

MINUTES

For a regular meeting of the Pittsfield Town Council held on Tuesday, January 21, 2014 at 6:30 pm in the Council Chambers.

PRESENT: COUNCILORS: Gary Jordan, Jr., Caleb Curtis, Trudy Ferland, Robert Stackhouse and Heather Donahue. **ABSENT:** Michael Cianchette and Tim Nichols. Also present: Town Manager Kathryn Ruth and Town Clerk Nicole Nickolan. Audience members included: Christopher Carr, Donna Chale and Brad Jackson.

1. **Gary Jordan, Jr.** opened the meeting by leading the **Pledge of Allegiance**. The Council observed a moment of silence.
2. Adoption of minutes of the regular meeting held on January 7, 2014

Moved by **Councilor Stackhouse** and seconded by **Councilor Curtis** that the minutes of the meeting held on January 7, 2014 be adopted.

VOTE: UNANIMOUS AYE

Mayor Gary Jordan, Jr. noted he was voting on the minutes for a quorum. Councilor Donahue arrived a few moments late.

3. **PRESENTATIONS, CONGRATULATIONS AND INTRODUCTIONS:**

Presentation by Executive Director Brad Jackson regarding recent Kennebec Regional Development Authority (KRDA) activities and future plans:

The Town Manager noted Brad Jackson was hired last year to bring KRDA (known locally as FirstPark) forward.

Councilors received a copy of the FirstPark Chronology, which will assist in background for those Councilors not familiar with the organization, as well as the Strategic Plan that is in the process of being implemented.

Brad Jackson wanted to thank the Town Council for their support and to update the Town Council on activities. Mr. Jackson noted he had been with the company since March 2013. Mr. Jackson gave a brief overview of his background as a soldier and as an economist. Some of the companies Mr. Jackson is speaking to will not fit in FirstPark. Not every opportunity will fit in the Park. Mr. Jackson reviewed his operational design. There will be a shift away from print advertisement and movement towards network and outreach. Our mandate is business attraction. I am mirroring the State programs and initiatives. Mr. Jackson discussed a few companies he has been networking with. He discussed capacity building and risks. Mr. Jackson noted Central Maine is a great place to do business.

Councilor Stackhouse questioned how many businesses could locate in FirstPark. Brad noted there are 24 lots total. 3 of the lots are fully serviced. FirstPark currently has 7 businesses.

The Town Manager noted that everything at FirstPark stayed the same for a long time. It is nice to have Brad come in with new ideas and new energy. Brad believes in networking, leveraging

assets of a region, and thinks outside the box. He has emphasized getting before business decision-makers regarding new facilities; having a regional presence; working with a Lead Generation company to grow FirstPark; and working on a Free Trade Zone for the Region/State. It is very interesting to be on the Executive Board and Chair of the Marketing Committee. I see a lot of possibilities for the future.

Councilor Curtis noted it is important to sell the companies Central Maine, and then find the right spot for the companies.

Councilor Ferland questioned if Mr. Jackson connects with local colleges and technical schools. Brad noted he connects with many schools in the region.

The Town Council thanked Mr. Jackson for his presentation.

Commendation for Town Service: Christopher Carr and Donna Chale:

Mayor Gary Jordan, Jr. presented former Councilor Carr with a plaque commending him for his town service and thanking him for his outstanding devotion to the community. Former Councilor Chale will be presented with a plaque at a later date due to illness.

Community and Economic Development Activities and Events:

Report on New Business Activity & Opportunities in Pittsfield:

Thursday, February 13, 2014: Seabcooke Valley Chamber of Commerce Annual Banquet from 5:00 – 9:00 pm
Wednesday, April 09, 2014: Regional Business Resources Night 6:30 – 8:30 pm
Wednesday, May 14, 2014: 7th Annual Regional Job Fair 3:30 – 6:30 pm

Several private sector business activities remain under review and small projects continue to be underway.

Several commercial properties have recently been sold, are under option or will be leased.

