

TOWN HALL 3 EAST MAIN ROAD PERU, MA 01235

SELECT BOARD MEETING MINUTES: February 3, 2025 @ 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
Peggy White, Board of Health
Valerie Bird, Board of Health Agent

Public Attendees: Bonny DiTomasso

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: Town Administrator Walker, 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 1/21/2025.

Selectman Leach motion to approve 1/21/2025 minutes pending changes, Selectman Munch second, 3-0.

Item 6: Update of Departments:

Police Chief Cullett:

Chief Cullett mentioned that the 2022 Ford is at Northampton Ford with transmission issues. The 2022 Ford has only 12,000 miles and is being diagnosed. At times the vehicle would not go into gear and transmission is slipping. It is being diagnosed to find the issue.

Emergency Management Director:

- EMD Cullett spoke with Highway Superintendent Russell regarding a Hazard Mitigation grant which is due on February 10th. If the town is interested, a statement of interest needs to be sent to see if the town fits the criteria. The grant is 75% town 25%.
- EMD Cullett also mentioned that Guardian Energy will begin working on the mini splits on February 10th.

Highway Superintendent:

- Superintendent Russell mentioned that the Chapter 90 project has been accepted, and the Town Treasurer should receive the check shortly. Also, Peru will be receiving \$110,000 in Rural Roads funding.
- Superintendent Russell presented the BOS with a new fee schedule for the transfer station from Seasonal Change Heating Cooling and Refrigeration in North Adams. The recovery of refrigerants over 24,000 BTU'S has increased to \$25.00. Highway Superintendent Russell mentioned that the company is under contract with

Berkshire Solid Waste and the fees have changed. Selectman Leach mentioned that the fee is now \$20.00, and he felt that it should remain at \$20.00 for the disposal of refrigerant units.

- Superintendent Russell mentioned that a veteran friend of his is a disturbed with the town regarding the American Flag at the Fire Station. His friend bought a new flag for the flagpole and hopes the new flag will be taken care of.

Board of Health:

- Peggy White mentioned that the Board of Health is getting more involved with housing issues. Peggy is recommending creating a Revolving Account with \$1,000 to proceed with court costs. Health Agent, Valerie Bird and Building Inspector, Tim Sears are working together to assure us that things are done correctly. Peggy plans to go to the Finance Committee to explain the need for a Revolving Account. Peggy wants the BOS's support moving forward on abandoned houses, condemned houses and demolished houses since the goal is safety and sanitation. Selectman Leach mentioned that the building inspector should be kept in the loop.
- Hogweed issue at 55 East Windsor Road is ongoing. Peggy explained that this is complicated because the property is abandoned, and the taxes are not being paid. Superintendent Russell mentioned that the hogweed has been treated a few times. Peggy explained that she cannot get in touch with the property owner and the hogweed is in the town's right of way. She feels that the town needs to get in touch with a licensed contractor to eradicate the hogweed. Peggy mentioned that the previous Town Administrator and MDR had taken care of eradicating the hogweed. Selectman Munch felt that the town should take over hiring a contractor that specializes in the removal of Hogweed and other invasive plants. Selectman Munch wants this issue turned over to Town Administrator, Terry Walker. Peggy reiterated that the hogweed remains on the property because they did not get owner's permission to eradicate. Superintendent Russell mentioned that this needs to be taken care of the hogweed before it goes to seed. Selectman Munch asked Peggy White to give TA Walker names of state officials. Selectman Munch was very confident that TA Walker would do the research and with her persistence get this issue resolved.

TA Walker:

- Austin Design has signed and returned the contract for the Town Hall Feasibility Study. The BOS gave TA Walker permission to sign the contract and return to Austin Design.
- Rescue Truck- TA Walker contacted Auctions International to sell the truck. They have not responded.
- Major Issue with a transportation invoice for Dufour. The entire appropriation has been expended because one student goes to McCann in North Adams. One student's transportation to North Adams is \$4,154.57 per month and the remaining students going to Smith Voke in Northampton is \$4,302.72. Dufour won the transportation bid in April 2024 for transporting vocational students. ATM budgeted for all students which was \$43,027.20. TA Walker was asked to look into this and call Greg Boino.

