

# 2015 TOWN MEETING MINUTES

## STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE TOWN OF PITTSFIELD

Moderator Arthur Morse called the 2015 Town Meeting to order at 10:04AM on Saturday, March 14, 2015 in the Pittsfield Elementary School Gymnasium. The Pittsfield Boy Scout Troop 84 and Girl Scout Troop 10540 led the *Pledge of Allegiance*.

Selectman Larry Konopka introduced the people on the stage: Town Clerk/Tax Collector Erica Anthony, Administrative Assistant Cara Marston, Selectwoman Linda Small, Town Administrator Mike Williams, Selectman Eric Nilsson, Selectman Gerard LeDuc, Fire Chief Rob Martin, Superintendent Public Works George Bachelder, Police Chief Jeff Cain, Town Moderator Art Morse and Selectman Al Douglas.

Moderator Morse called for a round of applause for Superintendent Bachelder and his road crew for their wonderful job this difficult winter.

Moderator Morse explained his job was to facilitate the meeting, and encouraged people to: "disagree without being disagreeable." He reviewed the rules and voting instructions for the meeting. Mr. Morse asked if anyone was interested in becoming a member of the Budget Committee or the Housing Standards Agency to please contact him within the next few weeks. He also asked newly elected officials to please see him after the meeting to be sworn in.

Moderator Morse read the introduction to the posted 2015 Town Meeting Warrant:

To the inhabitants of the Town of Pittsfield, Merrimack County and State of New Hampshire, qualified to vote in Town affairs:

You are hereby notified to meet at the Town Hall Meeting Room at 85 Main Street in said Town on the second Tuesday in March next, March 10, 2015, to act upon the subjects mentioned in Articles 1 through 2. You are hereby warned that on said date and at said place the polls will be opened at 7:00 AM and will remain open until 7:00 PM for the reception of your ballots under the Non-Partisan Ballot System. You are hereby warned that on Saturday, March 14, 2015, at 10:00 AM at the Pittsfield Elementary School Gymnasium, the matter of appropriations and such other business properly brought before said meeting will be taken up for your consideration and action.

### **TO BE TAKEN UP TUESDAY, MARCH 10, 2015**

#### **Article 1:**

To choose by ballot the following officers: two Selectmen for a three (3) year term; two Planning Board Members for a three (3) year term; two Zoning Board of Adjustment members for a three (3) year term; one Library Trustee for a three (3) year term; one Cemetery Trustee for a three (3) year term; one Town Clerk/Tax Collector a three (3) year term; and one Trustee of the Trust Funds for a three (3) year term.

# 2015 TOWN MEETING MINUTES

## Annual Town Election Results:

**Two Selectmen** for a three (3) year term –

**Nicholas Mark Hayes elected** – 234 votes  
**Denis R. Beaudoin, Sr. elected** – 303 votes  
Larry Konopka (write in) – 183 votes

**Two Planning Board Members** for a three (3) year term –

**Clayton Wood elected** – 282 votes  
Roland C. Carter, Sr. – 92 votes  
Daniel J. Greene – 132 votes  
John William “Bill” Miskoe – 106 votes  
**Daren Scott Nielsen elected** – 300 votes

**Two Zoning Board of Adjustment Members** for a three (3) year term –

Jeffrey Dylan Swain – 167 votes  
**John “Pat” Heffernan elected** – 284 votes  
**Paul E. Metcalf, Sr. elected** – 220 votes  
Daniel L. Schroth – 179 votes

**One Library Trustee** for a three (3) year term –

**William R. Tahnk elected** – 359 votes  
Sandra Adams (write in) – 56 votes

**One Cemetery Trustee** for a three (3) year term –

**Cara M. Marston elected** – 444 votes

**Town Clerk/Tax Collector** for a three (3) year term –

**Erica B. Anthony elected** – 473 votes

**One Trustee of Trust Funds** for a three (3) year term –

**Harry Emil Vogt elected** – 417 votes

## Article 2:

Are you in favor of adoption of the amendment to the existing town zoning ordinance as proposed by the planning board as follows: Revise the definition of “JUNK YARDS” to say, “A facility as defined in RSA 236:112, I, II, IV and V(c).” (Recommended by the planning board 3-2-0)

**Article 2 passed** – Yes (282) – No (86)

# 2015 TOWN MEETING MINUTES

TO BE TAKEN UP SATURDAY, MARCH 14, 2015

## **Article 3:**

To see if the Town shall adopt the provisions of NH RSA 261:153, VI, authorizing the collection of an additional vehicle registration fee in the amount of \$5.00 for the purpose of supporting the hereby established Municipal and Transportation Improvement Fund, and to further authorize the Selectmen to act as agents of said fund. Such funds shall be restricted in their use for improvements in the local or regional transportation system including roads, bridges, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, parking and intermodal facilities and public transportation.

(Recommended by the Board of Selectmen 3-1) (Recommended by the Budget Committee 7-5)

Moderator Morse stated that Article 3 was not a legal Article and would therefore be passed over. A public hearing was not held as required.

**No vote.**

## **Article 4:**

To see if the municipality will vote to discontinue the Fire Alarm System Capital Reserve Fund created in 2002. Said funds, with accumulated interest to date of withdrawal, are to be transferred to the municipality's general fund. (Fund balance on 12-31-14 is \$11,462.97)

(Recommended by the Board of Selectmen 4-0) (Recommended by the Budget Committee 12-0)

Motion made by Selectman Eric Nilsson to accept Article 4 as read, seconded by Selectman Gerard LeDuc.

Moderator Morse opened the floor for discussion.

Budget Committee Chairman Louie Houle III asked how these funds would be used.

Town Administrator Mike Williams responded the funds would go into the general fund and that there was no specific use for them at this time.

Merrill Vaughan asked if the funds could be applied toward Article 11 to reduce the tax impact. He felt funds allocated to the Fire Department should stay within that department.

Town Administrator Williams stated it is essentially doing the same thing. The money is going into the general fund and the appropriated money is coming out of the general fund.

Budget Committee Chairman Houle confirmed Town Administrator Williams' statement, stating if the funds go into the general fund and are used within the general fund, it will offset the need to increase taxes later on.

# 2015 TOWN MEETING MINUTES

Lance Houle asked if money in the general fund could be spent on something else other than what was intended. If money is in the general fund it could go toward anything.

Town Administrator Williams responded the purpose of the fund discussed in this Article is no longer needed. The \$11,000 in this fund will be used to offset expenses paid for by the general fund.

**Article 4 passed** by card vote.

## **Article 5:**

To see if the Town shall authorize the Selectmen to act as agents of the Town Hall capital reserve fund and to expend and close such fund.

