

MINUTES

for a regular meeting of the Pittsfield Town Council, held on *Tuesday, January 17, 2023* 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 Howard Margolskee; Councilor Brent Frost; Councilor Jason Hall; and Councilor Heather Donahue.

Councilors Present by ZOOM: None

Councilors Absent: Councilor Eric Saucier

Also Present: Town Manager Kathryn Ruth; Code Enforcement Officer Al Tempesta; Peter Logiodice IV; Robert Nicholson; Jennifer Parker Nicholson; and Cynthia Munn.

Also Present by ZOOM: Alicia Nichols

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 January 03, 2023

Moved by Deputy Mayor Margolskee and seconded by Councilor Frost to adopt the Minutes of the Regular Meeting held on January 03, 2023.

Motion passed with all votes in favor.

VOTE: UNANIMOUS AYE

3. PRESENTATIONS, CONGRATULATIONS AND INTRODUCTIONS:

A. Community and Economic Development Activities and Events

1. Projects and Grants:

A. Planning Partnership Initiative Program Update (Main Street Project)

A. Planning Partnership Initiative Program Update:

The Town Manager updated the Town Council on the meetings and steps that have taken place regarding the scope for the project being reviewed to ensure that the MaineDOT and the Consultant are in agreement on how the project will proceed. Good progress is being made and the details should be available for the next meeting. Previously she had advised that the parties had met on the proposals received. The MaineDOT, state officials, our Public Works Director, Committee member Peter G. Vigue and myself as Town Manager ranked then chose the #1 firm. It was very good news that the #1 firm is quite qualified and it appears that we will have agreement shortly on the scope and pricing.

4. PUBLIC HEARINGS:

ORDINANCE 22-16: (Public Hearing) The Town of Pittsfield hereby ordains that a Public Hearing Pursuant to Title 30-A M.R.S. Section 3106-B (Abandoned Buildings) be held and an Order and Notice to Correct Defects and Remedial Measures be issued on 157 Washington Street, Pittsfield, Maine located on Parcel ID: 29-50 owned by Larry E. Munn and Cynthia L. Munn.

Deputy Mayor Margolskee made a motion to open the Public Hearing, seconded by Councilor Jester.

The public hearing was held as Mrs. Munn received notice as she was in attendance at the meeting along with her Contractor Mr. Nichols and his wife.

Mayor Cianchette requested that Code Enforcement Officer Tempesta begin the meeting with the background on this dwelling and what he would like to see come out of this hearing given the long nature of issues at this site. The Mayor advised that then Mrs. Munn and Mr. Nichols could address the concerns.

The CEO advised that he was given a list of homes to concentrate on from the Town Manager and this one was at the top of the list. He tried to contact the Munns all last summer but did not receive any response including up to this meeting. There were numerous certified letters and regular letters sent. He advised of the issues at the site – this is the newer home built out by the road and not the home back off the street. The issues are: (1) the condition of the siding which is blowing off the dwelling; (2) the windows are covered with plywood; (3) there are open studs on the inside of the structure; (4) the lawn was not being mowed; and (5) the door was not locked allowing access to the inside; and (6) other smaller issues. Al stated he wants to work with the owners, but all the certified notices came back.

Mr. Nicholson indicated that the windows had been smashed out, lumber stolen and the door ripped open. He stated that Mrs. Munn hired him to fix this place up and he can do it this summer.

Mrs. Munn explained there had been serious health issues of her husband and herself that they concentrated on last summer but now they are ready to work on the property. They would like to fix everything this upcoming summer. She would like to pass the property onto the three children. She hired Mr. Nicholson to manage the property.

Mr. Nicholson explained that he has the windows for the home but does not want to put them in until he can make sure that the property will not be vandalized.

A lengthy discussion then incurred involving the Mayor, the CEO, Mrs. Munn and Mr. Nicholson.

