

MINUTES

for a regular meeting of the Pittsfield Town Council, held on *Tuesday, April 05, 2022* at 6:30 pm in the Council Chambers at the Pittsfield Municipal Building at 112 Somerset Avenue and by teleconferencing technology.

Councilors Present: Mayor Michael Cianchette, Deputy Mayor Peter Logiodice, Councilor Brent Frost, Councilor Jason Hall, Councilor Ronald Jester and Councilor Eric Saucier.

Councilors Present by ZOOM: None

Councilors Absent: None

Also Present: Town Manager Kathryn Ruth; Dale Doughty, MaineDOT; Jarold Farn-Guillette, MaineDOT; Annaleis Hafford, Vice-President Olver Associates; and Heather Donahue.

Also Present by ZOOM: A Resident.

1. OPEN MEETING/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE, FOLLOWED BY A MOMENT OF SILENCE:

Mayor Cianchette opened the meeting of the Council by leading the Pledge of Allegiance. The Council observed a Moment of Silence.

2. ADOPTION OF MINUTES OF: Regular Meeting held on April 05, 2022.

Moved by Deputy Mayor Logiodice and seconded by Councilor Hall to adopt the Minutes of April 05, 2022.

Motion passed with all votes in favor.

VOTE: UNANIMOUS AYE

3. PRESENTATIONS, CONGRATULATIONS AND INTRODUCTIONS:

A. Meeting with MaineDOT Representatives Dale Doughty, Director of Outreach and Planning and Jarod Farn-Guillette, Region 4 & 5 Transportation Planner re: MaineDOT Opportunities, specifically the Planning Partnership Initiative (PPI)

1. Presentation
2. Question and Answer Session
Other Relevant Programs, if any

Mr. Doughty and Mr. Farn-Guillette presented a detailed and thoughtful review of the new emphasis on the Village Partnership Programs. This program will be able to assist the Town in creating a Main Street Vision as well as the opportunity to file a federal grant with the MaineDOT's assistance and approval. This is a Municipal Partnership Cooperative program. It would reflect more than our building block project with all of these small and large grants targeted to one element, but would show a balanced human level look at the entire downtown.

Mr. Doughty noted that the planning partnership would take this comprehensive project which has quite a few components and through the Planning Partnership Initiative (PPI), provide for a larger

vision of the look, feel and character of the downtown. It would help the project be more comprehensive and cohesive. He noted that Dover-Foxcroft and Millinocket are examples of this process. He cautioned that we may need to take up to a year to go through this process so we would have to see what needs to take place and what elements can wait.

The Town Manager advised that Madawaska Road was scheduled for upcoming paving and with the condition of the road from the trench paving from the large sewer grant the Town received through the Northern Border Regional Commission program, it can not wait another year. Mr. Doughty noted that it may be able to be arranged so that this work can continue. Mr. Doughty noted that he will want to set down with the Town Manager to make sure that the grants will not lapse and if some do, can we apply for another grant. There was a lengthy discussion on the options available and the consensus was to take the next month to meet with other MaineDOT staff and review the project in detail to see how this can all fit together, whether as one project or two projects.

The Municipal Partnership program with MaineDOT has the Town and MaineDOT working together with the Town taking the lead as it is our community. There would be an RFP for Planning issued to study the Downtown and have visioning sessions to determine what the future of the Town in the downtown should become. An engineering firm would be hired to lead this project. This would have a 3rd party collect information and everyone could participate. It is not something the Town could do by itself. With the vision with its components compiled, the Town with the MaineDOT's approval would apply for federal funding for some of the projects that are identified.

The RFP and Planning Process would be a 50-50% share or in our case, we may be eligible for more funding as we have a low valuation. Any actual projects would be an 80-20% share in which the MaineDOT would work on assisting the Town with the 20% match share.

The pros are that this would be an amazing project that is a once in a 100 years for revitalization of the downtown. The cons are that we would have to pause the current project which we have waited a long time for as MaineDOT is moving forward now on the rehabilitation of Main Street. A meeting will take place to determine how these two concepts can fit together.

B. Community and Economic Development Activities and Events

1. Projects and Grants:
 - a. Route 11 (known as Route #11/10 and Main Street) Highway Construction/Rehabilitation.
 - b. Main Street Sidewalk Project Grant Funding; Project Canopy Grants; and multiple smaller grant projects
 - c. Main Street Sewer Main Rehabilitation Project including DEP American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Grant Funding.
 - d. Airport Grants
 - e. Many other smaller Grant Opportunities
 - f. Certificates
 - g. Ceremonies

The Town Manager commented briefly on the activities and events.

C. Presentation regarding the Town's Budget and Mil Rate History.

Town Manager Ruth noted the several presentations as well as charts that had been passed out during the last several meetings addressing mil rates, budgets, town valuations, real estate valuation, personal property tax valuation, personal property tax law changes, tax exempt property and how all

of this affects the mil rate. We also heard from the Tax Assessor about how to complete a four-year process to review the valuations of the properties as well as update any revisions that were made that had not previously been picked up. It is clear that many items go into the making of the mil rate and why our rate is high given the amount of tax-exempt property, loss of personal property tax valuation due to the law changes to phase out personal property taxes and the change in the budget process approved by the Town Council. She asked if the Council had any questions or if they would like any further information, to let her know. If not, this will conclude this discussion which was scheduled for late Summer prior to the Council's first budget workshop but was completed earlier due to comments.

4. PUBLIC HEARINGS:

5. REPORTS:

A. Council Committees:

The Finance Committee, Ordinance Committee and Recycling Committees reported that they had not met.