(Fund balance on 12-31-14 is \$5,196.95)

(Recommended by the Board of Selectmen 4-0) (Recommended by the Budget Committee 8-4)

Motion made by Selectman Eric Nilsson to accept Article 5 as read, seconded by Selectman Gerard LeDuc.

Moderator Morse opened the floor for discussion.

No discussion.

**Article 5 passed** by card vote.

## **Article 6:**

To see if the town will vote, pursuant to NH RSA 35:9-a, II, to authorize the Trustees of Trust Funds to pay for capital reserve fund investment management services, and any other expenses incurred, from capital reserve funds income. No vote by the town to rescind such authority shall occur within five years of the original adoption of this article. (Recommended by the Board of Selectmen 4-0)

Motion made by Selectman Eric Nilsson to accept Article 6 as read, seconded by Selectman Gerard LeDuc.

Moderator Morse opened the floor for discussion.

Chris Cheney asked if there would be a financial impact.

Chairman of the Trustees of the Trust Funds Harry Vogt responded there would be no financial impact on the tax rate. The State of New Hampshire has tight regulations on how capital reserve funds are invested. Due to the decrease in returns on investments in recent years, the State has allowed municipalities to get assistance from financial advisors to find ways to increase revenue.

# 2015 TOWN MEETING MINUTES

The cost of a financial advisor will come from the interest and dividends generated from the investments.

**Article 6 passed** by card vote.

**Article 7:**

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Two Thousand Four Hundred Forty Dollars (\$2,440.00) for the purchase and installation of playground equipment at the Town pool. This sum to come from the Parks and Recreation fund and no amount raised from taxation. (Fund balance on 12-31-14 is \$10,314.85) (Submitted by Parks and Recreation Commission) (Recommended by the Board of Selectmen 4-0) (Recommended by the Budget Committee 11-1)

Motion made by Selectman Eric Nilsson to accept Article 7 as read, seconded by Selectman Gerard LeDuc.

Moderator Morse opened the floor for discussion.

No discussion.

**Article 7 passed** by card vote.

**Article 8:**

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of One Thousand Dollars (\$1,000.00) for engineering costs necessary for the repair of the dam at the Town pool. This sum to come from the Parks and Recreation fund and no amount raised from taxation. (Fund balance on 12-31-14 is \$10,314.85) (Recommended by the Board of Selectmen 4-0) (Recommended by the Budget Committee 11-1)

Motion made by Selectman Eric Nilsson to accept Article 8 as read, seconded by Selectman Gerard LeDuc.

Moderator Morse opened the floor for discussion.

No discussion.

**Article 8 passed** by card vote.

**Article 9:**

Are you in favor of adopting the Floral Park Cemetery as a Town Cemetery and instructing the Board of Selectmen to initiate any legal documentation necessary to acquire said cemetery? And

# 2015 TOWN MEETING MINUTES

further to raise and appropriate the sum of Nineteen Thousand Dollars (\$19,000.00) for the current fiscal year? This sum to come from general taxation. (Estimated gross tax impact \$0.07) (Recommended by the Board of Selectmen 4-0) (Recommended by the Budget Committee 10-2)

Motion made by Selectman Eric Nilsson to accept Article 9 as read, seconded by Selectman Gerard LeDuc.

Moderator Morse opened the floor for discussion.

Merrill Vaughan asked how far we were into the current fiscal year, and asked what the cost would be for the next fiscal year.

Town Administrator Williams responded the requested \$19,000 extends from this Town Meeting through the end of this fiscal year. The estimated cost for a full year is \$26,000, which would be added to the operating budget for next year. The projected revenue offset is \$7,000 that would come from income generated from the trust funds.

Chris Cheney asked for someone to explain the revenue offset, and asked who currently oversees the cemetery and asked if it is an active cemetery.

Town Administrator Williams responded that Floral Park is private and is overseen by its own trustees, the Pittsfield Cemetery Association, Inc. The Association has not seen enough of a return on their investments to maintain the cemetery. After the Association approached the Select Board for assistance the Select Board wanted to bring it to the Town and see if the voters wanted to make Floral Park a public cemetery. It is a very active cemetery, and if the voters decide not to take possession, it will not be maintained. The \$7000 comes from the trust funds, but it is not enough to cover all the costs.

Dan Welch asked who would oversee the cemetery.

Town Administrator Williams responded it would be the Town elected Cemetery Trustees.

Dan Welch asked if a representative of the Trustees could explain a plan going forward.

Town Administrator Williams responded he does not know if it has been brought to their attention.

Paul Nickerson asked if the cemetery would come under the complete control of Town. He stated the Town is obligated to have a Town owned cemetery to bury those people who can't afford to be buried elsewhere.

Town Administrator Williams responded that yes, it would be completely owned by the Town.

Fred Hast asked if the \$7,000 would reduce the \$26,000 to \$19,000.

# 2015 TOWN MEETING MINUTES

Town Administrator Williams confirmed it would.

Carole Richardson asked if there had been a public hearing and who would maintain the cemetery should the Town take possession. She felt there were too many questions and was not in favor of this Article. She wanted to hear from the Trustees.

Town Administrator Williams confirmed a public hearing was not held and in his understanding one was not required. The Pittsfield Cemetery Association, Inc. came to the Select Board due to revenue concerns. The Select Board wanted the voters to have a choice in the matter.

Louie Houle III spoke as a member of the Pittsfield Cemetery Association, Inc. He stated they are in same boat as the Trustees of Trust Funds. Interest returns are too low. Unfortunately the Association waited too long to come to the voters. He stated it has been a Pittsfield cemetery since the Civil War. Though private, people can still be buried there. The Association currently pays insurance which would be added to the Town's current policy should this go forward. The Association currently pays for water but that cost would be eliminated should the Town assume ownership. Maintenance and equipment costs would remain. He stated it basically depends on how the townspeople want the cemetery to look.

Pittsfield Cemetery Association, Inc. Chairperson Dave Pollard (Moderator Morse asked the voters if it was permissible for non-resident Mr. Pollard to speak, no objections) stated a portion of plot sales would go into Town funds. With changes in funeral arrangements income has been reduced. He stated there was a lot of thought put into this request and the Association worked closely with the Selectmen all last summer to try to get through this past year.

Cara Marston spoke as a member of the Pittsfield Cemetery Association, Inc. as well as an elected Cemetery Trustee. She was speaking only for herself, but she felt Don Fife has done an excellent job as the groundskeeper for Floral Park, and believed he would be retained in that position.

Carole Richardson stated her concern regarding the expense of equipment and other costs.

Dave Pollard stated that State law requires all towns have a public cemetery. If this Article passes the Pittsfield Cemetery Association, Inc. would be dissolved.

Scott Palmer asked where the Cemetery was located.