To address remaining available locations, an additional promotion piece beyond our regular promotion of available properties has been provided to economic and community development resources and sites. This promotion is in addition to the creation and promotion of an Available Properties list, website listing, internet listings on free websites and verbal promotion. There have been several inquiries and one inquiry is promising.

SAS Property placed on the market by MTC Holdings, LTD of San Antonio, Texas and is offered by the LandVest, a Luxury Property Real Estate Company in Camden – The website promoting the property is linked to the Town's website. The Town has recommended that the building be available for lease of needed space, however, the company would like to sell the entire building/s. The December appointment with the out of state developer/investor was cancelled due to the winter storm. The Town has been advised that the appointment will be re-scheduled after Christmas.

North Lancey Street Business Building placed on the market by Lancey Associates and is offered by Better Homes and Gardens Real Estate The Masiello Group.

Report on MDOT Somerset Avenue Mill & Fill Project: A brief report will be provided regarding the cost of various traffic enhancements.

Report on Meetings & Events:

FirstPark Marketing Committee Meeting on Wednesday, January 08, 2014 at 2:00 pm at the First Park Office in Oakland

Recycling Committee Meeting on Wednesday, January 08, 2014 at 5:00 pm

Somerset Economic Development Corporation Board of Directors on Thursday, January 09, 2014 from 10:00 am – 12:00 noon in Skowhegan.

Sebasticook Valley Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors Meeting on Thursday, January 09, 2014 at 5:00 pm at the Chamber Office In Palmyra

Central Maine Egg Festival 2014 Organizational Meeting and Volunteer Dinner on Thursday, January 09, 2014 at 6:30 pm

Upcoming Meetings & Events:

FirstPark Executive Committee Meeting on Thursday, January 23, 2014 at 6:00 pm at the First Park Office in Oakland

FAA Airport Scoping Meeting on the Airport Master Plan on Friday, January 24, 2014 from 10:00 am – 1:00 pm in Curtis Air's meeting room.

Somerset Connect Workforce Committee on Educational Opportunities Meeting (SCCCN) on Monday, January 27, 2014 at 1:00 pm at Kennebec Valley Community College in Fairfield

- 4. **PUBLIC HEARINGS/OLD BUSINESS: NONE**
- 5. **REPORTS: TOWN MANAGER, FINANCE, ORDINANCE & RECYCLING COMMITTEES:**

Town Manager's Report: Town Council Meeting of 01/21/2014:

1. The FYI Folder: FYI Folder which contains items that come in between the Town Council Meetings has the following this evening: None.

2. 2014 Dog Licenses Due January 31, 2014: Dog Licenses are available at the Town Office. Starting February 1, 2014, owners who have not licensed their dogs will be charged a \$25.00 late fee pursuant to the State Law. The yearly license fee is \$6.00 for altered dogs and \$11.00 for unaltered dogs. Please bring in you current rabies certificate and proof of spay or neuter, if applicable. If you no longer have your dog, please contact the Town Office to let us know so we can remove them from our list. Please make sure to license your dog on or by January 31, 2014 to avoid the \$25.00 additional fee. It would be great if all dogs were licensed by the State's due date of January 31 so that no one has to pay an additional fee.

3. Sebasticook Regional Land Trust Farm & Habit Ride: The Town has been contacted by representatives of the Land Trust to start the collection of information for the 2nd Annual Farm & Habitat Ride. This year, the group is going to check all schedules to try to plan the ride on a day that another significant bike ride is taking place. This will lead to more participants as many of the regular bicyclists were at a large biking event. As soon as the date is chosen, we will start to promote and publicize the bike ride and padding event.

4. Egg Festival Dinner for Volunteer Organizations: The Central Maine Egg Festival hosted a dinner for volunteer organizations on Thursday, January 09, 2013 at 6:30 pm in the Council Chambers. This was an informal dinner meeting to discuss the 2014 Egg Festival and how Volunteer Organizations can become involved. We had great attendance and a lot of brainstorming. All of the interested parties will be invited to the next Egg Festival Committee Meeting on Thursday, February 13, 2014 at 6:30 pm.

