

# MINUTES

For a regular meeting of the Pittsfield Town Council held on Tuesday, January 17, 2012 at 7:30 pm in the Council Chambers.

**PRESENT:** COUNCILORS: Mayor Tim Nichols, Bob Stackhouse, Caleb Curtis, Donna Chale, Christopher Carr and Louise Baker. **ABSENT:** Deputy Mayor Gary Jordan, Jr. Also present: Town Manager Kathryn Ruth and Town Clerk Nicole Nickolan. Audience members included: Dale Martin, Jr., Richard Leavitt, Jason Levesque, Dena Worster, Brandon Bedeen, Meagan Bedeen and others.

1. **Mayor Nichols** opened the meeting by leading the **Pledge of Allegiance**. The Council observed a moment of silence.
2. Adoption of minutes of the regular meeting held on January 3, 2012.

Moved by **Councilor Stackhouse** and seconded by **Councilor Carr** that the minutes of the regular meeting held on January 3, 2012 be adopted.

**VOTE: UNANIMOUS AYE**

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

#### **Report on New Business Activity & Opportunities in Pittsfield**

Some private sector business activities are under review and consideration for development by individuals in town.

Some projects are on the agenda later this evening.

The Somerset Economic Development Corporation is seeking nominations for the Board of Directors from our Region. With the addition of two more County Commissioners and the division of the county into smaller areas, our region, which includes Pittsfield and Detroit, has a vacancy and needs a Director to represent it. There are generally five meetings per year in Skowhegan on Thursday mornings at 10:00 am. If any of the Councilors are interested, please let me know so that we can submit your names. The decision for representation is chosen at a caucus.

#### **Report on Meetings & Events:**

Sebasticook Valley Chamber of Commerce Strategic Plan and Board of Directors Meeting on Thursday, January 05, 2012 at 4:00 pm and 5:00 pm respectively at the Chamber Office in Newport: At the Strategic Planning Committee Meeting, the committee members completed the final Draft for the next Five Year Plan for the Chamber of Commerce. This plan will be presented by the Committee to the full Board of Directors on Thursday, February 2, 2012. Copies of the Draft Plan are available this evening with the handouts.

The Pittsfield Historical Society has announced a major fund to raise the remaining match needed for the CDBG Public Facilities Historical Preservation Grant Opportunity for the

preservation of the depot that serves as the Society's home and our Museum. We met last Wednesday, January 11, 2012 to discuss the project in detail. The letter was drafted and has been forwarded to all businesses, civic organizations, fraternal organizations, churches and town board and committee members. The fundraising letter explains the project, its importance to the community and asks for a donation for the Save Our Historic Depot Campaign. The fundraising goal is \$20,000. A copy of the fundraising letter is available this evening with the handouts.

### **Upcoming Meetings & Events:**

The 2012 Egg Festival Organizational Meeting was RE-SCHEDULED due to the first snowstorm of 2012 to Thursday, January 19, 2012 at 6:30 pm in the Pittsfield Municipal Building Council Chambers. All new members are welcome! The Central Maine Egg Festival is organizing for a great 2012 Festival -which is the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Egg Festival! We had a great 2011 festival and plan to build upon the event to add more activities.

Community Garden Forum to discuss the possibility and interest of a garden in the Town for use by citizens; growing products for the Community Food Bank, Welcome Table and other endeavors; or both will be held on Tuesday, January 24, 2012 at 6:30 pm in the Pittsfield Municipal Building Council Chambers.

Sebasticook Valley Chamber of Commerce Annual Meeting on Thursday, February 09, 2012 from 5:00 pm – 8:30 pm at the Millennium in Palmyra.

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

**RESOLUTION 12-01:** Resolved that the Town Council schedule, consider testimony and act upon a Public Hearing for a Community Development Block Grant Economic Development Program Block Grant for Argo Marketing Group, Inc.