Dan Welch asked Cara Marston if the Cemetery Trustees had formulated a plan.

Cara Marston responded that if the Article passed, the Cemetery Trustees would call a meeting and formulate a plan. A decision from the voters was needed before the Cemetery Trustees could move forward.

# 2015 TOWN MEETING MINUTES

Carl Anderson stated he didn't think we had a choice. He believe it is the Town's responsibility to take on the cemetery.

Chris Cheney felt there should have been a plan before asking for the money. He asked how the Town will know if the requested amount of money will be enough.

Selectman Konopka responded that the Select Board has a budget of \$19,000 and will do their best to stay within that, but there is always the possibility of unexpected expenses.

Dan Schroth stated it would be a shame not to take care of it. He trusts the elected officials and he trusts Cara Marston. He believed there will be a cost savings.

Diane Vaughan didn't think Floral Park was a Town cemetery, and asked who owns land.

Louie Houle III responded the Pittsfield Cemetery Association, Inc. currently owns the land. Individuals own their plots. The land was a gift to the Town from the Drake family to be used for a cemetery and given to the Association to care for.

Cedric Dustin spoke as Chairman of the Cemetery Trustees. He stated he had not been approached, but Cara Marston is also a Cemetery Trustee as well as a member of the Pittsfield Cemetery Association, Inc. He trusts Cara's account. Floral Park would come under the jurisdiction of the Cemetery Trustees should this Article pass. The Trustees would need to present a budget to the Select Board and it would be part of the general Town budget.

Paul Nickerson stated the Town does currently have a Town cemetery next to the Community Center, but it is full. The State requires a town to have a cemetery for people to be buried.

Request to move the question.

**Article 9 passed** by card vote.

## **Article 10:**

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Forty-Four Thousand Five Hundred Seventy Dollars (\$44,570.00) for the purchase of a police cruiser and authorize the withdrawal of Twenty-Five Thousand Dollars (\$25,000.00) from the Police Cruiser Capital Reserve Fund created for that purpose. The balance of Nineteen Thousand Five Hundred Seventy Dollars (\$19,570.00) is to come from general taxation.

(Fund balance on 12-31-14 is \$26,083.47) (Estimated gross tax impact \$0.07)

(Recommended by the Board of Selectmen 4-0) (Recommended by the Budget Committee 14-0)

Motion made by Selectman Eric Nilsson to accept Article 10 as read, seconded by Selectman Gerard LeDuc.



# 2015 TOWN MEETING MINUTES

Moderator Morse opened the floor for discussion.

Linden Cram brought it to the attention of the Body that Article 10 was read incorrectly.

Selectman Eric Nilsson withdrew his motion, seconded by Selectman Gerard LeDuc.

Moderator Morse re-read Article 10.

Motion made by Selectman Eric Nilsson to accept Article 10 as read, seconded by Selectman Gerard LeDuc.

Moderator Morse opened the floor for discussion.

Carl Anderson believed the police do a great job. However, he asked why we need another cruiser. It seemed to him like we have a lot of new cruisers.

Town Administrator Williams clarified that this would replace an existing cruiser. The thought is to maintain a schedule of replacement. The Town would get the most money for trading the vehicles in if the mileage is kept under 100,000. The plan is to replace a cruiser each year. This year the funds would come from this Capital Reserve fund, but going forward the replacement costs would be a budget item. The current Dodge cruisers are not good in snow and require a lot of maintenance. The newer cruisers have scheduled maintenance plans built into the contract for the duration of ownership.

Carl Anderson asked why we need to trade in the vehicles that frequently. He believed they would last longer if they are well maintained.

Police Chief Jeff Cain noted the 2006 Ford Crown Victoria that is scheduled to be replaced currently has 120,000 miles. If it sits more than a day it will not start. The Police Department has spent over \$14,000 in vehicle maintenance costs, but had \$7,000 budgeted. The maintenance warranty they have with the newer vehicles should cut these costs significantly. The cruiser that was replaced last year had no trade-in value. The plan is to have a 5-year rotation.

Diane Vaughan asked how many cruisers the Town owns.

Chief Cain responded the Town has five cruisers.

Diane Vaughan responded the Town would be replacing a cruiser every year.

Chief Cain confirmed it would.

Leonard Smith asked for confirmation that the requested \$44,570.00 is the cost of a new cruiser, and asked the replacement value of the current vehicle.

# 2015 TOWN MEETING MINUTES

Town Administrator Williams confirmed the \$44,570.00 is the cost of a new cruiser and responded the Select Board does not believe there would be any trade in value on the current Ford Crown Victoria with 120,000 miles. Consideration may be given to putting the current vehicle out to bid or auction.

Leonard Smith believed someone would pay something for it. He felt it is asking for too much money.

Chris Hill asked how many of the current vehicles are all wheel drive, and asked if any consideration was given to purchasing 4 wheel drive vehicles.

Chief Cain responded he would prefer all 4 wheel drive small SUVs. The Department currently has one, the Ford Explorer. There would be approximately a \$1,000.00 cost difference.

Hank Fitzgerald asked to move the vote.

**Article 10 passed** by card vote.

## **Article 11:**

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Thirty Thousand Dollars (\$30,000.00) to be added to the Fire and Rescue Apparatus Capital Reserve Fund previously established. This sum to come from general taxation.

(Fund balance on 12-31-14 is \$344,972.11) (Estimated gross tax impact \$0.11)

(Recommended by the Board of Selectmen 4-0) (Recommended by the Budget Committee 11-1)

Motion made by Selectman Eric Nilsson to accept Article 11 as read, seconded by Selectman Gerard LeDuc.

Moderator Morse opened the floor for discussion.

Diane Vaughan asked if Article 4 and 5 are going into the general fund, shouldn't the \$16,000 offset the \$30,000 asked for in Article 11.

Town Administrator Williams answered the amount the Town is expending from those first two funds makes it so the Select Board doesn't have to ask for even more money.

Moderator Morse responded that all revenue reduces the overall tax rate.

Chris Cheney asked for the status of the current apparatus, and if there were any anticipated costs.

Fire Chief Rob Martin responded that after 20 years it is difficult to get parts. Engine 2 is almost 30 years old, but right now it is in good shape.

# 2015 TOWN MEETING MINUTES

Ed Trzcinski asked if the Fire Department was considering replacing current vehicles with 4 wheel drive vehicles like the Police Department.

Chief Martin responded not at this time.

Paul Nickerson stated it was a long meeting last year due to a lot of confusion. We took a lot out of surplus last year and we need to put it back.

Selectman Konopka responded there were bad years when the Town didn't add to the capital reserve funds. This is an attempt to catch up.