The Central Maine Egg Festival will be held Monday, July 14, 2014 – Saturday, July 19, 2014.

5. MDOT Work Plan for Calendar Years 2014-2015-2016: MDOT has recently unveiled its work plan. Pittsfield has a number of projects listed in the plan for completion. READ List.

6. American Red Cross Real Hero Awards: The Real Heroes Nominating Committee of the Pine Tree Chapter of The American Red Cross has selected town employees for their awards. Police Chief Steve Emery, Officer Jeff Vanadestine and Firefighter Ryan Michael Havey were selected for this honor for their life saving efforts on October 7, 2013 when a car accident victim was pulled from the Sebasticook River. Their efforts definitely saved a life that day. The Annual American Red Cross Real Heroes Breakfast will take place on March 20, 2014 at 7:30 am at Jeff's Catering & Event Center in Brewer. Prior to that event, a TV crew will tape interviews with the winners.

Finance Committee: The Finance Committee met tonight prior to the meeting with TDWealth. The Cemetery Trust account is performing very well.

Ordinance Committee: None.

Recycling Committee: None.

6. **NEW BUSINESS:**

RESOLUTION 14-10: Resolved that the Town Council sign a Resolution expressing its concern with and its opposition to the loss of \$40 million from the State Revenue Sharing Program which essentially eliminates State Revenue Sharing for the communities and will have detrimental effects upon the Town of Pittsfield and municipalities across the State.

The Resolution reads as follows:

TOWN OF PITTSFIELD RESOLUTION

Be It Resolved by the Pittsfield Town Council:

Whereas, the Pittsfield Town Council is deeply concerned and wishes to express its opposition to the continual depletion of the Municipal Revenue Sharing Program that had been guaranteed under the State of Maine law as a source of funding for municipalities. It is understood that monthly payments to towns will change during the years due to the funds collected under the

law. It is not understood as to why the funds are being taken from the Towns and used by the Legislature to balance first the State FY 2014 budget and now the FY 2015 budget. These funds were designated for the municipalities so that there would be alternative revenues to that of the property tax. The diversion of Municipal Revenue Sharing is resulting in an alarming shift of costs to the Property tax and to the Property Taxpayer across the State of Maine.

Whereas, for FY 2015, the estimated \$146 million dollars in municipal revenue sharing distribution called for in the law was reduced to just \$60 million dollars with the remaining \$86 million dollars of Municipal Revenue Sharing diverted to support the State budget.

Whereas, the budget directed that a special “Tax Expenditure Review Task Force” recommend \$40 million dollars worth of tax exemptions for elimination, resulting in putting up an additional \$40 million of Municipal Revenue Sharing cuts as collateral if the Tax Force Effort did not work. As we have recently heard, the Tax Force effort did not result in any recommendations due to a variety of reasons including confusion over the many tax exemptions currently allowed under the law, the details of those exemptions and the time period allowed for the review.

Whereas, if \$40 million more dollars are taken from the Municipal Revenue Sharing account, this program will effectively be close to termination and certainly not remotely within the spirit of the law that created the program.

Whereas, in 2009, the Town of Pittsfield’s Municipal Revenue Sharing was at a level of \$452,832 which represented 28% of the Town’s municipal revenue collections. Municipal Revenue Sharing has been utilized to decrease the amount of property taxes collected and to fund necessary town programs.

Whereas, in FY 2015, if the Legislature does not act to save the Municipal Revenue Sharing program and the distribution becomes \$20 million, the Town will receive an estimated \$69,082 rather than \$376,713 provided for in FY 2013 before the shift of Municipal Revenue Sharing from the municipalities to the State.

Whereas, to not increase taxes on citizens, especially our senior citizens, the Town has taken many actions to deal with the loss of Municipal Revenue Sharing during 2013 and 2014 as follows: the Town ceased implementation of its paving plan resulting in roads which requiring work to not receive pavement or reconstruction; reduced capital expenditures for infrastructure; suspended energy retrofits; deleted tree planting and many landscaping projects; delayed downtown improvements; deleted planned purchases; and reduced funding appropriations for several services. The effects have already been felt and it is becoming very difficult to fund municipal services.