#### Public Hearing Notice Town of Pittsfield

The Town of Pittsfield will hold a Public Hearing on Tuesday, January 17, 2012, at 7:30 pm at the Pittsfield Municipal Building Council Chambers to discuss an application being submitted to the State of Maine CDBG program for an Economic Development Program Grant. The purpose of the grant application is to assist Argo Marketing Group, Inc. with renovations and fully equipping a modern state of the art call center, and provide working capital. Public comments will be solicited at this Hearing and will be submitted as part of the application. All persons wishing to make comments or ask questions about the grant application are invited to attend this Public Hearing. Comments may be submitted in writing to Kathryn Ruth, Town Manager at 112 Somerset Avenue, Pittsfield, ME 04967 at any time prior to the Public Hearing. TDD/TTY users may call 711. If you are physically unable to access any of the Town's programs or services, please call Kathryn Ruth at 207-487-3136 so that accommodations can be made.

The Public Hearing was opened.



**Brandon Bedeen** spoke in favor of Resolution 12-01. Mr. Bedeen noted he was formerly a supervisor at GCS, and is now a supervisor at Argo. There is an applicant flow that is even better

then we saw at GCS. I have personally noticed that employees that were struggling to even come into work at GCS are making strides with Argo.

**Dena Worster** also spoke in favor of Resolution 12-01. I am a relatively new employee at Argo. I am currently working as the HR Director. We hired over 20 applicants today, bringing our total employees up to 55-60. We are growing in leaps and bounds. It is the goal of Mr. Levesque to teach these employees to be the best they can. He is teaching them to be professionals. If we are going to continue to grow we will need a number of things. I hope you will give strong consideration to Argo Marketing for this grant.

**Kathryn Ruth, Town Manager** noted as this project has a tight timeframe it has been crucial to move forward with the process as quickly as possible. The Town Councilors have received a copy of the Grant Application and Narrative. Copies of the Grant Application and Narrative are available with the handouts this evening.

At this time, **Kathryn Ruth, Town Manager**, read and entered the following written comments received from the Town's economic and community development partners on their behalf into the record:

**Michael R. Gray, Senior Vice-President of the United Insurance Group who serves as a member of the Pittsfield Economic Expansion Corporation and the Economic Development Team:**

Please accept this note of support for Argo Marketing's expansion efforts. Given today's economic situations, the high unemployment in our area and the need for viable businesses we should consider ourselves very lucky that Argo Marketing has chosen Pittsfield to expand their business.

We have a very well trained and willing workforce and all we need is the opportunity to prove that a company's investment in Pittsfield is a very good business decision.

As with most business expansions, the need to raise capital is paramount in the minds of the business owners. We have a unique opportunity to help this business with their expansion and I fully support this effort.

As a local business owner I've seen businesses come and go. Argo Marketing has a very bright future, is well managed and family owned with solid Maine roots. I am very pleased to offer my support and help in any way that I can to expedite the support plans.

Respectfully,

Michael R. Gray  
Senior Vice President  
United Insurance Group

**Bruce Davis, Ph.D., Associate Dean, Continuing Education, Kennebec Valley Community College:**

I am very excited that you have secured a business to move into the vacated building left by GCS. The town needs business to remain viable and the people of the area need business like Argo. Employment is what drives our regional economy. By providing jobs for our people everyone in the area benefits. Stores will remain open and service providers will have work. Employment has a positive domino effect in any community.

If there is anything I can do to assist you in this endeavor please do not hesitate to contact me.

Respectfully,

Bruce A. Davis, Ph.D.  
Associate Dean, Continuing Education  
Kennebec Valley Community College

**Katherine Bolster, Maine Department of Labor, Rapid Response Representative/Career Center Consultant, Skowhegan Career Center:**

I am so excited to have Argo joining the area labor market so quickly after the closing of GCS. As always you have done a wonderful job of marketing Pittsfield's attributes. The Pittsfield area has experienced several company downsizings and closures over the past 3+ years which has displaced over 300 area workers. The anticipated 100+ employment opportunities offered by Argo are a welcome addition to the labor market and can only have a positive impact on the community. A high number of the area's displaced workers come from a continuing down turn in manufacturing and production processing work environments. The area workforce possesses a varied range of skills ranging from solid work ethics to technical competency. While a number of prospective applicants would need industry specific training to successfully service the companies needs Argo should be able to adequately fill their openings with quality workers from within the commuting community. I wish Argo a successful experience as they join the Pittsfield community.