Selectman Leach:

- Selectman Leach and Selectman Haupt both stated that there is no evidence that the Fire Chief is living at the fire house.
- Selectman Leach mentioned that since the fire department members do not always show up at calls, he is volunteering his services to the Fire Department. He is willing to be support in any way he can and recruit members.

Item 7: Discussion on Council on Aging with Bonny DiTomasso: The BOS reviewed Bonny's resume and felt that she had all the qualifications as the Council on Aging Director. Bonny calculated the budget for the COA director and outreach worker, and she is able to commit to 6-7 hours per month with the funding available. Bonny mentioned that one application form may take more than hour for her to assist seniors in need. Selectman Munch would love to see Bonny as the COA director and feels that at some point she needs to be paid adequately. Selectman Leach mentioned

that the Town of Hinsdale's COA is all volunteer. Bonny mentioned that she is more concerned about assisting with various applications to assist seniors: for example, Hilltown CDC and other organizations. Several seniors do not have computers and need assistance. Bonny's goal is to keep people in their homes with these services. Selectman Munch reiterated that they need a COA Director, an Outreach worker and a Shine Counselor and Bonny is a good choice. Selectman Leach inquired if Bonny could write grants. Bonny stated that she worked as a Risk Officer for Fleet Boston Financial for 19 years and if she needs assistance, she can use Terry Walker-TA/ Grant Writer. Bonny mentioned that Berkshire Health Alliance through the Board of Health handle Yoga classes and monthly meals are coordinated through the Hinsdale COA and is not widely participated in by Peru residents. Selectman Munch mentioned that the town would provide Bonny with a computer, and she could have access to the Community Center. Selectman Leach stated that if Bonny is interested there is no need for an interview and Bonny stated that she would like to be hired as the COA Director. Selectman Leach instructed Bonny to get together with TA Walker to complete the budget for FY26.

Item 8: Discussion and possible vote on quotes on servicing town furnaces: Selectman Haupt mentioned that Pioneer Plumbing stopped by to look at the furnaces and will submit a quote. Placed on hold.

Item 9: Discussion regarding United States Department of Labor Fact Sheet #17 regarding First Responders and the Part 541 Exemptions under the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA): Selectman Haupt mentioned that Town Council stated that when changes are made to a contract the BOS's meeting must be held in executive session. Chief Cullett mentioned that with executive session negotiations he has a choice whether it is public or executive session. Selectman Leach asked TA Walker to write a letter to Chief Cullett notifying him of an Executive Session at the next BOS meeting. Chief Cullett stated that this is not a contract but one simple issue regarding overtime. Selectman Haupt mentioned that paying overtime would require a town meeting vote to change the amount already budgeted. Selectman Haupt stated that Chief Cullett's salary was already established at Annual Town Meeting. Chief Cullett explained that since the town has lost two officers there is ample funds to pay for his overtime. Selectman Haupt mentioned that Town Counsel recommends executive session. Selectman Munch felt that once they get an opinion from Town Counsel, they should follow through with their advice. Placed on hold.

Item 10: Discussion and possible modification of Police Chief's employment agreement to align with (FLSA) Selectman Munch felt that once the BOS received a finding from town counsel, he wanted to wait until this is clarified before he has an opinion. Chief Cullett mentioned that the Department of Labor does have jurisdiction with overtime. The BOS is expected to get a written finding from Town Counsel tomorrow. Placed on hold for executive session.