Whereas, for the last decade, the Town has made a concentrated and comprehensive effort to reduce its expenditures in an effort to reduce property taxes for municipal expenditures. With the loss of additional funds, the Town will not be able to reduce any more programs without significant burden on our citizens and remaining staff or an increase in property taxes which will also burden our taxpayers.

Whereas, to replace this loss of Municipal Revenue Sharing through property taxation, the Town’s tax rate would need to be increased by an estimated \$1.50 mils without including the impact of SAD#53’s assessment and before considering any needs of the community in its budget;

Now, therefore, be It Resolved by the Pittsfield Town Council to request that the State Legislature re-instate the Municipal State Revenue Sharing Program to the original requirements of the law and not take any funds from the program.

Moved by **Councilor Stackhouse** and seconded by **Councilor Curtis** that Resolution 14-10 be adopted.

The Town Manager noted the Town Council received information in their package from the Maine Municipal Association regarding the potential loss of \$40 million more from the State Revenue Sharing Program which essentially is close to what remains of the program now. As we know, the funds in the program were diverted from the municipalities by the Legislature to assist with the large State Budget deficit.

A copy of the proposed resolution was forwarded to Councilors this weekend for review and consideration.

The Tax Expenditure Review Task Force did not complete its task of finding \$40 million dollars in tax exemptions, which has resulted in the remaining State Revenue Sharing being in jeopardy.

While I do not agree with some of the recommendations put forth regarding the reimbursement programs for the businesses, the Town is under considerable demand for services and is stressed to the limit to pay for these services each year. The Town has balanced its budget every single year for over a decade while losing valuable revenue sources for several years now and meeting more unfunded state mandates.

The Town Council thought it was very important to express its concerns.

VOTE: UNANIMOUS AYE

RESOLUTION 14-11: Resolved that the Town Council waive the bid policy, Chapter 2, Administrative Code, Section 106 to accept the proposal from Olver Associates in the amount of \$9,500.00 to complete design work of the Somerset Avenue Sidewalk Project to best utilize the Town's available funding and authorize the Town Manager to execute the Town's Standard Services Agreement.

Moved by **Councilor Donahue** and seconded by **Councilor Stackhouse** that Resolution 14-11 be adopted.

The Town Manager noted in 2012, the Town issued an RFP for sidewalk design work, construction administration and inspection work. Olver Associates was the low bid. The contract issued included three phases as it was based upon the receipt of a State of Maine grant through the Safe Routes to School Project. Phase I or the design work for the section of sidewalk on one side of the road from School Street to Hartland Avenue was \$3,500.00. That project was completed and the remainder of the work not initiated in Phase II and Phase III as the Town's application was not chosen from the 140+ pre-applications. A copy of the minutes of the approval from 2012 was included in the Town Council Package to show the cost for the small section of sidewalk. This project will look at the entire length and then determine sections that are feasible for design and complete that design.

As this project contains the review of the remainder of the sidewalks on Somerset Avenue to determine the best use of the town's available funds for sidewalk improvements, it is prudent to accept the proposal for the following reasons:

1. The cost to complete the sidewalk design is very low;
2. When the Town bid out the sidewalk work previously, Olver Associates had a very low cost vs. the other few firms that responded;
3. Olver Associates is very familiar with the project as the company designed Somerset Avenue and can hit the ground running;
4. The schedule is extremely tight and Olver Associates can meet it – prior to the end of March, 2014 per MDOT; and Olver Associates, overall, has been excellent to work with and very receptive to the Town.

VOTE: UNANIMOUS AYE

RESOLUTION 14-12: Resolved that the Town Council excuse the absence of Councilor Cianchette from the Town Council regular meetings of November 19, 2013, December 3, 2013 and December 17, 2013.

