

Town of Pittsford SELECT BOARD MEETING – December 6, 2023 – DRAFT

MEMBERS PRESENT: W. Joseph Gagnon, David Mills, Mark Winslow, and Thomas Hooker.

ABSENT: Alicia Malay. OTHERS PRESENT: Joe Repetur, Steve Ershonsky, Scott Kaufman, Steven Jupiter, Lyle Jepson, Olivia Lyons, Ann Reed, David Atherton - Town Manager, Kelly Giard – Recording Secretary.

The Select Board was called to order at 6:30 PM by Vice Chair Mills.

Vice Chair Mills stated that there was a need to amend the agenda to add the discussion into New Business for the appointment of the Rutland Regional Planning Commission member. Motion by T. Hooker and seconded by J. Gagnon to accept the agenda as amended. Motion passed unanimously 4 – 0.

MINUTES:

The November 15, 2023 regular meeting minutes were signed with no corrections.

TOWN MANAGER REPORT:

Town Manager Atherton reported the following:

- Attended the Otter Creek Union District Executive Meeting on December 5, 2023. Discussion included Pittsford being included in the fiber optic internet program. Otelco has now joined forces with Gonet. There was original concern that there was a possibility of an overbuild, which is a violation in the grant protocols. Consolidated Communications has dropped free connections. Vice Chair Mills asked that a map of the included properties be posted. Town Manager Atherton stated that he will look into this possibility.
- Town Clerk McKinlay has been working with the Bond Council regarding the Bridge 108 project and is working on a list and resolution for Select Board consideration.
- The Transfer Station changeover happened on December 1. The new rates have been posted on the website and in the Reporter. A copy of the rates is also available at the Transfer Station or the Town Office. Tracy Wyman reported that the transition at the Transfer Station was smoother on the second day.
- There was a meeting scheduled with West Rutland and Proctor to discuss policing services. Proctor was not able to attend. West Rutland is proposing a 5 year contract that covers 40 hours per week. Pittsford is proposing assistance with funding a cruiser. West Rutland is asking that the cost be split into 5 yearly payments.
- The Highway Department staff worked on the milfoil removal at the Recreation Area and removed 12 tandem loads during the night hours. Thank you to Markowski Excavating for the use of their large pump to drain the pond.
- Attended the Chittenden Reservoir Action Planning meeting. The major goal of this group has been to create a plan that will alert the public as quickly as possible if the dam poses a threat to the public.
- A letter has been received from the VT DEC approving the 90% completed preliminary engineering report and capital improvements for the Pittsford Florence Water Department. The DEC recommends that the remaining 10% be completed once VTRANS has finalized construction schedule and plans for Segments 2 and 3.

- A Tri-Town Trails Scoping Study Project Workplan is in the packets for review. Managers from West Rutland and Proctor, representatives from RRPC and VTRANS will be discussing this workplan with Stantec. "Value Engineering" will be considered to stay within budget.
- Attended the RRPC TAC meeting, which focused on lane widths, roadway geometry and speed.
- The staff has been working on the budget and delinquent taxes.
- The Highway Department has finished the road rebuilding project on Oxbow Road. There will be updates following the winter frost. The Highway Department has also been working with the contractors at the Recreation Area swimming area with the dock support system retaining wall.
- The Recreation Department has been busy with basketball season, Sugar Hollow Ice Bowl Disc Golf Tournament (to be held in January and will benefit the Food Shelf), Bone Builders Class is a success and the Recreation Director is now a member of the CEDRR board.

SELECTBOARD MEMBER REMARKS:

None presented at this time.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Scott Kaufman, Arch Street resident spoke to the Select Board regarding the use of Arch Street as a by-pass for Route 7 on GPS apps. T. Hooker stated that traffic has always been an issue. Town Manager Atherton stated that there is discussion slated on the current agenda to address speed limits on town roads. There was discussion concerning traffic signs and the possible use of No Thru Traffic signage.

Steve Ershonsky, Whipple Hollow Road resident, spoke to the Select Board regarding the Transfer Station changes. Mr. Ershonsky inquired the process, which was explained. Mr. Ershonsky is concerned with the prices doubling, charging for recycling and he feels that the public was blindsided in this change. Town Manager Atherton stated that the process was included on 4 agendas; there was an article in the Rutland Herald; and an RFP was sent to certified area haulers. The town financials showed that there has been a continuously growing loss since 2007. The increase in the fees is due to the hauling is done by weight and the customer was being charged by the bag.

