



Town of Pittston
38 Whitefield Road
Pittston, ME 04345
(207) 582-4438

Town of Pittston Select Board Meeting Minutes June 29, 2022

Board Present: Kerri Farris, Jean Ambrose, Jane Hubert

Staff Present: Deb MacInnes, Sam Snow

Residents Present: Greg Lumbert, Wellman Cromwell, Fred Kimball, Maggie Smith, Amy Cooper, Larry Ireland, Adam Winchenbach, Sharon Gleason, Joe Caputo, Linda Caputo, Cheryl Peaslee, Jaimy Snow, Jim Lothridge, Jay Kelley, Priscilla Kelley, Mr. Chandler, Autumn Deveries, Randall Deveries.

Via Zoom: Gary Norris, Jessica Soucy, Doreen Plaisted, Bob Lazar, Michele Malinowski, Ray Snider, Todd Pilsbury, Harris Plaisted, Jason Farris, Paul Stilphen, Kim Gleason, Jeff Campbell, Tim Gay, Wanda Burns Macomber.

1. **Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order by Chair, Kerri Farris at 6:30 p.m.

Kerri Farris reviewed the agenda. The Board agreed to add the following items to the agenda: 1. A response to public comment. 2. ARPA money. 3. Meeting with Deb Barry.

2. **Review agenda/meeting protocol**

Kerri Farris stated that reviewing meeting protocol is necessary to clarify that the meetings are business meetings and need to be conducted in this manner. Kerri stated that she has heard from residents that someone is telling them they are no longer allowed to speak at meetings and that is a gross misrepresentation. We invite you to participate constructively. If you have an item you'd like the board to consider please contact the office and provide a summary of the subject matter. This allows the board to be prepared for substantive discussion.

3. **Response to public comment**

Two letters from residents were received the previous week. Kerri thanked the commenters for taking the time to put their comments in writing. Because public comments are taken seriously, it was important to take the time to address them directly, particularly since the commenters complaints were mostly directed at Kerri individually.

Comments within the letters were as follows:

- **Comment:** That in the previous week's meeting Kerri Farris was playing on her phone during the meeting.
Response: This is a false accusation.



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- Comment: Both complaints stated that too much time was spent on one subject during last week's meeting.
Response: We appreciate that the commenter supports our interest in conducting efficient meetings by closely following a predictable and structured agenda. It is also important to allow flexibility for the development of discussion. The commenter correctly points out that we do need to keep a closer eye on the time, that is a responsibility for everyone at the Select Board table.
- Comment: The commenter complains that taxpayers are not allowed to speak.
Response: This contradicts the commenter's earlier statement that a meeting discussion was allowed to go on for too long. Kerri stated that this accusation is false. Residents' concerns are valued which is why time is dedicated during this meeting to address them.
- Comment: A person was not called on to speak at a meeting.
Response: Kerri apologized that a raised hand was missed. She was unaware of a raised hand by this person, noting that at last week's meeting attendees filled the room. There is a need to rely on everyone at the table to see raised hands.
- Comment: Complaint about removing new/other business from the agenda.
Response: The board discussed setting up a structured agenda that provides predictability and allows us to adequately prepare for discussion. This allows for more efficient meetings, something both complainants stated would be preferable. If there is a topic you would like the board to discuss please contact the office and provide a summary so that we can appropriately place it on the agenda. There is no prohibition on placing items on the agenda – rumors that make this claim are false.
- Comment: The complaint includes the statement, "Never tell me to shut up again during a meeting."
Response: This is an outrageous false accusation, slanderous and completely uncalled for. Kerri stated that she has never heard anyone at the board's table say those words.

Kerri Farris stated that rumor and inuendo seem to abound and she would like to answer some of what is being said. Accusers are claiming that no one is allowed to speak at meetings, that she is a dictator, and that she is bad for the town and moving the town in the wrong direction.

Kerri said it is not possible to set policy by herself, and noted that nearly all of the recent initiatives have been supported unanimously. She took this on because she feels her



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education and experience would benefit the town. Kerri said that she believed there would be a collaborative environment here open to managing the town's work more like a business and would gladly accept help making that work. Kerri stated that to project anything contrary is a manipulation intended to distract from the important work we need to accomplish. Kerri also stated "talk to me, not about me".

Kerri stated that the meeting room needs to be for town business only; no personal attacks, no manufactured drama. If you feel there is something we can do better, let's discuss it constructively.