B. Committee Updates by Town Councilors and Manager: Ms. Ruth noted that there had not been any meetings convened.

C. Town Manager's Report

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT FOR 04/19/2022:

The Town's Computer System upgrade started after the 04/05/2022 Council Meeting and has taken considerable time. We have spent our time since the upgrade making sure that customers are assisted with their payments and questions. Due to having older computers which work best with the required printers and setups by the State of Maine, we may have been slower in processing items but there were few conflicts so we were able to utilize our time effectively in processing the many types of registrations. We are experiencing quite a few issues now as a number of the types of printers required by the State in order to process State registrations and licenses are not very compatible with our new computers. We continue to work through the issues with our first priority being that citizens' payments and registrations are able to be processed. This has resulted in few projects being worked on since earlier this month. Training is scheduled for later this week on the new web-based TRIO and we will hopefully will be able to utilize a training video the following week to practice. Several issues have been resolved, however, there are still items that do not work or have to be hand written.

New Items and Important Reminders:

These items will be referred to but not read as the Council has heard them several times. The items are important though for the citizens, especially those who are new and tune in to Town Hall Streams, watch the videos later or use the website:

1. Maine On-line Burn Permits Became Free of Charge: On-line Burn Permits are now free of charge. Burn permits are available at maineburnpermit.com

2. Important Reminder: 2022 Transfer Station Stickers: In order to reduce costs at the Transfer Station by making sure that only those who should be dumping garbage are doing so, new stickers

are being issued each year. Stickers have been sale since December 01, 2021. Residential stickers are \$20.00 each and Commercial are \$40.00 each.

The staff are policing the facility, therefore, please obtain your sticker. We do not want to have you show up at the Transfer Station and have to turn you away. There are still a few households that need to pick up their new sticker to utilize the Transfer Station.

3. Important Reminder: 2022 Dog Licenses: All dogs over 6 months old must be registered prior to January 31, 2022. As of February 01, 2022 there is a \$25.00 late fee per animal licensed. The State law requires the late fee be assessed. We have been registering dogs since October 15th and have had this information advertised for quite some time with regular updates at the Town Council Meeting. We apologize, however, the fee must be charged.

4. Important Reminder: Online Services: For re-registration of vehicles, boats and other services go to www.pittsfield.org and click on the Citizens' Tab, choosing on-line services at the top of the page. All on-line tabs have been checked and all are working fine.

Please remember that Motor Vehicle has advised the Town that there is an aluminum shortage and we will receive a reduced inventory of new plates so if you do not need a new plate and can use your current plate, please do so. We are also going to receive reduced inventories of stickers.

5. On-line Council Materials: We would also like to make sure that people know where to go to get the Town Council packages. Go to www.pittsfield.org to the right-hand side of the home page and click on Government Services, then click on Town Council Packages and then on 2022 Council Packages. Then you can review the pack. If you print it out, make sure that you look at it first to see how many pages it is as you may only want a section of the package along with the agenda.

6. Cleaning out Your Home / Downsizing – Think of the Re-Use Center:

Please consider donating your left-over items to the Trash to Treasure Re-Use Center. Citizens who are cleaning out their homes for sale or just downsizing may contact the Pittsfield Town Office at 487-3136 or finance3@pittsfield.org to schedule an appointment to drop off items to the Re-Use Center. As the Center is closed now, an appointment is needed. Please do not drop off items in the yard as they will get wet and not be of any use to anyone. We are currently re-stocking the building so we need new materials. Please remember, no bedding or clothing. All clothing should be donated to Pennywise. Bedding can be dropped off in our Textile container as you enter the Transfer Station. At times we are taking items up at the Transfer Station and moving them down to the Re-Use Building depending upon staffing. It is almost time to start planning yard sales so if anyone would like to cut down on the items to move around, think of the Re-Use Center and Pennywise.

Current and Upcoming Activities:

7. Special Election for Town Councilor Open Position:

Two candidates filed Nomination Papers by the deadline and both papers were certified by the Town Clerk. Heather Donahue, former Mayor and Town Councilor and Lindsay Holmstrom, Recreation Committee member and organizer for the Skating Rink are running for the one seat available with a term that expires December 31, 2022. The Election to be held for Councilor – At Large is on Thursday, April 21, 2022 from 12:00 noon – 6:00 pm. Everyone is encouraged to vote!

8. Somerset County Budget Public Hearing:

The County Commissioners have scheduled a public hearing for Monday, April 25, 2022 at 6:00 pm in the Superior Court Room, 41 Court Street, Skowhegan. A copy of the proposed County Budget for FY 2022-2023 is attached as Addendum #1.

9. Spirit of America County Presentation:

On May 4th beginning at 3:00 pm, the 2020 and 2021 Awards for the Spirit of America for all towns in the county will be announced. Our recipients were:

2020 – Paul E. Bertrand

2021 – In the Memory of Alton Cianchette

Unfortunately, due to the pandemic, both the County and the Town were unable to hold an award ceremony in person. Our District's event will be held on May 4th to honor the recipients of the 2020 and 2021 Spirit of America Award for outstanding volunteerism in each Town in Somerset County. This will be a ZOOM meeting in which every recipients' name will be called off and a brief description of the volunteer work will be read.

10. MSAD#53 District Public Hearing:

As discussed at the last Town Council Meeting, the District was going to verify the date of the upcoming hearing. That date is Thursday, May 19, 2022 at 6:30 pm in the Warsaw Gym. After the hearing, the second part of the process, which is the referendum vote should be scheduled in June with the State vote. Our Primary and potential Referendum Election is scheduled for June 14, 2022. Attached is the updated Budget Assessment in Attachment #2.

