

MINUTES

For a regular meeting of the Pittsfield Town Council held on Tuesday, August 21, 2007 at 7:30 pm in the Council Chambers.

PRESENT: COUNCILORS: Mayor Tim Nichols, Wayne Fotter, Michael Gray, Brian Philbrick, Sr. **ABSENT:** Gary Jordan, Jr., Christinalyn Hamel, and Louise Baker. Also present were Town Manager Kathryn Ruth and Town Clerk Nicole Nickolan. Audience members included: Scott Noble, Don Hallenbeck and David Quint.

1. **Mayor Nichols** opened the meeting by leading the **Pledge of Allegiance**.

For a matter of record **Mayor Nichols** will be voting tonight to make a quorum.

2. **Adoption of Minutes** of the Regular Meeting on August 7, 2007.

Moved by **Deputy Mayor Fotter** and seconded by **Councilor Gray** that the Minutes of the Regular Meeting on August 7, 2007 be adopted.

VOTE: UNANIMOUS AYE

3. **PRESENTATIONS, CONGRATULATIONS AND INTRODUCTIONS:**

4. **PUBLIC HEARINGS/OLD BUSINESS:**

- a. **ORDINANCE 07-11:** (Public Hearing 08/21/2007) That the Town Council hereby Ordains to Accept the payment of Michael A & Theresa L Knowles respectively, including interest and lien costs, for the property at 207 Harriet Street (Map 33, Lot 55), the Town having acquired said property as a result of automatic foreclosure of a 2002 property tax lien, recorded in the Somerset County Registry of Deeds on July 18, 2003, at Book 3156, Page 333, which matured on January 18, 2005; The Town Council further authorizes the Town Manager to execute a municipal quitclaim deed releasing the Town's interest in said property to Michael A. & Theresa L. Knowles.

There was no one who wished to speak in favor or opposition of this ordinance. Public Hearing was closed.

Moved by **Councilor Gray** and seconded by **Deputy Mayor Fotter** that Ordinance 07-11 be adopted.

The Town Manager noted this is a TAP that has been on the books since 2005. We have received payment in full for taxes, tax liens, and interest along with payment for the ad. They have done an excellent job in getting this paid off.

VOTE: UNANIMOUS AYE

- b. **ORDINANCE 07-12:** (Public Hearing 08/21/2007) That the Town of Pittsfield hereby ordains to Add Section 1300. Pittsfield Municipal Airport to Chapter 2. Administrative Code, Division 2. Administration of Town Business, Article 3. to read as follows: The Pittsfield Municipal Airport shall have Curtis Field added to its name.

There was no one who wished to speak in favor or opposition of this ordinance. Public Hearing was closed.

Moved by **Councilor Gray** and seconded by **Deputy Mayor Fotter** that Ordinance 07-12 be adopted.

The Town Manager noted this has been recommended by the Airport Committee. A number of pilots that use the facility had recommended the change. The Airport will remain as currently named, we would simply be adding Curtis Field to the end of the name in honor of and memory of Ron Curtis.

VOTE: UNANIMOUS AYE

- c. **ORDINANCE 07-13:** (Public Hearing 08/21/2007) That the Town Council hereby ordains to Accept the offer of Liberty Propane, LLC DBA Mid State Gas Company of \$2,500 for Map 11, Lot 70-1 and Authorize the Town Manager to Execute a Municipal Quit Claim Deed.

David Quint, Manager of Mid State Gas, was in the audience to ask the Council to accept the offer and answer any questions they may have. There were no questions. There was no one who wished to speak in opposition of this ordinance. Public Hearing was closed.

Moved by **Deputy Mayor Fotter** and seconded by **Councilor Philbrick** that Ordinance 07-13 be adopted.

The Town Manager noted this parcel was created when a lot was sold in the Industrial Park. It lies on the outskirts of the Industrial Park on what was formerly Merrimac Drive and now is Stinson Street. It is wooded and wet. Of the 1.6 acres, there is a small area that could be developed. Many people have looked at it, however, it needs a small use. This is it. Mid State Gas would like to expand and this parcel is in the near vicinity to their business. The company would need to go to the Planning Board and receive approval as part of the offer. Attorney Bachrach has the background materials to draft the quitclaim deed.

