



**TOWN OF PITTSFIELD
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
TOWN HALL, 85 MAIN STREET
PITTSFIELD, NH 03263**

MEETING MINUTES OF Tuesday, February 25, 2020

CALL TO ORDER

Call to order at 5:00 P.M. by J.C. Allard, Chairman

NONPUBLIC SESSION

A motion to go into Non-Public session under RSA-A:3; II (b) was made by Gerard and seconded by Jim.

Discussion: None.

Motion carried 5-0. Roll call was done and all approved.

When the Board returned to public session JC called the regular meeting to order.

CALL TO ORDER – REGULAR SESSION

Call to order by Chairman J.C. Allard at 6:00 P.M.

MEMBERS PRESENT

J.C. Allard, Chairman

Gerard LeDuc, Vice-Chairman

Carole Richardson

Carl Anderson

Jim Adams

OTHERS PRESENT

Cara Marston, Town Administrator

Sabrina Smith, Recording Secretary

PUBLIC INPUT - regarding agenda items only

None.

AGENDA REVIEW

None.

NEW BUSINESS

ACTION ITEMS

1. Added item - Vote to hire Scott LaCroix as new code compliance officer.

Jim motioned to hire Scott LaCroix as the new code compliance officer effective April 5, 2020 for 15-20 hours per week.

Gerard: Second.

Discussion: None.

Motion carried 4-0-1. Carl abstained.

2. 2020 town revaluation preparation – discussion with Avitar Associates

Evan Roberge, representing Avitar Associates of New England, Inc., addressed the Board and stated the purpose of the meeting was to give an overview of the revaluation process. He said that every community goes through this process at least once every five years. The process of revaluation is to bring property assessments to market value as of April 1, 2020. Evan stated that he would be the supervisor in charge of the revaluation in Pittsfield. He said that the town has opted to not require a bond and has provided the DRA a copy of the contract and the insurance certificate.

He said that the real estate market is consistently changing but that the state does track the market changes from year to year through the annual equalization process. For instance, EQ ratio for 2019 was 81.1% which indicates, that on average, assessments were at 81.1% of what they were selling for. He said that the assessment percentages were down, but that they were selling for percentages further up the scale and that essentially, the assessments should bring it up to 100%. He stated that the reference point for that ratio was from the last revaluation, which was five years ago.

Mr. Roberge went on to say that that not all classes or types of property change at the same rate such as vacant land, single family dwellings, older homes, water front, and mobile homes. He said that depending on the sales of those, they will change at different rates. The sales are the basis for the new values, so it's important to verify the physical data of those sales and that is what they will be out doing. He said that they are only using arm's length transactions, meaning sales that represent market value, so they will not be using bank sales, family sales, foreclosures, or short sales. He said that right now, they plan on going back about 2 years for sales and if there are certain types of property that require them to go back further, then they will do that.

Evan Roberge said that tax payers should also be aware that if their assessment increases for example by 20%, it doesn't mean that their taxes are increasing by 20%. He said that if the Town, School, and County budgets stay the same and the towns total value increases 20% as a result of revaluation, the tax rate will come down proportionately. He said that the wild card is the budgets, because if any or all of them go up, then the tax rate will not drop by the same percentage of the total value increases. He said that it's also important to note in that scenario, that the tax rate would have risen without the revaluation done that year anyway.

Mr. Roberge said that once they analyze the sales and develop preliminary values, there will be a field review of the entire town. He explained that it would be Avitar representatives driving parcel by parcel and that if they couldn't see the house by the road, they would drive up the driveway and turn around. He said that they don't get out of the car but need to verify each location, site characteristics, quality, and so forth to be as consistent as possible. He said that he wanted everyone to be aware that while they are doing the field review, there might be questions of just driving by and not getting out, but that was the protocol of the field review.

