

# MINUTES

for a regular meeting of the Pittsfield Town Council, held on *Tuesday, September 06, 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 Jason Hall; Councilor Brent Frost; Councilor Eric Saucier; Councilor Ronald Jester and Councilor Lindsay Holmstrom.

Councilors Present by ZOOM: None

Councilors Absent: None

Also Present: Town Manager Kathryn Ruth; Public Works Director Don Chute and Heather Donahue

Also Present by ZOOM: None

## **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 August 16, 2022 and Budget Workshop held on August 23, 2022

**Moved** by Deputy Mayor Logiodice and seconded by Councilor Frost to adopt the Minutes of the Regular Meeting on August 16, 2022 and the Budget Workshop of August 23, 2022.

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 Initiative Program Update
- b. Main Street Sidewalk Project
- c. Route #11/10 (Route 100) and Main Street Highway Construction/Rehabilitation
- d. Main Street Sidewalk Project Community Development Block Grant Funding; Northern Border Regional Commission Grant; Project Canopy Grants; and multiple smaller grant projects
- e. Main Street Sewer Main Rehabilitation Project including DEP American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Grant Funding
- f. Airport Grants
- g. Many other smaller Grant Opportunities
- h. Certificates and Ceremonies

The Town Manager advised that the subject this evening is the Planning Program Initiative (PPI) Scope of Services that is on the agenda for approval through the authorization of a Letter of Intent. She noted that the Scope of Services had been updated with the extension of the project area from first Route #100's intersection with Madawaska Road up to the Hospital/Leighton Street and now to the Town Line. Everyone agreed that having the Town line was better so that a small area did not get left out when MaineDOT paves to the Detroit/Pittsfield town line and the PPI project is paved to the Hospital/Leighton Street. Now it will be paved to the Town line. On the other side of Route #100 toward Burnham the project will not stop at originally a short distance past Route #100's intersection with Nichols Street which was then extended to the urban line and now to the back entrance of the Industrial Park at Stinson Street which makes a good loop. The Councilors agreed with the extended scope of the project along Main Street as this makes a lot of sense and will result in a more complete project. The State added the Council's two additional areas involving (1) extending the boundary to include Manson Park and the Friend lots and (2) extending down Central Street from Route #100/Main Street down around Hathorn Park and then onto Somerset Avenue down to the Signal Lights.

Councilor Hall advised that a citizen wanted to know whether this project could be extended down Stinson Street around Maine Central Institute to Route #100/Main Street. The Town Manager asked if the thought was to possibly add this to the project scope? Ms. Ruth also noted that we need to mention Madawaska Road so that the need to pave this road is not forgotten. She explained how it was scheduled to be paved along with Main Street when she was notified that the Town's Northern Regional Border Commission Grant was approved for the reconstruction of the sewer main on Madawaska Avenue so that the former SAS Facility would be able to be developed as the sewer system serving it had issues. This resulted in a year delay while the sewer project took place and then all of the items happened to the State so the project got delayed.

Mayor Cianchette stated that the scope was already decided upon and wanted to know why it was being brought up again as they voted on it. Councilor Saucier and Town Manager Ruth thought that The Town needed to mention someplace that Madawaska Avenue needs to be paved as it cannot wait 2-3 more years. It is breaking up badly. It was agreed to include this with the Town's Letter of Intent that is on the agenda for approval.

Deputy Mayor Logiodice asked what grants had been lost due to the delay that will happen now that we have voted to go with the PPI project. The Town Manager advised that around \$20,000 was lost through the two Project Canopy Grants. She advised that she can get these again as she has the format in the computer and has received numerous awards. She noted next year there may be an issue with the CDBG grant as she had advised the Council that the State is not going to extend it and instead has indicated that perhaps we can find another approvable project that can be developed or a new grant could be written.