Moved by **Councilor Curtis** and seconded by **Councilor Donahue** that Resolution 14-12 be adopted.

The Town Manager noted under the Town Charter, if a Councilor misses three consecutive meetings, the Town Council should formally excuse the absences. Michael's work has taken him out of the state and the country recently. There are no issues created by the absences, we simply need to have this resolution in the record.

VOTE: UNANIMOUS AYE

RESOLUTION 14-13: Resolved that the Town Council appoint members to fill the vacancies on the various Town Boards and Committees from the attached list.

Moved by **Councilor Stackhouse** and seconded by **Councilor Curtis** that Resolution 14-13 be adopted.

VOTE: UNANIMOUS AYE

7. **DISCUSSION ITEMS:**

Financial Reports as of 12/31/2013:

Budget Expenditure Report
Revenue Collections Report
Tax Acquired Property Report
Economic Development Revolving Loan Update
Housing Revolving Loan Update
Transfer Station/Recycling Monthly Report
Theatre Monthly Report
Excise Tax Collections Comparison Report
State Revenue Sharing Comparison Report
Personal Property Tax Collection Report
Real Estate Property Tax Collection

Briefly Reviewed by Town Manager

Other Reports as of 12/31/2013:

Building and Plumbing Permit Reports

Library Report-Librarian's and Library Trustees Minutes

Police Report

Self Explanatory – Not Reviewed

Updates:

Water & Sewer Projects Update : Both Water and Sewer have been very busy with regular work created by the interesting and challenging weather conditions. Donnie Chute has been assisting with Water/Sewer while Scott has been out of work on medical leave. Scott will be back to light duty on February 10, 2014. There are plenty of light duty projects such as bid documents to update the telemetry system; maintenance work at the facilities to be reviewed and written up; plan updates; safety plan update, etc.

Highway Projects Update: Highway has been extremely busy with the challenging weather conditions with salting/sanding; Plowing parking areas and town building accesses; removing snow; cleaning out the storm drains as best as possible; cleaning up slush and ice accumulations on streets; and many other projects.

Now, they are starting to get back to a normal winter with regular functions. This is when we complete building repair projects which have not been started yet.

Public Works has been working on the building leaks. The Municipal Building and Transfer Station had leaks in the last storm. The Town has a temporary repair with a final repair to be implemented when it is warm enough out. The Transfer Station was waiting for a roofing company as a piece of the metal roof came off. Both issues were due to the ice.

Public Works has identified the leak issue on the Theater roof. The company that shovels the roof off agreed to fix the holes by the seams in the roof. Once this is fixed, Public Works will complete some work in the crawl space.

Program Staffing Levels: As we know, Recreation has been a challenging area due to having a part-time director and full-time expectations. We have an amazing recreation program with literally hundreds of volunteers during the year. Our current Recreation Director Jared Foster has done a great job, however, his time is limited and he can not keep on. His position at MCI is much more than 40 hours a week and Spring Sports is coming up which is very intensive. Last year, Jared advised that he would continue until Spring Sports or through Basketball.

This position has been advertised in the Rolling Thunder. I have forward two application packages.

Personal Property Tax: One of the companies with a high amount of personal property tax due has agreed to make payments. I thought we would make one last verbal attempt with the companies before contacting the Town Attorney.

Tax Acquired Property: The bids for the three TAP are due 02/05/2014 at 11:00 am. The redemption process allows an opportunity to the former owners to buy back the property for the accumulated back bills and costs through tomorrow. So far, we have advertised twice in both the

BDN and the Rolling Thunder. We have forwarded bid notices to those who have expressed interest in TAP properties and notices to abutters. The last time that we advertised in the Rolling Thunder, I opened up the newspaper to see three TAP bid notices for two other communities and Pittsfield so people have some options available to them if they like to buy TAP. We have only had a few inquiries.