VOTE: UNANIMOUS AYE

5. **REPORTS: TOWN MANAGER, FINANCE, ORDINANCE & RECYCLING COMMITTEES:**

Town Manager's Report: Town Council Meeting of 08/21/2007:

1. The FYI Folder: The FYI Book contains the following items this week: Read List

2. 2007 Tax Bills: The 2007 tax bills have been sent out in the mail. Taxes are due on Friday, October 19, 2007 and cover the period of January – December, 2007. The mil rate is \$21.80 which is a decrease of .70 of a mil or 3.1%.

The Town lost \$8,007,520 in personal property tax value
We gained \$5,344,952 in real estate from new buildings and additions
Net loss in valuation of \$2,662,568.

We were very fortunate that the School received additional funding through the property tax law LD #1 and passed this along to the communities through a lowered assessment. In addition, we were fortunate that the Town received \$110,892 more in State Revenue Sharing and appropriated this toward the 2007 Commitment.

The State Law provides Homestead Exemptions for individuals who reside in their homes. As our community's values are at 72.6% of market value, the Homestead exemption is at \$9,438.

Therefore, the property tax on residences, which have Homestead Exemptions in most cases, will have increased a few dollars because the certified ratio dropped quite a bit.

The property tax on residences where people did not have a homestead exemption, businesses, apartment buildings, second homes, parcels that are just land, parcels with buildings that are not residences, camps that are second homes, new homebuyers, people who have not applied for their exemption despite notifications, etc. which do not have a Homestead Exemption are a straight multiplication of the rate times the value. As the mil rate went down, these tax bills will go down a little bit unless work was done to the property.

Which considering losing \$8 million in personal property and having a 31.4% increase in the County Tax, this is good.

As an interesting fact, because our valuations are now at 72.6% of full market value, this means that our mil rate which is \$21.80/\$1,000 would actually be \$15.83/\$1,000 if it was at 100% and values were at 100%.

3. Nomination Papers: Nomination papers are now available for 2 positions on the Town Council (District 3 and At Large) and 3 SAD #53 Board members. All terms are three years. Nomination papers must be returned to the Town Clerk by 5:00 pm on Monday, September 24, 2007 for the three-year terms.

4. Board Vacancies: We have three vacancies on town boards as follows: 2 on the Board of Appeals and 1 on the Recycling Committee. Anyone interested should contact the Town Clerk Nicole Nickolan at the Town Office.

5. Highway Projects: Now that the work is completed to preserve the municipal parking lot and the areas around Hathorn Park have been patched, the Highway Department will turn its attention to the Main Street sidewalk and the municipal streetlight posts. The gaps in the concrete sidewalk will be refilled again and the streetlight posts will be painted. This is in addition to regular highway work.

6. Household Hazardous Waste Disposal: Our Annual Household Hazardous Waste Collection Day is Saturday, October 6, 2007. We will be teaming up with KVCOG and the Town of Skowhegan again this year. Pre-registration will be required to participate with calls made to the Transfer Station/Recycling Center to sign up for a specific time. We would plan to limit the collection to \$3500 and have the Transfer/Recycling Coordinator sign the basic agreement that we will participate. To date, Palmyra and Unity residents will also be coming over after signing up at their Town Offices. Brochures will be out shortly.

7. Maine Senior Farm Share Program: This program still has over 2,000 free produce shares available for income eligible seniors. The free produce shares are worth \$50 each and are a great way to support income eligible seniors with fresh local produce. The shares are available at 80 Maine Farms. We have handouts available at the Town Office and will drop some by the multi-unit housing projects in Town where there are seniors living.

8. Maine Municipal Association Insurance Rebate Check: The Town was fortunate again this year to receive a rebate check from MMA for last fiscal year. This year the rebate was on all three programs, WC, PC and UC in the total amount of \$8,920.

