

# TOWN OF PITTSFIELD

## FOR YOUR INFORMATION:

### TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT FOR 01/04/2022:

#### New Items and Important Reminders:

- 1. Town Offices closed:** The Town Offices and Public Library will be closed on Monday, January 17, 2022 in observance of Martin Luther King's Day.
- 2. Maine On-line Burn Permits Became Free of Charge:** On-line Burn Permits are now free of charge. Burn permits are available at [maineburnpermit.com](http://maineburnpermit.com)
- 3. Important Reminder: 2022 Transfer Station Stickers:** In order to reduce costs at the Transfer Station by making sure that only those who should be dumping garbage are doing so, new stickers are being issued each year. Stickers have been sale since December 01, 2021. Residential stickers are \$20.00 each and Commercial are \$40.00 each.
- 4. Important Reminder: 2022 Dog Licenses:** All dogs over 6 months old must be registered prior to January 31, 2022. The State law requires a late fee be assessed after that date. The Town has received the new tags and can start registering your dogs on October 15<sup>th</sup>. We want to make sure that you license your dog/s prior to the deadline so that you do not have any extra fees. The Doggie Jewelry is here!
- 5. Important Reminder: Online Services:** For re-registration of vehicles, boats and other services go to [www.pittsfield.org](http://www.pittsfield.org) and click on the Citizens' Tab, choosing on-line services at the top of the page.

Please remember that Motor Vehicle has advised the Town that there is an aluminum shortage and we will receive a reduced inventory of new plates so if you do not need a new plate and can use your current plate, please do so. We are also going to receive reduced inventories of stickers.

We would also like to make sure that people know where to go to get the Town Council packages. Go to [www.pittsfield.org](http://www.pittsfield.org) to the right hand side of the home page and click on Government Services, then click on Town Council Packages and then on 2022 Council Packages. Then you can review the pack. If you print it out, make sure that you look at it first to see how many pages it is as you may only want a section of the page along with the agenda.

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## **6. Left over Items from Yard Sales – Think of the Re-Use Center:**

Please consider donating your left over items to the Trash to Treasure Re-Use Center. Citizens who are cleaning out their homes for sale or just downsizing may contact the Pittsfield Town Office at 487-3136 or [finance3@pittsfield.org](mailto:finance3@pittsfield.org) to schedule an appointment to drop off items to the Re-Use Center. As the Center is now closed due to COVID restrictions, an appointment is needed. Please do not drop off items in the yard as they will get wet and not be of any use to anyone. We are currently re-stocking the building so we need new materials. Please remember, no bedding or clothing. All clothing should be donated to Pennywise. Bedding can be dropped off for our container as you enter the Transfer Station. It has been quiet so we are getting to the point where we may not be able to get into the building after a large storm and at that point, we will stop taking items and advise you.

## **Current and Upcoming Activities:**

**7. Water Excavation on 01/05/2022:** Pittsfield Water Works will be excavating a service line so that a family can have water service up on Arbor Terrace. We have been assured that the water will not have to be turned off, however, given that a small area was to be turned off the last time there was a dig in that area and the area had to be extended for a shut off to safely conduct excavation, we wanted to advise that there is a small possibility that water would be out for a limited time in the Forest Park Subdivision. It is not expected by Olver Associates, however, we did want to advise that the possibility is small. We applied for a Drinking Water Project for Birchwood Terrace late last year and are waiting for the results from the State. We are looking into whether we can add Arbor Terrace or a section to that project if it was to be funded.

## **8. Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Advisory sessions:**

Although the snow is coming down shortly, we will be planning out the Main Street Sidewalk and learning more about the Main Street Road Rehabilitation Project. Once we have more members for the Committee to oversee the CDBG project, we will start meeting in earnest. Some of the partners have not been available for meetings prior to the holidays, however, we need to start up shortly in order to have plenty of time to make sure that the project is planned out correctly. There are many grants, requirements, deadlines and it is complex so all the help that we can get would be appreciated. Once we are organized as we are still looking for members, then it would be great to have a little zoom meeting that people could watch or some slides that explains the progress on the project.

## **9. Airport Hangar, Apron and Taxiway Project updates:**

This also will be a major project at the Airport and really put the Pittsfield Municipal Airport on the map as there will be actual new spaces to rent for people to bring or locate their airplanes at the airport. Currently, over 30 planes are housed at the airport, however, some are outside and others are closely fitted in rental spots. Anyone interested in a new T-Hangar spot, please contact Caleb Curtis, Fixed Base Operator and Airport Manager at 487-5213. Once this project

starts moving forward, it would be interesting to have some photographs or overhead pictures to place on the Town's website.

## **Updated and/or Continuing Items:**

### **10. Board and Committee Positions:**

The Town is looking for volunteers for its boards and committees. This is a yearly process. We know that there are issues over having enough time as life does seem busier now and about COVID concerns. We have set up the Meeting Room with nice air filtering devices. The Fire Chief/EMA Director selected them and in talking with contractors who come to the building as well as people who have had COVID, we have been told that these are really good units. A list of boards/committees with expiring terms was published in The Rolling Thunder and is available at the Town Office.