The Mayor as well as several Councilors and the Town Manager advised that there needed to be improvements made over a period of time and not just waiting until this summer. It was agreed to leave this up to the CEO for a letter of agreement to be written that would lay out the projects to be done and dates by which they would be completed. This would start with securing the structure so that it is locked up and people can not just walk in and making sure that the siding is not blowing off into peoples' yards. A Game camera was suggested for the site so that the Munns and Mr. Nicholson could see who is causing trouble on the site.

It was discussed that if there is not distinct improvement by the timeframe established that we would be right back here with another public hearing and meeting with a different result. The Town

Manager advised that if these defects were not fixed that the Town has the authority to fix them. Unfortunately, work by the government always seems to cost more as more people are involved so the Munns will want to make sure that they get this work done and that the Town does not have to do it for them. If the Town has to conduct the work, the cost is passed onto to the property owner and it becomes a special assessment which then turns into a tax on the property and treated like a tax lien if not paid.

The Councilors agreed that the motion allowed for the list of defects and due dates to be established for the property by the CEO.

Motion passed with all votes in favor.

VOTE: UNANIMOUS AYE

5. REPORTS:

- A. Council Committees: Finance, Ordinance and Recycling
- B. Board/Committee Updates by Town Councilors and Manager
- C. Town Manager's Report

A. Council Committees: Finance, Ordinance and Recycling

Finance Committee – No Report; Ordinance Committee – No Report; and Recycling Committee – The Town Manager reported the committee will begin meeting shortly with an agreed upon date.

B. Board/Committee Updates by Town Councilors and Manager

There will be an informational session for the Planning Board to include Freedom of Access training as soon as we locate an acceptable date.

C. Town Manager's Report

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT FOR 01/17/2023:

This continues to be the busiest time that we have seen with many requests for assistance and dealing with issues that we have not had before.

1. Planning Partnership Initiative Program: A very helpful and interesting meeting took place between the Maine DOT and the Consultant which the Town participated in with history and background. It appears from the subsequent discussions reported between the MaineDOT and the #1 choice consultant that another meeting may be necessary to have agreement on all the details such as the scope and the cost. Our first meeting took place on 01/06/2023 and their discussions seem to be on 01/11/2023 and 01/13/2023. We received a revised proposal over the weekend which MaineDOT and the Town will be reviewing this week as soon as possible.

2. Public Hearing on Code Enforcement – Abandoned Building Statute: As detailed in the Council package, the owners of the Washington Street property have not signed for their certified mailing. The Public Hearing is still on the agenda as only the Council can re-schedule a public hearing of this nature. There is the possibility that the owners may attend as they opened their non-certified copy of the letter advising of the public hearing. If so, then we can hold the public hearing. However, if the owners are not in attendance, the public hearing will need to be re-scheduled and the new public hearing date is listed under New Business. The Code Enforcement Officer Al Tempesta will be in attendance on 01/17/2023.

3. Financial System: Working with Harris: Had to open up tickets as a few items that were fixed seem to be back.

4. Foreclosures: The foreclosure notices for 2020 Taxes are going out this week with payment due in 30 days once mailed. These notices are for taxes that were due in October 2020, over 2 years ago. There are 29 properties that will receive foreclosure notices.

5. Androscoggin Bank Accounts: Many accounts will have their interest rate increased which is very good news.

6. Credit Card: Still working on this. It looks like one of the banks can provide the credit cards the way that they are needed. I am optimistic but need to meet with the bank because I was told I was all set with the first bank, however, it turned out that it would not work correctly.

7. Open Position Recruitment:

A. Police Officers: 2 positions open – Police Chief has hired one officer who had previously worked at Augusta. She needs to finish the last step for the Academy. This lowers the number of open spots to 2 as of today. He has another one under review who would need to go to the Academy.

B. Recycling Attendant: 1 position – raised the hourly pay – several people were hired last year, but quit. Currently have a part-time employee from another department who works summers helping out who is happy to have the work.