Budget Committee Chairman Houle clarified Mr. Nickerson's reference to last year's fund balance. He explained money from the fund balance was used to add to capital reserve funds last year. \$300,000 was taken from fund balance. He believes those funds should only be used for a real emergency. It reduced the fund balance to \$242,000. In his opinion it should not be that low.

**Article 11 passed** by card vote.

## **Article 12:**

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Fifteen Thousand Dollars (\$15,000.00) to be added to the Small Highway Truck Capital Reserve Fund previously established. This sum to come from general taxation.

(Fund balance on 12-31-14 is \$20,145.24) (Estimated gross tax impact \$0.06)

(Recommended by the Board of Selectmen 4-0) (Recommended by the Budget Committee 12-0)

Motion made by Selectman Eric Nilsson to accept Article 12 as read, seconded by Selectman Gerard LeDuc.

Moderator Morse opened the floor for discussion.

No discussion.

**Article 12 passed** by card vote.

## **Article 13:**

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Thirty Thousand Dollars (\$30,000.00) to be added to the Dump Truck Capital Reserve Fund previously established. This sum to come from general taxation.

(Fund balance on 12-31-14 is \$2,014.66) (Estimated gross tax impact \$0.11)

(Recommended by the Board of Selectmen 4-0) (Recommended by the Budget Committee 12-0)

# 2015 TOWN MEETING MINUTES

Motion made by Selectman Eric Nilsson to accept Article 13 as read, seconded by Selectman Gerard LeDuc.

Moderator Morse opened the floor for discussion.

No discussion.

**Article 13 passed** by card vote.

## **Article 14:**

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Ten Thousand Dollars (\$10,000.00) to be added to the Loader Capital Reserve Fund previously established. This sum to come from general taxation.

(Fund balance on 12-31-14 is \$150,762.18) (Estimated gross tax impact \$0.04)

(Recommended by the Board of Selectmen 4-0) (Recommended by the Budget Committee 9-3)

Motion made by Selectman Eric Nilsson to accept Article 14 as read, seconded by Selectman Gerard LeDuc.

Moderator Morse opened the floor for discussion.

No discussion.

**Article 14 passed** by card vote.

## **Article 15:**

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Fifteen Thousand Dollars (\$15,000.00) to be added to the Grader Capital Reserve Fund previously established. This sum to come from general taxation.

(Fund balance on 12-31-14 is \$37,884.44) (Estimated gross tax impact \$0.06)

(Recommended by the Board of Selectmen 4-0) (Recommended by the Budget Committee 10-2)

Motion made by Selectman Eric Nilsson to accept Article 15 as read, seconded by Selectman Gerard LeDuc.

Moderator Morse opened the floor for discussion.

No discussion.

**Article 15 passed** by card vote.

# 2015 TOWN MEETING MINUTES

## **Article 16:**

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Five Thousand Dollars (\$5,000.00) to be added to the Backhoe Capital Reserve Fund previously established. This sum to come from general taxation.

(Fund balance on 12-31-14 is \$75,929.53) (Estimated gross tax impact \$0.02)

(Recommended by the Board of Selectmen 4-0) (Recommended by the Budget Committee 8-4)

Motion made by Selectman Eric Nilsson to accept Article 16 as read, seconded by Selectman Gerard LeDuc.

Moderator Morse opened the floor for discussion.

No discussion.

**Article 16 passed** by card vote.

## **Article 17:**

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Ten Thousand Dollars (\$10,000.00) to be added to the Sidewalk Tractor Capital Reserve Fund previously established. This sum to come from general taxation.

(Fund balance on 12-31-14 is \$92,779.12) (Estimated gross tax impact \$0.04)

(Recommended by the Board of Selectmen 4-0) (Not Recommended by the Budget Committee 1-11)

Motion made by Selectman Eric Nilsson to accept Article 17 as read, seconded by Selectman Gerard LeDuc.

Moderator Morse opened the floor for discussion.

Dan Welch stated he was not opposed to any of these funds, but asked Superintendent of Public Works George Bachelder what he thought would be the next big hit.

Superintendent Bachelder responded the current sidewalk tractor was purchased in 2006. They would like to replace it in 2016. They plan to replace the Loader in 2017, but it will need some maintenance in the meantime. The Grader is scheduled to be replaced in 2027. The International should be replaced in 2017, but there is currently not enough funds in the capital reserve.

Scott Palmer asked why this Article was not recommended by the Budget Committee.

Budget Committee Chairman Houle asked for the cost to buy a new sidewalk tractor and asked if the current one was worn out.

# 2015 TOWN MEETING MINUTES

Superintendent Bachelder stated a new sidewalk tractor costs approximately \$120,000 without equipment but it would need a new plow and sander. The current tractor is in good shape.

Budget Committee Chairman Houle responded that the Budget Committee was looking to save money and it looked like we could wait on this item.

Fred Hast stated a new sidewalk tractor would cost approximately \$150,000 with the needed equipment. It is better to put money away now.

Diane Vaughan stated the Highway Department has taken financial hits in past. We should help them now.

**Article 17 passed** by card vote.

## **Article 18:**

To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Twenty Five Thousand Dollars (\$25,000.00) to be added to the previously appropriated amount for the investigation and evaluation of whether the town should consider the purchase of Pittsfield Aqueduct.

(Estimated gross tax impact \$0.09)

(Recommended by the Board of Selectmen 4-0) (Recommended by the Budget Committee 10-2)

Motion made by Selectman Eric Nilsson to accept Article 18 as read, seconded by Selectman Gerard LeDuc.

Moderator Morse opened the floor for discussion.

Carl Anderson stated that \$25,000 is a lot of money for a study. He felt a lot of time has been spent on this issue already and it's now like beating a dead horse. Pennichuck Corporation seems to be doing a good job, and costs seem to be reasonable. He felt this is a waste of money.

Fred Hast agreed with Mr. Anderson that we've spent too much time talking about this, but believed the Town should purchase it. Pennichuck Corporation is generating income that could stay here in Town. He believed there should be water service on Route 28 to entice people. He asked people to support this Article.

Noreen Rollins stated she is from Nashua. Nashua bought their water system back from Pennichuck Corporation and promised rates would go down but it did not happen. Rates increased significantly.

Selectman Al Douglas stated the previously requested \$30,000 was used. A restricter report was created. The \$25,000 appropriated last year was not used. The Board is asking to use that \$25,000 this year instead.

# 2015 TOWN MEETING MINUTES

Carl Anderson asked what the cost to purchase Pittsfield Aqueduct would be, and asked if it was for sale.

Selectman Al Douglas responded the estimated cost is between \$2 – \$4 million. Pennichuck Corporation has not yet been approached.

Fred Okrent spoke as a member of the Aqueduct Purchase Committee. He stated if it was decided to go ahead with the purchase, an agency would probably be created to oversee the service. All costs could be rolled into a bond.