At 6:45p, Cheryl Peaslee has an item scheduled on the agenda and stood up and said so. Kerri Farris asked her to let her finish. Cheryl stated the "never tell me to shut up again" was not directed to you, Kerri, but to Jane. Sorry you took that personally." Cheryl continued due to the fact that it was her scheduled time to speak and she needed to leave. Cheryl stated that she thought that the Pledge of Allegiance should be done at the Select Board meetings. Other towns do it, and we should honor our state, country and veterans who attend meetings properly. Kerri Farris asked Cheryl to please let her finish. Cheryl Peaslee left the meeting. Kerri stated that saying the Pledge of Allegiance was a good idea.

Kerri Farris finished by stating that changes are for transparency and predictability. This should not be adversarial; we can do better. Kerri asked for respect and asked for people to work with her. Thank you for being here.

4. **Sam Snow, Road Commissioner:**

Sam recommends using Harcross for the winter salt supply.

Jane Hubert made a motion to go with Harcross for winter salt.

Voted approved: 3-0.

Sam Snow reported that Roadside Mowing needs to go out to bid.

Sam Snow stated that culverts from the state program will not be available until September. Therefore, culverts will be purchased from Ames Supply.

Sam Snow gave the Select Board a quote of \$4,000 to process 700 yards of gravel for the Riverwalk access road. That quote is to crush and screen gravel. Jim Lothridge stated that there are volunteers ready to truck the gravel and some equipment to put the road in. All work done on the property is done by volunteers. The culverts needed have already been purchased. The Riverwalk account has \$1,500 available. The Riverwalk is asking to use some of the available ARPA funds to pay the remainder of the gravel. Kerri Farris stated that it is a slippery slope to give permission to spend money before it is approved.



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Jean Ambrose stated that this project fits in nicely with the terms of what ARPA money can be used for. Joe Caputo stated he thought giving the OK to process the gravel so that the volunteers can get going on the work was a good idea. Fred Kimball suggested that the work get done but the invoice not be submitted until after a special town meeting is held. Jean Ambrose stated that a special town meeting could combine this request for ARPA funds along with the Water District's request. Sam Snow will be processing gravel for the Town and wants to do this gravel for the Riverwalk at the same time. Jane Hubert stated that this project is a benefit to the Town. Jane Hubert made a motion to move forward with the processing of the gravel for the Riverwalk. Kerri Farris is nervous about approving funds before they know where the funds will come from. Voted approved: 2-0-1

Kerri Farris has called DOT in regards to reviewing the Jewett Road. Someone will get back to her and she will keep everyone updated.

Plowing Update:

Sam Snow did not get ahold of Gordon Libby. Jane Hubert talked to Chelsea. Jane Hubert spoke with a representative of Gordon Libby and had given the information to her. Spicer has a problem with getting enough drivers, Spicer is already plowing Whitefield, but Dave Spicer will be getting back to Jane. Jane will do more follow-up next week. Jane also reported that Sea Breeze doesn't want to plow Pittston. Alna has Holbrook. Sam Snow stated that there is a big shortage of drivers. Kerri Farris asked Sam if he could take on the other two routes. Sam replied that he would have to change some things around, like cut down to two trucks meaning the service wouldn't be there, when the trucks get there is when they get there.

Other items:

Sam Snow asked if there was an update from St. Germain in regards to the culverts. St. Germain has worked on applying for the additional grant for the Blodgett Road. Sam asked about the Pinkham Road, we could move ahead with that project. That culvert is the one that has been posted by the State.

Action item: Deb M will email St. Germain.

Sam Snow, Road Commissioner stated that the 2nd week of July he will be processing gravel and then getting ready for paving the Warren Road.

Kerri Farris stated that the Palmer Road has similarities with the Jewett Road and asked Sam Snow if he had a plan in place. Jane Hubert is concerned about the water at the pond by the bend. Sam Snow replied that the water is way down



due to the beavers being trapped out. Jane stated that in the spring you can't get through and doesn't want issues later. Sam stated that there is nothing you can do about the beavers, beavers cause trouble all around town. Kerri Farris stated that this is different and asked what can be done differently in the construction of the road to avoid similar problems like we're seeing on the Jewett Rd. Kerri asked Sam if there is a scope of work for the Palmer Road. Sam replied that there can be.

5. Request to do the Pledge of Allegiance:

Cheryl Peaslee suggested that the Pledge of Allegiance be done at the start of the Select Board meetings. Cheryl had left the meeting. Fred Kimball suggested that this item be addressed anyway. Jane Hubert stated that some Select Board meetings do the Pledge of Allegiance and some don't and she thought this was a good idea. Kerri Farris stated that it is an outstanding idea and appreciates that Cheryl felt this board would be open to the idea. Kerri Farris made a motion to do the Pledge of Allegiance at Select Board meetings. Voted passed: 3-0. After this motion all in attendance did the Pledge of Allegiance.