9. 25th Annual CDBG Appreciation Day: This event was held last Friday, 08/17/2007 in Augusta. All Towns receiving over \$1 million in CDBG funds over the last 25 years were provided with a small paperweight with the amount of funds awarded. There were 93 towns that qualified and we were actually the 22nd highest recipient with \$3,967,924.

Finance Committee: No Report.

Ordinance Committee: No Report.

Recycling Committee: No Report.

6. NEW BUSINESS:

- a. **RESOLUTION 07-90:** Resolved that the Town Council Authorize the Pittsfield Water Works to purchase Replacement Water Meters and a drive-by Automated Meter Reading (AMR) System from _____ to not exceed \$150,000.

Moved by **Deputy Mayor Fotter** and seconded by **Councilor Philbrick** that Resolution 07-90 be adopted from Toomey Services.

The Town Manager noted the Town Council received several handouts in their package including a copy of the original bids received; bid specifications; the Town's review of the two lower bids closer to the budgeted amount and then the staff's recommendation to utilize the \$150,000 to purchase a drive-by system with as many meters as possible. Basically, after review the Town determined what could be purchased for \$150,000 and which was the better buy for longevity based upon our history with the different type of meters.

References were good on both Badger and Hershey meters, service contracts were higher with Badger; meter cost was higher with Hershey; TRIO states that it is compatible with both the Badger and Hershey systems; so for the staff it really comes down to reliability, efficiency and effectiveness along with cost. As the Council knows, the Town has had a higher failure rate with the Badger meters. Over the last three years, the Assistant Superintendent/Plant Manager has calculated that number of meter failures and cost of labor to test, pull and replace the meters.

Deputy Mayor Fotter stated that he, himself, has had numerous meter failures at his home and recommends that the Town purchase the Hershey Meter package.

The Town Council reviewed the meter packages with the Assistant Superintendent and determined that the Town would be better served to pay a few extra dollars per meter rather than having the same problems that the Town has had for the last three years of replacing failed meters and servicing homes multiple times. The cost for the amount of staff time, everyone's aggravation, lost time that could have been spent productively and poor service for the residents when added together is far more than the cost difference per meter. The Town Council felt that it would be in the best interest of the Town to purchase Hershey Meters.

Michael Gray questioned how many meters we would be able to purchase. We would be receiving just over 1,000 meters, which would cover approximately 75% of the Town. There are 1252 household meters in Town currently, this includes some of the smaller businesses on Main Street that use household meters. There are also 123 1-inch meters in Town, which are working well. **Michael Gray** questioned if the company would include a hand held unit. Scott Noble explained that Toomey Services is a truck mounted unit that does not require a handheld unit, you simply drive by to get the meter reading.

VOTE: UNANIMOUS AYE

- b. **RESOLUTION 07-91:** Resolved that the Town Council Authorize the Town Manager and Recreation Director to seek bids for a new Outdoor Municipal Public Swimming Pool.

Moved by **Councilor Gray** and seconded by **Councilor Philbrick** that Resolution 07-91 be adopted.

The Town Manager noted the Swimming Pool Committee had recommended that the pool go out to bid for this Fall in anticipation of being completed prior to the 2008 Swimming Program.

There are some advantages to this. A very long-over due project would finally begin. The pool will be ready for the Summer of 2008 programming with no delays. We can utilize current funding for construction and save dollars as construction costs continue to increase. If we are fortunate to receive the L&W Conservation grant, the phased approach will allow us to have the pool completed prior to working on the remainder of the facility infrastructure.

There are also some disadvantages. Today we do not have the funding for the entire pool project. With the Masons' donation, we are quite close. We will have enough funding for all the work that would be completed in the Phase I. Therefore, over the winter, we must raise the remaining funds for this particular project, approximately \$50,000.00, so that Phase II can be undertaken in the Spring. Also, by having a Phase I and Phase II, we do not know if the warranty may be affected. We have been advised that pools generally have a 1-year warranty, Kleinschmidt Associates has listed 5 years so we will need to examine this in the bids.