Call for the vote.

Moderator Morse determined the vote was too close to determine by sight. He asked the Supervisors of the Checklist to count the cards.

62 yes. 57 no. **Article 18 passed** by card vote.

## **Article 19:**

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of One Hundred Twenty Three Thousand Seven Hundred Fifty Three Dollars (\$123,753.00) for the purpose of funding 1.) ambulance repair, 2.) eight hours of the forty-eight hour work week, 3.) ambulance overtime, 4.) on-call personnel , 5.) paramedic intercepts, and 6.) replacement of ambulance vehicles; and further to fund this appropriation by authorizing the withdrawal of that sum from the Ambulance Replacement and Equipment Special Revenue Fund previously created, with no amount to be raised by taxation. This article is designated as a special warrant article and the appropriation shall not lapse until adjournment of the 2016 Annual Town Meeting. (Fund balance on 12-31-14 is \$294,039.09) (Recommended by the Board of Selectmen 4-0) (Recommended by the Budget Committee 10-2)

Motion made by Selectman Eric Nilsson to accept Article 19 as read, seconded by Selectman Gerard LeDuc.

Moderator Morse opened the floor for discussion.

No discussion.

**Article 19 passed** by card vote.

## **Article 20:**

To see if the town will vote to approve the cost items included in the collective bargaining agreement reached between the Board of Selectmen and Pittsfield Town Employees AFT-NH,

# 2015 TOWN MEETING MINUTES

Local 6214, which calls for the following increase in salaries and benefits at the current staffing level:

2015	\$49,313.00 (Estimated gross tax impact \$0.18)
2016	\$26,519.00
2017	\$31,671.00
2018	\$212.00

And further to raise and appropriate the sum of Forty-nine Thousand Three Hundred Thirteen Dollars (\$49,313.00) for the current fiscal year, such sum representing the additional costs attributable to the increase in salaries and benefits required by the agreement over those that would be paid at current staffing levels.

(Recommended by the Board of Selectmen 3-2) (Recommended by the Budget Committee 12-0)

Motion made by Selectman Eric Nilsson to accept Article 20 as read, seconded by Selectman Gerard LeDuc.

Moderator Morse opened the floor for discussion.

Diane Vaughan asked why the amounts listed for each year were so different.

Town Administrator Williams responded the first year of the contract is higher to compensate for the lack of raises in the last four years. This is a three year contract which, if it passes, would begin with this Town Meeting and conclude at Town Meeting 2018. This would avoid dispersing retroactive pay.

Selectwoman Linda Small noted the Select Board approved this Article by a 3- 2 vote. She voted against the agreement, but wanted to explain her reasons. She stated it had nothing to do with employee performance. She felt the employees have done a good job. She believed the agreement with the Teamsters approved last year was fair and sustainable. She supported the raises agreed upon in this AFT contract, but unfortunately she could not support the agreement overall. She had always felt it was important to bring the proper information to the voters so they may make educated decisions. She was concerned with the recognition clause in this AFT agreement because it includes supervisors. She did not believe supervisors should be included in the same contract with other employees. She had witnessed the presence of conflict of interest during her tenure as a voter representative that resulted in the voters not being fairly treated nor adequately protected. She believed the language of this contract was ambiguous, partial and inadequate. She stated the Select Board has worked hard over the years to make this a working document that is fair for both parties. (Ms. Small read aloud portions from the tentative agreement) She said the recognition clause states that if someone who previously worked for the Town be reinstated, he or she could get the same benefits as the other employees covered by this contract.



# 2015 TOWN MEETING MINUTES

Louie Houle III called for a point of order. He was concerned we should not speak of contract information that should be private.

Moderator Morse stated he could not explain that, and there was no legal counsel present to consult.

Selectwoman Small stated this information is in the current tentative agreement and believes it is public knowledge and is "Right to Know". She believes the voters have a right to know what they are signing. She stated ambiguous language has cost the taxpayers a substantial amount of money in the past because they were not adequately protected in previous contracts.

Selectman Konopka called for a point of order. He stated we should not bring up past issues. We should only speak of this Article at the present time.

Moderator Morse stated he does not have the legal expertise to advise on this. He expressed his hope that Selectwoman Small would limit her comments to this Article.

Selectwoman Small stated she had spent a great deal of time putting this information together and said that this was neither easy nor comfortable for her, but she took an oath to represent the taxpayers. All this information came from the tentative agreement. She said everything she had the voters could find on their own. She is trying to help the voters. She believed the language in this current tentative agreement is putting a barrier between management and staff. She didn't feel the voters have been adequately protected or fairly represented. She believed management of overtime has been limited which concerned her, and she did not believe there is accountability for sick leave. She was concerned new employees covered by this agreement would get the same leave time as someone who had worked for the Town several years. Overall, she had a problem with the accumulation of leave time. It could result in too much time off. Employees covered by the AFT contract would get more leave time than the employees covered by the Teamsters contract. She did not feel it was fair or sustainable. She would like to start fresh with negotiations.

Bea Douglas stated our Town employees have gone four years without a contract. They are dedicated to our Town and deserve our vote.

Merrill Vaughan stated that Selectwoman Small claims this is public knowledge, but he hadn't seen anything. He said Selectwoman Small had thrown out a lot of numbers. He asked how the voters could be expected to understand it all in such short time. He asked for the tax impact for subsequent years. He felt the voters should have been given information to digest before now.

Dan Welch understood we were only voting on the money. He asked if this agreement was a done deal.

# 2015 TOWN MEETING MINUTES

Selectman Konopka responded that if this Article passes, the employees will have a three year contract. He supported this contract along with the majority of the Select Board. He believes this is a fair contract.

Bob Wharem asked the voters to support the contract. He said this increase will bring the employees' salaries in line with other communities. He believed four years is too long to go without a contract.

Donna White asked the voters to support the contract. She believed we should support the people who protect us.

Chris Cheney asked what would happen if this Article does not pass.

Moderator Morse responded that Article 21 allows for renegotiation and permission to call for another town meeting.

Dan Green asked for a secret ballot.

Moderator Morse stated he had already received a written request for a secret ballot and had the required number of signatures.

Louie Houle III stated we should be very careful when speaking of contracts. The Town has spent a lot in legal fees in the past when we were not cautious. He also asked that the names requesting the secret ballot be read aloud.

Selectwoman Small agreed a contract was needed, but was concerned about the language in this agreement. She asked that the voters consider voting this Article down and vote in favor of Article 21 and renegotiate.

Scott Palmer asked why there was no legal counsel present.

Moderator Morse stated that it is at the discretion of the Select Board to decide whether or not to have legal counsel present at the Meeting.

