

TOWN MEETING MINUTES
PERU, VT
MARCH 3, 2026

Peru's Moderator, Gary Ameden, called the meeting to order at 10:10AM. Gary welcomed all to the 2026 meeting and advised all participants of the ground rules for this meeting.

WARNING: The legal voters of the Town of Peru are hereby warned and notified to meet at the Peru Town Center on March 3, 2026, at 10:00AM to transact the business of the town from the floor.

Article 1: To elect a Town Moderator – 1 Year Term. Iwanna Reed nominated Gary Ameden, Andy Dahlstrom 2nd the nomination. All in favor; motion passed by voice vote.

Article 2: To hear and act on the reports of the Town Officers. Iwanna Reed motioned to accept the reports as printed, Josh Witkin 2nd the motion. All in favor, motion passed.

Article 3: To elect Town Officers as the law directs.

Town Clerk – 1 Year Term. Iwanna Reed nominated Melinda Beebe and Jane Worley 2nd. Hearing no other nominations, proposition B was moved and 2nd. The Clerk cast one ballot for Melinda Beebe.

Treasurer – 1 Year Term. Barbara Petra nominates Cheryl Fox, and Terry Crandall 2nd. Hearing no other nominations, proposition B was moved and 2nd. The Clerk cast one ballot for Cheryl Fox.

Collector of Delinquent Taxes – 1 Year Term. Andy Dahlstrom nominated Tracy Black and Jane Worley 2nd. Hearing no other nominations, proposition B was moved and 2nd, The Clerk cast one ballot for Tracy Black.

First Constable – 1 Year Term. Jane Worley nominated Mike Gayda and Josh Witkin 2nd. Hearing no other nominations, proposition B was moved and 2nd. The Clerk cast one ballot for Mike Gayda.

Second Constable – 1 Year Term. Jim Potter nominated Josh Witkin and Nicole Witkin 2nd. Hearing no other nominations, proposition B was moved and 2nd. The Clerk cast one ballot for Josh Witkin.

Selectboard Member – 3 Year Term. Lorri Black nominates Jane Worley, and Karen Utiger 2nd. Harriet Dahlstrom nominates Laurie Gayda and Jim Bowen 2nd. Mike Gayda nominates Alex Sheets and Brian Hazard 2nd.

Moderator, Gary Ameden, called for paper ballots to be cast. JP's passed out paper ballots to all registered voters. The first ballots cast did not produce a majority for any of the nominees.

A second round of ballots were handed out and voted. Per the count by the JP's, a majority of the ballots (21 out of 37) were cast in favor of Laurie Gayda. Laurie Gayda is our new Selectboard member.

Lister – 3 Year Term. Jack Pennypacker nominated Richard Rockwell and Lorri Black 2nd. Hearing no other nominations, proposition B was moved and 2nd. The Clerk cast one ballot for Richard Rockwell.

Auditor – 3 Year Term. Andy Dahlstrom nominated Heidi Healy and Josh Witkin 2nd. Hearing no other nominations, proposition B was moved and 2nd. The Clerk cast one ballot for Heidi Healy.

Trustee of Public Funds – 1 Year Term. Terry Crandall nominated Iwanna Reed and Josh Witkin 2nd. Hearing no other nominations, proposition B was moved and 2nd. The Clerk cast one ballot for Iwanna Reed.

Cemetery Commission – 5 Year Term. Terry Crandall nominated Iwanna Reed and Lorri Black 2nd. Hearing no other nominations Proposition B was moved and 2nd, The Clerk cast one ballot for Iwanna Reed.

Article 4: A) To see if the town will vote a tax to defray the expenses of the town for the fiscal year July 1, 2026, to June 30, 2026, as set forth in the budgets submitted in the 2026 Town Report, subject to such modifications as this meeting may vote. Iwanna Reed motions that we move this article and Brian Hazard 2nd. All in favor; motion passed by voice vote.

B) To authorize the Selectboard to set the rate on the Grand List to meet the budgets voted. Josh Witkins motions that we move this article and Barbara Petra 2nd. All in favor; motion passed by voice vote.

C) To establish the date of payment of such taxes. Previous years dates July 1 – September 30. Iwanna Reed motions we accept this article and Lorri Ameden 2nd. All in favor; motion passed by voice vote.