### **11. The Planning Board is very important:**

While we have a list of committees looking for volunteers, I would like to bring your attention to the Planning Board. This is a very important board for the Town. Activity in terms of commercial growth is coming to Town and you can be a part of it by being on the Planning Board. This board generally meets once per month to review applications and may be meeting to review ordinances at various times during the year. The membership is down and as people are already planning for projects for this summer – 3 applications are coming in – we need volunteers. You would receive a package of materials, review the materials and then attend a meeting to make sure that the project meets the ordinance requirements. There is staff assistance including a planner from the Kennebec Valley Council of Governments who reviews materials. If you like helping businesses or you like making sure that business projects are good for the Town, the Planning Board is for you. Although terms are 5 years in length, there are a few unexpired terms available.

THANKS so much. Have a Happy and Safe New Year All Year Long!

*Kathryn Ruth*

Town Manager

#### **9. Codes Enforcement Work:**

**Update:** Individual property updates were provided at the last Town Council Meeting on November 02, 2021 and several code violations and/or conditions went forward for consideration of enforcement actions at the November 16, 2021 meeting. An update will be provided at the Council Meeting. This evening.

#### **10. Municipal Building Renovations and/or Beautification:**

**Front Entrance:** No answer as of yet on re-scheduling of our Municipal Building Renovations. Likely this will be put off until Spring 2022.

**Update:** In November, made inquiries for the company to arrive to complete the work that was scheduled for October before it is too cold. I expect they are running behind like everyone else is. We are on the schedule for October with one of the best little companies and I am anxiously awaiting notice so we can give public notice. It will be great to have this work done as it has been on the specialty contractor's list for over 2 years now. Once the contracted work to the building is completed, we plan to have the steps sealed and painted so we will be addressing the weatherproofing and appearance of the stairs.

#### **11. Railroad Improvements:**

**Update:** No update on this project. All remains the same. It is getting late in the year so this may be a project for MaineDOT for 2022. Multiple calls did not result in a schedule. We believe that they do not know how long each will take and do not have a firm schedule. As soon as we know, which may be that day, the information will be posted to the Town website and Facebook Page. We have called for information on this because if there are going to be traffic delays or revisions to traffic flow, we would like to advertise this beforehand so people will know in case they would like to take an alternate route or plan for more time for their trip. Shortly, the MaineDOT and the Railroad will be making at grade highway crossing improvements and/or signal improvements. These will be taking place in Pittsfield on Industrial Park Road at the Railroad Crossing located .46 south of Somerset Avenue and on Route #69/Detroit Avenue at the Railroad Crossing located .48 miles east of Route 100/11. When we know more information, we will post it on the Town website.

## **12. Computer Services / Managed Services Onboarding:**

### **Update:**

Service has been going along well. Logically has been on site to work on the computer that we use for our ZOOM Meetings as well as the TV. The computer was shutting off during the last meeting, the TV was malfunctioning during the meeting (and the Town Hall Streams Cameras were difficult to download). Logically fixed the computer, the company that sold the TV will be sending a repair service or will replace the TV (and Town Hall Streams has replaced the cameras with new ones).

The preliminary pricing for the computer system upgrade and installation of the newest version of TRIO financial software will be reviewed at the Budget Workshop this evening.

**History:** We have made a number of requests and have continued to emphasize that items need to be done, therefore, one of the computers was worked on. While not 100%, it is working much better. E-mail seems very good now. We have requests waiting for assistance. We did receive from TRIO, our other managed services provider, at long last the materials on the ability to have the MyRec site communicate with TRIO to discover that after all these discussions about the credit cards and how many companies can be added, that we need to be on the higher level TRIO to be able to interface. We plan to move over to the higher level TRIO after year end as doing it before the books close would likely be a very difficult and frustrating process. The information we have received from other towns does not sound good.

Once one item is fixed, another appears. A ticket will be created with the Managed Services Contract. Then, there will be e-mails, phone calls, faxes and the ticket will be closed out, sometimes when the issue is not resolved. One then needs to ask for the ticket to be continued and then there are two tickets in total on the problem with the computer system or program. One item that is under review now has 12-13 different steps.

Even when we deal with the TRIO Financial system, in which we have tickets out now, there can be as many as 3-5 people involved and contradictions take place. I have noticed that the staff changes quite a bit with these companies which then requires constant learning.

Therefore, with both the Logically system for assistance with the Town's computer programming and the Harris system for the financial software, there are extensive tickets and steps. Harris seems to send a copy to one person while the Logically System responds to the person who first called/e-mailed or went to their computer system to report a problem. It is harder to track the Logically System issues as many people have tickets.

**History:** When I receive a concrete plan of action, pricing and timetable, I will advise. Multiple tickets and items are on the list of requests at the computer company. Work that was scheduled for weeks ago is still waiting. Unfortunately, COVID has been an issue. The individual who was scheduled for the next work day to address some of the issues we were having as well as to go over requests on how to set up new programs such as a second Vendor for Credit Cards for Recreation was diagnosed with COVID the prior day. The Assistant has been following up with the company over the last several weeks and it looks like we are going to have some help arrive soon. The staff continues to work on the cost of the server to be updated as well as the computers that require updating for a transfer to an updated version of TRIO. This needs to happen shortly as we would not want to transfer at year end as we have heard of malfunctions in other communities during the transfer.