11. Summer Concert Series for 2022

The concert series begins on July 7 with Scott Cole, a Singer/Songwriter and ends on August 25 with Conspiracy with Danceable Rock. All concerns are at Hathorn Park on Thursday nights from 6:00 pm – 8:00 pm. Please see Attachment #3.

12. Fendler Park Boat Launch:

Bill Cunningham is back in action on a new plan for the staircase boat slide for the boat launch. He has developed a concept of a poured reinforced concrete staircase (15 step, 7 feet wide) boat slide for the Fendler Park boat launch site. This would be similar to the 20 plus year old poured concrete staircase boat slide at the hand carry boat launch in New Sharon, Maine on the Sandy River that shows no damage from the ice in the river after all these years. There will be no additional charge for this plan if it is done by Kleinschmidt. There were some misgivings from some of the contractors who were providing estimates about the plan to use pressure treated wood to construct the staircase and securing each end of it to pre-made concrete slabs. The contractors thought that the pond ice could damage it resulting in the need and expense for future repair work. Dr. Cunningham studied the situation and looked into how newly cut pinned granite slabs could be used for a staircase after talking with a granite supplier and two landscape companies that install staircases like this. He looked at some other options too and with the advice of Kleinschmidt engineers concluded that other options were not viable. Both Dr. Cunningham and Kleinschmidt have settled on a plan for the concrete staircase which is now underway. Dr. Cunningham will then work with Kleinschmidt and others to have the Planning Board, Code Enforcement Officer, Maine DEP and Army Corp approve this change; then obtain more project estimates; get the Bid Specs

prepared so that the project can go out to bid; then solicit contributions from local donors; and apply for project grants that may be available to cover construction.

13. Water, Sewer and Road Construction Costs for Pittsfield:

Based upon past work and a review of the most current costs for recent projects, Olver Associates and the Town have calculated a preliminary cost to update the Town's water, sewer and roads. While this is an estimate, it is a reasonable preliminary estimate to replace water and sewer mains and rebuild and pave roadways. The figures were presented at the 04/05/2022 meeting for the old mains to be replaced and roads to be re-built:

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|---|------------------------|
| Sewer Mains Total Preliminary Estimate if all work is done now: | \$ 32.3 million |
| Water Mains Total Preliminary Estimate if all work is done now: | \$ 46.4 million |
| Road Re-building Total Preliminary Estimate if all work is done now: | <u>\$ 48.1 million</u> |
| Total Preliminary Estimated Cost if all work is done in 2022 dollars: | \$126.8 million |

14. 2022 Speed Trailer Application:

Update: The loaner Speed Trailer arrives at the beginning of May 2022. The PD and Highway Departments will be coordinating on locations. Last time, we had the trailer for 2 weeks and a few days. It was quite helpful in slowing down speeders. When I spoke with Acting Chief Cochran, we thought of the same speeding spots where the Speed Trailer is really needed. In addition on April 6, 2022, our Speed Zone Sign (a stationary sign) will arrive. We will need to determine a location for this sign. I think we all know the road that requires a sign every day.....various locations on Somerset Avenue; Peltoma Avenue; Hartland Avenue, etc.

History:

The Town is awaiting its new Speed Device awarded last Spring. Unfortunately, chain supply issues prevailed after COVID hit. I did not sign up to borrow the Speed Trailer for 2022 as we thought the units were coming in. Unfortunately, the chain supply issues and now contract issues are continuing. Therefore, I did submit an application for the Town to have the Speed Trailer which we would move around town. It will display the current speed of a driver as he/she comes upon the sign. This was very effective the last time that we borrowed it. If chosen, we would receive the unit for two weeks and be responsible to coordinate transportation of the unit from the previous town and coordinate with the next town for pickup.

15. Department Head Meetings:

While department head/supervisor meetings have been held each month, they have been on different days of the week/month to accommodate schedules. As a regular date is better, we are back on the second Thursday of each month. Tentatively we have scheduled a meeting in both July and August as well as December. These meetings are during vacation months so we will see if we have enough staff available for the meetings and if so, will hold them in those three months also. Meetings will take place on the second Thursday in all of the other months.

16. Downtown Streetlight Issues Resolved:

Two weekends ago, the Main Street downtown streetlights were on during the day. An electrician was located and we opened the box to find out that someone had tampered with the box, got it open and moved

the breaker, which caused the lights to stay on. Another lock has been bought for the box and this is being taken into consideration for the design stage for the Downtown lighting project.

17. Airport Multi-Sector General permit:

This was a new permit nearly ten years ago which required testing of the stormwater runoff at the airport and quarterly reporting. It seemed overkill at the time given that all of our maintenance at the airport is conducted inside the hangars. The State of Maine has re-evaluated its position and determined that most small airports do not conduct aircraft maintenance outside of a building. As long as our fueling activity is covered by a Spill Prevention, Containment and Countermeasure Plan as required by the Environmental Protection Agency and the plan and training requirements are up to date, we are being allowed to terminate this program. Caleb Curtis, Fixed Base Operator, has verified that he has this plan and training as well as the fact that aircraft maintenance does not take place outside. One less permit requirement for the airport!

18. Grant Paperwork filings:

Many of the Town's grants have a filing deadline of April 30, 2022 and June 30, 2022. The federal websites are up and we will be filing with the new federal numbering system so this will be interesting. As many of the federal websites had been combined, it is anticipated that it will take longer than usual to file the quarterly and semi-annual reports. Time will be dedicated to the filing of all of these reports to ensure that we are current and our funds are not jeopardized.