Kathe Bolster  
Maine Department of Labor  
Rapid Response Representative/Career Center Consultant  
Skowhegan Career Center

**Jim Batey, Executive Director, Somerset Economic Development Corporation:**

Thank you for sharing the good news about Argo Marketing Group of Lewiston's expansion to the former GCS facility in Pittsfield. Somerset Economic Development Corporation is very supportive of the Town of Pittsfield's application to the CDBG Economic Development Program for funds to assist Argo Marketing Group's expansion needs.

When GCS announced their decision to close the Pittsfield facility it was a major blow to Pittsfield and Somerset County's employment picture. The loss of 65 jobs with benefits is a big deal in our county, especially in these difficult economic times. As you know with the recent unemployment in Somerset County at 9.3% and an even higher unemployment rate of 10.3% in the Pittsfield Labor Market Area (LMA) the loss of jobs is especially difficult. Recent data (November 2011) indicates an employed labor force of 6,560 persons in the Pittsfield LMA so the closure of GCS was 1% of the employed labor force in the LMA.

The opening of Argo Marketing and the subsequent employment of 25 people, I understand the vast majority of those employed had worked at GCS, with the promise of many more to be hired is terrific news for Pittsfield and Somerset County.

The CDBG Economic Development Program has been used successfully a number of times in our county and in Pittsfield to benefit businesses starting up or expanding. The program is a great fit for this project as it benefits people of low and moderate incomes and provides businesses with the gap financing that they require making a project happen. It appears that Argo Marketing Group has found a great fit at the former GCS site and the Town of Pittsfield and has a willing and able trained workforce in the former GCS employees.

We wish you the best of success with this project and are always available to assist in any way possible to make the project a resounding success.

Regards,

Jim Batey  
Executive Director

In closing, I would note that after the news broke that Argo Marketing Group, Inc. would move into the former Global Contact Services location at the Somerset Plaza, the Town Office received an extensive number of calls from people looking for work during not only the day, but also the evenings and the weekends. I received many positive comments and also received questions from people about how to apply for a position as I went around the community.

There was no one who wished to speak in opposition of the Resolution.

The Public Hearing was closed

Moved by **Councilor Stackhouse** and seconded by **Councilor Carr** that Resolution 12-01 be adopted.

**VOTE: UNANIMOUS AYE**

**RESOLUTION 12-02:** Resolved that the Town Council schedule, consider testimony and act upon a Public Hearing for a Community Development Block Grant Riverfront Bond Project for the Pinnacle Park Recreation Plan, Phase I.

Public Hearing Notice  
Town of Pittsfield  
Riverfront Community Development

The Town of Pittsfield will hold a Public Hearing on January 17, 2012 at 7:30 p.m. at the Council Chambers of the Pittsfield Municipal Building Council Chambers for the purpose of receiving input from the citizens of Pittsfield relative to the \$32,200 State of Maine Riverfront Community Development Bond Program Grant. This grant provided funding to implement the Pinnacle Park Recreation Plan, Phase I which included a skating rink; skateboard park; boat launch; parking area; multi-use recreational trails; habitat restoration; bird watching lean-tos;

fishing; and interpretative nature signs. All persons wishing to make comments or ask questions about the work completed with the funds are invited to attend this Public Hearing. Comments may be submitted in writing to: Kathryn Ruth, Town Manager, 112 Somerset Avenue, Pittsfield, Maine 04967 at any time prior to the Public Hearing. TDD/TTY users may call 711. If you are physically unable to access any of the Town's programs or services, please call Kathryn Ruth at 207-487-3136 so that accommodations can be made.



The Public Hearing was opened. There was no one who wished to speak in favor or against Resolution 12-02. Public Hearing closed.

Moved by **Councilor Chale** and seconded by **Councilor Baker** that Resolution 12-02 be adopted.

The Town Manager noted this has been a great grant project involving many individuals, groups and town staff.

