



**TOWN OF PITTSFIELD
BUDGET COMMITTEE
TOWN HALL, 85 MAIN STREET
PITTSFIELD, NH 03263**

MEETING MINUTES OF Thursday, January 16, 2020, Public Hearing
At PMHS Lecture Hall

CALL TO ORDER

Call to order at 7:04 PM by Robert Schiferle, Chair

MEMBERS PRESENT (12)

Robert Schiferle, Chair
Jeremy Everson, Secretary
Carol Richardson, Select Board Rep.
Heidi Asdot, School Board Rep.
Katie Bachelder
Michael Cabral
John Christakos (7:30 pm)
Larry Konopka
Paul Metcalf III
Ralph O'Dell
Helen Schiff
Randy Severance

MEMBERS ABSENT (0)

Mary Paradise, Vice Chair, excused
Fred Hast, excused

GUESTS PRESENT

Dr. John Freeman, Superintendent
Cara Marston, Town Administrator

DOCUMENTS DISTRIBUTED:

- *Town of Pittsfield 2020 Budget Revenues*
- *Town of Pittsfield 2020 Budget Recap by Department*
- *2020 MS-DTB Appropriations*
- *2020 Annual Town Meeting Warrant*
- *Town of Pittsfield – Teamsters #633 Union Negotiations Summary*
- *Town of Pittsfield Equipment Replacement Funding – CIP*
- *Pittsfield School District Proposed 2020-2021 Budget*
- *Pittsfield School District Default Budget 2020-2021*
- *Pittsfield Local School 2020 Warrant DRAFT*

Welcome & Introduction

B. Schiferle, Chairman, welcomed all members of the community to the meeting and introduced the purpose of the hearing. There were **34 members of the community** present, as well as budget committee members and guests.

Agenda Item 1: School Budget Presentation and Discussion

Documents Referenced:

- *Pittsfield School District Proposed 2020-2021 Budget*
- *Pittsfield School District Default Budget 2020-2021*
- *Pittsfield Local School 2020 Warrant DRAFT*

Dr. John Freeman introduced the School Warrant Articles. Articles 04 and 05 would be contingent on there being a fund balance at the end of the fiscal year. Article 06 was changed at a School Board meeting today (January 16, 2020) and amended the request to \$50,000. Dr. Freeman then introduced the proposed budget as a 'maintenance' budget with no major increases. The State of NH has changed the ways that the local schools receive funds for stabilization grants and adequacy funding resulting in an increase in revenues from the state. The proposed budget revenues reflect that increase and the School Board has decided to propose a budget that will allow for a decrease of the tax rate of \$1.90 per thousand. Dr. Freeman then introduced the default budget.

Discussion:

- Louis Houle – asked about the increases in the budget, specifically the warrant articles, are they one-time items or recurring items? Dr. Freeman answered that the staff positions would be recurring and need funding in future budgets.
- L. Houle – commented that a decrease of the tax rate is a very responsible way to use the increased funding from the state. His overall feeling is that this is a very responsible budget.
- Carl Anderson – asked about Articles 04 and 05, are they one-time funding items or would these funds be requested again in years to come and is this technically a 'no tax impact' item? B. Schiferle responded that these articles would be using funds from taxation that are already included in the budget. Dr. Freeman answered that the school board has a desire to increase the funds in these reserves to cover unexpected costs that can be foreseen as possibilities.
- Gerard LeDuc – commented that he agrees with the technology plan of replacing a

portion of the computers and other devices in the schools on a rotating schedule.

- Tracy Huyck – questioned the Medicaid billing items in the revenue sheets. Dr. Freeman answered that the schools only bill for actual services.
- Dan Schroth – commented that he wished there was a warrant article for mitigating environmental issues that the school may be facing in years to come.

Agenda Item 2: Town Budget Presentation and Discussion

(28 community members still in attendance)

Documents Referenced:

- *Town of Pittsfield 2020 Budget Revenues*
- *Town of Pittsfield 2020 Budget Recap by Department*
- *2020 MS-DTB Appropriations*
- *2020 Annual Town Meeting Warrant*
- *Town of Pittsfield – Teamsters #633 Union Negotiations Summary*
- *Town of Pittsfield Equipment Replacement Funding – CIP*

B. Schiferle introduced the documents regarding the town budget proposal.

Discussion: *Town of Pittsfield 2020 Budget Revenues*

- L. Houle – asked why the EMS revenues are down in lines 57 – 63. C. Marston replied that the numbers reflect a net total and are dispersed between the line items.
- L. Houle – asked if the town had also received additional funds from the state. C. Marston replied in the affirmative and pointed to line 39 of the Revenues sheets.

Discussion: *Town of Pittsfield 2020 Budget Recap by Department*

- B. Schiferle – there are increases due to the additional election days this year. The town is also due to have a property revaluation in 2020 which has to be funded. There have been staff changes which are reflected in the Financial Administration Department and the Planning & Zoning Department.
- Donna Keeley – asked about the funds proposed for the maintenance of Floral Park Cemetery. C. Marston replied that the change in maintenance staff at the cemetery has required the work to be put out to bid and will cost more to have the cemetery properly cared for.
- Merrill Vaughn – asked how long ago was the last ambulance was replaced. Fire

Chief Pete Pzonowski replied it was replaced in 2014. The other was replaced 11 years ago.

