

MINUTES

for a Workshop of the Pittsfield Town Council, held on Tuesday, June 25, 2019 at 6:00 PM in the Council Chambers.

PRESENT: COUNCILORS: Mayor Timothy Nichols, Deputy Mayor Heather Donahue, Councilor Howard Margolskee, Councilor Caleb Curtis, Councilor Matthew Bolster and Councilor Debra Billings.

ABSENT: Councilor Robert Stackhouse

Also present: Town Manager Kathryn Ruth and Assistant to the Town Manager Michael Feole

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

3. **DISCUSSION**

Future of the Theatre

Theatre Building

- There are two estimates that were created in the recent past for renovations of the existing building.
- The building next door is available for purchase in two years.
- A new building could be built in the footprint of the current theatre building and the building next door if we decide to purchase it.
- It may be possible to keep the theatre open while renovations are being completed.
- The Unitarian Universalist Meeting House may be an option to house the theatre operations while the building is being renovated or rebuilt.

Theatre Future

- Setting up a steering committee to start a 501c3 corporation non-profit to become separate from the Town.
- Having either the Pittsfield Economic Expansion Corporation PEEC or the Pittsfield Development Corporation PDC sponsor the Theatre until it can be setup as its own non-profit to allow certain Grant opportunities that could be leveraged for non-profits.
- The Town providing a certain level of funding each year to support the activities of the Theatre.
- Changing the name of the Pittsfield Community Theatre to the Pittsfield Cultural Center.

Next Steps

1. Review the estimates of the building renovations needed with the authors in a walk-through of the building to get an idea of how the pricing may have changed in the years since they were developed.
2. Meet with the Unitarian Universalist Meeting House director to discuss availability of that location if we need to move the Theatre operations to a second site and what that would entail as far as costs.

Councilor Stances

Mayor Nichols:

- I want to see the Theatre stay where it is, on Main St.
- I want it to be in that building.
- I think that it should become a 501c3.

Deputy Mayor Donahue:

- I favor a 501c3 organization.
- I don't expect the Theatre Committee to do the work to become a 501c3.

- I favor someone other than the town running it.
- I favor shifting ownership of the building.
- I can get behind a regular donation by the town.
- I am not sold on keeping it where it is.
- I think that it is a good idea to partner with the UU Meeting House.

Councilor Bolster:

- I think that the Theatre has done a 180 degree turn from last year.
- My only hesitation is that the momentum can be kept up.
- I think that we can support them until they get a 501c3 and then we could commit a little support, maybe \$2,000.00 per year.
- People are thinking outside of the box but we need to think about the building, whether we fix it up, we build new or we work with the UU Meeting House and put shows on there for a couple of years.
- I stand for a 501c3.

Councilor Curtis:

- I support a 501c3 effort.
- I want it to be on Main St.
- I want to hear people talking about coming to Pittsfield to attend shows there.
- I support working with the UU Meeting House and that there will be some sacrifices.

Councilor Margolskee:

- I think either the Theatre Committee or another committee needs to proceed to a 501c3.
- If that effort is not started by budget time, I will vote to close it.

Councilor Billings:

- I want to move the Theatre to PEEC and change its name to match grants.
- I want to review all three quotes to renovate the building and talk to Cianbro about how we can renovate the building(s) in stages to keep it open.
- We need to decide about the building before the budget starts.
- I do not want our tax dollars going to support the Theatre.

4. **ADJOURNMENT**

Moved by Councilor Billings and seconded by Councilor Bolster to adjourn at 8:10 PM.

VOTE: UNANIMOUS AYE

Michael Feole, 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.