

WORKSHOP MEETING MINUTES/NOTES

Minutes/Notes for a Budget Workshop of the Pittsfield Town Council held on *Tuesday, October 18, 2022 directly after the Council Meeting. After a brief break at the conclusion of the Council Meeting, the workshop started at approximately 8:06 pm* in the Council Chambers at the Pittsfield Municipal Building at 112 Somerset Avenue and by teleconferencing technology.

2023 Budget Workshop First Town Council Workshop

A. General:

Review of overall expenditure budget

Review of revenue budget

Review of capital budget

The Town Manager provided a review of the overall expenditure budget, revenue budget and capital budget for the Town Councilors to include the following:

Compiling the 2023 proposed Municipal Budget, the proposed 2023 Capital Budget, 2023-2027 Capital Improvement Plan and the 2028-2032 Capital Projects for forecasting during a crunched budget process has certainly been a challenge.

Taking into account the need to bring forward all items at the same service level or a similar level of services at the direction of the Town Council and not reduce services, we compiled a Municipal budget that reflects an increase of \$269,316 in Expenses (\$246,796 in operational and \$22,520 in capital budgeting for 2023). Please note that this does not include any of the new Department Additional Items proposed.

Preliminarily, the bottom line of the municipal revenue budget for 2023 is \$2,758,385 which is \$469,719 higher than 2022 or 20.5% higher. As State Revenue Sharing has been increased to the State mandate for the first time for an entire year in 2022, this has been a great boost to our revenue stream. If the State's projections decrease or the State decides to not follow the mandate which had taken place for several years, this account will need to be re-evaluated. The Town is also now able to utilize surplus funds as our base has increased over the last few years to a very comfortable level. These funds will be utilized over several years to assist in keeping the taxes as low as possible.

The Town Manager reviewed the budget book to include Tab 1 the Budget Calendar with meeting schedule listing out all of the meetings for review for the public. Tab 2 includes the Letter of Explanation which reflects what is taking place this period vs. the history of the expenses and revenues were a multi-year period as previously requested. Unappropriated surplus was discussed and revenue sources for this year as well as how the budget was put together with costs for Health Insurance, Workers' Compensation, Unemployment, Electricity, Telephones and then the major increases/decreases for the 2023 vs. 2022. The revenues are also explained in detail in the book and the Town Manager referred to the pages as this section provides good background.

Tab 3 is the actual proposed Municipal Budget with Town Departments; Capital Budget and Financing; Water Budget and Revenues; and Sewer Budget and Revenues. This is an excel spreadsheet with a page or more per department with information supplied by the department. Tab 4 and 5 have Financial Software comparisons of the 2023 proposed budget and the 2022 actual budget that was approved. The software format did not permit a line with the difference for the Worksheets, only the two columns. Ms. Ruth noted that she talked to the financial software

customer service representative/programmer who is very good on the holiday as she knew she would not have to compete with all of the other towns. She had her ticket for the custom reports and verified that there is no way to create just a report with health insurance, overtime, etc. We would have to try to extract it or just type out an excel spreadsheet.

Tab 6 is the Capital Budget and Capital Improvement Plan Details for the Years 2023-2027 as required by the Charter and also beyond that as we have 5 additional years of improvements to project into the future for 2023-2032. This includes the Capital Budget for 2023 for taxation in the proposed budget; 2023 projects, the CIP for 2023-2027; the capital projects for 2023-2032 and the details on the debt service for the current debt and the debt that we may be incurring for water and sewer projects discussed earlier in the evening. Ms. Ruth discussed how the section worked and where items were location on the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP).

Tab 7 was reduced this year to cut down on paper as requested by the Council this year so that it includes for the Prior capital budget and capital improvement plan details the 2021 Priority Public Works projects; 2021 Engineering Cost review of Road Projects; 2021 Engineering Cost Review of Water/sewer/Road/Drainage projects 2021-2030 Paving Plan. Tab 8 includes both the Expenditures and Revenues through 08/31/2022. Tab 9 will have the Achievements and Goals while Tab 10 will have Additional which we are fine tuning due to the lead time needed to get estimates nowadays.

Ms. Ruth noted that we are in the advantageous position for the first time since the late 2000's of having at this tentative time an increase in revenues that can be used to reduce taxes a bit. She noted we can not get carried away and use all of this at once, however, should use it over a period of time because this situation can change at any time. She noted that having more revenues than the amount of the increase in expenses does not include any Additional being added and we know that some will be added. Ms. Ruth thanked the Councilors.

B. Council & Administrative Budgets

Library \$216,978 or 7.3% increase for the Preliminary Budget

It was decided to review the Library budget first on page 35 as the Librarian was present. The Councilors asked for the differences. The cost-of-living raise, part-timers were increased more as they were close to minimum wage, health insurance and electricity. Started with a 7.3% increase or \$14,690. It was decided to put in \$17,000 rather than \$14,000 for electricity as this was electric heat. The building was doubled when the expansion project went through. Added \$1,350 in the telephone account.