#### **4. PUBLIC HEARINGS:**

**ORDINANCE 22-08:** (Public Hearing) The Town of Pittsfield hereby Ordains to accept all tax year payments of Bryan L & Heather L Spencer, including interest and lien costs, for the property at 702 Canaan Road (Map 013, Lot 007-002), the Town having acquired said property as a result of automatic foreclosure of a 2019 property tax lien; recorded in the Somerset Registry of Deeds on July 21, 2020 at Book 5575, Page 165 which matured on January 21, 2022. The Town Council further authorizes the Town Manager to execute a municipal quitclaim deed releasing the Town's interest in said property to Bryan L & Heather L Spencer.

**Moved** by Deputy Mayor Logiodice and seconded by Councilor Frost to adopt Ordinance 22-08/

Motion passed with all votes in favor.

**VOTE: UNANIMOUS AYE**

## **5. REPORTS:**

### A. Council Committees:

The Finance Committee, Ordinance Committee and Recycling Committees reported that they had not met. Councilor Hall reported that the Finance Committee will be meeting in the future on the budget as the Budget Calendar was just set. The Town Manager advised that the Recycling Committee will be starting up in January of 2023.

### B. Committee Updates by Town Councilors and Manager:

The Town Manager reported that the Planning Board would not be meeting this month as applications had not been received, however, in the near future, the Board had talked about meeting to discuss solar projects to review the requirements. Mayor Cianchette requested that the Town Manager add a report to the package from the Planning Board and Parks and Recreation Committee so that the Council would not be hearing third hand from the Manager. Ms. Ruth agreed to add this to the Monthly Achievement Reports and noted that both boards do not have a meeting scheduled as of yet this month.

### C. Town Manager's Report

## **TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT FOR 09/06/2022:**

### **STREAMLINED VERSION FOR TOWN COUNCIL**

Please note that in August 2022 to date, most of our time has been spent with finances, taxes, utilities and the TRIO conversion.

1. Budget Calendar for 2023: The revised budget calendar with a public hearing date scheduled for 12/06/2022 and a backup date of 12/20/2022 is attached as Exhibit A.

2. Economic Development Project: The Pittsfield Economic Expansion Corporation (PEEC), which was requested by the Town Council to handle the Theatre, has received a proposal. The proposal will be vetted and a recommendation, with full background materials, provided to the Town Council for action later this month.

3. Audit for period ending 12/31/2021: As the Auditor discussed at the 08/23/2022 Budget Workshop, the audit was unqualified which is the finding that the Town would want and the Town is financially in very good shape. A management letter was issued as there are always items that can be improved upon. The three items listed were (1) Remove outstanding checks over 6 months old – this has been done. The checks were left on the bank statement as there had been issues with the postal service for a while with checks damaged, delayed or lost. If the checks were damaged, they were replaced. Re-issuing checks costs money. In addition, if checks are small, there is a tendency to not cash them in a timely fashion. These are now being removed on a regular basis and/or re-issued; (2) Fixed Assets was missing a few assets – several requests have been made to the auditor who has been very busy for the background as I

did not see any issues for 2021. There were a few assets missed by the staff with the 2019 audit done in 2020 during the COVID shutdown. I had not worked on the fixed assets over the years as the staff did this work, however, I am now involved. Several Councilors requested a copy of the fixed asset document. When I receive it, the list will be forwarded; and (3) The audit was completed on time but needs to start earlier. We agree. The Town has been behind since the required federal, state and local government shutdown due to COVID. We plan to start early for the 2022 audit as we did for the 2021 audit, however, due to staff illnesses and COVID, we got behind on 2021 audit.

4. 2022 Taxes:

Update for 09/06/2022: When the Assessor arrives for work on this date, we will have a better idea of when the tax commitment can take place. There were TRIO issues with the input of personal property data which we have been advised by Harris has been corrected.

5. Tax Liens:

Update for 09/06/2022: Tax liens were placed on properties with outstanding balances on 08/25/2022 with the exception of three accounts which should not have been taxed/created and had been referred to the Tax Assessor for resolution. The tax lien process began at the beginning of 07/2022 and was complicated as it took place during the TRIO conversion. A total of \$168,840.03 in taxes were placed in lien plus applicable interest and costs.

