

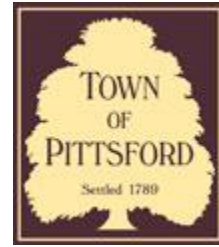
MEMORANDUM

From: William A. Smith, Jr.

To: Town Board

Date: October 22, 2020

Re: Proposed Budget for 2021



Submitted herewith is my proposed Town Budget for 2021.

Notwithstanding a severe decline in revenue receipts during 2020, projected downturns in 2021 and sheer unknowns, all consequent to the COVID-19 pandemic, the proposed budget preserves and continues 100% of all Town services to our residents. It does this at an additional Town tax expense to the average-valued home in Pittsford of thirty-six dollars (\$36.00) for the entire year 2021. The average value of a home in Pittsford is \$295,900. Town tax remains proportionally low. **Town** tax continues to comprise less than nine cents (\$0.09) of every dollar in property taxes paid by Pittsford residents.

In absolute terms, of the 18 towns in Monroe County, Pittsford still has the 7th lowest town tax rate. If you exclude from the comparison those towns that receive revenues from landfills, and those that have commercial areas much more extensive and intensive than Pittsford's, we're the 5th lowest. And Pittsford provides municipal services that not all of the other lower-taxed towns do, such as weekly leaf pick up, weekly yard debris pick up, a recreation program and a Town-financed library.

To illustrate what the Town is up against, the points below exemplify the shocks to the budget in 2020, in terms of decreases in expected revenues due to the pandemic, in addition to reduced revenue from the snow and ice contract with the State:

Sales Tax	- 13%	- \$223,211
State Local Street Program (CHIPS)	- 20%	- \$ 48,374
State Aid to Municipalities (AIM)	- 20%	- \$21,616
Recreation Fees	-173%	- \$240,249
Library Fees	- 66%	- \$29,993
Interest Revenue	- 31%	- \$69,000
State Contract for Snow and Ice	- 39%	- \$116,525
Total Revenue Losses 2020		- \$748,968

The best current estimate for CHIPS and AIM funding for 2020, as shown in the chart, is a reduction of 20%; however in either case or both it could be zeroed out completely.

In addition to the COVID-related and other revenue decreases detailed above, the Town has incurred unanticipated COVID-related expenses. These include \$75,000 for Plexiglas, technology protective upgrades, sanitizer stands/dispensers, thermometers, soap, gloves, paper products, signage, work pods, masks and the like, and an additional \$184,289 for the Pandemic Time Bank established for our employees and \$34,638 in payment to employees for pandemic-related childcare. Together with other unanticipated expenses for equipment to maintain the brush and leaf pickup uninterrupted as well as road repair, and non-routine vehicle maintenance, these expenses add up to more than \$388,927.

The State's increase in minimum wage alone adds \$170,621 in additional expense for wages in 2021. This does not include increases due to the cascading effects of the minimum wage hike throughout our wage scales.

Pittsford's longstanding record of fiscal responsibility and careful budget practices leave the Town in a strong position to meet the fiscal challenges imposed by COVID and other factors, while mitigating substantially impacts on taxpayers in the budget proposed for 2021.

For another year, this budget for 2021 maintains and improves the services that contribute to the quality of life of Pittsford residents. It reinforces my commitment to an aggressive road repaving program, to building stronger neighborhoods, to continual improvement and to services of importance to youth and seniors.

Among its other features, the Proposed Budget for 2021 provides for:

- Another \$100,000, in addition to the 2020 increase of \$272,000, to the road repaving and repair budget, totaling \$372,000 in increased funding for road repair since calendar year 2018
- \$100,000 to fund projects in the Active Transportation Plan
- \$22,000 for Pedestrian Safety and measures to reduce speeding
- \$11,000 for a Crossing Guard at Allen's Creek School
- A 200% increase in funding for Martin Luther King events
- \$20,000 in Library furniture improvements
- Town Website redesign improving navigation, mobile-friendliness and handicapped accessibility
- \$13,500 for new trail maintenance machinery
- Increased funding to Pittsford Volunteer Ambulance
- Funding for the 4.5% increase in medical expenses for Town employees
- 2% Cost of Living Increase for all Town Staff except elected officials; no increase for elected officials

The proposed budget for 2021 calls for increased funding for services supporting youth and seniors. It funds Pittsford Youth Services in an amount that exceeds PYS's request. This represents a total increase in Town funding for PYS since 2017 of 65%. PYS provides indispensable social services to Pittsford families, including solution-focused individual, family,

and group counseling, home visits, crisis intervention, referral to other service providers, parenting support, education and information.

Notwithstanding uncertainties in revenues going forward in the era of COVID, the proposed budget for 2021 maintains the increases in funding for senior citizens' programs and services. Funds continue to support lunch and nutrition programs, including the pandemic-friendly Grab-and-Go lunches program and online resources designed for and offered specifically to Pittsford seniors.

Taxpayers continue to benefit from the forward-thinking of the Town administration and its predecessors. The Finger-Lakes Municipal Healthcare Trust – a statewide model for shared services, initiated by the Town of Pittsford – continues to save the Town substantial additional expense every year. Incorporating the Senior Center in the renovated Spiegel Community Center has saved approximately \$100,000 in rent payments annually for the previous Seniors facility.

Maintaining the Town's credit rating is no small feat. It is the highest possible – Triple-A. This is much more than a report card on municipal fiscal management. It represents substantial, ongoing savings to Pittsford taxpayers by keeping down the rate of interest we pay on Town bonds, for such things as the Greenprint, the new Community Center, the Library and the Park and the recent Athletic Field improvements. Pittsford remains not merely the only town in upstate New York to have earned a perfect credit rating, but the only municipality of its size *in the United States* to have a perfect credit rating.

The Town's Greenprint Plan, which I supported and voted to approve in 1996 as a Town Councilman, continues to benefit taxpayers year after year. Not just by its substantial contribution to the aesthetic character of the Town by preserving expanses of open countryside. By preventing development on the lands protected by the Greenprint, we avoid altogether the pressure for additional Town and School services, and the consequent costs that would have been generated if these lands had been developed.

This is the appropriate place to thank the Town's new Finance Director, Brian Luke, and to our Town Department Heads for their efforts in preparing a budget for 2021. And to thank as well the residents who have made suggestions for improvements funded by this budget that can benefit the whole community. Together we pave the way forward to improving the quality of life in this splendid community of which we all properly may be proud.