Town Administrator Williams stated the Select Board did not anticipate the need for legal counsel and did not see the need to spend the money. Contract negotiations are exempt from RSA 91-a "Right to Know". All negotiations were held in non-public sessions, so he stated he could not comment on the points Selectwoman Small had made without violating RSA 91-a and non-public session. The purpose of this vote is to discuss the cost items. The Body can only vote on the money issues. He believed this discussion could result in legal issues. He stated no one is completely happy with the leave policy. The parties are prepared to go back and discuss the leave policy.

# 2015 TOWN MEETING MINUTES

Leslie Vogt asked if there were going to be any other secret ballots, and asked if we could conduct them together.

Moderator Morse stated he would not accept a request for a secret ballot before an Article came up.

Ed Trzcinski was concerned if this Article did not pass it would hurt the employees further. He asked why it had taken four years for a contract.

Selectwoman Small believed the employees were very well taken care of. She responded she had not been part of the contract negotiations this year. She stated she had no idea what happened behind closed doors because she was not the representative, and that we were no longer in negotiations and that we had a contract. She believed if this agreement is accepted there could be an abuse of leave time.

Scott Palmer asked to call the question.

Selectman Nilsson stated he believed they were very close to agreement on this union contract however he also opposed this current agreement. He felt more negotiation was necessary.

Paul Sherwood moved to call question. Merrill Vaughan seconded.

Card vote to move the question passed.

**Moderator Morse accepted a request for a secret ballot** from Eric Nilsson, Larry Konopka, Paul Sherwood, William Elkins, Carole Elkins, Gerard LeDuc, Marilyn Roberts.

Moderator Morse explained the procedure for the secret ballot.

Moderator Morse opened the polls for the secret ballot vote.

Moderator Morse closed the polls after confirming all who wanted to vote had the opportunity.

Moderator Morse stated that without legal counsel present, he would maintain an atmosphere of true democracy and err on the side of allowing people to speak unless he determined a valid reason to not allow it.

Secret Ballot results Yes 69. No 64.

**Article 20 passed.**

# 2015 TOWN MEETING MINUTES

## **Article 21:**

Shall the Town of Pittsfield, if article 20 is defeated, authorize the governing body to call one special meeting, at its option, to address article 20 cost items only?

Motion made by Selectman Eric Nilsson to accept Article 21 as read, seconded by Selectman Gerard LeDuc.

**Moderator Morse passed over Article 21 since Article 20 passed.**

## **Article 22:**

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Four Million Thirty-Two Thousand Three Hundred Ninety-Eight Dollars (\$4,032,398.00) to fund the Town Budget and Capital Outlay as recommended by the Budget Committee. Said sum does not include the sums contained in special or individual articles of this warrant. (Estimated gross tax impact \$9.67)  
(Recommended by the Budget Committee 13-0-1) (Recommended by the Board of Selectmen 5-0)

Budget Committee Chairman Houle moved to accept Article 22 as read, Budget Committee member Jacob Kitson seconded.

Motion made by Selectman Eric Nilsson to amend the amount to be raised and appropriated to \$4,038,891.00 in Article 22, seconded by Selectman Gerard LeDuc.

Moderator Morse stated the increase of \$6493.00 represented the PUC approved Pennichuck Corporation cost increase. He reminded the voters they were now only discussing the amendment.

Budget Committee Chairman Houle stated the Budget Committee did not include this increase in their proposed budget because it came in after their final vote.

Scott Palmer asked if the \$6493.00 could come from the other two Articles voted on to return money to the general fund.

Moderator Morse responded the voters need to decide whether or not to give the Select Board the authority to spend the amount of money.

**Moderator Morse called for the vote to amend the figure to \$4,038,891.00.**

**Card vote passed.**

Moderator Morse reminded the Body they were now discussing voting on Article 22 with the new amended figure.

# 2015 TOWN MEETING MINUTES

Ted Mitchell made a motion to amend the figure in the economic development line item 01-4651-1-390 from \$4,000 to \$6,000 increasing the amount to raise and appropriate to \$4,040,891.00. Paul Sherwood seconded the motion.

Ted Mitchell stated budgeting for the Economic Development Commission (EDC) started in 2007. Their budget has been cut each year since. He did not believe \$4,000 would cover their current estimated costs. Mr. Mitchell gave examples of what the money has been used for. He stated a decrease in their budget would hurt their momentum.

Budget Committee member Kitson stated the Budget Committee did not get the information they had requested of the EDC when they were reviewing their budget.

Scott Palmer asked for the tax impact with this new amendment.

Town Administrator Williams responded the first amendment increase was .02 cents and the second amendment increase was less than .01 cent resulting in a revised tax impact of \$9.69.

Budget Committee member Helen Schiff stated the voters should be concerned with how to bring businesses into Town. It is important to keep EDC's momentum.

Moderator Morse reminded the Body they were only voting on the second amended figure.

**Moderator Morse called for the vote to amend the figure to \$4,040,891.00.**

**Card vote passed.**

Chris Cheney asked how this increase compared to last year's budget and what the tax rate would be if all the Articles pass.

Moderator Morse responded last year the rate was \$10.00. This year the rate would be \$10.55, but explained this is a property assessment re-evaluation year, so it is not possible to give an accurate number at this time.

Moderator Morse called for the vote on Article 22 with the amended figure of \$4,040,891.00.

**Amended Article 22 passed** by card vote.

## **Article 23:**

To see if the town will vote to amend Housing Standards Ordinance 201.3 Terms Defined in Other Codes to read, "Where terms are not defined in this code and are defined in the most recent International Building Code, International Fuel Gas Code, International Property Maintenance Code, NH State Fire Code, International Plumbing Code, International Mechanical Code, or the

# 2015 TOWN MEETING MINUTES

ICC Electrical Code, or any other code adopted by reference, such terms shall have the meaning ascribed to them as in those codes.” (Submitted by Housing Standards Agency)

Motion made by Selectman Eric Nilsson to accept Article 23 as read, seconded by Selectman Gerard LeDuc.

Housing Standards Agency Chairman Bill Elkins stated Articles 23 through 26 are mostly housekeeping items pertaining to housing standards.

Scott Palmer asked if there were issues with these codes.

H S A Chairman Elkins explained these Articles represent codes brought to the attention of the H S A board, and they want to clarify the ordinances.

H S A member Cedric Dustin stated the change in this ordinance is the addition of “most recent” before the codes.