Regulations to prevent Junky Yards/Property Maintenance: The Building Inspector has made revisions to the proposed amendments to the Zoning Ordinance to address property maintenance issues. All of the language involving the State Statutes, conflicting sections and definitions were extracted leaving a much shorter document. This is being reviewed by the Town Manager and Town Clerk and will be placed in the Planning Board's February 10, 2014 package for review. The information will also go to the Ordinance Committee in February, which will likely be the February 18, 2014 meeting. We have other Ordinance amendments so I would like to have this all done at once for efficiency, save time and savings on public hearing notices.

Grants Update:

New Grants:

Airport Grants: Airport Taxiway Reconstruction – Pay Req #1 was processed and paid.

Airport Grants: Airport Apron Expansion – Pay Req #1 and #2 were processed and paid.

Airport Grants: Environmental Assessment (Engineering to prepare for Apron Expansion) – this grant has been forwarded for closure and once acknowledged, will be moved to the closure list.

Airport Grants: Engineering to Design the Apron Expansion – still processing paperwork for this grant, however, it will be closed out later this year when the Taxiway and Apron projects are closed out. As the Taxiway grant did not provide for any engineering/inspection work, these three grants will be closed out with amendments to reconcile this project. We discussed this last year. The Engineering Consultants recommended this in order to complete most of the project in 2013.

Belvedere Fund for Historic Preservation – Have the \$11,000 saved toward the project.

Davis Family Foundation – the sill work is pending for later this year when the project can be completed. The foundation work was excellent. Earlier this month, we received Pay Req #3 which is to be paid by the Grant Match Account. This was for work in 2013 so it is an Accounts Payable and is on the warrant for payment this evening.

Library Mini-Grants (Cornerstone of Science and Gates for computers) All of the other small grants have been closed out and these two grants basically remain from the grant acquired during the last several years.

Police Grants: Bulletproof Vest – the Vest was purchased, however, funds which were approved just prior to the federal shutdown, has still not been processed. This is a 2013 Accounts Receivable.

Police Grants: Long Gun – Skowhegan PD had agreed to be the agent for several police departments on a cooperative purchasing project for the guns. There have been staff changes and the grant paperwork and payment has not yet been processed.

USDA Sewer Rehabilitation Grant – on-going with the receipt of Pay Req #33, which is being processed and will be paid.

New Grant Opportunities:

Airport General Aviation Apron Expansion Grant – The FAA will hold a scoping meeting on Friday, January 24, 2014 from 10:00 am – 1:00 pm or so at Curtis Air to discuss the specifics to be incorporated in the next Airport Master Plan. The Master Plan allows for the development and growth of the airport. In order to obtain grant funding, the items requested must be part of the airport master plan. Anyone who would like to attend can do so. This is not the Airport

Master Planning Process in which airport users, town officials and citizens will be invited to sessions to discuss the airport. This is designing the grant project.

8. **REPORTS:** Audience, Council

Audience: None

Council:

Councilor Donahue: No Report.

Councilor Stackhouse: I made an oversight at the last meeting. I wanted to congratulate the Mayor and Deputy Mayor on their appointment. I also wanted to congratulate Jeff, Steve and Ryan Michael on the American Red Cross Real Hero Award. The FirstPark presentation was great. Mr. Jackson has a great strategy. Congrats to Chris and Donna. Kathryn, you are doing a great job upstairs. Keep up the good work.

Councilor Ferland: I enjoyed the Finance Committee meeting. I had my first constituent call this week. It felt good to help. I also wanted to discuss quality of life. I feel that there are a lot of positive things in Pittsfield. We moved her over 20 years ago for the education.

Councilor Nichols: Absent.

Councilor Curtis: I agree with Trudy. We have a new guy working at the Airport from Idaho. We are always talking about how nice it is to live in Central Maine – and Pittsfield.

Councilor Cianchette: Absent.

Councilor Jordan: I am glad Public Works made it through the storm. It was a very tough storm.

9. **ADJOURNMENT**

Motion by **Councilor Stackhouse** and seconded by **Councilor Curtis** that the meeting be adjourned at 7:58 p.m. All in agreement.

Nicole Nickolan, Town Clerk