

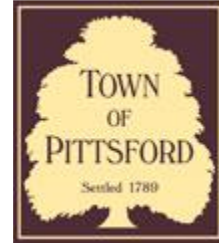
MEMORANDUM

From: William A. Smith, Jr.

To: Town Board

Date: October 16, 2023

Re: Proposed Budget for 2024



Submitted herewith is my proposed Town Budget for 2024.

The proposed budget holds the town tax rate flat, with no increase. The rate therefore remains, for the second consecutive year following the tax cut for 2022, at \$3.13 per thousand dollars of assessed value.

Since 2018 the budgets I have presented to the Town Board for approval, all of which the Board has approved without amendment as to tax rate or tax levy, have cut the Town tax rate by more than 9%.

Town tax remains proportionally low. Under this budget proposed for 2024, for every dollar each taxpayer pays in property tax, just eight cents (\$0.08) comprises Town of Pittsford tax.

Therefore, the owner of a home of the average value in Pittsford, which is \$301,100, will pay \$944 in town tax in 2024. Still less than a thousand dollars for the year.

Inflation has continued, albeit at a lower rate than in the previous year. The CPI for our area has been 3.5% over the past 12 months. Notwithstanding the continuing bite of inflation, my proposed budget for 2024 maintains all municipal services without cuts.

This budget provides full support for our Pittsford Community Library. It maintains funding for pedestrian safety improvements and measures to mitigate speeding.

The proposed budget steps up funding to our Elderberry Express transport service for seniors by 6%.

It maintains our stepped-up program of repaving residential neighborhood streets. It fully funds Pittsford Youth Services' budget request for next year. Cumulatively, the Town has increased its funding of Pittsford Youth Services by 88% since 2017 – and that does not count the extra \$39,400 in ARPA funds we provided to PYS in 2022. The proposed budget increases by 2% the Town's funding for Pittsford Volunteer Ambulance, following a cumulative increase for PVA of 114% from 2018 through 2022.

Pittsford 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. As a result, the increase in medical costs is confined to 12% for next year. This nevertheless represents a substantial increase. Costs for employee dental benefits are up by 3%.

Though fully covered in the proposed budget, these increases in medical and dental expenses exemplify unavoidable increasing costs for the Town, notwithstanding the rate of inflation for consumer prices. In the last two years the cost of health care coverage has increased by 19.5%. The Town pays 85% of this. Over the same period the cost of dental care coverage increased by 5%. The Town pays 100% of dental care coverage. For retirees over 65, the Town pays 100% of the cost of health care; this has increased by 3% since last year.

The State's increase in the minimum wage affects principally some part-time employees, but for 2024 does not compel increases in the Town's wage scales across the board, as it has in the past, including last year. The proposed budget provides all non-elected employees with an increase of 4% as a cost-of-living adjustment. Elected officials receive no increase.

The proposed budget maintains full funding for senior citizens' programs and services, including lunch and nutrition programs. It funds our full schedule of recreation programs, including youth programs; it includes as well our schedule of Town events that we expanded in 2022.

Taxpayers continue to save money because the Town maintains its credit rating. The Town of Pittsford has the highest credit rating possible -- Triple-A. Pittsford has a higher credit rating than the United States government. It protects taxpayers by keeping down the rate of interest we pay on Town bonds, for such things as the Greenprint, the renovations to our Spiegel Community Center, the Library and our improvements to Athletic Fields and parks. Pittsford remains the only Town of its size in the United States to hold this perfect credit rating.

In relation to the 17 other Monroe County towns that impose property tax, Pittsford has the 7th lowest town tax rate. If you exclude from the comparison those towns that receive revenue from landfills, and those with commercial areas much more extensive and intensive than Pittsford's, we're the 5th lowest. Despite this, Pittsford provides a full schedule of municipal services that none of the lower-taxed towns offer, such as weekly leaf pick up, yard debris pick up, a recreation program and a Town-financed library.

This budget supports my Town administration's commitment to responsiveness to residents, building stronger neighborhoods, continual improvement and to services of importance to youth, to seniors and to all residents. We continue to build on Pittsford's solid legacy of decades of enlightened and responsible budgetary practices that protect taxpayers. These are the practices and policies that have created the conditions that cause the State Comptroller once more to evaluate Pittsford's fiscal stress as Zero – a Town government with no fiscal stress whatsoever.

Thanks to Finance Director Brian Luke and our Town Department Heads for their work and recommendations in preparing this budget. Our methodology remains straightforward:

- What have residents suggested throughout the year? Which are cost-effective and have broad public support?
- What will it cost to maintain Town services for our residents in the year ahead?
- What will it cost to make the improvements we seek?
- On the most realistic view and on a principled basis for analysis, what are our projections for Town revenues for the year?
- How do we reconcile this data to maintain and improve services and amenities while best protecting taxpayers?

This is how we continue Pittsford's long tradition of improving services, amenities, infrastructure and protecting taxpayers. The result is the budget for 2024 I now propose for your approval.