**Article 23 passed** by card vote.

## **Article 24:**

To see if the town will vote to amend Housing Standards Ordinance 603.5 Portable Cooking Equipment to read, “Portable equipment such as hot plates, gas grills, hibachis, etc. is prohibited for primary cooking. Any portable cooking equipment employing a flame is prohibited from use on all porches or balconies on multi-story structures. All portable cooking units shall be kept a minimum of 15’-0” from structure during use.” (Submitted by Housing Standards Agency)

Motion made by Selectman Eric Nilsson to accept Article 24 as read, seconded by Selectman Gerard LeDuc.

H S A member Cedric Dustin confirmed this Article is a housekeeping issue. The Agency changed the distance to 15’. This requirement would only apply to rentals.

Paul Sherwood stated as a renter, 15’ would put him in the neighbor’s yard or in the street. He would like to make a motion to amend the difference to 10’.

Merrill Vaughan seconded the motion.

Moderator Morse reminded the Body they were now discussing the amendment to Article 24.

Fred Hast asked for the current State requirement.

Fire Chief Martin responded the current State code requires 25 feet.

# 2015 TOWN MEETING MINUTES

H S A Chairman Elkins stated that the H S A cannot amend the code to be less than required by State code.

Moderator Morse stated if that is the State code it makes Article 24 invalid.

Paul Sherwood removed his motion to amend Article 24, and Merrill Vaughan seconded.

Call for vote on the originally worded Article 24.

**Article 24 failed** by card vote.

## **Article 25:**

To see if the town will vote to amend Housing Standards Ordinance 101.5 Inspectors to read, "The Board shall appoint a Chief Inspector and Inspectors who shall not be members of the Housing Standards Board. Inspectors must become ICC Certified." (Submitted by Housing Standards Agency)

Motion made by Selectman Eric Nilsson to accept Article 25 as read, seconded by Selectman Gerard LeDuc.

H S A member Cedric Dustin stated the Agency added "inspectors must become ICC Certified".

Scott Palmer asked what "ICC" stood for.

Building Inspector Jesse Pacheco responded International Code Council.

Housing Standards member Pat Heffernan made a motion to amend Article 25 to add a time limit of 90 days to become ICC Certified. Paul Sherwood seconded.

Moderator Morse opened the floor for discussion on the amended verbage.

Fallon Reed asked how long it normally took to become certified, and asked if 90 days was a reasonable amount of time.

H S A member Cedric Dustin responded the person must take classes and an exam. He was not sure if all of that could happen in that time frame.

**Moderator Morse called for the vote to amend Article 25 to include the 90 day time frame.**

**Card vote passed.**

Moderator Morse read the amended Article 25 to include the inspector must become ICC certified within 90 days.

# 2015 TOWN MEETING MINUTES

Louie Houle III agreed the inspector should be certified, but was concerned if classes didn't start right away. He believed more time would be beneficial. Mr. Houle made a motion to amend Article 24 to extend the amount of time for the inspector to become ICC Certified to 180 days. Sharilyn Deane seconded the motion.

Moderator Morse opened the floor for discussion on the amended verbage.

Fred Okrent stated he took the classes online and that it took about 3 weeks.

H S A Chairman Elkins stated one of the issues the Board has seen is timing of the exam.

**Moderator Morse called for the vote to amend Article 25 to include the 180 day time frame.**

**Card vote passed.**

Moderator Morse read the amended Article 25 to include the inspector must become ICC certified within 180 days.

Scott Palmer asked if the inspector was a paid or volunteer position and asked if he or she would be reimbursed for the costs of the certification.

H S A member Cedric Dustin responded the Agency has always had inspectors. They are paid through the revenue generated by inspections. All rental properties are inspected every two years. The inspector is an employee of the Housing Standards Agency.

**Amended Article 25 passed** by card vote.

## **Article 26:**

To see if the town will vote to amend Housing Standards Ordinance 102.3 Application of Other Codes to read, "Repairs, additions or alterations to a structure, or changes of occupancy, shall be done in accordance with the procedures and provisions of the most recent International Building Code, International Plumbing Code, International Property Maintenance Code, International Mechanical Code, International Fuel Gas Code, the ICC Electrical Code and NFPA # 101 Life Safety Code. Nothing in this code shall be construed to cancel, modify or set aside any provision of the State of New Hampshire's Adopted Codes or the Town of Pittsfield Zoning Ordinance." (Submitted by Housing Standards Agency)

Motion made by Selectman Eric Nilsson to accept Article 26 as read, seconded by Selectman Gerard LeDuc.

H S A member Cedric Dustin stated the change was the addition of "most recent" to the ordinance.



# 2015 TOWN MEETING MINUTES

Carl Anderson asked for a definition of “changes of occupancy”.

H S A member Cedric Dustin replied the phrase refers to when a building goes from a private residence to a rental property.

**Article 26 passed** by card vote.

## **Article 27:**

Are you in favor to remove Jessie Pacheco from building inspector position and (1) instruct the selectman to hire a temporary inspector (2) appoint a committee to hire someone more helpfull (3) put Dan Schroth on this committee? (sic) (By citizen petition)

Motion made by Dan Schroth to accept Article 27 as read, seconded by Fred Hast.

Moderator Morse cautioned those who spoke on this Article. It is a very sensitive Article. He was disappointed that it was here on the floor. He asked people to use good judgement when they spoke.

Dan Schroth stated he had expressed his concerns to the Town Administrator and then to the Select Board but did not receive relief. He did not feel he could work in Pittsfield until this issue was resolved. He believed there should be a committee formed to hire a building inspector. He felt it would avoid a conflict of interest. He believed Building Inspector Jesse Pacheco has a conflict of interest because he is a contractor. He doesn't believe a person can be professional if they have a conflict of interest. Mr. Schroth asked for a secret ballot.

Chris Ward stated he has been in the electrical trade for 27 years. He believed the importance of the building inspector is to enforce the building codes and that it benefits everyone. He believed the current inspector is consistent and fair and that we should not shoot the messenger. He thanked the Building Inspector for the work he has done for the Town and recognized it can be a thankless job.

Sharon Matras stated her family had an incident with this person. She said Dan Schroth gave a voice to their issue. They felt intimidated by Mr. Pacheco. She stated he came to their property unannounced, claiming he had received a complaint. She was disappointed with the experience.

Pat Heffernan stated he is a contractor in Town. He stated his agreement with Chris Ward's statements. Mr. Heffernan believed Mr. Pacheco was being vilified for enforcing codes. If people do not like the rules they need to go to Concord. Mr. Pacheco should not be punished for enforcing rules that may not have been enforced previously. The rules cannot be ignored.

Merrill Vaughan stated as an appointed official, only the Selectmen could hire and fire.

# 2015 TOWN MEETING MINUTES

Moderator Morse responded that Article 27 is only advisory. The Select Board would have the final decision.

Jeffrey Swain stated Mr. Pacheco came by his property. Mr. Swain wasn't happy, but knew Mr. Pacheco was doing his job.