Item 11: Discussion on Other Post -Employment Benefits with Bruce Cullett: Bruce Cullett mentioned that he did not present this to the board. TA Walker had presented to the board for this week's agenda. TA Walker explained that OPEB is town insurance benefits that bridge the gap between when a person retires until they are old enough to collect Medicare and Medicaid benefits. She also mentioned that there are only 17 towns in Massachusetts that do not offer OPEB and Peru is one of them. Bruce agreed and reiterated that it is a way to retain good employees and fund the OPEB trust fund prior to anyone retiring. Bruce explained that the Town of Colrain created a policy and funded their entire OPEB trust fund. The Town of Peru needs to create a policy on the qualification; for instance, years the employee must work before they can get OPEB benefits and what percent the town will pay for retirees' insurance. Highway Superintendent Russell felt that it may potentially be the deciding factor if an employee continues to work in Peru or goes to another town where they offer OPEB. Selectman Leach felt that the cost (\$22,000) per person each year until age 65 is a lot to handle and didn't want to raise taxes to fund the OPEB Trust fund. Bruce mentioned that this could be funded with Free Cash, Stabilization Fund and any money left over from Health Insurance could go into the OPEB Trust fund. Selectman Munch would like to maintain good benefits to retain good help. Selectman Haupt is not against it but needs more information. Bruce Cullett suggested getting touch with our Town Accountant for their feedback. Highway Superintendent Russell mentioned that the town is already paying OPEB for the school employees. Selectman Leach mentioned he is not against it but not sold on it. Bruce Cullett will bring before the Finance Committee to get their opinion.

Item 12: Discussion on meeting with Jordan Meyer from MIIA: Jordan Meyer met with town officials and took photos of the buildings. Selectman Munch mentioned that one recommendation was an inventory at the Highway Garage. Selectman Munch mentioned that the Highway Garage was very tidy, and Jordan Meyer was impressed on the condition of the Highway Department.

Item 13: Discussion and invitation for participation in Woodlands Partnership Emergency Services Survey: Selectman Haupt would appreciate everyone completing the survey that is on the town website.

Item 14: Discussion on Senior work program: Selectman Leach presented the Hinsdale Senior Work Program guidelines at the BOS meeting. Selectman Leach mentioned if the BOS is in favor of a Senior Work Program this needs to be voted on the town election ballot in June. Selectman Leach mentioned this program is under MGL Chapter 59 Section 5K.

Item 15: Discussion and possible vote on Date and Time for the Annual Town Meeting: After a brief discussion, Selectman Munch motion to hold the Annual Town Meeting on Saturday, June 7, 2025, at 6:00 P.M. Selectman Leach second, 3-0.

Item 16: Discussion on hiring a maintenance person: Selectman Haupt gave TA Walker a draft of job description. TA Walker will revise for the next BOS meeting.

Item 17: Public Input: None

Item 18: Review and approve Accounts Payable, Treasury Warrant and Payroll Warrant: V16-2025
The BOS agreed that Terry Walker, Recording Secretary, would email the minutes to the Board in advance of the meeting.

Item 19: Adjourn: Selectman Leach made a motion to adjourn the 2/3/2025 BOS Meeting, Selectman Munch second, Vote 3-0. The 2/3/2025 BOS Meeting adjourned at 8:06 P.M.

- Articles used:**
 V16-2025 warrant
 Minutes 1/21/2025
 Bonny DiTomasso resume
 Hinsdale Senior Tax Relief work program
 Maintenance Job description/draft
 OPEB health insurance estimates from Town Treasurer

Terry Walker
Recording Secretary

Verne Leach, Chairman

Sam Haupt, Selectman

Ed Munch, Selectman

Verne Leach
 Sam Haupt
 Ed Munch

Date Approved: 2/18/2025

Received February 21, 2025, Kim Leach , Town Clerk

BONNY DITOMASSO
33 South Rd
Peru, Massachusetts 01235
413-441-2390

OBJECTIVE

To integrate my varied professional experience into the role of Council on Aging Director

EDUCATION and PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATIONS

Bachelor of Arts, Western New England College
SHINE Certified since 2012

EXPERIENCE

ELDER SERVICES OF BERKSHIRE COUNTY, Pittsfield, MA
HOME AND COMMUNITY BASED PROGRAMS SUPERVISOR
October 2015 — October 2021

- Responsible for coordinating and participating in outreach events for the Berkshire Aging and Disability Resource Consortia.
- Responsible for fulfilling the requirements of programs administered by the Executive Office of Elder Affairs including: Option Counseling, Volunteer Services, Information and Referral Services, Massachusetts Family Caregiver Support Program, and the Senior Community Services Employment Program.
- Responsible for preparing and maintaining budgets for agency programs.
- Administer the Farmer's Market Coupon program and compile reconciliation reports for the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources.
- Served as a Member of the Berkshire Senior Editorial Board.
- Coordinated programming and host the monthly Berkshire Senior Television show on PCTV.
- Served as Recording Secretary for the Agency's Board of Directors.