Hours of operation were reviewed which during the winter was 43 hours and during the summer 40 hours. They have increased their budget by getting grants. The Town Councilors mentioned that they wanted to have the breakdown of the use again.

Councilor Holmstrom left the meeting, however, signed into ZOOM shortly thereafter. In the light of fuel, it was questioned if the Library should be open 6 days a week. If there is a day that is low, can we cut out that day? If we cut the hours, Holly wants her staff on the weekend to work during the week. Holly said that the heat does not change on the weekend as well as AC, so it would be only the electricity. Councilor Hall advised if the hours are cut then would the part-time not be less? Holly said so you want to cut staff? Jason noted that they are going to propose a lot of items. This budget is negative \$216,000 and we have everything else needing money, closed the theatre as it was negative \$90,000. She stated we are the gem of the community. Jason said that he is not

attacking anyone but that we need to scrutinize this We have a Town Office not open to the public 48 hours a week. Do we need to have the Library open 48 hours a week then? He stated he will ask the questions. Jason stated it has nothing to do with the librarian or how she runs the library. He would like to know about whether this could be a non-profit. There was a lengthy discussion about looking at the departments and then every department vs. the Town. We can not reduce 5% from every budget as some have all obligations.

Are we getting all of the grants that we should? She thinks we are but can research it. There are hybrid budgets with the staff paid by the Town and the group raised money for everything else.

Items needed for the Library:

Town Offices closed 1 day a week so can the Library close 1 day a week as an inquiry? 100% of the Town uses the Town Office. It does not make sense to Councilor Hall just looking at it. Librarian will provide a list of services that the Library provides. The Library will provide the Traffic per day for the Year.

**The Town Council added funds to the Library Budget as follows:
\$3,000 to the Electricity to \$17,000
\$1,350 to the Telephone to \$3,350**

B. Council & Administrative Budgets

Council \$4,710 or 3.7% increase, after discussion, there was nothing that could be changed.

After a very lengthy discussion, it was tentatively agreed that the cost of living will be decreased from the initial 5.0% to 3.0% for all positions except for the lower paid positions which the Town Manager had increase 8.0% to +8.0% increase. This is because the minimum wage increase will go up higher than what some employees make and we need to be able to retain people, not have some positions be a continual revolving door due to low pay.

It was decided that each department will advise the Town Council in a couple of sentences as to what the increase is comprised of so this information will be provided by the Town Manager at the Dept. Head meeting so that the next Departments will know for the next meeting.

It was agreed that it would be a 3.0% across the board cost of living with the lower paid positions at 8.0% to more than 8.0% depending upon how low they originally were and responsibilities.

Administration \$117,815 or 5.2% increase	Revised to \$92,405 wage; \$116,109 total
Town Clerk \$79,645 or 4.0% increase	Revised to \$51,856 wage; \$ 78,378 total
Finance \$236,968 or 8.3% increase	Revised to \$90,020 wage; \$232,348 total
Reorganized the jobs, put each clerk in charge of each area, built in promotional opportunities with higher rates to be able to keep people, reviewed other towns/positions/on-line sites	
Assessing \$47,841 or 6.4% increase	Same
Revaluation is not built in; the assessing maps must be Completed this year; TRIO is a 10% increase	
Legal \$21,000 or 0.0% increase	Same, but explanation
Left the same, depends on the year and what is going on.	
Elections \$4,574 or 0.0% increase; based on minimum wage	Same

Municipal Building	\$61,744 or 22.8% decrease	Same
This budget is clearly impacted throughout especially with heating, telephones, contractual, it differs each year as to the issues; Also have the Mun Bldge Reserve available; etc.		
Community & Economic Development	\$100,449 or -7.1% increase	Same
Instead of putting in a whole position, I put in ½ of the Grant Administrator and the Virtual Assistance we have talked about; It had the AA assistance, so I moved the work over to the Finance Dept.; maintain the placeholder to not have any effect and have this placeholder to be proactive.		
Insurances	\$66,589 or 8.7% increase	Same
Commercial Insurance area; United Insurance bids out to the Few Municipal insurers each year for all commercial policies; Fine Arts for the Historical; Airport policy and Firefighters Policy; 7.1% for the Commercial policy ½ and the other ½ is already set.		
Codes and Building Inspection	\$4.1% increase	Revised to \$40,844 wage; \$65,433 total
This is for the current setup, the Town Council will look at Additional in the future for a F/T CEO; 24 hours a week; plus legal for codes. If we add on the Additional, it will be the difference. This exists the way the Town is now.		
Airport	\$26,730 or -.4% decrease	Same
General Assistance	\$15,130 or 0.0% increase	Pin on it to determine state requirement
Although it has been quiet, things have been heating up; There is a revenue reimbursement for 50% of the cost from the State; concern over costs come.		
Unclassified Expenditures	\$342,385 or 29.7% increase	-\$9,000 Safety Program; \$333,385 total

All figures are preliminary approvals only with the entire budget reviewed later in the process.

The workshop was concluded at 11:06 pm.

Respectfully Submitted by:

Kathryn Ruth, Deputy Town Clerk