Updated and/or Continuing Items:

19. 2022 Clean Water State Revolving Loan Fund (CWSRF) Infrastructure (Construction) Projects:

Update: The three CWSRF applications filed by Olver Associates for the upcoming Infrastructure (Construction) Projects that allow for the use of the Clean Water State Revolving Loan Fund and hopefully if we are fortunate enough, some forgiveness of principal and/or reduced loan interest rate were attached to the 04/05/2022 Town Manager's Report. One year we were fortunate to receive a 0.0% interest rate which frankly over a long-term loan is similar to receiving a grant for part of the project. Applications were submitted for Birchwood Terrace and Library Street as they are listed as two of the Town Council's priority projects and Hunnewell Avenue as the sewer has some issues on that road.

History: Olver Associates is working on the applications that will need to be filed by the March 18, 2022 deadline. I have not yet seen copies of them to submit with this report. The applications that we talked about were for Birchwood Terrace and Library Street as these were on the Town Council's original priority listing. As we seem to be applying for both water and sewer on the priority projects, Annaleis has brought to my attention through the collection of material for the water and sewer status lists the fact that Hunnewell is going down hill on the water side, which means that we would submit an application for the sewer also. These are applications for funding and if awarded, the Town is not committed to the projects. Given that three applications are being submitted, it is unlikely that all three applications would be approved.

Background:

A recommendation on the applications to file for this program will be part of the March 15, 2022 Council meeting. With all the additional funding available it may provide for an increased amount of forgiveness. If so, the Town will have a much better chance to score high enough to obtain funding. While funds are available for straight loans at a low interest rate, the Town can only encumber a certain amount of debt before it starts affecting the Sewer and Water Enterprise Funds and our ability to perform other work.

I know that it has been said that we should be saving money for all of these projects, however, given the cost of sewer main replacement, the Town will be unable to save the millions of dollars that are needed. Right now, we have the opportunity to compete for forgiveness so that part of the sewer project will not be required to be paid back which is similar to getting a grant. Therefore, we should take advantage of this opportunity to apply for some projects.

I will work with Olver Associates Senior Process Engineer Annaleis Hafford on this opportunity to determine proposed projects. We will need to determine how far in the future the projects will be as that will determine when roads are paved so funds will need to be available. One never knows which project will be chosen, if any, which makes the paving component difficult to determine.

The loan program for 2022 for Sewer Construction (and Rehabilitation) projects was just received with a due date of March 18, 2022. Each year, the United States Congress has appropriated federal funds for the base CWSRF program to finance wastewater infrastructure projects and water quality improvement or protection projects. The funds are passed through the Environmental Protection Agency to State CWSRF programs to capitalize their loan programs. The Maine Department of Environmental Protection and the Maine Municipal Bond Bank administer Maine's CWSRF program. This program's allotment and the share of the funds that can be distributed in the form of loan principal forgiveness depending on the passage of the federal budget and the Appropriations Act language. The DEP has not yet received notification of the State's base CWSRF 2022 allotment, however, the Department is soliciting projects for funding so that they can make funds available as soon as possible.

President Biden signed the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) on Monday, November 15, 2021. This is a huge and bold investment in our nation's infrastructure. For the State of Maine's CWSRF program, DEP is anticipating this supplemental funding to be \$13.7M for 2022, with an increasing annual amount from this fund through 2026.

The CWSRF Program will also be incorporating the remaining \$8.8M in ARPA funds that was announced with the enactment of Public Law 2021, Chapter 483 (LD1733) of the 130th Maine Legislature, which was approved by Governor Mills' *The Maine Jobs & Recovery Plan*. This will further assist municipalities' wastewater infrastructure needs throughout the State.

Thus between the base CWSRF, the BIL Supplemental CWSRF, the ARPA funds, and the CWSRF repayments that come back into the program for reuse, the program will have an estimated \$80M in funds of which an estimated \$22.6M will be in the form of principal forgiveness and/or Grants. In the past, the base CWSRF and the CWSRF repayments for reuse would only provide an estimated \$50M in funds, of which \$4.9M was given out in the form of Principle Forgiveness. This is a significant increase in funding for our wastewater community in this time of need.

These projects will be environmentally ranked, and, if available, principal forgiveness will be offered to applicants based on the applicant's ability to afford the proposed project. Given the larger amount of funding available, the Town of Pittsfield, which often does not rank high as our sewer rates are lower than average and to date, we have had few environmental problems, may be able to score high enough for forgiveness.

20. Airport Hangar, Apron and Taxiway Project updates:

Update: A course of action is being pursued regarding the error that took place on the Airport hangar. Information was collected and reviewed for the record. This is a claim that has now been filed. Under separate cover, a copy of the notice is provided.

Background:

Bids are due on March 24, 2022 at 2:00 pm for the re-bid hangar, apron and taxiway project. If the low qualified bid is lower or the same, we have the solution in place. If the low bid is higher than the various funding sources that were compiled for the original project after great effort, we will need to determine if we can locate the appropriate funding for a new hangar, apron and taxiway in this day and age. The Advertisement of the Bid is in Attachment #3.

