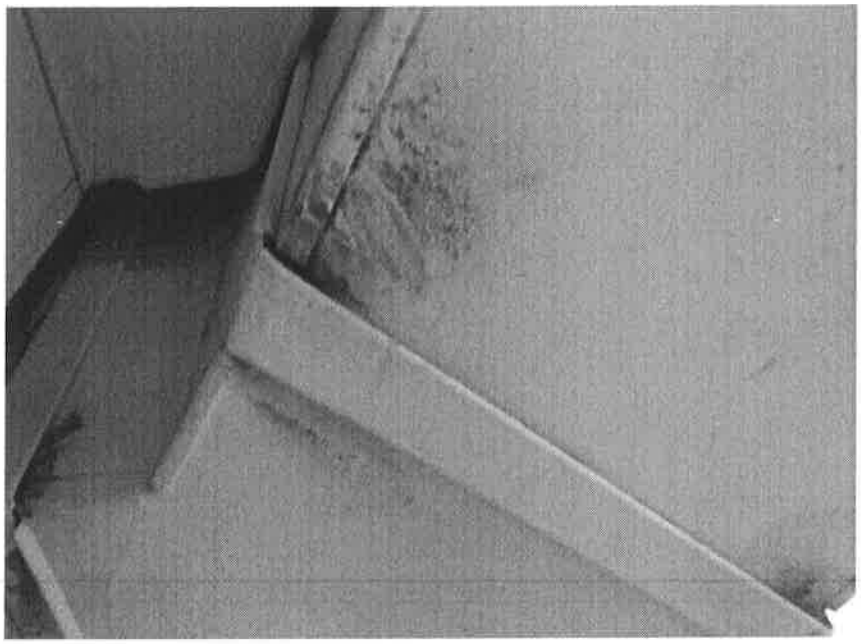
Picture 5

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