Mr. Roberge said that once the process has been complete, they will send out the preliminary notices. The notice gives the owners a chance to call and set up an appointment, if needed, to sit down with the assessor and see the sales they used or ask any questions they may have and that they would be there to answer it. He said that they planned to start the field review in July, and the preliminary notices and hearings in August. Once the hearings are over and values have been

finalized, the time will be provided in a report that will describe the entire process, what they did, the sales they used, etc. He said that the contract has a completion date of October 1, 2020 which could mean that the town would have to file for an extension on the MS-1.

Evan Roberge stated that the town should also know that Avitar will be doing the utilities and that they will be done in accordance with House Bill 700. Avitar will be entering of all the value related changes associated with the revaluation in the towns accessing software and also, new for 2020, they will be accessing solar. He said that he believes that the town does have the solar exemption but that the tax payers should be aware that this is coming and they will need to file an application in order to get the exemption. He said that he will get a list to Bonnie so that letters can be sent to everyone. Mr. Roberge ended by saying that if the Board had any questions, the DRA was here in the room to answer them. He said that they have a role in monitoring different parts of the process and introduced Adam Denoncour, the East District supervisor for the Department of Revenue along with Ben Lafond, the DRA property assessment monitor assigned to Pittsfield.

Adam Denoncour greeted the Board and stated that the purpose of DRA is to monitor Avitar's work as part of their contract. He said they would be taking a look at the sales Evan talked about verifying. He said that DRA basically pulls out 25-30 samples and might visit a dozen of them just to make sure that they are accurately measured and that listing all of the date collection items are done appropriately. He stated that they will have an inspection sheet that will first send to Avitar with any findings, Avitar will then have 30 days to respond if there's something that maybe DRA got wrong or that Avitar got wrong, so that the problems could be worked out before the final report was sent to the Select Board.

Mr. Denoncour asked for the Town to post notifications that there would be revaluations going on and properties being visited. He said that post card notifications will be sent out ahead of time and that if people would like to opt out and rather not have anyone come to their property, they can. He said this is why they send so many at first because they will normally get 5-7 negative responses and that would be fine, they just wouldn't visit those properties. He said that 2020 is also an Assessment Review year for Pittsfield which involves DRA doing quite a bit of work in the field. DRA would probably be looking in the neighborhood of 60-70 properties next year between the monitoring of Avitar's work and the Assessment Review itself.

J.C. asked how does an Assessment Review differ from a Revaluation?

Adam Denoncour stated that an Assessment Review is also on a five-year cycle which is why it can be confusing, but if any town or municipally did an update outside their normal five-year cycle they would be disjointed. He said that in this particular case with Pittsfield, they're not. He said that it's a process that the DRA undertakes to ensure compliance with the statute as it relates to assessing. For example, he said, one of those things is accuracy of data which includes visiting 36 properties in town determining the overall accuracy of data on the property record cards. Another one is inventory, which is going and taking a look at the properties Avitar looks at to make sure they are correct as of April 1st. He said that if you have under construction, new construction, depreciations of any kind and if they were flagged because of an ownership change or a lot line adjustment or something like that, DRA would ensure that Avitar is making the needed changes as of April 1, 2020.

Carole asked how they will determine what properties to look at?

Adam Denoncour stated that equalization gets a download of the data base and basically takes a completely random sample of every single improved property in town for accuracy of the data.

Carole asked what was considered an improved property?

Adam Denoncour said that improved property was correct because for inventory they may do vacants. He said what happens is DRA asks Avitar for a list of all the properties that were visited in the Spring and then a random sample is taken from that. He said that it's a little bit of excel magic because they put the properties in excel and basically get back between 30-40 random properties. He said that they then send postcards out to those 30-40 property owners and again, if they would rather DRA not visit, then the home owners can respond and DRA won't visit.

Mr. Denoncour said that the rest of it is mostly in office at the Town office or DRA office. DRA will want to take a look at the Town's credit exemption files just to make sure there's a proper application and that it's signed by the Board, that it's signed by the applicant and that they do qualify, they still live in town and they aren't deceased. With the exemptions, he said DRA will want to make sure the exemptions have been reviewed in the last five years making sure income hasn't been changed or something like that, that it has been documented and that it still qualifies. He said they will also take a look at religious, educational, and charitable exemptions. For instance, the institutional exemptions to make sure there's a form A-9 and an A-12 on file and that it's current. And that DRA will take a look at current use files to make sure that there's a properly filed application, that there is a map and all the different things that need to be in a current use file.