We were indeed fortunate to receive this grant opportunity and to be able to add so much to the Pinnacle to make it a multi-seasonal recreational facility. Activities can now take place at the Pinnacle, which has been known for decades as a great skiing location for children, all season-long.

The grant award was for \$32,200. The Town's match was \$64,403.

The facility has received the following upgrade:

1. A better accessible boat launch that is now maintained by the Town. There had been a place to back in at the facility previously, however, it had not been a formal boat launch. We now have that facility and it is maintained by the Town.
2. A paved parking lot, part of which can be used for skateboarding when the pieces are put out during the summer months.
3. New Gate for the entrance for the lodge
4. Habitat Restoration with proper tree plantings as detailed by an environmental engineer who volunteered for the project.
5. Bird watching lean-tos
6. Fishing platforms (secured for the winter)
7. Event signage for activities at the Pinnacle
8. Skating Rink that will be used as a volleyball area in the summer when we roll up the liner.
9. An improved trail system.

10. Picnic tables, benches, trash receptables
11. Interpretative signing (which has been secured for the winter)
12. Signage for trails for Share the Trail

**VOTE: UNANIMOUS AYE**

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

**Town Manager's Report:** Included in the Community and Economic Development Activities and Events Report.

**Finance Committee:** The Committee met tonight and discussed the cemetery account. The account is doing well. It is up 2.3% since the last meeting and is expected to keep growing.

**Ordinance Committee:** No Report.

**Recycling Committee:** The Recycling Committee met last week. We discussed the Re-Use Center and manning the operation. We are hoping to open weekly again in April. We talked about our role in the proposed Community Garden. We also discussed how well the Re-Use Center is doing.

6. **NEW BUSINESS:**

**RESOLUTION 12-15:** Resolved that the Town Council schedule for 02/07/2012, consider testimony and act upon a Public Hearing for a Community Development Block Grant Public Facilities Program Historical Preservation Grant for the Historical Railroad Depot "Pittsfield Train Station."

Application Public Hearing Notice to Comply with Title VI requirements

Public Hearing Notice  
The Town of Pittsfield

The Town of Pittsfield will hold a Public Hearing on Tuesday, February 07, 2012 at 7:30 pm, at the Pittsfield Municipal Building Council Chambers to discuss an application being submitted to the State of Maine CDBG program for a Public Facilities Historical Preservation Grant Program. The purpose of the grant application is to preserve and restore the Pittsfield Train Station known as the Historic Depot and Depot Museum. Public comments will be solicited at this Hearing and will be submitted as part of the application. All persons wishing to make comments or ask questions about the grant application are invited to attend this Public Hearing. Comments may be submitted in writing to: Kathryn Ruth, Town Manager at the Pittsfield Town Office, 112 Somerset Avenue, Pittsfield, ME 04967 at any time prior to the Public Hearing. TDD/TTY users may call 711. If you are physically unable to access any of the Town's programs or services, please call Kathryn Ruth at 207-487-3136, so that accommodations can be made.



Moved by **Councilor Chale** and seconded by **Councilor Carr** that Resolution 12-15 be adopted.

The Town Manager noted this is the first public hearing on this proposed project. The Town Council has authorized a Letter of Intent to be filed for grant funding to preserve and restore the Pittsfield Train Station, which is known as the Historic Depot and Depot Musuem. This building is owned by the Town and serves as the home to the Pittsfield Historic Society which maintains and takes care of the Town's historic records and items.

**VOTE: UNANIMOUS AYE**

**RESOLUTION 12-16:** Resolved that the Town Council approve and sign the Community Development Block Grant Economic Development Program Resolution for Argo Marketing Group, Inc.

Moved by **Councilor Carr** and seconded by **Councilor Stackhouse** that Resolution 12-16 be adopted.

The Town Manager noted this is the standard language required for the Community Development Block Grant Program.

**RESOLUTION 12-17:** Resolved that the Town Council appoint Dale A. Martin, Jr. as an interim director for the SAD #53 School Board to complete the remaining term for Barbara Poirier, with an expiration of November 2012.

