

TOWN HALL 3 EAST MAIN ROAD PERU, MA 01235

SELECT BOARD MEETING MINUTES: September 15, 2025, 6:00 P.M.

Town Hall Community Center

Verne Leach, Chair Selectman

Samuel Haupt, Selectman

Edward Munch, Selectman

Terry Walker, Recording Secretary

Justin Russell, Highway Superintendent arrived at 6:19 p.m.

Nanette Mone, Board of Health

Caryn Wendling, Tax Collector/Treasurer

Shana Lecours, Assessor arrived at 7:05 p.m.

Jonathon Mejias, Assessor arrived at 7:05 p.m.

Public Attendees: Courteny Morehouse, BRPC

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: TA Walker recording, Selectman Leach recording for personal reasons under exemption E

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

Item 5: Review and Approve BOS Meeting Minutes for 8/11/2025 and 8/18/2025:

Selectman Leach motion to approve 8/11/2025 minutes as written, Selectman Munch second, 3-0

Selectman Leach motion to place 8/18/2025 minutes on hold

Item 6: Presentation and discussion with Courteny Morehouse of the BRPC regarding the MVP Grant Program:

Courteny explained that MVP stands for Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Grant. These grants are specific for small towns hazard mitigation projects for emergency management and climate induced events. Projects could include a culvert on North Road and possibly grants for vulnerable seniors in an emergency situation. Selectman Haupt mentioned that Bonny DiTomasso, COA Director, will be putting together a list of vulnerable seniors who are at risk. Courteny mentioned that in order for the town to qualify they need to participate in a one-day workshop. Selectman Haupt also mentioned that they have a \$20,000 grant award and if the town doesn't follow through with the process, we need to return the grant. Selectman Haupt mentioned the next step is for BRPC to put together a contract and the BOS will sign it. Emma will be notified that the intermunicipal contract was awarded to BRPC.

Item 7: Update from Departments:

Highway Superintendent:

Superintendent Russell mentioned:

- Justin mentioned he is waiting for an answer from the BOS to have Foresight Engineering provide a free estimate for the culvert on North Road. The field work will cost \$700.00. The Board agreed that Justin notify Allison Dckson from BRPC to go ahead and hire Foresight.
- Sunrise Village is all completed this project was funded with a MassWorks grant.

- The loader is overheating, and the repairs will cost around \$2,000 to have someone come to the garage to fix it.
- The 2019 International has been repaired and the cost was around \$12,000.
- Justin needs to replace one of the door panels which will cost around \$1,300.00. Justing was told to order a door since building maintenance has adequate funds.

Northern Berkshire Solid Waste representative:

- Ed Munch attended a meeting for Northern Berkshire Solid Waste and was told that the Town of Peru could do a better job recycling. One of the major problems is kitty litter. Linda Cernik mentioned that we can't make people recycle but educating people is important.
- Ed Mentioned that the town does not pay to get rid of Freon and wondered if we should charge the residents. Selectman Leach mentioned to further discuss this issue it needs to be on the agenda.

Maintenance:

- Ed Munch mentioned that he does not have time to do his job in 5 hours. Ed asked as long as he stays within the budget if he would work a little longer to finish projects. Selectman Haupt and Selectman Leach agreed that Ed could work extra hours as long as he does not exceed the budget. Ed has prioritized a few tasks:
- Scrape walls so chipped paint will not be falling in offices
- Hot water in bathrooms (Ed mentioned he needs a hire a plumber)
- Ed needs a hand truck to move heavy items. The board agreed he could purchase a hand truck.
- Ed asked TA Walker to tell the cleaning people to stop mixing the trash with the recycling items and tell them to leave the bins alone.

Selectman Haupt: Sam mentioned that he is being supported to be appointed by Paul Mark as a representative on the Governors Commission for pilot reform.