He said that there was a couple of questionnaires, just generally, about needing access to what kind of public records. He said the main concern that DRA has had recently is that a lot of towns have been putting confidential information in public files. The PA-29 itself is often green sheet, that is a public document, but something like a DD 2-14 or any sort of income/expense information that would come under elderly exemption are not public and they need to either be sent back, destroyed or at the very least not kept in the same location as public files. The other questionnaire is about the inventory program and how does Avitar identify properties to visit. He said that he's pretty familiar with Avitar's process and can they identify lot line adjustments, do they get building permits so that they know when properties have made a physical change and things of that nature and that the Statistics are done at the DRA office.

Mr. Denoncour said that the median ratio, which Evan spoke about earlier, is coefficient of dispersion and the price related differential. He said that there is a range for each one of those numbers that would ensure equity and uniformity with the values. So, when DRA equalization bureau is finished processing the sales, they would have an idea of how those stats come out. The idea of course is to have the ratio be at 100% and the COD be less than 20% that's just how dispersed are the values. And then the PRD is a relationship between high and low value properties. If it's over 1.03 then it's indicating that higher value properties are assessed lower compared to lower value. So, he said, that it's really just a proportionality measure to make sure everything on an even keel.

Mr. Denoncour said that beyond that, DRA will want to take a look at Avitar's USPAP report that Evan spoke about that will be produced at the end of the update just to make sure it complies with USPAP standards and also that any time the town enters into a contract with an assessing company, that DRA has a copy of it, which they do. Adam Denoncour ended by saying that this was basically

the size of an assessment review and that DRA probably won't be doing anything in office until much later in 2020, if not almost into 2021. He said that the plan was to be out on field when the weather is nice and working in office when it's not. Mr. Denoncour then passed out informational packets containing all the assessment review standards to the Board members. The Board thanked all three gentlemen for coming in and explaining the Revaluation process.

3. Auction date for sale of tax-deeded property – 313 Webster Mills Road

Carl made a motion to reschedule the auction date for 313 Webster Mills Road to May 3, 2020 with notice given on April 1, 2020 to James R. St. Jean Auctioneers for the auction to take place on May 3rd unless the previous owner pays the entire outstanding obligation to the Town not later than close of business on March 31, 2020.

Jim: Second.

Discussion: None.

Motion carried 5-0-0.

4. Notice of Intent to Cut Timber– tax map R39, lot 29

Carole motioned to approve the notice of Intent to cut timber on tax map R39, lot 29.

Carl: Second.

Discussion: None.

Motion carried 5-0-0.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Gerard reminded everyone that the B.C.E.P. meeting will be on Thursday February 27, 2020 at 6:00 P.M. at the B.C.E.P. facility. Carole reminded everyone of the Budget Committee meeting for Wednesday February 26th at 6:00 P.M. at the Town Hall meeting room to go over things that will be posted in the Pittsfield Post to give voters information on the coming election, March 10, 2020.

INFORMATION ITEMS

None at this time.

OLD BUSINESS

1. Perambulation of town lines (8/14/2018)

No new updates.

2. Memorial Day 2020 (6/11/2019)

Carl announced a proposed schedule (open for change) for the Memorial Day celebration. Chief Peter Pszonowsky, Deputy Chief Rob Freese, along with the Fire Department, will hold a pancake breakfast from 8:00 A.M. to 9:30 A.M. prior to the Town parade. The Memorial Day parade will start around 10:00 A.M. on Broadway and continue down Carroll Street to the Barnstead Bridge where a Laying the Wreath Ceremony will be performed. The parade will then continue onto Floral Park for another ceremony before heading to the destination of Dustin Park where the last ceremony will be held. Memorial Day celebration will end around 12:00 P.M. A meeting has been scheduled for March 3, 2020 6:00 P.M. at Town Hall inviting any committees and/or organizations who are interested in planning/joining in the celebration.