OLD BUSINESS

Municipal Reappraisal and Act 68 (H.480) Letter Discussion/Approval:

A letter that was drafted per the Select Board at a previous meeting was included in the packets for review. Town Manager Atherton stated that the Assessor (or Lister, depending on various town designations) receives the grievance of property taxes, and the property owner presents their concerns to the Board of Civil Authority, and if the property owner disagrees with the decision of the Board of Civil Authority, can appeal to the State, who enforces the decision. There is no mutual party. Vice Chair Mills has concerns with some of the wording in the letter, which was discussed at length. D. Mills believes that there should be stronger wording on the changes that would occur and the loss of local control for appeals and grievances. Motion by

M. Winslow and seconded by T. Hooker to send the first letter as written. M. Winslow and T. Hooker both felt this was only the first letter that will need to be written regarding this topic. Motion passed 3 – 1.

NEW BUSINESS

Lyle Jepson – CEDRR Presentation:

Lyle Jepson and Olivia Lyons were present representing CEDRR. Ms. Lyons gave an update on the Real Rutland Initiative to bring people from out of state to live and work in the Rutland region. Mr. Jepson stated that this is the 8th year that Pittsford has participated in this initiative financially and looks forward to continuing this relationship. Mr. Jepson also stated that Liz Avarado from the Recreation Department/Economic Development Coordinator has joined the Marketing Committee with CEDRR. There was an information packet that was distributed and Select Board members asked questions concerning the various programs included in the initiative. Town Manager Atherton stated that the funding to continue supporting this initiative is included in the next budget cycle.

Mr. Jepson and Ms. Lyons exited at 7:16 PM.

Budget – Town Clerk/Treasurer, Assessor, Zoning, Animal Control, Health Officer:

Ann Reed presented the remaining budget categories. The noted changes are decreasing the Zoning Administrator wages due to lower hours being worked, increasing legal fees for the Planning Commission and lowering the Assessor hours due to the work by the assessor clerk. T. Hooker inquired what the overall increase of the budget is as it currently stands. Ms. Reed explained that it is at about 3 – 4 % with special appropriations, without special appropriations, the budget will be approximately 3% less than last year. The largest increases in the budget categories are in the public safety categories of police, fire, and first response, with decreases in other departments. Vice Chair Mills requested that the Select Board receive a department budget without the explaining lines. Ms. Reed will compile the requested information for discussion at the next meeting.

Speed Limit Ordinance Discussion:

Town Manager Atherton stated that he and Highway Foreman Chad Eugair have driven all town roads and compiled a listing with recommended speed limits for these roads, which were presented for review. T. Hooker stated that he is hearing complaints of speeding on Pine Woods Road and would like to see that speed lowered to 30 mph. Motion by T. Hooker and seconded by M. Winslow to adopt the proposed speed limit ordinance as presented, with the correction of Pine Woods Road to be posted at 30 mph. Motion passed unanimously 4 – 0.

RV and Homeless Discussion:

An RV has been parked at the pull off at the Pittsford/Rutland Town pull off overnight with a generator running and is disturbing the neighbors. Chief Warfle has spoken with the occupants, however, parking overnight still occurs. M. Winslow stated that he has spoken with AOT and this is on Route 7 and falls under the AOT jurisdiction to resolve the issue. AOT stated that they would need a unanimous decision by both Pittsford and Rutland Town Boards to take action on this situation. There was discussion by the Board to see if it would be possible to have the State put in No Overnight Parking signs in this pull-off area.

Rutland Regional Planning Commission Representative Discussion:

Vice Chair Mills was previously the Pittsford representative to the Rutland Regional Planning Commission, however, has had to step down. Motion by J. Gagnon and seconded by T. Hooker to appoint Donna Wilson (alternate) as the representative and opening up the alternate slot. Motion passed unanimously 4 – 0.

Act on Orders \$246,707.20 and Payroll \$15,929.47:

J. Gagnon inquired the number of over tax payment refunds. Town Manager Atherton explained that his happens and there is no way to determine why this happens yearly.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

T. Hooker made the motion and seconded by M. Winslow to go into Executive Session for legal and personnel. Motion passed unanimously 4 – 0.

In accordance with 1 VSA§ 313 (a), where premature general public knowledge would clearly place the Municipality or person involved at a substantial disadvantage, the Board unanimously agreed to enter into Executive Session, to include the Town Manager and the Assistant to the Town Manager 7:42 PM.

Motion by M. Winslow and seconded by T. Hooker to exit Executive Session at 8:35 PM. Motion passed unanimously 4 – 0.

Motion by M. Winslow and seconded by T. Hooker to adjourn. The motion passed unanimously 4 – 0.

The Select Board adjourned at 8:35 PM.

The next Select Board meeting will be held on December 20, 2023

Respectfully Submitted,

Kelly Giard
Recording Secretary

_____ ABSENT _____
Alicia Malay, Chair

David Mills, Vice Chair

Thomas Hooker, Selectman

W. Joseph Gagnon, Selectman

Mark Winslow, Selectman