MONEY MANAGEMENT, SENIOR COMMUNITY SERVICES EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM,
AND SHINE PROGRAM COORDINATOR **July 2012 — October 2015**

- Responsible for fulfilling the requirements of three programs administered by the Executive Office of Elder Affairs.
- Recruited and trained volunteers for the Money Management and SHINE programs.
- Supervised volunteers for the Money Management and SHINE programs.
- Performed outreach activities at community organizations.
- Prepared training presentations for community outreach activities.
- Prepared and submitted statistical reports to the Executive Office of Elder Affairs.

BERKSHIRE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION, Pittsfield, MA
LEASING MANAGER **August 2002 – July 2012**

- Ensured compliance with HUD 202/8 programs by completing tenant recertifications and submitting vouchers for payment through TRACS.
- Responsible for processing potential applicants for senior/disabled housing based on tenant selection plans.
- Resolved tenant-landlord issue via informal meetings in coordination with Property Managers, Resident Service Coordinators, Resident Managers, and Service Providers.
- Served as Berkshire Housing's agent in court proceeding and related to pending evictions and coordinate payment plans with Property Managers and Accounting staff.
- Performed crisis intervention in resolving issues surfaced during in person interviews with recertifying tenants.
- Coordinated referrals to local agencies to obtain services for in place tenants to ensure ongoing independent living.
- Completed leases for approved applicants to ensure minimal vacancy losses.
- Submitted vacancy claims to HUD to reduce vacancy loss.
- Completed requirements to maintain Certified Occupancy Specialist status.
- Achieved satisfactory scores on all HUD/MHFA property management reviews.

- Monitored delinquencies, sent out delinquency notices and served as Berkshire Housing's representative in evictions.

FLEET BOSTON FINANCIAL, Boston, MA

RISK OFFICER TEAM LEADER

July 1983 — January 2002

- Responsible for reviewing branch adherence to branch policies, procedures, and regulations in a 630 branch network.
- Over saw branch conversions through mergers, acquisitions, and divestitures including divestiture of branches to newly formed First Mass and Sovereign New England banks.
- Coordinated compliance with branch branding on new construction of branch locations.
- Served as local coordinator for corporate business resumption/branch recovery team for Connecticut, Rhode Island and Western, MA.
- Provided on-site support for complex problem-solving to branch banking network.
- Prepared monthly trend analysis reports to Senior Management.
- Participated in Y2K readiness project representing Retail Management.
- Served as regional coordinator for conversion/integration issues and contributed on conversion/integration walkthroughs.
- Identified potential areas of risk/liability and presented analysis of trends/solutions to Retail and Corporate Division risk councils.
- Provided on-site support to branch management absorbed through acquisitions and mergers.
- Designed, implemented, and administered scored internal audit programs for the Consumer Loan Division, Collection Division, and Retail Division encompassing an 18 branch network.
- Design, implemented, and administered scored security examinations of branches within the Retail Division.
- Prepared quarterly and annual presentations for risks/trends to the bank Board of Directors.
- Developed, implemented, and maintained a formal bank security program in compliance with Regulation P and conducted annual security training.
- Served as liaison between law enforcement agencies and the bank in investigations of frauds, robberies, and larcenies.
- Prepared budget projections and negotiated contracts with vendors of security products on behalf of Senior Management.