3. Town Hall exterior repairs (8/27/2019)

4. Zoning & RSA 155-B violations (8/27/2019)

5. Holden Engineering Contract Amendment #1 – Shaw Road over Kelly Brook project (9/24/2019)

6. Granite State Solar Garden – PILOT agreements for town project (1/14/2020)

7. Request for Pittsfield Town View Facebook page (2/17/2020)

The Board congratulated Mike Cabral on the recent 1,400 hits to his Facebook page, Pittsfield Town View, that includes all information in one area for what is happening in town. The Board also stated that the Facebook page should and will remain unofficial, is not sanctioned by the town, and has no connection to any of the Town administration. They thanked Mike for his work and wished him luck.

CHECK MANIFESTS

1. Accounts Payable

Gerard motioned to approve account payable.

Jim: Second.

Discussion: None.

Motion carried 5-0-0.

2. Payroll

Gerard motioned to approve the payroll.

Carole: Second.

Discussion: None.

Motion carried 5-0-0.

MINUTES

1. February 18, 2020 – Nonpublic Session Minutes

Gerard motioned to approve the February 18, 2020 Nonpublic Session minutes.

Jim: Second.

Discussion: None.

Motion carried 5-0-0.

2. February 18, 2020 – Public Session Minutes

Gerard motioned to approve the February 18, 2020 Public Session minutes.

Carole: Second.

Discussion: None.

Motion carried 5-0-0.

PUBLIC INPUT

Dan Schroth addressed the Board and introduced himself as Serf Dan. He said that there is something keeping him up at night and it isn't the Coronavirus; it's the trampling of our Constitution and that we have all taken an oath to defend our Constitution. He said that he had already been to the school board and that he is moving up the chain of command and the Board was next. He asked if anyone in the room had had a science class or believed in dinosaurs, because that's where he needed to start. He said that when the rock hit 66 million years ago, the temperature dropped estimated by 46* so, if you subtract 46* off today, that's what happened. He said that was 66 million years ago. He asked if anyone in the room remembered when Hitler invaded Poland. Dan said the same thing was happening right now in Poland, it is going back to communism because they weren't taught the constitution. They took their judges and now their judges are ruling in favor of them. Dictatorship is happening in Poland.

Dan said the reason he is speaking up is because he is German and Italian and we all took an oath to defend our Constitution. He said that he's asked the school site council if they would consider

maybe not reciting the Pledge of Allegiance for a while in our school district that maybe we can just stand in silence until our democracy flourishes again. He said he wanted to point out another thing, we have 3 branches of government but the senate is now the agent of the executive branch and the judges are now being changed. He said it's a very scary thing and it's keeping him awake at night. Dan then passed out a letter to the Board members and asked if they could read it. He said the checks and balances are gone at the moment and if people can't see it, then they have to be crazy. He feels like we have a King.

Dan said that he doesn't know what to do. Should people march on Washington? Wait for another election, business as usual? He said there wasn't one shot fired, not one shot fired and all the guns didn't save us. Dan wanted to point out that it was 11 million years ago that the apes came but only 4 million years ago that they found prints of the homosapiens. So, from 4 million years ago until now this is what we've become. He said that we don't want to screw it all up now because it's taken us 4 million years to get here. Dan said he is asking for someone to make a stand, to say something, but that no one is saying anything about our Constitution being under attack. Dan said that he gave an oath to defend the Constitution but his wife won't even let him go to Concord. So, he doesn't know what to do except ask the Board to think about it. Dan thanked the Board for allowing him to talk and for listening. The letter Dan passed out read; "Letter to the Editor To the good citizens of Pittsfield on election day at the town hall I was called disapointing, a hypacrit, a socialist, a communist, and a traitor, But be it known I am really a serf, so for far and wide I will be known as Serf Dan. Dan the Stoneman is asleep, maybe not dead. There are no longer three equal branches of government, the president is corrupt, the senate is corrupt, the house can't seem to correct it. Although they are trying might hard. So no democracy for now just a king. I will bide my time, for now, I will go to work and obey the king. But when you see me weeping side the road, you will know I'm just a serf. Serf Dan"