The meeting with Federal and State Representatives, Town Engineering Consultants, Fixed Base Operator and myself went well. It was agreed to re-bid the project which has already gone out to re-bid, been advertised by the Town and had the Pre-Bid Meeting held. When the bids are received and reviewed, we will have a better understanding of what needs to be done. It seems that additional funding may be able to be made available, additional time will be provided to pay back the inter-airport loan and the engineering consultant, once the bids come in and the situation is known, will go to their board to confirm their level of participation. We were asked to come up with additional funding, which is reasonable if the Town receives more grant funding and then should allocate the 5% match. Whether the Town itself, would put up additional funding is another matter and when asked, I did not commit to this indicating that we did not think that we were going to be obligated for any additional funding especially as we had received additional grants which lowered our need to contribute a higher amount. The action/s that are necessary will become evident when the bids are received.

History:

I wanted you to know about this as we are reviewing the Site Plan for the Airport project at the Planning Board Meeting Monday evening.

Over the weekend, it became apparent that there is a large wrinkle in this project. The State and Federal Government have worked on a potential solution. Unfortunately, the contractor with the lowest bid that was accepted by the Town Council for the project last October has pulled out of the project indicating that their company needs an additional 20+% due to higher costs for building materials and supplies as well as labor. This seems to be over \$350,000. Although this is upsetting, it is better to happen now rather than to have extensive change orders brought forth throughout the project that we could not approve. A general concept has been put forth by MaineDOT that would result in re-bidding the project. If the pricing is favorable, which likely will be higher, then there could be an additional year added onto the multi-year grant in which the Town would receive additional funding; the inter-loan agreement with Rangeley will be moved back one year which Rangeley has agreed with as they do not need the funds until then; and the Town would be loaned funds by another Town that has funding that it does not need right now and would likely lose. The Town has an intergovernmental loan put together by the MaineDOT with Rangeley now. We would need to amend that loan document and perhaps re-do the Ordinance authorizing it and process a new Ordinance with a second town. The funds that the Town borrows would then be paid from our future entitlement funds that airports receive each year. This is in concept stage right now with a meeting just scheduled for Thursday, 02/17/2022 early in the morning to work out the details. We have been advised that within reason, we would receive additional grant funding so that the project can move forward.

21. 2019 Tax Liens foreclose on Friday, January 21, 2022:

Update:

We have some valuations now from the Assessing Consultant. As soon as the computer upgrade is complete, the process will begin. Some of the former property owners have been talking with the Town.

There is a redemption period and some calculations have been made for the costs that are owed and back bills that provide the figure to redeem property.

History: I will compile the information so that we can move forward on this project. The Assessors are going to be out straight now as we near April 1 which is the Assessing date. Our regular Assessor did not come in today, March 14th. Last week, he had a large pile of information to go through so beyond asking about the Business Tax and how it applies to our mil rate, I did not inquire on several other items. Our regular Assessor has been out and the individual who is filling in is working on other types of projects so the properties that have foreclosed have not been reviewed with the Assessor who is familiar with the Town and properties.

Unfortunately, a few people did not pay their 2019 property taxes and to redeem their property will have to pay the 2019, 2020, 2021 and 2022 taxes if after April 1 of this year along with the Town's costs such as advertising fees and notices. Letters will be sent to the last known address for those whose property now owned by the Town due to the automatic foreclosure process. If someone does redeem their property within the timeframe that is established, an Ordinance will be placed on the Council Agenda to schedule a public hearing to transfer the property back to the former owner and then the public hearing held. After the public hearing is held, the Council would then vote to authorize the quit claim deed to be issued.

There are 6 new properties added to the town's rolls, properties that we do not want to own so after the redemption period is completed, it is likely that some properties will go out to Tax Acquired bid. Those individuals interested in Tax Acquired properties when the TAP Sale is authorized by the Town Council, please call the Town Office and provide your e-mail address for the notice and packs to be sent to you. There are two parcels of land and some land with dwellings. We need to see if the people can redeem their property in accordance with the law first. An agenda item will be submitted to meet with the Planning Board to see if any of the properties should be retained by the Town as a requirement of the TAP Ordinance. Then in the future after all of the steps are completed, there will be discussion and action, if appropriate at the Town Council Meeting to schedule a sale. From reviewing the parcel histories dating back to 2019 and before, one has had significant assessing issues and may need to be mitigated.

For those who have not yet paid their 2019 taxes, the liens on the property will automatically foreclose at the end of business on January 21, 2022. This is for taxes that were due in October 2019. There are now 24 properties on the foreclosure list. We urge those owners to pay their taxes in full by Friday. Notices of impending automatic foreclosure went out in December. If the taxes are not paid in full on Friday, the Town will own these properties. The Town does not want to own any tax acquired properties. In order to buy the property back, all taxes, interest and costs for 2019, 2020 and 2021 will need to be paid in full in order to receive a Quit Claim deed from the Town after a public hearing. This would be very expensive so we would encourage you to pay off the 2019 tax lien in full.

22. Computer Services / Managed Services Onboarding:

Update:

The Town Office staff will be training later this week and then practicing next week in anticipation of the change-over of the TRIO system to the web-based version on April 29 – May 2, 2022. We will be working to have all postings take place prior to that date as well as making an extra backup.

Background:

The new computer installation started after the last Council Meeting (March 15, 2022) and was finished last week (ending April 1, 2022). There are still wrinkles to fix as the state required printers are not very

compatible with newer computers. Our Assistant retired during this process. Our Town Clerk brought the project to fruition and did a great job. It was a frustrating two weeks as we have regular work that needs to be done, however, most of the computer functions do work. We will continue to tie up loose ends, and then get our many mandates and requirements taken care of for the first quarter. After a little non-computer focus time, we will then head out to work on the TRIO Programming Update.

