

**Brighton-Pittsford Post** – “From the Supervisor” column – October 16, 2014 issue  
**Submitted by Pittsford Town Supervisor Bill Smith**

## **Budget process relies on resident input**

To paraphrase T.S. Eliot, October is the most important month. At least for purposes of Pittsford’s municipal calendar it is. This is the month in which we give final shape the Town budget for next year, in anticipation of a Town Board vote in November.

The Town Board and I will conduct a formal public hearing on the budget. This occurs each year. However, as I noted in a previous column, we seek far broader public participation in preparing the Town’s budget for 2015 than a single hearing affords.

For this reason we have scheduled, in addition to the hearing, which will occur on November 5, four interactive public sessions. These are for the purpose of learning what YOU, as members of the public, have to say about the budget. A municipal budget in its most significant sense amounts to a collection of community choices. The Town Board and I believe those choices must represent decisions by the community.

Pittsford residents have spoken already regarding part of the budget in approving, by referendum vote, additional expenditure for the Town’s proposed athletic field improvements.

Yet that represents only one component of the budget altogether. We need to know your advice, your observations and your comments. For this reason I take this opportunity once more to urge you to try and attend one of our budget meetings. They will be held as follows:

Saturday, October 18 – 9-11am, in the Town Hall Meeting Room

Friday, October 24 – 7-9pm, in the Town Hall Meeting Room

Monday, October 27 and Wednesday, October 29; both meetings running from 7-9 pm in the Fisher Meeting Room at Pittsford Community Library.

Budget Hearing: November 5, 7-9pm, in the Town Hall meeting room

The Town began in July to prepare a budget for 2015. We began in each department, evaluating foreseeable community and operational needs and reviewing staff recommendations. This exercise resulted in departmental budget proposals presented to me, as Supervisor, by each department head.

From August through September we conduct budget workshops at regular Town Board Meetings. Department heads present to the Town Board their departmental budgets. In these open sessions the Town Board scrutinizes and discusses each, with each department head.

Subject to changes consequent to the workshops, the Town Finance Director and I formulate a complete preliminary budget. It's based on the budget work to date and on public comment received up to that point.

Then we formally submit the preliminary budget to the Town Clerk. We'll post it on the Town website. Remember that what's proposed is merely PRELIMINARY. Public comment and participation, at the formal budget hearing, in our four interactive public budget sessions and through comment otherwise conveyed to me or the Town Board, is critical in informing the judgment of the Town Board as we shape a budget in final form, for a Town Board vote in November. At present, our target for voting on the budget for 2015 is November 18 at the regular Town Board meeting.

Our goal at Town Hall is to provide for Town operations, and needed improvements that have community support, in a budget that is fiscally responsible and efficient in the use of public resources. Please help us develop a budget that reflects the community's priorities – attend one of the public budget meetings to express your views on the decisions before us.

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