C. F/T Code Enforcement Officer – New

D. P/T Help in the Office – Would be appreciated.

8. Water/Sewer Meter Review: The Town had Mueller come in to thoroughly go over the Meter Reader and how it works. Mueller services the meter reader. The company representatives spent two days here reviewing the current water/sewer system to determine if there are any items that can be fixed or enhanced to make the water/sewer system work better. Olver Associates advised after the session that the issues seem to be in the Harris TRIO system. I have asked for an analysis so that we can see exactly what the revisions or corrections are that are viewed as needed. In addition, the financial staff told me a few items about the meters so I have asked for their analysis also.

9. Financial Work: This is my major focus of time. The Town is trying to concentrate on finances so that we can close out the last budget period and concentrate on the 2023 budget, however, bills are still coming in that are Accounts Payables and the revenues which are Accounts Receivables due for 2022 are still coming in. Last year, this slowed down in mid-March to beginning of April. Many reconciliations must be conducted to close out 2022.

6. OLD BUSINESS:

7. NEW BUSINESS:

ORDINANCE 23-01: (Set to Public Hearing on 02/07/2023) The Town of Pittsfield hereby ordains that a Public Hearing Pursuant to Title 30-A M.R.S. Section 3106-B (Abandoned Buildings) be held and an Order and Notice to Correct Defects and Remedial Measures be issued on 157 Washington Street, Pittsfield, Maine located on Parcel ID: 29-50 owned by Larry E. Munn and Cynthia L. Munn.

Moved by Deputy Mayor Margolskee and seconded by Councilor Hall to table Ordinance 23-01.

Motion passed with all votes in favor.

VOTE: UNANIMOUS AYE

RESOLUTION 23-09: Resolved that the Town Council approve the filing of a Community Building Grant of \$10,000 from the Maine Community Foundation to conduct a Community Needs Assessment, and if approved, further authorize the Town Manager and Librarian to expend the funds in accordance with the grant requirements and town regulations.

Moved by Councilor Donahue and seconded by Councilor Frost to open discussion on Resolution 23-09 for approval.

Councilor Donahue provided an overview of the grant project as Librarian Williams was not able to join the Town Council until after 8:00 pm due to another commitment.

Motion passed with all votes in favor.

VOTE: UNANIMOUS AYE

RESOLUTION 23-10: Resolved that the Town Council waive the Bid Policy, Chapter 2, Administrative Code, Section 106, to accept the renewal of the agreement with the Waterville Humane Society in the amount of \$7,882.00 and authorize the Town Manager to execute the agreement.

Moved by Councilor Donahue and seconded by Councilor Jester to approve Resolution 23-10 with the figure of \$7,307.96.

A concern was expressed regarding a quarantine and how the Town should be advised before one is put in place or as one is implemented. As the agreement is already signed by the Humane Society and it is a standard agreement that all towns sign, the Mayor asked that the Town Manager check into this with the Society.

Motion passed with all votes in favor.

VOTE: UNANIMOUS AYE

RESOLUTION 23-11: Resolved that the Town Council approve the Renewal Application for an On-Premises Liquor License for Outland Farm Brewery and Execute the Application.

Moved by Deputy Mayor Margolskee and seconded by Councilor Hall to adopt Resolution 23-11.

Motion passed with all votes in favor.

VOTE: UNANIMOUS AYE

8. REPORTS: DEPARTMENTS AND FINANCIAL:

- A. Departments Report for 12/31/2022
Accomplishments/Achievements

The Town Manager advised that all of the reports were in order. She just received the report from the Fire Chief which was late as he was concentrating on the FEMA visit which was very important for the storm prior to Christmas.

9. REPORTS: Audience, Council

Audience: No comments.

Councilors:

Councilor Donahue: Would like to see the Code Enforcement Letters back in the FYI Folder that the Councilors used to have prior to COVID. (The Town Manager advised when the CEO comes back from medical leave, this will take place. Noted at this time, the Interim CEO comes in for 1-5 hours a week so he is just covering and not out looking for code violations). Never seen the walkway cleared off so well! The next Maine Cheese Festival will be held on September 10, 2023 at Manson Park again this year. Noted that we still have not seen the Recreation inventory and building plans, however, that the Committee has working all year long on the operations.