Kleinschmidt has put together basic bid specifications for the project including a summary and the swimming pool. We also received basic bid specifications for a excavation; fencing; and concrete bases.

The bids would be due on September 10, 2007 to provide enough time for a response. If the bids are favorable, we would like to start right off as time is of the essence and we may want to have a Special meeting that week, on Tuesday, September 11 or Wednesday, September 12 to review and accept a bid or we can wait until September 18.

VOTE: UNANIMOUS AYE

- c. **RESOLUTION 07-92:** Resolved that the Town Council Authorize the Town Manager and Public Works Foreman to seek bids for the Removal of Trees and Stumps.

Moved by **Deputy Mayor Fotter** and seconded by **Councilor Gray** that Resolution 07-92 be adopted.

The Town Manger noted this is the yearly bid document for shade trees or trees in the right-of-way.

VOTE: UNANIMOUS AYE

7. **DISCUSSION ITEMS:**

Review of the Comprehensive Plan Implementation Strategies and Goals

The Council feels that the Town is already working on many major projects and our plate is pretty full at this time. The Council determined that there is nothing else that funds need to be allocated for at this time.

Financial As Listed Below:

- A. Financial Reports as of 07/31/2007:
 - Budget Expenditure Report
 - Revenue Collections Report
 - Tax Acquired Property Report
 - Economic Development Revolving Loan Update
 - Housing Revolving Loan Update
 - Transfer Station/Recycling Monthly Report
 - Theatre Monthly Report
 - Briefly reviewed by Town Manager**

- B. Other Reports as of 07/31/2007:
 - Building and Plumbing Permit Reports
 - Library Report – Librarian’s and Library Trustees Minutes
 - Police Report
 - Self-Explanatory – Not Reviewed**

8. **REPORTS:** Audience, Council

Audience:

Council: Donnie Hallenbeck was going through the comprehensive plan update and noticed a section on archeology and general history. Mr. Hallenbeck passed around a paper from the National Historic Register bulletin, which may be helpful when preparing to register with the National Historic Register. Also noticed when he was on a virtual earth website, it listed an area off Hunnewell Avenue, as Sand Hill Park. Neither the Council nor the Town Manager was familiar with the location of any such park.

Lynn Smith, Librarian, came for the Strategic Plan discussion. She wanted to recognize that it noted that the Town would adequately support the needs of the library. Also, read that the Town would maintain bike racks available for use in Town. Lynn noted she didn’t know of any bike racks in Town other than the one in front of the library, which is used a lot.

Councilor Baker: Absent.

Councilor Hamel: Absent.

Councilor Philbrick: Questioned who was in charge of the new streetlights and crosswalk signals. The buttons don’t work well or allow enough time to get across the street. The Town Manager noted that the traffic light company did come down and checked the signals and they are calibrated to US DOT requirements.

Also would like to see if we could get the crosswalks painted in the next few weeks before school started, especially in the school zones. The Town Manager will coordinate with Public Works.

Councilor Jordan: Absent.

Councilor Gray: No Comment.

Deputy Mayor Fotter: Questioned the Neighborhood Watch program and if Manson Park has shown any interest in participating. The Town Manager noted there was a multi faceted approach which included the following recommendations: Volunteer Neighborhood Watch, which 2 people have signed up for, Police details involving reserve officers on foot patrol around Town if there was enough coverage, additional lighting at key locations at Manson Park and a elementary security system. To date the Manson Park Committee has not responded.

Donnie Hallenbeck also stated that the parks down at Manson Park are no where near as briht as they used to be.

Mayor Nichols: Wanted to say how much he appreciated all the hard work by everyone. Hopefully the Neighborhood Watch gets off the ground, as it is a good program.

9. **ADJOURNMENT:**

Moved by **Deputy Mayor Fotter** and seconded by **Councilor Philbrick** that the meeting be adjourned at 8:05 p.m. All in agreement.

Nicole Nickolan, Town Clerk