History: Logically's plan was to have their Engineer onsite on Thursday, March 3, 2022 to install the new server. The staff was told that installing the new server will take a couple of hours and not result in any down time. TRIO's Implementation Project Manager/Technical Consultant from Harris (TRIO) was to join Logically's Engineer on Friday morning, March 4, 2022 to complete the migration. We understood that this will take a few hours and staff had been advised that there would be about 20 minutes of downtime for TRIO. This will be advertised as the staff will be unable to process any financial transactions during this period of time.

March 3rd worked out according to plan. This was not the case on March 4th as the server was down for several hours. We advertised on Facebook, the Town's website and the doors. We were able to assist many customers as we obtained a book of receipts to take in cash and checks. That way the citizens received a receipt and we used these hand written receipts to then enter the checks and cash into the TRIO system. We could not assist everyone as some items had to be done on the system with forms signed by the customer for the transaction to be complete.

Still no word on the individual computers which are to be installed so that we can move over to the new TRIO software. I do not see why we cannot have the new TRIO software setup on a Wednesday when we are closed as to not to inconvenience our citizens.

Background: To date, we have not received a schedule as the company does not know when all the parts will be available due to supply chain issues. Electronics seems to be quite affected. The company is starting to work on e-mail, software and other items. The company project manager calls to ask questions about our current setup as they are in the planning stages while waiting for enough equipment to arrive. In the meantime, we applied for and have received the paperwork for the new Recreation bank account at Androscoggin. It should be ready to go this week

The contracts for the new server and new computer equipment were signed the day after the December Public Hearing on the new 2022 budget. The order was then placed for the upgrade. Logically has received a number of the computers and/or parts, however, is lacking a number of strategic electronics in order to proceed ahead. The company is going to start to put the computers together. So far, they do not have a time that the electronics are going to be delivered to their company but hopefully will the next time that we call back. I provided the Assistant with a number of questions on the process and whether on the timetable we can install all or part of the new setup on a Wednesday when we are closed to avoid the disruption of customer service or can we leave two computers up and running to serve customers while they work on the complete upgrade. When our Assistant has the schedule, I will provide an update to the Town Council.

23. Code Enforcement Actions:

Update:

Another fourteen (14) meetings with the Code Enforcement Officer have taken place. To date, we now have seven (7) letters issued to property owners with code violations. All of these letters request a plan of action for cleanup and a one-time offer of utilizing a town dumpster free of charge for the cleanup of the

site. If the offer is not taken or another solution is not provided by the property owner, then these items will need to continue on the path to court. We realize that the courts are very backed up and these 80B appeals are low on the priority list, however, everyone is tired of constant requests and nagging to have properties cleaned up. People need to be responsible.

So far, one person has accepted the offer of the dumpster and provided a plan. We are waiting on a second individual. The property on Somerset Avenue has changed hands so it is fortunate that we did not file at the court system as we would have to re-file under a new name. The new owner of the property has been contacted.

Background:

I have met with the Code Enforcement Officer nine (9) times regarding the properties in question. Specifically, we were to send letters requesting a plan of action to address the code violations at the four priority sites plus the other identified sites. The intent is to have a plan provided to clean up or fix up the sites based upon the work identified by the CEO with the Town providing a dumpster (to move this along). If a plan with appropriate due dates can be identified and agreed to between the property owner and the CEO, then a Consent Agreement will be drafted and signed. If the project is cleaned up and/or fixed up, then fine. If not, we file for court. This will show the designated judge in our backed-up court system that we did try to address these problems, we have a signed consent agreement that was not followed and there is no recourse but court.

We have been notified that the Somerset Avenue property is in the process of being sold.

There was an interesting Portland Press Herald article last week regarding “Backlogs causing delays in thousands of Maine court cases”. Things are more backed up than one would think.

Background:

153 Washington Street: The Fire Chief followed up on this property and reported at the last Council Meeting that the wires are just too close. Chief Williams is checking with Central Maine Power and the telephone company regarding whether their lines can be protected given the proximity of the burn. In addition, the smoke and debris are being reviewed as homes are in close proximity.

The Code Enforcement Officer has followed up on two of the properties:

140 Leonard Street: The property owner agrees to clean up the property and pledged to the CEO that he will start April 1. He has asked for the dumpster from the Town to be available and then hauled to the Transfer Station when he fills it up. I advised the CEO this is good, however, that we are going to sign a consent agreement on this to ensure that it takes place. We are verifying with the Transfer Station/Recycling Coordinator the possibility of the Transfer Station hauling the dumpster to the site. We also need to estimate the number of loads.

231 Somerset Avenue: The legal firm representing the property owner is no longer involved with the case. Therefore, the property owner is likely representing himself. I have advised the Town Attorney and asked for a recommendation on how to proceed given the situation.

No further reports have been received on these properties.

History:

At the Council Meeting on 02/15/2022, we discussed these recommendations and are proceeding ahead to have the Code Enforcement Officer work with the individuals to get these code violations addressed

Regarding the 4 specific cases, below is the review of Attorney McCall working on these code violations:

153 Washington Street (Map 29, Lots 50 & 51): The file indicates that this property is likely dangerous within the meaning of the dangerous building statute, *i.e.* siding is missing, holes in foundation, etc. The Town Council can most effectively address this property by noticing and conducting a dangerous building proceeding at the local level. Upon completion, the property owner may be forced to undertake the necessary repairs or else risk having the building demolished. This property should be the Town's immediate priority, given the available options and need for more immediate remediation.

