



Town of Pittston Select Board Meeting Minutes January 11, 2023

Board Present: Kerri Malinowski Farris, Jean Ambrose, Jane Hubert

Staff Present: Deb MacInnes, Sam Snow (also on budget committee)

Budget Committee Members: Lynette Eastman, Steve Costello, Rodney Hembree, Sarah Perkins, Paula Work, Tim Lawrence, Larry Ireland, Hope Ricker

Residents Present: Wellman Cromwell, Jim Lothridge, Jeanne Lothridge, Cheryl Peaslee, Tony Garvan, Joe Caputo, Sharon Gleason, Sue Tardiff

Via Zoom: Todd Lindstrom, Mike McCaslin, Linda Caputo, Ray Snider, Deb Barry, Jason Farris, Mary Lawrence.

1. **Call to Order:** Kerri Malinowski Farris, Chair of the Select Board called the meeting to order at 6:31p.m.
2. **Pledge of Allegiance:** The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.
3. **Review Agenda:** Sign an appointment paper and the office schedule were added to the agenda.
4. **Call to Order:** Steve Costello, Chair of the Budget Committee, called the budget meeting to order at 6:34 p.m. A quorum was established and the budget committee met to review and vote on the warrant articles for the March 2023 Town Meeting.

Tim Lawrence inquired about an insurance claim. Kerri Malinowski Farris stated that bonding was not an avenue that the Board can proceed with. Kerri stated that she had received a new email from the Town's attorney, that would need to be reviewed by the Board.

Kerri Malinowski Farris expressed her concerns about a proposed dollar an hour raise for the three office positions. Kerri feels this is separating those three positions from the rest of the town employees, and that there should be a consistent and predicable schedule and best practices in place before a raise should be considered. Kerri stated that she will have a hard time supporting this proposal. Kerri read a list of what other towns that are similarly sized pay their employees which showed that Pittston's clerk makes a considerably higher hourly wage than the same position in other towns.

The typical hourly rate for the clerk's position in towns with a similar population served is \$20/hr. Pittston's clerk is currently paid \$25/hr. The proposed warrant would increase this to \$26/hr.



There was also discussion about the monetary benefits associated with the town's current hourly wage, including the proposed raise in the town's contribution to the employees retirement and that the employees are required to pay zero dollars for their health insurance premiums.

Sarah Perkins, budget committee member, stated that the proposed raises are premature and made a motion for the proposed warrant article salaries for the three office positions to go back to the 2022 rate, as proposed in the original warrant article draft. Motion failed. The Budget Committee passed Article 3 as written with a 6-2-1 vote and the Select Board vote on article 3 was 1-2-0.

At Article 10, Kerri asked for discussion about whether the town will be sufficiently funded for upcoming culvert projects. The Road Commissioner did not express concerns about this funding. The article was unchanged.

The articles continued to be reviewed and voted on by both the Budget Committee and the Select Board.

There was a conversation in regards to surplus. The Town had \$933,550 at the end of 2021 in surplus, and a carry forward balance of \$586,000 in excise tax reserve, \$285,875 in revenue sharing and the Planning Board has \$8,000. Thoughts about how and when to spend this money were discussed. Examples were to reduce taxes, pay off the village station debt service, save for a new fire truck, use some, if necessary for the two large culvert projects that the town is working on with another culvert project coming right up.

The road commissioner pointed to the need for a large surplus so that the town can rely on it for operations costs when tax revenue is low. The former treasurer clarified that the town does not borrow from surplus in this way

The group agreed that there should be a designated time for more conversation to set priorities for this money and perhaps an informational meeting.

The Pittston Fair requested an increase of \$500 for its budget. The approved budget for 2022 was \$4,000. Kerri Malinowski Farris asked what is the benefit for a taxpayer. Some benefits included the fair itself, a sense of community, no charge for building rentals for benefits, reduced building rental for Pittston residents, a place for folks to go for a walk and to walk their dogs. The extra funds were approved by both the Budget Committee and the Select Board.



Kerri Farris Malinowski Farris stated that she would like the River Walk line item to be a separate warrant article for next year.

The Budget Committee meeting adjourned at 8:07 p.m.

5. **Current Road Work:** Sam Snow, Road Commissioner, reported that he had not heard from Maine-ly Paving regarding the Hanley Road. Sam also reported that there is a place on the Warren Road that is coming up. Sam also reported that he has not heard from Davis Paving in regards to the Blodgett Road.
6. **Observation report for ice around recycling roll off:** The parking lot drains to the corner where the ice problem is. Sam Snow stated that gravel can't be placed there this time of year and crushed stone will plow off. The bins' positions are too far from the end of the pavement. There needs to be 12 feet in between them. This needs to be looked at in the spring to find a solution. A potential solution discussed included having the collection company reposition the bins to cover the area that is creating a walking hazard.

Action item: Jane Hubert will call Lincoln County to request that the bins be repositioned.
7. **Spirit of America Nominations:** The Select Board will be accepting Spirit of America nominations. The award will be giving out at the March Town meeting. A notice will be made regarding this.
8. **Approve and sign accounts payable/payroll warrants:** Jean Ambrose made a motion to approve preview warrant #2 in the amount of \$22,045.79. Motion approved 3-0.

Jean Ambrose made a motion to approve payroll warrant #223 in the amount of \$3,3357.35. Motion approved: 3-0.
9. **Appointment paper:** Jane Hubert made a motion to appoint Deborah Barry as interim tax collector/treasurer. Motion approved: 3-0
10. **Approve Select Board minutes January 4, 2023:** Jane Hubert made a motion to approve the Select Board meeting minutes of January 4, 2023, as corrected. Motion approved: 3-0.

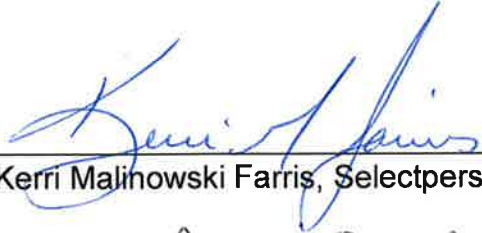
There will be no work session on January 12, 2023.



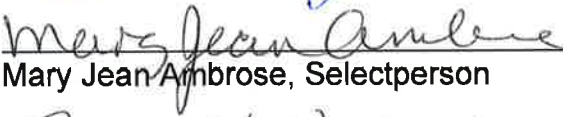
TOWN OF PITTSION
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Jane Hubert will be unavailable for the next Select Board meeting of January 18, 2023. The Select Board meeting for January 18, 2023 is to be canceled.

Jean Ambrose made a motion to adjourn at 8:30 p.m. Motion approved: 3-0.



Kerri Malinowski Farris, Selectperson

 2-22-23

Mary Jean Ambrose, Selectperson

 02/22/23

Jane H Hubert, Selectperson