6. Open Positions Recruitment:

The Town of Pittsfield is experiencing the same issues as many employers in Pittsfield and the State with positions unfilled and very few applicants. There are still 17 pages of jobs on the Maine Municipal Association Job Bank, the one site in the State where nearly all municipal positions are listed. It is full of municipal positions in all departments with most pages having 20-30 position listings so there must be more than 500 jobs listed. The major issue we are running across is that people do not want to wait on customers and most applicants want to work remotely. It is certainly a different work environment now.

Updated for Week of 09/06/2022:

| Position   | Vacancy                              | Filled/Status                                   |
|--|--------------------------------------|---|
| Assistant (Revised by Town Council to handle Personnel/HR rather than assist Town Manager) | As of late 03/2022                   | Several applicants from Indeed                  |
| Deputy Treasurer/Tax Collector <u>OR</u>   | As of late 08/2021                   | in second interviews                            |
| Financial Clerk  | No vacancy                           | Conditional Offer – unable to obtain references |
| Public Works Driver/Equipment Operator   | 1-2 positions open again             | Hired several part-timers                       |
| Police Officer   | 2 vacancies                          | Hired 1 officer; second officer came back       |
| Fire Department  | Always recruiting, handles own hires | On-going all year                               |

\*Financial Clerk positions are filled. It is easier to hire a Financial Clerk than a Deputy Treasurer so we may hire and promote.

There was a lengthy discussion on recruitment. There are 6 positions vacant, 2 of which are office work; 2 require CDL licenses in highway and 2 are police officers. The Town Manager has had to stretch out her credit card to cover the cost of the recruitment on Indeed which Councilors wanted to be the priority recruitment tool and to really focus on. The Town Manager advised that if she lists everything that she runs out of money with the cap on her personal credit card within 1-2 weeks and accrues additional charges. She does not want to use her other credit card to have an issue with that

one too. To save money, she lists positions for Finance Clerks as traditionally there have been more applicants and few for higher level positions. She then discusses with the candidates that the individual hired will start as a Financial Clerk as they need to learn the front office and then there is an opportunity for promotion. This has started to work to fill the vacancies given that the town pay rates are not drawing in a lot of candidates across the board. The next area to concentrate on is CDL drivers for highway.

7. Computer Services / Managed Services Onboarding/Transfer to New TRIO:

Update for September 06, 2022: There have been a lot of tickets pulled for the conversion involving several programs, mostly in cash receipting, utility billing and taxes. Customer service reps have stayed right with us on the taxes and utility billing issues.

8. Grant Applications:

Update for September 06, 2022: Other Grant Opportunities:

Local Infrastructure.org Sign-up: As noted at the August 16, 2022 Council Meeting, the Town signed up for the infrastructure course from a leading university in preparation of what we have been advised will be the next phase of stimulus funding – for infrastructure. Hopefully, we will be chosen to take the course so that we can learn about the resources available and the connections that can be made. Five communities from around the nation will be chosen for a project. While, it would be unlikely that a medium sized community would be chosen for the project, we can learn a lot if chosen to participate in the training.

2022 Grants for Municipal Stream Crossing Upgrades: This program is under review. The application will require engineering assistance which has been hard to obtain this year. Engineering has been requested on a number of projects that is outstanding. The Public Works Director and I will review opportunities.

Efficiency Maine Small Municipality Retrofits: The Town received a reimbursement for lighting so we have asked if the Town is eligible to apply for heating and air conditioning (HVAC) projects this year of if we need to wait a year.

Airport Grant Reimbursement: Reimbursement for our last billings for the Airport Hangar grant have been submitted in order to be processed before the federal government shuts down for the end of their fiscal year for a couple of weeks prior to October 1, 2022.

Police Grants Update: We continue to work on the Police Grants. Payments were received for the grant that expired on August 31, 2022 for the cameras. A couple of grants have been closed out and it appears that one remains. We are reviewing current opportunities.