140 Leonard Street (Map 26, Lot 37): This property was the subject of a Rule 80K land use enforcement matter in 2015, regarding alleged violations of the Town's plumbing and fire codes, as well as the illegal establishment of a junkyard. The matter was resolved by entry of a final order and judgment on January 9, 2016. The Order required the property owner to: (i) remove or fully screen all junk materials from the property, (ii) fully enclose or secure the property's foundation to prevent further vermin infestation, and (iii) reimburse the Town for its attorney's fees and costs, totaling \$3,247.35. Later correspondence from the CEO, dated April 9, 2021, shows that full compliance with this court order was not achieved. Recent photos of the property show a tall stockade fence surrounding the entire yard, making a determination of the structure or yard's status difficult. The Town could attempt to enforce the existing court order from 2016 by filing a motion for contempt with the District Court; however, additional proof of non-compliance would be needed, and absent the property owner's consent, an administrative inspection warrant is likely required to allow for further inspection. Alternatively, the Town could focus efforts on the state of the structure itself, and consider initiating a dangerous building proceeding (correspondence from April of 2021 describes this as a possibility). Further evidence of the structure's dilapidated state would be needed in order to substantiate such a finding. Ultimately, the potential difficulty of collecting additional information regarding the property's current state could prove to be expensive and time-consuming. The Town Council should consider those costs and weigh the same against the benefits of moving forward at this point in time.

231 Somerset Avenue (Map 28, Lot 51): This matter has been ongoing for many years. The photographs in the file do indicate potential violations of the property maintenance code, but they do not appear to be major. We also understand that the property owner may still be in a long-term care facility due to a fall from the roof. Given the nature of the problems with the building, the fact that some progress appears to have been made, and the property owner's current condition, the Town should consider monitoring this property for further improvement. Reaching out to the property owner's attorney for any potential status update could also improve the situation. However, moving forward with a Rule 80K proceeding at this stage is probably a step too far at this point, given the nature of the violations and the potential difficulty of conducting a hearing and/or enforcing any court order given the property owner's current condition.

139 Manson Street (Map 25, Lot 42): I agree with the Town's assessment that proper remediation of this property has taken too long. However, the property owner has a documented history of health issues that have stalled efforts to complete necessary renovations. Furthermore, reports from the then-CEO in November of 2021 indicate that substantial repairs have been made to the building, including the installation of a new roof, and that "Over all I would say that the house is sound." The most recent pictures do indicate issues with some windows, peeling paint, and other issues with the siding. It is possible that the property still remains in violation of the Town's property maintenance standards,

particularly given the state of the building's exterior walls. However, given the progress made, and the difficulty in navigating the court system with a defendant with a documented history of health issues, continuing to work with this property owner towards and eventual resolution of the documented issues is likely the most effective and cost-efficient way forward.

History:

Mr. Tempesta will be the Code Enforcement Officer who will be bringing the cases to court so he needs to be involved. For the Somerset Avenue property, the elderly owner was repairing the facility himself and fell off the roof. He has a long recovery period in order to be able to get around. The gentleman did work on the property. We will send the file to the Town Attorney, however, ask how to address this. Basically, the owner is recovering from a dreadful fall and will be unable to go to court. The Washington Street property file has more enforcement action in it against the former owners of the property vs. the current owner. I wrote a letter for the former Code Officer just before he retired after I went out and saw the property last year. Bob Geaghan, the new Code Officer has written letters requesting compliance. We are asking the attorney for advice on how to proceed. The Leonard Street property seems to have more junk now than it had before so that file is going to the Town Attorney. The Manson Street property is neat and orderly in the yard, however, the building needs considerable work. The owner wrote to the Town that he has been ill and explained out what has been taking place. We will ask for advice on all of these. Since Al will be taking the cases to court, we needed him to be involved which he now has been. Copies of the files are being forwarded to the Town Attorney on Wednesday, 01/19/2021.

The Code Enforcement Officer (CEO) was asked to address the property on North Main Street that has its windows removed and sitting outside which is resulting in further deterioration.

The Code Enforcement Officer (CEO) was dispatched to a property at the corner of Harriet and Madawaska Avenue which is a very dilapidated building. The owner was to be instructed to tear it down due to its condition.

The CEO was persistent with the owners of the property at the corner of Lancey Street and Peltoma Avenue. After multiple calls and letters, the owners did schedule a major tree cutting day at the property. The owners have also pulled a building permit to fix up the property. The CEO has been instructed to keep in contact with the owners to monitor their progress.

The Alternate Code Enforcement Officer sent a letter to the property owners on Webb Road. The facilities at this property have expanded without proper permits.

24. Water/Sewer Projects:

History:

There is a lengthy list of Water and Sewer Projects available for completion. Several Departments Meeting were held which was very informative on priorities and addressing particular items in the most commonsense and systematic fashion.

I was able to meet with several water and sewer employees from Olver Associates to discuss proposed projects for the ARPA funding as well as capital priorities. Annaleis Hafford and I have had several meetings to discuss issues as well as paving/water/sewer projects. Water/Sewer is a large discipline that needs to be a focus for Spring and Summer this year

A comprehensive list of the projects to be undertaken will be provided at a later date once more planning is conducted on how to accomplish as much as possible.

I will mention one item:

A citizen was advised that someone was not billed for 5 years: As I had to review each account that was being billed to address the code processing issue, I reviewed the accounts. I did not see an account that was not being billed unless it had been listed as turned off and there was a record of why it was turned off. We did find out later on that the individual was provided with incorrect information and neither she nor I could figure out why this took place. I appreciate the fact that she did tell us about this because as a result of her comments, I did locate an item that needs to be reviewed:

The Town has a list for each Book of Locations where water is turned off: In our Departments Meeting, we determined that each of these locations needs to be reviewed in the field.

