

Town of Pittsford SELECT BOARD MEETING – January 7, 2025– DRAFT

MEMBERS PRESENT: Alicia Malay, David Mills, Thomas Hooker, Mark Winslow and Dan Adams.

OTHERS PRESENT: Ann Reed, Charles “Butch” Shaw, Mike Markowski, John Eugair (7:13 PM), David Atherton – Town Manager, Kelly Giard – Recording Secretary

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

Chair Malay stated that there was no need to add any additional Executive Session.

Chair Malay stated that there was a need to amend the agenda to add under New Business: Letter to the Town Clerk/Treasurer and Certification of Highway Mileage. Motion by D. Mills and seconded by T. Hooker to adopt the agenda as amended. Motion passed unanimously 5–0.

MINUTES:

The December 18, 2024 regular meeting were signed with a clarification from M. Winslow regarding the Library budget.

TOWN MANAGER REPORT:

Town Manager Atherton reported the following:

- A claim has been filed with the insurance company of the driver that hit the Depot Hill bridge in December. The Highway Department was able to do the repairs and there was no structural related damage. The amount of the damage was \$434.40.
- The semi-annual water and sewer bills have been sent and the due date is February 3, 2025
- The tax sale process has begun. There are 17 properties that have met the criteria for tax sale.
- The Plains Road sewer replacement project is progressing with the weather cooperating. There have been 8 manholes completed and 1 residence that sits behind a current residence that is connected to the sewer has had a ‘T’ installed in the event they elect to become connected in the future. There have also been modifications to improve service to the house at 313 Plains Road.
- An invitation for a Regional Select Board “Meet Up” was included in the packets for review. This will be on January 16, 2025 at the West Rutland Town Hall.
- The State of Vermont has submitted the 2024 Equalization Study Results from the State of Vermont Department of Taxes, which was also included in the packets for review.
- The Police Department has submitted their monthly report for December 2024 and was included in the packets for review.
- The Highway Department Chevrolet truck had been out of service for a frozen caliper. This truck was repaired at Earl’s Truck repair and is back in service.
- Bridge 108 project will be shut down for the winter.

D. Adams inquired if the tax sale notices are published as a list. Town Manager Atherton explained the process and that Ann Reed is working with some property owners to set up payment plans.

SELECTBOARD MEMBER REMARKS:

M. Winslow stated that he recently attended the Little Brook Solar meeting which is proposed for the gravel pit on Furnace Road. Town Manager Atherton inquired if the town should file Party Status. Following discussion, the Select Board agreed to have the town file for Party Status on this project.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Charles "Butch" Shaw was present to discuss the Property Tax Sales and explained that the Board of Civil Authority/Board of Abatement has had people asking for water and sewer abatements due to the fact that people just can't pay their bills. Another concern that is coming before the Board of Civil Authority/Board of Abatement is property owners requesting total abatement for property taxes. Recently, the 2 abatements that were received were denied. Property owners don't understand that the Education tax is not within the town's control and does not go away, however, does become the responsibility of the town and other taxpayers. Property owners are encouraged to file the Homestead Declaration when filing their annual income tax returns.

OLD BUSINESS

Approve Budget:

Mr. Shaw spoke to the Select Board about the budgeting process for the future explaining that he has reviewed the previous budgets and feels that the Select Board should be booking the budget to keep up with inflation and the future needs of the town. Going forward, Mr. Shaw stated that the town will need to be reviewing what services to cut at the current budget rate as it is "a reality" to keep a 1.5% - 2.0% increase. The Education tax is a political problem that needs to be solved. The current general budget is \$1,827,833 with a total of \$1,404,123 to be raised by taxes (the Special Appropriations are not included in these numbers as they are voted on separately at Town Meeting); the Village Fund amount to be approved is \$17,000; the Highway Fund budget is \$1,213,555 with a total of \$1,065,205 to be raised by taxes. Town Manager Atherton recommends that the Village Fund be reviewed at the next budget cycle. M. Winslow inquired if the Department Heads were included in their budget requests. Town Manager Atherton stated that he and Ann Reed met with the Department Heads to discuss their budget and that the Department Heads are responsible to code their invoices. Ms. Reed explained that she met with all but the Town Clerk/Treasurer. Motion by D. Mills and seconded by T. Hooker to approve the following budget amounts: The current general budget is \$1,827,833 with a total of \$1,404,123 to be raised by taxes (the Special Appropriations are not included in these numbers as they are voted on separately at Town Meeting); the Village Fund

amount to be approved is \$17,000; the Highway Fund budget is \$1,213,555 with a total of \$1,065,205 to be raised by taxes. Motion passed unanimously 5 – 0.

Potential Opening of Class 2, 3 & 4 Roads to ATV's:

Mike Markowski was present to discuss the possibility of opening Class 2, 3 and 4 roads to ATV's. The Select Board was given similar ordinances from Bakersfield, Whiting and Newport for review. The recommendation of the Select Board is to have Mr. Markowski, John Eugair, 1 Select Board member (D. Mills volunteered for this position) and Town Manager Atherton form a committee to review this possibility and report back to the Select Board to continue with the process.

Code of Ethics Investigation and Enforcement Ordinance:

Motion by T. Hooker and seconded by D. Mills to begin the ordinance process. Mr. Shaw stated that what was presented by the VLCT is adequate to comply with the law. D. Adams inquired what prompted the ordinance. Mr. Shaw explained that this began late in the last Legislative session. Motion passed 4 – 1.

Mr. Markowski exited at 7:10 PM

Town Report Dedication and Photos:

Chair Malay has submitted the photos and dedication information to Ann Reed.

NEW BUSINESS

Letter to the Town Clerk/Treasurer:

M. Winslow suggested that a letter be sent to the Town Clerk/Treasurer to hold on paying the school allocation bill until they are due. The school recently kept calling looking for their funds, which were not released until a Select Board meeting to approve the orders. M. Winslow stated that this would be more interest revenue to the Town. Town Manager Atherton stated that he would discuss this and draft a letter.

Certificate of Highway Mileage:

This is an annual requirement of the State of Vermont. Motion by D. Mills and seconded by M. Winslow to certify the highway mileage as 64.261. Motion passed unanimously 5 – 0 and was signed by the members of the Select Board.

Act on Orders \$167,901.09; Payroll \$32,759.24:

The orders were signed with the following discussion:

T. Hooker inquired the expenses for the First Response door/operator. Town Manager Atherton explained that the door was not safe and was replaced to prevent damage to one of the vehicles.

Motion by M. Winslow and seconded by T. Hooker to enter into Executive Session at 7:25 PM.
Motion passed unanimously 5 – 0.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

In accordance with 1 V.S.A. § 313(a) where premature general public knowledge would clearly place the municipality or person involved at a substantial disadvantage to discuss the appointment, employment or evaluation of a public officer or employee, provided that a public body must make the final hiring or appointment decision and explain its reason for the decision, in open meeting. 1 V.S.A. § 313(a)(3) to include the Town Manager.

Motion by D. Mills and seconded by D. Adams to exit Executive Session at 8:12 PM with no action taken.

Motion by D. Mills and seconded by D. Adams to adjourn at 8:12 PM. Motion passed unanimously 5 – 0.

The next regular Select Board meeting will be held on January 22, 2024.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kelly Giard
Recording Secretary

Alicia Malay, Chair

David Mills, Vice Chair

Thomas Hooker, Selectman

Dan Adams, Selectman

Mark Winslow, Selectman