COPS Grant: The Town was contacted by DOJ listing our community as one of over 85 entities that were impacted by the software issues when filing an application. Interestingly enough, we were advised in August that we had an extension granted from 06/17/2022 to 06/30/2022 to file. Since we submitted the application that evening before and after the due date time on 06/17/2022, it should have been filed. Since we did not hear until 08/2022 that we had additional time to file, we were unable to meet the second due date as it was unknown.

9. Swimming Pool Cover:

Update for September 06, 2022: The pool cover was ordered through a local business, Philbrick Enterprises, when we were unable to obtain a satisfactory arrangement through the company that we purchased the pool from. Many requests were made to the original company for assistance and finally we did receive the pricing, however, they would not budge on having the entire payment up front. Our local vendor had several companies they work with and as this was a very large cover and a special order, we ended up with pricing from one vendor. As it has taken so long to obtain estimates due to how backed up and busy suppliers were, Public Works requested an emergency purchase. The lowest quotation was \$1,400 over the bid cap and approved as an emergency purchase. Public Works did come up with a temporary measure until winter sets in, therefore, the pool cover was ordered to move this along as we were heading into a large problem which needed to be avoided. While it has been hard to order many items due to supply chain issues, this was one of the most difficult purchases in the last three years. Several employees worked on this as well as a Manson Park Committee member. For the future, once we get the new pool cover in, a schedule will be set for the capital improvement plan to purchase a new cover every x years.

#### 10. Public Works Updates:

Update for 09/06/2022: Paving Update and Road Closure

2022 Summer Paving: Paving continues with numerous paving dates having been provided. While paving was to be completed well before school started, it was not. When the Public Works Director found the paving company in a different area of Town from where he requested the company begin paving, he shut down their paving until the bus and vehicle traffic was into the schools. The paving company was advised to be finished in the vicinity of the school and out of the way by noon as the buses and vehicular traffic would start up again, which was observed to have been followed. The company did wait for school to be in session prior to paving. Paving is to continue on 09/06/2022 in town and hopefully be finished shortly.

#### 11. Code Enforcement Status:

Update for 09/06/2022: Alternate CEO Al Tempesta will be working with the Town Manager on the code enforcement efforts of the Town. The files are now in the Assessing Office so that they can be secured to be kept in order. Mr. Tempesta has been on a well-deserved vacation and will return on 09/06/2022. The Town Manager provided an update and copy of the latest excel spreadsheet of code enforcement activity. Al is not yet back in the office but they will be working together on the code enforcement activity. Two violations have gone through the cleanup time and not been addressed. These two violations need to then go through the appeal process time limit. Then they can proceed to court. We should take one first and then the other. The Alternate CEO and Town Manager will be coordinating with the Town Attorney.

12. Waste Disposal: The staff and I will be reviewing our current contract with Waste Management regarding options for future disposal open to the Town. Waste management services are increasing in cost as they are very transportation orientated so it would be good to review this particular subject for the budget process.

13. Energy Efficiency: As we have been notified, as well as all other customers of CMP, that the company has submitted a request for a three-year rate plan with the Maine Public Utilities Commission (PUC) and we have recently experienced a rate increase with some accounts, it would be a good idea to seek out assistance in looking at energy efficiencies. We have access to the Efficiency Maine funding,

however, we need an expert in this field to review the buildings. I had recommended that the Town's buildings we reviewed as part of recommended budget topics for the 2023 budget for consideration. Structural review and energy efficiency review would be helpful for the future. If the Town Council is interested in pursuing this, I will put together a Request for Proposals for this type of review.