Fred Hast asked if our building inspector was ICC certified.

Town Moderator Williams responded he was not.

Beverly Drolet stated many of the voters understand Mr. Pacheco was appointed, but were also led to believe he was to become certified. She asked why he wasn't certified. She also stated word was out that he is not made accountable for business reports or mileage. She did not know if this was true. She believed if it was it should be addressed, if it was not true his name should be cleared.

Chris Hill stated it didn't appear Mr. Pacheco was reimbursed for all the expenses associated with his job. The Town needs code enforcement. He believed if there is an employee issue, the Select Board should address it.

Dan Schroth stated if he had received relief, he wouldn't be here. He did not think his competition should be inspecting his work. He stated he is not against a building inspector, he is against a conflict of interest.

Building Inspector Jesse Pacheco stated he had taken only one job in Pittsfield. At that time he had an outside building inspector inspect his work. He stated he goes out to a property after he receives a complaint or a request from the Select Board. He knows it is not always popular, but he has to follow the rules.

Budget Committee Faith Whittier stated it was difficult for the Budget Committee to make recommendations without job descriptions. She said it was very difficult to determine what a person should be reimbursed for mileage and gas when they do not have the information, though she recognized it is not the job of the Budget Committee to inspect logs. She also stated the Budget Committee did not know the Building Inspector was not required to be ICC Certified until after the Town Administrator looked it up for them.

Willie Matras stated he didn't want an inspector, but if we had to have one they should go after the bad guys.

Building Inspector Jesse Pacheco stated his qualifications and that he had been working in this profession for over 40 years. He stated he is licensed and takes courses.

Selectman Konopka made a motion to move the question, seconded by Selectman Eric Nilsson.

# 2015 TOWN MEETING MINUTES

Motion to move the question passed by card vote.

**Moderator Morse accepted a request for a secret ballot** from Dan Schroth, Ralph Odell, Merrill Vaughan, Joyce Terrill, and Diane Vaughan.

Moderator Morse explained the procedure for the secret ballot.

Moderator Morse opened the polls for the secret ballot vote.

Moderator Morse closed the polls after confirming all who wanted to vote had the opportunity.

Secret ballot results Yes 53. No 65.

**Article 27 was defeated.**

## **Article 28:**

To see if the town will vote to direct the Board of Selectmen to exempt the Pittsfield Center Development Corporation, a 501.c3 non-profit corporation, from having to pay property taxes on its properties at 1 Cram Ave. and 33 Bridge St. as recommended by the town's assessor, Avitar Associates. All income from these rental properties is used in the operation and maintenance of the Pittsfield Community Center and the building housing the Blueberry Express Day Care, which are the other properties owned by the Pittsfield Center Development Corporation. (By citizen petition)

Motion made by Fred Hast to accept Article 28 as read, seconded by Cedric Dustin.

Moderator Morse opened the floor for discussion.

Pittsfield Center of Development Corp. (PCDC) member Cedric Dustin stated the PCDC is a 501.c3 registered non-profit agency. They own four properties. Two are rental properties and the other two are the Community Center and the Blueberry Express Daycare building. They currently pay taxes on the two rental properties. Due to increased costs of utilities and other expenses, he stated the PCDC has run into financial issues. Mr. Dustin stated the Community Center is very difficult to maintain financially due to its age and size. A number of organizations use the Community Center. As treasurer of PCDC, he had brought forward the idea to ask for tax exempt status for the two rental properties to free up funds to maintain the Community Center and Blueberry Express Daycare building. The Select Board brought the request before Avitar Associates, the Town's assessing company, and Avitar recommended making the two apartments tax exempt. The Select Board did not agree, so PCDC wanted to bring it to the voters. Mr. Dustin stated if they do not have to pay taxes on those two buildings, PCDC would be in the black. He stated that if it is decided not to allow the tax exempt status the Town could eventually take the tax deeds on the apartment buildings and PCDC would have no income to run the Community Center. PCDC currently generates their income through the rental income from the apartment

# 2015 TOWN MEETING MINUTES

buildings and facility rentals from the Blueberry Express day care building and Community Center and grant funds. PCDC believes the Community Center is a huge asset to the Town.

Scott Palmer asked what the taxes were on the properties, and how many properties were currently tax exempt.

PCDC member Cedric Dustin responded that the 2014 taxes totaled \$12,450.00.

Town Administrator Williams responded that the tax exempt properties are listed in the Town Report.

Dan Schroth stated we have to maintain the Community Center. It is a great asset. He didn't like the idea of taking property off the tax rolls, but felt we had to maintain the building.

Diane Vaughan believed the voters should pass this Article. The Community Center does a lot for the Town.

Sabra Welch stated the building was vacant before PCDC took it over. There was no place for the senior center for example. She believed PCDC does a lot for the Town and therefore should be supported.

Louie Houle III stated the daycare has also been a huge asset to the community. The Community Center was put together with a lot of peoples' effort, and it has benefited this community immensely. This is our chance to help them help us.

Moderator Morse stated the tax exempt properties were listed on page 83 of the Town Report.

Chris Ward asked how long would the taxes be waived under this Article.

Town Administrator Williams responded PCDC asked the Select Board for a tax exemption. The Select Board offered to grant an abatement for the short term and requested a business plan showing how PCDC planned to resolve this issue. If this Article passed, the properties would be permanently tax exempt. No one is questioning the value of the Community Center or Blueberry Express Daycare to the Town. The concern was theoretically, PCDC could then buy up other properties and make them tax exempt.

Chris Ward asked if there were mortgages on these apartments.

PCDC member Cedric Dustin responded there were not. PCDC bought them, rehabbed them and sold them, retaining the mortgage on the properties. However the owner defaulted on the mortgage and PCDC acquired them back. Mr. Dustin stated that PCDC does not have enough money to pay the taxes how could they possibly buy a bunch of buildings? He stated PCDC runs on rentals and grants. Grant funding is not guaranteed year to year. He stated that was the reason PCDC could not put together an accurate business plan.

# 2015 TOWN MEETING MINUTES

**Article 28 passed** by card vote.

**Article 29:**

To transact any other business that may be legally brought before said meeting.

Motion made by Selectman Eric Nilsson to accept Article 29 as read, seconded by Selectman Gerard LeDuc.

Dan Schroth recognized the newly elected Selectmen Nick Hayes and Denis Beaudoin and congratulated them. He also thanked Larry Konopka and Linda Small for their dedication. Thank you!

Moderator Morse asked any newly elected officials to come forward to be sworn in.

Moderator Morse adjourned the meeting at 1:57pm.

To attest to the minutes' authenticity and accuracy.

Respectfully Submitted,

Erica B. Anthony  
Town Clerk  
March 26, 2015