REFERENCES

Available on Request

Hinsdale's Senior Tax Relief Work Program

2025 Program Description

The Senior Tax Relief Work Program was established for Hinsdale residents under the provisions of Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 59, Section 5K. Eligible participants may receive a maximum credit of \$1,500 on their property taxes (less any applicable withholdings), earned at a rate of \$15.00 per hour, for authorized work performed for the Town of Hinsdale. The program is open to resident property owners sixty (60) years of age or over who meet the specified income level based on the HUD Low-Income Limits established for the area.

The Select Board and Town Administrator shall administer the Senior Tax Relief Work Program. Applications may be obtained from the Administrative Assistant's office or may be downloaded from the town website at www.hinsdalemass.com.

The approval format includes a three-section application requesting information on eligibility, skills, and experience. The app will be evaluated using the following selection criteria:

- Meets income, age, residency, and home ownership eligibility requirements
- Ability to perform work
- Availability of a position suitable for the skills of the applicant

Selected applicants will be placed within a town department, board, agency or program upon recommendation of the subcommittee and subject to review by the Town Administrator. An applicant may refuse the first offering. The department head will supervise and train the applicant and report the accrued hours worked to the Administrative Assistant on a biweekly basis (consistent with scheduled payroll submissions).

The program work cycle runs from January 1 through November 30. The Town Administrator will prepare a Certificate of Completion of Volunteer Services and distributed to the participant, the Board of Assessors, the Treasurer/Collector and the Select Board.

Each participant must file a new application each year. Applicants should be made aware that credits granted are considered reportable income for federal income tax purposes. Participants will receive a W-2 form for money earned through the program.

Application Instructions:

1. Applications will be considered only when filled out completely and accompanied by a copy of the applicant's most recent property tax bill and verification of age.
2. Eligibility is subject to age (60 years or over) and residency conditions, as well as meeting the income guidelines established by the Select Board and the ability to place the applicant in available positions.
3. The Select Board decides placements and Town Administrator based on the skills and interest of the applicants and the needs of the various departments. Attention is paid to individual preferences; however, it may be impossible for all applicants to obtain their first choice.
4. The Town Administrator and credit will issue a Certificate of Completion will be applied to the applicant's January 1 real estate tax bill at the rate of \$15.00 per hour, not to exceed \$1,500 per program year (less applicable withholdings).
5. Applicants must attached copy of last year's Income Tax return, which is required as proof of financial resources and liabilities.
6. Participants in the program will receive a W-2 for federal income tax reporting purposes. New participants are required to provide two forms of identification to the Treasurer/Collector at Town Hall before reporting to work.

Hinsdale's Senior Tax Relief Application Form

Section I: Eligibility

Name _____ Tel. _____ Date of Birth ____ / ____ / ____

Address _____

Please answer the following questions:

I am over age sixty (60) Yes No

I/My spouse and I own the home in which I/we reside Yes No

I am a Hinsdale resident Yes No

I meet the financial guidelines listed below Yes No

Number in family	One Person	Two Persons	Three or more Persons
Annual Income	\$49,196	\$64,333	\$79,470

My gross receipts from all sources of income in the preceding calendar year (including social security, pensions, other retirement allowances, wages, salaries, other compensation, net profit from business or profession, interest and dividends, rental income, capital gains, etc.)

\$ _____

Please list any unusual expenses that affect your ability to meet living costs:

TOWN OF BECKET *Peru*

DRAFT

Position Title: Building Maintenance and Grounds Person

Statement of Duties:

Position is responsible for performing a wide variety of skilled work in the maintenance and construction of town facilities. Perform related work as required.

and semi-skilled
upkeep the Peru Town Hall and associated grounds

Supervision

Employee works under the general supervision of the *Select Board* ~~Town Administrator~~. Employee is familiar with the work routine and uses initiative in carrying out recurring assignments independently without specific instruction. Any questionable cases are referred to the supervisor for clarification or interpretation. Supervisor checks employee's work only to ensure that completed work methods used are technically accurate, and that instructions are being followed. Employee is required to work outside normal business hours as needed, and is on call at all times to respond to emergencies. ~~Employee will be available to the Highway Department for snow removal.~~

situations

Job Environment

Position responsibilities require the use of judgment and initiative to interpret the numerous standardized practices, procedures, or general instructions governing the work. Employee is expected to locate, select and apply the most pertinent practice, procedure, regulation or guideline for a given situation.

tools,

Errors in vehicle or equipment operation can result in personal injury/loss, delay or loss of service, injury to other employees and/or damage to buildings, equipment and the general public.