Councilor Frost: Asked about the two hydrants out of commission – one by the hospital and by Hartland Avenue. Asked if they were going to be repaired (The TM advised that the Town has the materials for the repairs once the weather is warmer). Mentioned how many people in the community do not mow their lawns similar to the Munns.

Councilor Hall: Likes the FYI Folder idea. Would like the excel spreadsheet of Code violations to be kept up (TM advised that right now with the CEO out, we have an Interim CEO who is not working on code violations unless something large comes up. Advised once Al Tempesta is back she will go over this with him. We need to create a document that is easier to update than the excel spreadsheet). Suggested we request TRIO come to a meeting. This would light a fire under them and get to the root issue.

Councilor Jester: Wants to see the TRIO/Harris listing of issues and the time spent trying to straighten out the issues as he requested for the second meeting in December 2022. The Town Manager advised that she has her list of items ready and he saw the large binder of background materials that she had collected at the December 21, 2022 meeting, however, that the staff has had difficulty putting a time element to this information so she does not have the entire package yet. She will work with the staff again to help them as this is intertwined with their daily work and activities so they basically spend time each day. Councilor Jester mentioned that he was aware of issues with TRIO in the Assessment area from the presenters we have had in here before. He noted that he does want the Town Manager to continue to write the notes on the bills if there is an issue. Mentioned the Cemetery Sexton bills whereas this is the first time that the Town saw those charges that the Town Manager marked did not get approved by herself and the Finance Department nor a purchase order issued.

Councilor Saucier: N/A

Deputy Mayor Margolskee: Noted that the Committees need to meet such as the Council Committees have not been meeting such as the Finance and Ordinance Committee. Stated that there were a lot of bills on the expense warrants recently and is worried that the bill paying is behind so that vendors will not want to work with us. He noted that the CMP bills had late charges. He is willing to come in and nitpick the bills for the Council to make sure that everything is on the up and up. He stated if the Councilors do not have enough time to come in to check and sign the

warrants, then he could do it for them as he is retired. He instructed the Town Manager to get the TRIO issues straightened out as this has gone on long enough. Believes that the Rec Committee is doing a good job with what they are doing and would like to see an expanded role for the Recreation Committee with community events.

Mayor Cianchette: Pleased that Mrs. Munn came in, however, this is the exception to the Rule and the Town had to schedule a public hearing to have an improvement. We need to do more of this. Commented the leadership in the Public Works Department as this is headed in the right direction now. Would like to see the Recreation Director handle the events such as the summer concert series, gazebo and other projects. It would be funded better with the Rec Director becoming a permanent full-time position involving Community projects. Started a Charter Review and is making notes. Indicated that the Councilors could review a section at a time with one person handling some sections and for the more detailed sections, having several Councilors handle it. Then the Council can consolidate all the changes and send it to the State for approval. Advised that it is a large project. Would like to have the Theatre put back on the market and have this entire subject revisited. (A discussion incurred about PEEC addressing this with other Councilors and whether there would be an RFP for other realtors).

Councilor Jester: Wants to see the TRIO/Harris listing of issues and the time spent trying to straighten out the issues. The Town Manager advised that she had her list of items ready and he saw the large binder of issues at the last meeting, however, the staff has had difficulty putting a time factor to this information so she does not have the entire package completed yet. She will work with the staff to help them again with this task to provide timing. It is intertwined with their daily activities so they spend time each day basically. He advised that there is a warrant with a vendor on it that he will not sign. Mentioned the Cemetery Sexton bills whereas this is the first time that the Town saw those charges that the Town Manager marked did not get approved by herself and finance nor a purchase order issues.

10. ADJOURNMENT:

Moved by Councilor Hall and seconded by Councilor Jester to adjourn the meeting at 8:09 pm.

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.