#### 14. Upcoming Events:

Sunday, September 11, 2022: The Annual Maine Cheese Festival to be held at Manson Park with two sessions of local food, drink and craft artisans; live music; beer & wine garden; food trucks and education sessions. Advance tickets only: [www.mainecheesefestival.org](http://www.mainecheesefestival.org)

Saturday, October 01, 2022: The Annual Household Hazardous Waste Day at the Transfer Station for the disposal of a long list of items. Registration required. The Kennebec Valley Council of Governments (KVCOG) is handling this item. They have had a continual staff shortage and retainage issues as have many organizations. KVCOG has just hired an Ec and Community Development Director who is going to handle this project as they do not have an Environmental Planner. This is always a great event and we set a budget cap to make sure that the cost does not get out of control if a large amount of materials is requested to be disposed. In addition, it has been noted that several towns may want to attend, which would decrease the setup fee.

#### **6. OLD BUSINESS: N/A**

#### **7. NEW BUSINESS:**

**RESOLUTION 22-82:** Resolved that the Town Council authorize the Town Manager to execute the Maine Department of Transportation (MaineDOT) Letter of Intent indicating that the Town seeks to move forward to a Memo of Understanding (MOU) with the MaineDOT for the Planning Partnership Initiative for Main Street – Downtown.

**Moved** by Deputy Mayor Logiodice and seconded by Councilor Frost to adopt Resolution 22-82.

Motion passed with all votes in favor.

**VOTE: UNANIMOUS AYE**

**RESOLUTION 22-83:** Resolved that the Town Council create an ad hoc committee called Planning Partnership Initiative Committee and appoint seven members to oversee the project "Planning Partnership Initiative for Main Street – Downtown" for the duration of the project.

**Moved** by Deputy Mayor Logiodice and seconded by Councilor Hall to adopt Resolution 22-83.

The Mayor read the list of proposed committee members: Michael Cianchette; Eric Saucier; Lindsay Holmstrom; Brent Newhouse; Peter Vigue; Craig Weaver; and Jason Hall. Mayor Cianchette thanked Councilors Holmstrom and Hall for their hard work in reaching out to people and obtaining their agreement to serve on this committee.

Councilor Frost asked why Heather Donahue who has been very involved with this project and knowledgeable about the Town cannot be added to the Committee. He stated that she will bring a

good aspect to the Committee. A discussion then incurred on the makeup of the committee, the number of committee members and other related subjects.

After discussion, Deputy Mayor Logiodice amended his motion to change the number of members from seven to no more than nine and to approve the addition of Heather Donahue to the list of committee members read at the meeting and seconded by Councilor Hall.

Motion passed with all votes in favor of the amendment.  
**VOTE: UNANIMOUS AYE**

The Councilors then voted upon the amended motion for a Committee of no more than nine as described.

Motion passed with all votes in favor of the amendment.  
**VOTE: UNANIMOUS AYE**

**RESOLUTION 22-84:** Resolved that the Town Council accept the bid of Snowman's Construction of St. Albans in the amount not to exceed \$14.50 per yard for Winter Sand for the 2022-2023 Winter Season.

**Moved** by Deputy Mayor Logiodice and seconded by Councilor Jester to adopt Resolution 22-84.

Motion passed with all votes in favor.  
**VOTE: UNANIMOUS AYE**

**RESOLUTION 22-85:** Resolved that the Town Council authorize the Town Manager to execute the Sidebar Agreement #4-2022 to the Police Collective Bargaining Agreement expiring December 31, 2022 to re-instate the Two Signing Bonuses to recruit two officers to the force and Sidebar Agreement #5-2022 to provide a retention incentive for one officer on the force who did not qualify for any of the incentives.

It was explained by the Town Manager that Sidebar Agreement #4-2022 simply re-instates the same signing bonus incentive that the Town had used for the hire of two officers who have since left the Police Department and that this Sidebar allows the Town to continue to have two spots that are provided with a \$15,000 signing bonus. A lengthy discussion incurred amongst the Councilors about the retention incentive. The Town Manager provided the cost of the incentive after calculating it vs. other incentives. It was agreed by a number of Councilors that it is very hard to recruit any employees but specifically police officers.