Moved by **Councilor Stackhouse** and seconded by **Councilor Chale** that Resolution 12-17 be adopted.

The Town Manager noted Barbara Poirier is unable to serve the remainder of her term, which expires in November of 2012. Under the State law, the Town Councilors may appoint an individual to fill that vacancy. SAD #53 has notified the Town of the vacancy and noted that Dale A. Martin, Jr. is interested in being appointed to the position. Further, the School is unaware of any other interested individuals. Mr. Martin has approached the Town expressing interest in being appointed and is here this evening in the audience.

Mr. Martin noted that he has 3 children in the school district and is excited for the opportunity to be involved with the School Board.

**VOTE: UNANIMOUS AYE**

## 7. **DISCUSSION ITEMS:**

### **Updates:**

1. Water Projects: 2012 DWSRF Applicants and Priority Ranking of projects
2. Sewer Projects: Sewer System Evaluation Study Draft received by the Town & currently being reviewed.
3. Highway Projects: Public Works has had on its lengthy To Do list, fixing up the Main Street sidewalk brick Esplanade areas. With 5-7 grant projects going each year in addition to regular work, the Department has been unable to get to this project until now. There may be 2-3 grant projects that they can help on this year, however, these grants will not be the time-

consuming consolidation that we worked on last year. Therefore, we are working on pricing to replace the three brick areas that abut the concrete sidewalk. Re-doing the entire sidewalk on Main Street is a ½ million dollar project. We can fix these brick areas ourselves. A test project will be the small area by Main/Somerset. In the near future, the proposal will be presented to the Town Council with a request to use Highway Construction/Reconstruction funding.

**Financial Reports as of 12/31/2011:**

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  
Excise Tax Collections Comparison Report  
State Revenue Sharing Comparison Report  
Personal Property Tax Collection Report  
Real Estate Property Tax Collection

**Briefly Reviewed by Town Manager**

**Other Reports as of 12/31/2011:**

Building and Plumbing Permit Reports  
Library Report-Librarian's and Library Trustees Minutes  
Police Report

**Self-Explanatory – Not Reviewed**

8. **REPORTS:** Audience, Council

**Audience:** NONE

**Council:**

**Councilor Baker:** Glad to see Argo coming to Town. I hope they stay and hire as many people as they need. I am glad to see all the improvements at the Pinnacle.

**Councilor Carr:** Congrats to Mr. Martin. I think it is important that Argo has our support. I want to thank Kathryn for all her hard work.

**Donna Chale:** Congrats to Mr. Martin on his appointment to the school board. I want to say thank you to Kathryn and the office for all their hard work with Argo. I also wanted to commend the Recycling Committee on the Re-Use Building. It is a wonderful project.

**Deputy Mayor Jordan:** Absent

**Councilor Curtis:** Congrats to Mr. Martin on the school board seat. Councilor Curtis questioned which project has such high permit fees on the summary report. The Town Manager noted it was the CMP project.

**Councilor Stackhouse:** Congrats to Mr. Martin and thank you for stepping up for the position. It's a trying time at the school with the ongoing Superintendent search. I also want to thank Kathryn and all the girls for their hard work. It really shows. Glad to see Argo is doing well already.

**Mayor Nichols:** Congrats to Mr. Martin on the school board position. It is nice to see Argo moving right along and hiring people so quickly. I wanted to note there is an Egg Festival Meeting this week. The Community Garden Project is going to be an important project. It will be a big help to the Welcome Table and the Food Bank. Their resources are really starting to be strained too. I hope to see that project go forward. I want to thank Councilor Chale for her comments on the Re-Use center. We wanted people to try and depend on each other and their community. For people to help their neighbors, the way things used to be. It has worked out very well. I want to thank Kathryn and the Town employees, including Highway, Water & Sewer, Recycling and all the departments. We have a good group of people working here. When the economy turns around, we will be head and shoulders above the rest. That is direct result of our employees.

## 9. **ADJOURNMENT**

Motion by **Councilor Stackhouse** and seconded by **Councilor Chale** that the meeting be adjourned at 8:20 p.m. All in agreement.

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Nicole Nickolan, Town Clerk