Update:

In the interim while waiting for good weather for the Water/Sewer Department to check all the turned off locations, we verified all locations vs. account information to have updated lists for the Water/Sewer Department to utilize in the field.

We are also going to check the hookups at the end of the line as some have water and sewer; some have just water and some have just sewer. This will ensure that the last one on the line being billed is actually the last one on the line.

There are many other projects to work on which include:

- a. *Leak Detection, of which we have had fantastic results;*
- b. *Rehabilitation of the Wells;*
- c. *Sewer Video Work for roads that may be paved;*
- d. *Inspection and Cleaning of Water Storage Facilities;*
- e. *VAS Program with E.J. Prescott;*
- f. *Grant for the Stationary Backup Generator;*
- g. *Grant for the Capacity Study;*
- h. Creating and bidding out the Painting of one or more Water Storage Tanks and the most critical one with all of the funding coming up;
- i. To look for, determine and apply for water/sewer funding with the Town Manager.

6. OLD BUSINESS:

7. NEW BUSINESS:

RESOLUTION 22-39: Resolved that the Town Council act as necessary on the MaineDOT Planning Partnership Initiative (PPI)

Moved by Deputy Mayor Logiodice and seconded by Councilor Frost to approve Resolution 22-39.

This approval provides Mr. Doughty with the permission of the Town Council to move forward over the next month to talk with other members of the MaineDOT and explore the options available to the Town. Mr. Doughty will bring back his findings and recommendations to the Town Council in approximately a month. The Council would also like a list of other towns to talk to about this project. This information can be provided to the Town Manager.

Motion passed with all votes in favor.

VOTE: UNANIMOUS AYE

8. DISCUSSION ITEMS:

A. Department Reports for 03/31/2022

Accomplishments/Achievements

TM advised that the reports are self-explanatory.

9. REPORTS:

Audience:

Peter G. Vigue: Applauded the Council in moving forward with exploration of a Main Street vision and planning process. Discussed the need for a vision for the Town. Commented at length on the lack of code enforcement and all of the buildings that he sees in town that do not meet the Code. He stated that there are no building permits, no code enforcement and indicated that when he brings people to town they do not want to live here due to the condition of the town. Would like the Council to invite him to show his pictures of over 30 locations in town that are unfit structures or do not meet the code. He will come to do this if the Council invites him. Mentioned how the records are not yet digitized and that a letter has come off the side of the building.

Heather Donahue: Reminded the Council and audience about the upcoming Special Election for Town Councilor.

Councilors:

Councilor Hall: Wanted to know the status of hiring a Public Works Director, Assistant Town Manager and Deputy Tax Collector. Stated it was not on the town website (TM advised that Donnie Chute was hired for the PW Director last year so there is no effort to hire a PW Director. Indicated the jobs had been on the website until Sunday/Monday of the week when she took them down as the posting by prior staff was not correct. She was unable to revise it as the wording was embedded and since it was not correct, it was taken down. It is to be re-done and put back up). Wants the Abode program utilized as it is ridiculous to write numbers on the pages (TM advised that it is very quick to put the numbers on the pages as a Councilor had suggested but will check on the program as it would now be available it is only for one user). Stated that the Town foreclosed on a property and the owner did not know, she came to the Town Office to pay the taxes in order to sell the property that day and found out that the property was owned by the Town. Requested to see the paperwork. Stated the Town Manager was not available to address this. (TM noted that the individual knew that the property was tax acquired as the information had been provided to the closing agent on the cost for the sale that was scheduled. Advised that she was on the phone at the time and did not hear about this until later in the

afternoon). Wanted to know why the office staff were doing the billing and was she trained. (TM indicated that the Financial Clerk/s have been in charge of the billing for 12 or more years. Advised that she had trained the Financial Clerk and that they had access to a water and sewer utility billing module on the web). Indicated that the Town Manager should not receive mileage reimbursement. Does not want the Council packages delivered. Does not want copies made for the Councilors. (TM took a poll to determine of the current Council that 2 want the hard copies and 4 will use their phones without copies of Council materials made for them or delivered).

Councilor Saucier: Reminded the Town Council that things are changing very quickly now with the economy and costs are increasing. Just because we approved projects last year does not mean that they will all will move forward. Indicated that we are definitely going to need to talk about the cost of projects when the asphalt comes up for discussion.

Councilor Jester: No Report

Deputy Mayor Logiodice: No Report

Councilor Frost: No Report.

Mayor Cianchette: Asked about the crossing guards (The TM advised that the crossing guards had been in MSAD#53's budget and all were cut several years ago except for the one remaining at School/Somerset). Advised that we should think about having the Speed sign at Hartland Avenue by the intersection (TM agreed it was a great idea. Updated the Council that she had contacted the MaineDOT Traffic Engineer about that intersection and the area by Somerset Plaza again).

10. ADJOURNMENT:

Moved by Deputy Mayor Logiodice and seconded by Councilor Frost to adjourn the meeting at 8:10 p.m.

Motion passed with all votes in favor.

VOTE: UNANIMOUS AYE

Respectfully submitted,

Kathryn Ruth, Deputy Town Clerk

Minutes are a synopsis of a meeting. For more detail, please go to www.pittsfield.org and click on Town Meeting Videos to listen to videos of Town Council and other Board/Committee Meetings.