Town Administrator:

- TA Walker mentioned that she finally received a list of vocational students from CBRSD. She also received a letter from Superintendent Henault stating that 4 students in question are living in Northampton. With school choice, Peru will no longer be paying tuition and Northampton will paying their tuition.
- TA Walker also mentioned that she had met with Assessor Shana Lecours and Assessor Jonathon Mejias on Monday, September 8th. She presented Shana and Jonathon with timesheets and a letter explaining the changes. At the September 2nd, BOS meeting the BOS voted that the assessors had to fill out time sheets, and if they didn't work, they didn't get paid. Jonathon's rate of pay increased from \$25.00 per hour to \$34.00 per hour. This occurred because he was hired to work 1.5 hours per week, and 2 hours per week was calculated in the budget at ATM. Shana and Jonathon both signed the letter and TA Walker mentioned that it was a very productive meeting. She feels that the meeting with the assessors was very pleasant, and they are moving forward in a positive way.
- TA Walker mentioned that she had a request for the Executive Session minutes for August 11th. This will be delayed because the minutes have not been approved.
- Selectman Leach mentioned that in his opinion Shana and Jonathon are salaried, and he doesn't believe this can be changed mid year. Selectman Haupt mentioned that any letter written must go through and be approved by the BOS but the letter is still valid. Selectman Munch was satisfied with the letter signed by the assessors and Selectman Haupt wants the issue with timecards and hourly salary put to bed. Selectman Munch feels the situation with the lead assessor and 1 assessor is resolved and motion to approve executive session minutes from August 11th, Selectman Haupt second, 3-0. The Executive session minutes will be on next week's agenda to be approved.
- Selectman Leach received an Open Meeting Law complaint, and it will be on next week's agenda.

Assessors:

Assessors Shana Lecours and Assessor Jonathon Mejias arrived at 7:05 p.m. and questioned the Selectboard with the following changes:

- Why do they need to fill out time sheets?
- Why are they being paid hourly instead of a salary?

Shana felt that because they are salaried, she doesn't believe that can be changed halfway through the year. Selectman Munch stated on behalf of the Selectboard the assessors will be filling out a time sheet and being paid hourly. Jonathon felt that if he worked more than 1.5 hours he would not be getting paid for the extra time. Jonathon mentioned that he signed the letter stating that he needs to fill out a timesheet, he would be paid 1.5 hours per week and if he doesn't show up he will not be paid. He stated that he signed the letter with the changes just to be a good sport. Selectman Haupt mentioned that this change is not intended as a change in salary. Selectman Leach asked Jonathon if he was hired to work 1.5 hours a week- why is he working 5 hours per week. Shana stated that the calculation of absences is incorrect, and she wants to know where the calculation came from. The calculation stated that Jonathon attended 75% of the Assessor meetings and Shana attended 55% of the Assessor meetings. Jonathon questioned who came up with the idea of time sheets and the change in pay. Selectman Munch mentioned that the time sheets were voted on at the executive session on August 11th. Jonathon didn't think the letter came from the Selectmen but from someone else. At the September 2nd, BOS meeting Selectman Munch and Selectman Haupt instructed TA Walker to create time sheets for the assessors and meet with the assessors to explain the changes. TA Walker explained that she wrote a letter explaining the changes so they would understand the changes and if they had questions, they didn't have to sign the letter. Shana and Jonathon both signed the letter with the changes and TA Walker was under the impression they didn't have a problem with the changes. TA Walker mentioned that with the changes Jonathon's rate of pay went from \$25.00 per hour to \$34.00 per hour. Selectman Munch stated that if they didn't want to sign the letter they shouldn't have signed it. It was decided that in order to discuss this issue any further an executive session will be convened next Monday, September 22nd.

Item 8: Update on Transfer Station dumpster: Since there is adequate funds to purchase a dumpster, Highway Superintendent Russell was told to go ahead and start the process of purchasing a dumpster for the town.

Item 9: Discussion and possible vote to increase hourly pay rate for Highway Driver/Laborer: After a brief discussion, Selectman Leach motion to set the rate at \$24.00 - \$25.50 per hour for a highway driver/laborer depending on the experience, Selectman Haupt second, 3-0.

Item 10: Public Input: N/A

Item 11: Review and approve accounts payable, Treasure Warrants, Payroll Warrants: V26-2026

Item 12: Adjourn: Selectman Leach made a motion to adjourn the 9/15/2025 BOS Meeting, Selectman Munch second, Vote 3-0. The 9/15/2025 BOS Meeting adjourned at 7:45 p.m.