Action item: The Pledge of Allegiance will be done at the start of each Select Board meeting.

6. Town's website value as communications tool:

Fred Kimball discussed not receiving an email blast since March. An email blast was done and 59 emails came back and Fred asked what was being done about that. Pete Coughlan, webmaster, has been contacted. Fred stated that if the Town is not asking for an email blast, one is not done. Fred stated that he would be willing to help Pete figure out the problem. Fred stated that email blasts are a communication tool that is not being used. Not everyone is on Facebook. Fred Kimball stated that he noticed a delay in the Select Board meeting minutes being posted to the website and would like a policy to commit to post minutes within three days after approved. Kerri Farris explained there has been legitimate reason for the recent delay and agreed that is a good idea.

Fred Kimball suggested that the steps to be put on the Select Board meeting agenda be put on the website.

Jaimy Snow observed that on the Pittston website under the community information page, things such as the Gardiner Library and Gardiner Thrives, are listed before items about Pittston and asked why those things are listed before

Pittston items. Kerri Farris stated that was a great observation. Jaimy also stated that the Riverwalk is not in that drop down and should be listed more



prominently. Jamiy also pointed out that the picture on the website is a generic picture. Pittston's website and Farmingdale's website have the same picture. Jaimy went on to explain what other Town's website use for their pictures. Jaimy stated that we can do better. Kerri Farris stated that Jaimy's observations were spot on and was glad that she brought it to the floor. Fred Kimball explained that using a generic picture is at no cost and if you use your own picture on the website, it costs more. Jean Ambrose stated that there are a lot of smart people in town that could help figure all the website issues out.

Action item: Perhaps forming a fix the website committee might correct these situations.

7. Approve Select Board meeting minutes of June 22, 2022.

Kerri Farris made a motion to approve the Select Board meeting minutes of June 22, 2022. Discussion. Kerri Farris made revisions in the minutes. Kerri stated that giving the directive to the budget committee in regards to writing the warrant was inaccurate. Jean Ambrose stated that Deb M puts the minutes together and listens to the tape and thought that the original version was accurate. Jane Hubert discussed email contact she has with the budget committee who thought this conversation was a directive as well. Two residents who attended last week's meeting stated their observation was that the budget committee had not been given a directive but were instead asked to consider a larger role in budgeting. Jane also stated that the Select Board should call the Budget Committee back in again for more conversation. Jane also stated that Deb M's minutes were not inaccurate, but Kerri's added more content. Deb MacInnes stated that the original minutes don't use the word directive and she stands behind her minutes.

Motion approved: 2-0-1.

8. Sign Augusta Fire Mutual Aid Agreement:

Kerri Farris asked if Chief Josh Johnson has reviewed this agreement. This agreement was not signed until Chief Johnson has reviewed it.

9. Approve and sign Lincoln County 911 Communications Agreement due July 1, 2022:

Jane Hubert made a motion to approve the Lincoln County 911 Communications Agreement. Voted passed: 3-0.

10. Weekly work session:

There will be no work session on Thursday June 30, 2022.

Kerri Farris suggested that work sessions be shown on Zoom, as it is a public meeting. Jean Ambrose said no thank you and Jane Hubert stated that they may



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not always be at the table and said she doesn't mind if people come in, but no to Zoom.

11. Approve and sign accounts payable/payroll warrants:

Jane Hubert made a motion to approve preview warrant #26 in the amount of \$47,804.10. Voted approved: 2-0-1

Jean Ambrose made a motion to approve payroll warrant #2622 in the amount of \$16,174.72. and the 2nd payroll warrant in the amount of \$4,170.55. Voted approved: 3-0.

12. Meeting with Deb Barry:

This was unable to happen. It is 7:59 p.m. and Deb B leaves the office at 7:00 p.m.

13. Executive Session Personnel Matters 1.M.R.S.A.§405(6)(A):

Kerri Farris made a motion to go into Executive Session at 8:00 p.m. Voted passed: 3-0

At this time Wellman Cromwell made a statement that he had his hand up earlier and did not get called on. An apology was made, that his hand up was not seen.

Executive Session ended at 8:43 p.m.

The Select Board meeting ended at 8:44 p.m.



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Kerri Farris, Selectperson Date

Mary Jean Ambrose, Selectperson Date

Jane H Hubert, Selectperson Date