Article 5: To see if the town will vote to accept the provisions made by law for payment of taxes to the Town Treasurer. Heidi Healy moves we accept this motion and Karen Utiger 2nd. All in favor; motion passed by voice vote.

Article 6: Shall the voters vote for a sum of money for the following organizations which serve the community.

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| South Londonderry Free Library | \$1,500.00 |
| Bennington County Coalition for the Homeless | \$ 500.00 |
| VT Rural Fire Protection Task Force | \$ 200.00 |
| My Community Nurse Project | \$3,500.00 |
| Project Against Violent Encounters | \$ 150.00 |
| Londonderry Volunteer Rescue Squad | \$5,250.00 |
| VT Center for Independent Living | \$ 140.00 |
| Center for Restorative Justice | \$ 300.00 |
| Neighborhood Connections | \$3,540.00 |
| The Collaborative | \$ 750.00 |
| SW Vermont Council on Aging | \$ 200.00 |
| Visiting Nurses Association of VT/NH | \$2,700.00 |
| Peru Cemetery Commission | <u>\$5,000.00</u> |
| TOTAL | \$23,730.00 |

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| South Londonderry Free Library | \$1,500.00 |
| Bennington County Coalition for the Homeless | \$ 500.00 |
| VT Rural Fire Protection Task Force | \$ 500.00 |
| My Community Nurse Project | \$4,690.00 |
| Project Against Violent Encounters | \$ 500.00 |
| Londonderry Volunteer Rescue Squad | \$5,250.00 |
| VT Center for Independent Living | \$ 500.00 |
| Center for Restorative Justice | \$ 500.00 |
| Neighborhood Connections | \$3,540.00 |
| The Collaborative | \$ 750.00 |
| SW Vermont Council on Aging | \$ 500.00 |
| Visiting Nurse Association of VT/NH | \$1,000.00 |
| Peru Cemetery Commission | <u>\$5,000.00</u> |
| TOTAL | \$24,730.00 |

Tom West spoke on behalf of The Collaborative, advising of the many programs that are available through this organization. All focused-on Community, Youth and Families.

Carol Lechtaller spoke in support of VNH, having been with this organization for over 50 years. She also addressed the Hospice services available through VNH. Andy Dahlstrom

voiced concerns as to the need for VNH's appropriation given that they are funded by insurance coverage. Regina Downer spoke about the need for rehabilitation services to be offered in our area.

Iwanna Reed motions we accept this list of appropriations as printed and Jane Worley 2nd. Motion voted down by hand vote. Andy Dahlstrom motions that The VNH be removed from the list of appropriations and Harriet Dahlstrom 2nd. All in favor; motion passed by hand vote.

Mike Gayda motions that we contribute \$1000.00 to VNH and Josh Witkin 2nd. Motion passed by voice vote.

Gordon Searles Jr. motioned that we increase any appropriations that are less than \$500.00 up to \$500.00, 2nd by Gordon Searles III. All in favor; motion passed by voice vote.

So, between removing VNH from the appropriations and increasing five organizations to \$500.00 this created a surplus in appropriation funds of \$1,190.00.

Motion was made by Karen Utiger, 2nd by Andy Dahlstrom to add \$190.00 to the request from The Community Nurse Project. David Utiger motions we amend the motion to include an additional \$1,000.00, 2nd by Andy Dahlstrom. All in favor; motion passed by voice vote.

The first set of figures is what was originally requested for appropriation. The second set of figures is the final amount that was voted and accepted by the voters of Peru.

Article 7: Shall the town assess a one percent (1%) tax on rooms pursuant to 24V.S.A § 138(b).

Jane Worley motioned that we accept this article, Harriet Dahlstrom 2nd. Some discussion on why the Selectboard did not take advantage of the two other local taxes available. All in favor. Article passed by voice vote.

Richard Rockwell motioned that we have the Selectboard take steps to impose the other taxes. Harriet Dahlstrom 2nd. All in favor; motion passed by voice vote. The Selectboard will investigate doing this.

Article 8: To transact any other business that may properly come before this meeting. Jack Pennypacker advised that grievances would be in late April. There was no other business to properly come before this meeting.

Respectfully Submitted,
Melinda M. Beebe
Peru Town Clerk
Dated March 9, 2026

Andy Dahlstrom

Ben Foltz

Laurie Gayda

Town of Peru Selectboard