?

The position has frequent contact with other town employees and the public when working within the ~~public buildings~~ *contractors,* or on the grounds. The majority of contact is to respond to inquiries and provide information and assistance.

Position Functions

The essential functions or duties listed below are intended only as illustration of the various types of work that may be performed. The omission of specific statements of duties does not exclude them from the position if the work is similar, related, or a logical assignment to, or extension of the position

Essential Functions

1. Performs routine maintenance and repair tasks for the Town Hall including ~~all~~ ~~custodial services and~~ minor plumbing and electrical repairs.
- ? 2. Perform minor repair tasks at other town owned buildings. *or if appropriate?*
3. Perform landscape maintenance on all town owned properties and parks except cemeteries.
4. Set up Town Hall for voting, town meetings and other functions as required.
5. Perform weekly trash removal from all town buildings with delivery to transfer station.
6. Maintain standby generator at Town Hall.
7. ~~Performs snow removal with Highway Department as needed.~~ ?

*and ability to recognize the need for repairs.
carpentry, painting, masonry*

Maintain security of Town Hall including security systems.

Assist with

Recommended Minimal Qualifications

Physical and Mental Requirements

Employee is subject to loud noise, toxic or caustic chemicals, hazardous driving conditions, ? electrical shock and hot and cold outdoor weather conditions. Employee is required to stand, *stoop* ? walk, talk, listen, sit, climb, bend over, reach with arms and smell. Employee frequently lifts up to 10 lbs. and occasionally up to 60lbs.

Education and Experience

A candidate for this position must have a High School Diploma or equivalent, with advanced training and experience in the operation of light trucks, landscape equipment and the use of special tools used for building maintenance and construction; three to five (3-5) years of experience in the construction trades or an equivalent combination of education, knowledge or experience. *preferred*

Special Requirements

A candidate for this position must have a valid Massachusetts driver's license. A Massachusetts Construction Supervisors License is preferred.

Knowledge, Skills and Abilities

A candidate for this position should have knowledge of:

- Custodial materials, methods and current practices ?
- Construction materials, methods and current practices
- Practices and principles of plumbing and electrical work, *including security systems.*
- Practices and principles of grounds maintenance
- Safety precautions
- Knowledge of ordering materials and supplies

Skill in:

carpentry, masonry

- Safe and effective use of vehicles, [?] equipment and tools used in building and grounds maintenance

Ability to:

- Follow directions and work independently
- Detect and report equipment malfunctions and building deficiencies
- Perform the physical requirements of the position in all weather conditions.
- *Communicate and coordinate with various third party contractors either on an emergency basis or otherwise.*

EMPLOYEE	EARLIEST RETIREMENT	AGE 65	CURRENT INSURANCE COST (HEALTH AND DENTAL)- 80%	
BEDARD, MARK	APRIL 2034	APRIL 2044	\$	22,771.20
CROFTON, ERIK	JULY 2029	MAY 2035	\$	8,486.40
CULLETT, BRUCE	MARCH 2029	MARCH 2039	\$	22,771.20
RUSSELL, JUSTIN	MARCH 2034	MARCH 2044	\$	22,771.20
WENDLING, CARYN	SEPTEMBER 2028	SEPTEMBER 2038	\$	22,771.20
TOWN ADMINISTRATOR	T.B.D.	T.B.D.	\$	22,771.20

**COVERAGE
UNTIL MEDICARE**

\$ 227,712.00

\$ 84,864.00

\$ 227,712.00

\$ 227,712.00

\$ 227,712.00

\$ 227,712.00

\$ 1,223,424.00