- Carol Richardson – the select board and highway department are looking at a 10 year plan that would replace all the sidewalks in town. The decision was made to fund this project with funding from the proposed budget as opposed to warrant articles. There is also some funding from license plate fees to go toward this. This explains the increase in the proposal for the Highways & Streets (Dept Number 4312).
- D. Schroth – commented that he wants to avoid shorting the funding for the Fire Department by adequately funding our budgets and preparing for the future.
- D. Keeley – asked about the tax rate and how much \$1.00 per thousand represents. C. Marston replied \$1.00 per thousand is equal to \$265,000 in budgeting.

Discussion: 2020 Annual Town Meeting Warrant

- Article 5 – Teamsters Bargaining Unit
 - D. Keeley – asked about Article 31 in the Union Summary, is this a lump sum bonus for longevity? C. Marston answered in the affirmative, this bonus will be paid out after seven years of service.
- Article 7 – Municipal Sidewalks Improvement
 - B. Schiferle – commented that this article will raise and appropriate \$20,000 and take \$20,000 from the Capital Reserve Fund for the sidewalks project this year.
 - M. Vaughn – commented that the aging population in Pittsfield finds the sidewalks in their current condition to be very frustrating, even dangerous. He believes that the money spent will be beneficial to the town.
- Article 8 – Shaw Road Bridge over Kelly Brook project
 - C. Marston – when the state of NH is ready to do this project, if the town of Pittsfield is not ready with funding we could lose our place in the line of projects and have to wait much longer for this to be replaced. This could bring us to the place of needing to replace the bridge with town funding entirely.

- M. Vaughn – how safe is this bridge for a fire department response with a pumper truck? George Bachelder replied that the bridge is safe for that purpose now.
- Article 9 – Ambulance Replacement & Equipment Fund
 - B. Schiferle gave an overview of the current ongoing plan to maintain or replace equipment as needed and the new CIP to fund and plan for these needs. The Equipment Replacement Planning document was introduced and explained.
- Article 10 – Ambulance Replacement
 - *No public comment*
- Article 11 – Fire Department Grant
 - *No public comment*
- Article 12 – Police Cruiser Capital Reserve Fund
 - L. Houle – feels that the Chief of Police is doing a great job planning the use of the cruisers and their replacement
- Article 13 – Fire Department Small Equipment Capital Reserve Fund
 - P. Pzonowski – the FD desires to build up this fund in order to replace some equipment that will cost more than is currently in the fund.
- Article 14 – Fire Department Pumper Capital Reserve Fund
 - *No public comment*
- Article 15 – Fire Department Tanker Capital Reserve Fund
 - *No public comment*
- Article 16 – Fire Department Forestry Truck Capital Reserve Fund
 - L. Houle – feels that the Fire Chief is doing a great job planning the maintenance and replacement of the fire equipment and considering the interests of the town as well as the FD.
- Article 17 – Dump Truck Capital Reserve Fund
 - C. Richardson – pointed out that this fund services three trucks in the highway department
 - G. LeDuc – the CIP attempts to keep the budget from spiking on the years when equipment needs to be replaced and keep even funding throughout

the budget from year to year.

- Article 18 – Loader Capital Reserve Fund
 - *No public comment*
- Article 19 – Backhoe Capital Reserve Fund
 - *No public comment*
- Article 20 – Sidewalk Capital Reserve Fund
 - *No public comment*
- Article 21 – Grader Capital Reserve Fund
 - *No public comment*
- Article 22 – Small Highway Capital Reserve Fund
 - T. Huyck – asked if the CIP considered cost increases for equipment that won't need to be replaced for 10 or more years? B. Schiferle answered that the CIP attempted to do so.
 - Daniel Welsh – asked if the reserve funds are in interest bearing accounts? C. Marston answered 'yes'.
 - Ammy Ramsey – asked what the tax rate increase from the warrant articles for the capital reserve funds would be and if it will stay increased over the next several years? B. Schiferle answered 'yes'.
 - There was much discussion regarding the inevitable increases in the budgets for the next several years to cover the decreased funding for the CIP items in years past.
- Article 23 – Floral Park Cemetery Fence Fund
 - *No public comment*
- Article 24 – Solar Array multi-year lease
 - B. Schiferle put off discussion of this article since there is no immediate budget impact.

Discussion: *Budget Summary Estimated Tax Impact*

- The estimated tax impact if all town budget related warrant articles pass will be an increase of \$2.74 per thousand. Combine this with a decrease in the tax rate from the school of \$1.90 per thousand and the estimated tax impact would result in a tax rate increase of \$.84 per thousand.

- C. Anderson – commented that all department heads are doing a very good job to be responsible with these budgets and thanked the budget committee for the hard work that they do.

Meeting adjourned at 9:09pm

Next Meeting

Next meeting will be on Tuesday, January 21, 2020, starting at 6:00 PM.

- January 21, 6:00 PM, voting meeting
- January 22, 6:00 PM, voting meeting
- February 1, 10:00 AM, Town Deliberative Session, at PES
- February 5, 7:00 PM, School Deliberative Session, at PES

Submitted by: Jeremy Everson, Secretary

Approved:



Robert Schiferle, Chair

01/21/2020

Date