**Moved** by Deputy Mayor Logiodice and seconded by Councilor Saucier to adopt Resolution 22-85.

Motion passed with all votes in favor.  
**VOTE: UNANIMOUS AYE**

**RESOLUTION 22-86:** Resolved that the Town Council approve the Request for Proposals for Consulting Services to Update the Town of Pittsfield's 2013 Comprehensive Plan adopted August 6, 2013 and authorize the Town Manager and Planning Board to seek bids for same.

**Moved** by Deputy Mayor Logiodice and seconded by Councilor Frost to adopt Resolution 22-86.



Motion passed with all votes in favor.  
**VOTE: UNANIMOUS AYE**

**RESOLUTION 22-87:** Resolved that the Town Council approve the Request for Proposals for Consulting Services to update the Town of Pittsfield's Assessing Records and authorize the Town Manager to seek bids for same.

**Moved** by Deputy Mayor Logiodice and seconded by Councilor Frost to adopt Resolution 22-87.

Motion passed with all votes in favor.  
**VOTE: UNANIMOUS AYE**

**RESOLUTION 22-88:** Resolved that the Town Council approve the Request for Proposals for Document Management Solution and Digitizing Document Services and authorize the Town Manager and Town Clerk to seek bids for same.

**Moved** by Deputy Mayor Logiodice and seconded by Councilor Hall to adopt Resolution 22-88.

Motion passed with all votes in favor.  
**VOTE: UNANIMOUS AYE**

## **8. DISCUSSION ITEMS: N/A**

## **9. REPORTS:**

Audience:

Heather Donahue: Updated the Town Council on the Annual Cheese Festival. As of this morning, they had 57 vendors. She asked for volunteers for the Town's table. Mrs. Donahue advised that the Town employees need to have a cost-of-living increase. Even at 3% over the year, they are losing money with inflation. All employees should be considered for a cost-of-living increase. A higher rate of pay can be found at fast food places and with the increase in minimum wage, the progress that the Town had made in its pay plan no longer exists.

Public Works Director Don Chute: Described all of the activity going on. Has been shocked at how ungrateful people have been, yelling at the workers who are helping to make their ride over the roads better by lowering culverts and paving roads. Stated that all the employees need to be treated with respect. Advised that everyone is helping out.

Councilors:

Councilor Hall: Thanked Public Works for addressing the paving challenges. Residents had complaints regarding the paving given to Donnie and he sorted through items. Indicated that there has been a lot of work to do with the TRIO conversion, the taxes and water/sewer bills. He stated that everyone in the Town Office is appreciated by the Council and thanked everyone for their hard work.

Councilor Saucier: Indicated that a lot of good items are going on. We are spending a lot of money and the Town has major challenges. Stated that he can not see who can hold the line with

the cost of everything going up. Asked how we enact a vision and not go overboard on the budget. Indicated that the employees all deserve a raise to address inflation. How do we do this without bankrupting the Town?

Councilor Jester: Thanked everyone for their comments. Stated it is difficult to discuss wages of individuals but responsible spending must take place. Appreciates the work of Public Works.

Deputy Mayor Logiodice: No Report.

Councilor Frost: No Report.

Councilor Holmstrom: Thanked Don Chute for his report and work. Stated that there is more work to be done in codes. She is getting her papers tonight to run again. She appreciates all the work being done by everyone.

Mayor Cianchette: Jan and Barbara take care of the concert series. If you see them thank them and commend them as they do this all themselves. Indicated that if we add a Full-time Recreation Director that he would highly recommend that we charge the individual with the summer concert series as well as recreation entertainment for youth/adults. Jan and Barbara can be consultants. He is challenging the Council between now and December 1 to look at the charter to see what items are of concern. He stated that we know that the review of the charter will be a long process and has a lot of steps involved. Stated that the budget is coming up and is always painful.

## 10. ADJOURNMENT:

**Moved** by Deputy Mayor Logiodice and seconded by Councilor Hall to adjourn the meeting at 8:25 pm.

Motion passed with all votes in favor.

**VOTE: UNANIMOUS AYE**

Respectfully submitted,

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Kathryn Ruth, Deputy Town Clerk

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