**13. Summer Highway Work Program for 2022: Please call in any drainage or culvert issues that you are having for our 2022 Work Plan:**

**Update:** Anyone with drainage or culvert issues, please contact Don Chute at [transferstation@pittsfield.org](mailto:transferstation@pittsfield.org) as we have extended the list of areas that we have to watch out for with heavy rains and preparing information for future Work Plans for the Budget.

**14. Other Water/Sewer Projects:** While many projects are taking place, the more strategic or important items are reviewed below as they would be priorities for completion once we switch over to the new contract with Olver Associates when they run the Town services.

*a. Leak Detection:* The good work being completed with Olver Associate staffing and/or associates has worked out quite well to stop the loss of a lot of water. There are still leaks in the system, however, several have been stopped. Another leak detection day took place on Tuesday, May 18, 2021 to address 2-3 remaining leaks. These leaks need to be correlated exactly so that we know their precise location rather than a general area in order to minimize the impact of roadway disturbance when the repair is done. Once the exact location of the leak is determined, the repair is then scheduled. Multiple locations were found which has been very helpful in lowering demand. This has been a very good project for the Town and it is expected that we would continue to work on leak detection.

*b. Rehabilitation of the Wells:* The Town continues to wait its turn for the cleaning and inspection of the wells by the Contractor hired for the work. This work will remove the fines from the wells that slow down water production as well as inspect the wells for any remedial work. This work will need to take soon prior to our highest production period during the middle of the summer or will need to be re-scheduled to Fall.

*c. Sewer Video Work for roads under consideration for paving was conducted.*

More roads were to have their sewer reviewed later this Fall for the next two years of paving projects if those roads are simply going to be paved. If they are being considered for reconstruction and previously had video work completed, then another review of the sewer would not be needed. I asked Olver Associates to have the cost determined to video camera the large residential subdivision containing Birchwood, Hamilton, Arbor, Hemlock and Maple Terrace. A cost to video camera Library Street was also obtained. We have received those costs but had not received the cost to clean the lines. Those costs have just come in and are quite large so this item will be placed on the upcoming Council Meeting for consideration.

**History:** The Town, through its Consultant Olver Associates had sewer video work conducted on Main Street as well as the roads under consideration of paving this year (Central Street, Hathorn Street, Middle Street and Harrison Street). Discussions with Olver Associates has resulted in the decision that sewer video work will not be required on any of the roads that had sewer reconstruction projects during the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) massive Sewer Remediation work. This is because the sewer mains were replaced on those roads or sections of those roads and the service lines were also updated as part of the projects. At their early age, they do not need to be videoed.

*d. Inspection and Cleaning of Water Storage Facilities:* Olver Associates is in the process of obtaining quotations for the inspection and removal of sediment in the two tanks/standpipes. Locating a company is no easy feat, especially a company that has some time available to fit the Town's two tanks into its schedule. This would be a hard item to bid out and may not result in any bids as companies with a good reputation have too much work to do. It is time to have this work completed and it is a necessary component of being able to finish bid specifications for the painting of 1 or both of the tanks/standpipes. A quotation was received which was reasonably priced. Other companies did not quote.

*e. VAS Program with E.J. Prescott:* Olver Associates promotes the use of the VAS Program that E.J. Prescott provides to its customers free of charge. This is an inventory management program in which the Town would purchase all items in its inventory from E.J. Prescott and the company manages the inventory so that each town or district always has an up to date inventory. Prices are locked in for 1 year for nearly all items with prices locked in for a month for copper pipe, HDPE pipe and PVC piping. Certain item would have a 2-Hour Emergency Delivery guarantee with the Town not charged for the delivery including fuel surcharges. This program would keep the Town's inventory in order and in the case of emergency breaks, result in the staff not running around trying to find parts or having to go pick up parts in the midst of an emergency break. As the Town would have more inventory in stock, this is not a program that we would explore further or sign up for until a rate increase goes into effect and we start to have more funding available. We will continue to review this program as it does have benefits; however, it is on the back burner for the moment.

*f. Grant for the Stationary Backup Generator:* The Town had been advised that it has received \$10,000 in grant funding toward the cost of the backup generator which was authorized.

*g. Grant for the Capacity Study:* The Town has just been advised that an award of \$20,000 has been made toward the Capacity Study for the Water System.

Update: Both grants are very good for the Town, however, we need to determine how to pay for the remainder of the Capacity Study.

15. Next Town Council Meeting: In addition to all of the regular end of the year requirements, which are many and the Public Hearing on the 2022 Budget, we will also review the Fee Schedule updates from departments. To date, we have received revisions to the fee schedule from three departments. That material will be packaged up for consideration at the December 21, 2021 Council Meeting.

THANKS so much. Have a Happy and Safe New Year All Year Long!

*Kathryn Ruth*

Town Manager