Articles used:

V26-2026

8/11/2025

Letter from Superintendent Henault (CBRSB)

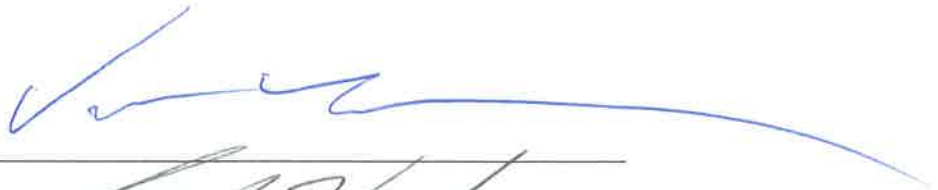
Request for 8/11/2025 Executive Session minutes

Letters to Assessors Shana Lecours and Jonathon Mejias

Terry Walker

Recording Secretary

Verne Leach, Chairman



Samuel Haupt, Selectman



Edward Munch, Selectman



Date Approved: 9/22/25

Received 9-24 2025
Kim Leach, Town Clerk

Town Administrator

From: Michael Henault <mhenault@cbrsd.org>
Sent: Wednesday, September 3, 2025 11:31 AM
To: Town Administrator
Cc: Beth O'Connor; Greg Boino; Sam Haupt; Ed Munch; Select Men
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Re: Town of Peru, False claim of residency

Good morning,

In response to your letter, we sent a formal request to the family via email and our messaging system ParentSquare requesting proof of residency in accordance with MA Law and DESE regulations. We informed the family that if they are living outside of CBRSD, they will need to follow our School Choice application process. We also informed them that our goal is not to disrupt their children's education.

I followed up with mom via phone and she reported that her current residence is outside of Peru. We are working with her to get us proof of residency and will follow up with making the required changes on our end once the students are properly enrolled through school choice. Once this happens, we will report the changes to Smith Vocational. This will likely be resolved within the next week, and will be reflected in the October 1 enrollment.

If anything changes, I will reach back out.

Respectfully,

Michael Henault, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools
Central Berkshire Regional School District
(413) 684-0320
[Book an appointment with me](#)

On Tue, Sep 2, 2025 at 8:06 PM Town Administrator <townadmin@townofperuma.com> wrote:

Please see attached letter from the Peru Board of Selectmen.

Your response is very much appreciated.

Thank you,

Town Administrator

From: ksuezq88@aol.com
Sent: Monday, September 15, 2025 1:43 PM
To: Select Men; Town Administrator
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Minutes

I am requesting a copy of the Executive Session minutes of August 11, 2025. Please email them to me.
Thank you, Susan Koziara

Sent from the all new AOL app for iOS

Town of Peru

Peru, Massachusetts 01235



September 8, 2025

Dear Assessor Shana Lecours,

The Selectboard voted on, Tuesday, September 2, 2025, that Assessors would be paid hourly for scheduled hours worked in the Assessor's office. The Selectboard also voted that you need to fill out a time sheet in order to be paid. Head Assessor Susan Koziara will be signing off on your time sheet and will schedule hours.

Your rate of pay is \$37.39 per hour, which will not change your salary that was appropriated at Annual Town Meeting as long as you attend all assessor meetings.

If you do not show up for scheduled hours, you will not be paid. Also, as a part time employee, you are not entitled to be paid for medical or sick leave.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact, me or the Board of Selectmen.

Sincerely,

Terry Walker

Terry Walker

Town Administrator-Town of Peru

Please acknowledge receipt of this correspondence.

Shana Lecours

Shana Lecours

Date:

9/8/2025

Town of Peru

Peru, Massachusetts 01235



September 8, 2025

Dear Assessor Jonathon Mejias,

The Selectboard voted on, Tuesday, September 2, 2025, that Assessors would be paid hourly for scheduled hours worked in the Assessor's office. The Selectboard also voted that you need to fill out a time sheet in order to be paid. Head Assessor Susan Koziara will be signing off on your time sheet and will schedule hours.

Your rate of pay is \$34.00 per hour, which will not change your salary that was appropriated at Annual Town Meeting as long as you attend all assessor meetings.

If you do not show up for scheduled hours, you will not be paid. Also, as a part time employee, you are not entitled to be paid for medical or sick leave.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact, me or the Board of Selectmen.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Terry Walker'.

Terry Walker

Town Administrator-Town of Peru

Please acknowledge receipt of this correspondence.

Jonathon Mejias

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Jonathon Mejias'.

Date: 9/8/2025