Adam Gauthier addressed the Board and wanted to know if and when the minutes from various Board meetings in town would be updated on the website. He said that there were very few Select Board minutes posted for 2020 as well as Zoning and Planning Board minutes missing from the website. Cara said that the Select Board minutes were just recently signed in the afternoon and would be posted tomorrow and that Adam would need to check with the Chairs of the Zoning and Planning boards to find out about updating those minutes.

Deputy Chief Rob Freese addressed the Board and requested that the Board consider the appointment of Jennifer Austin to the support company with the Fire Department. He stated that they had reviewed the appointment last week, but he had neglected to request a vote. Carl motioned to approve the appointment of Jennifer Austin to the support company with the Fire Department.

Carole: Second.

Discussion: None.

Motion carried 5-0-0.

NONPUBLIC SESSION

A motion to go into Non-Public session under RSA-A:3; II (a) & (c) was made by Gerard and seconded by Jim.

Discussion: None.

Motion carried 5-0. Roll call was done and all approved.

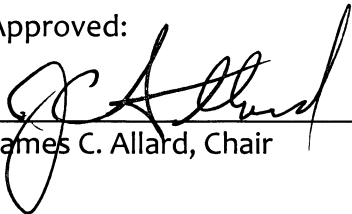
When the Board returned to public session Gerard made a motion to seal the non-public minutes and the motion was seconded by Jim.

Discussion: None.

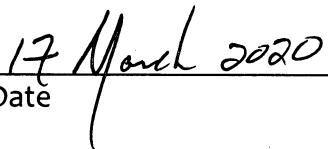
Motion carried 5-0. Roll call was done and all approved.

Meeting was adjourned at 9:08 p.m.

Approved:



James C. Allard, Chair



Date



MEETING AGENDA
TOWN OF PITTSFIELD
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
TOWN OFFICE, 85 MAIN STREET
PITTSFIELD, NEW HAMPSHIRE 03263

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 25, 2020

5:00 p.m. – call to order – scheduled nonpublic session

6:00 p.m. – call to order – regular session

PUBLIC INPUT – regarding agenda items only

AGENDA REVIEW

NEW BUSINESS

ACTION ITEMS

1. 2020 town revaluation preparation – discussion with Avitar Associates
2. Auction date for sale of tax-deeded property – 313 Webster Mills Road
3. Notice of Intent to Cut Timber– tax map R39, lot 29

COMMITTEE REPORTS

INFORMATION ITEMS

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7. Request for Pittsfield Town View Facebook page (2/17/2020)

CHECK MANIFESTS

1. Accounts Payable
2. Payroll

MINUTES

1. February 18, 2020 – Nonpublic Session Minutes
2. February 18, 2020 – Public Session Minutes

PUBLIC INPUT

Public Input standards: The Board of Selectmen may accept the public's input that is addressed directly to the Chair in a courteous and respectful manner in a time frame of three minutes or less.

NONPUBLIC SESSION

The Board of Selectmen may enter into Nonpublic Session under RSA 91-A:3

Please note: The meetings of the Board of Selectmen are recorded, audio and video.



MEETING SCHEDULE CHANGE

TOWN OF PITTSFIELD

BOARD OF SELECTMEN

TOWN OFFICE, 85 MAIN STREET

PITTSFIELD, NEW HAMPSHIRE 03263

The Board of Selectmen will be meeting on

Tuesday, February 25, 2020 at 5:00 p.m.

at the Pittsfield Town Hall, 85 Main Street, Pittsfield NH 03263

this is a change in their regular meeting time to adjust for a scheduled nonpublic session from 5:00pm to 6:00pm