

## From the Supervisor

### Jurisdictional Jambalaya

#### Where do you live?

If you received this copy of our Town newsletter in the mail – congratulations! You live in the Town of Pittsford. We mail this only to Pittsford residents.

Maybe your kids attend school in East Rochester. No matter. If you received this newsletter in the mail, you live in Pittsford – the part of Pittsford that’s in the East Rochester *School District*.

Some of you have kids who attend school in Brighton and you don’t realize it. Do your kids go to Allen Creek Elementary School? If so, *surprise!* They go to school every day in the *Town of Brighton* – the part of Brighton that’s in the Pittsford School District. The same part of the School District where the *Town of Pittsford* has no jurisdiction or authority – because it’s in the *Town of Brighton*.

There are households with a Pittsford mailing address located in Perinton and Mendon. They don’t receive this newsletter. Because they don’t live in Pittsford. Many of them have kids in Pittsford Schools. Like some households in Brighton, they live in the *Pittsford School District*, but not in the *Town of Pittsford*.

Still with me? I know it can be confusing, at least superficially. No doubt to some it seems like bureaucratic pettyfogging. Actually it’s quite important. It strictly limits what the law allows our Town government to do, and where it can do it.

Notwithstanding these municipal distinctions, to the full extent our authority permits we at Town Hall pursue our duty of protecting the interests of Pittsford residents, their safety and the safety of schoolchildren wherever they may attend school.

#### Road to confusion

Nearly all of Pittsford’s main roads are State highways. Monroe Avenue. East Avenue. Main Street. State Street. Jefferson Road. Mendon Road. Clover Street. Most of Mendon Center Road.

State roads fall under exclusive jurisdiction of the State Department of Transportation. State DOT controls their maintenance. Also speed limits, siting of traffic lights, duration of traffic lights, pedestrian crossings, signage for pedestrian crossings, bicycle lanes, stop signs and everything else related to the operation of these roads. Pittsford has had too many excellent and helpful dealings with State DOT to cite them all.

*Continued on page 2*



Bill Smith  
Town Supervisor

#### Inside:

- State Comptroller’s Perfect Score for Pittsford
- Where Your Taxes Go
- New Copper Beech Park
- Fall Leaf Collection
- New Pollinator Meadow at Bird Harbor
- Dog Park Update



## eNews Signup

Stay up to date on  
Town meetings,  
projects, programs,  
services and events  
– sign up for our  
weekly eNews.



[townofpittsford.org/enews](http://townofpittsford.org/enews)



## Copper Beech Park Expansion Under Way

Construction on our Copper Beech Park expansion is taking shape! The project creates a new park on North Main Street, connected by a walkway to our existing Copper Beech Park on State Street. It continues the legacy of our iconic original Copper Beech tree. Once construction is complete, the clone from that tree will be re-planted in the new park area. We’re taking care to ensure a rustic, historic feel to the new park – for example, with a more natural finish for the walkway. The new park will include cafe tables, shade trees, pollinator-friendly native plantings and a food vending area. You can find our project renderings here: <https://bit.ly/copper-beech-park-renderings>. We expect the project to be completed by this fall.

## From the Supervisor

Continued from page 1

From the Town's perspective other interactions have been less successful. State DOT guards its jurisdiction zealously. Public opinion makes no difference. Intervention by elected State legislators makes no difference. Petitions signed by hundreds of residents make no difference. The Town can ask, but that's it. Decisions about State roads aren't ours to make. In August I wrote to the DOT's regional office to ask once again for road safety improvements based on long-standing legitimate and practical concerns about problem traffic areas and unsafe conditions. These include reducing the speed limit on Clover Street, increasing green light times for left turns at Clover and Jefferson, a traffic light at Jefferson and Mitchell Road and flashing light crosswalk signs at South Main Street and Sunset Boulevard.



You can read my letter and the State's response here: [bit.ly/pittsford-traffic-safety-requests](https://bit.ly/pittsford-traffic-safety-requests). It supplements our previous requests for speed limit reductions and other safety improvements on other State roads in Town.

Through Pittsford also run a number of main *County* Roads, under the jurisdiction of the Monroe County Department of Transportation. These include Tobey Road, Marsh Road, Golf Avenue, Thornell Road, Railroad Mills and Park Road. We are fortunate to have an excellent and highly cooperative relationship with the County DOT.

### Public Utilities

The New York Public Service Commission governs all public utilities in the state, including Pittsford. It's the agency of State government that regulates and oversees the electric, gas, water, and telecommunication industries.

Utilities answer to the Public Service Commission, not to the Town. It's why the Town can't *require* a utility to remove a utility pole when it erects a new one right next to it. The prevalence of "double poles" in Pittsford and everywhere else attests to this jurisdictional limitation.

However, utilities care about their public image and have proven generally cooperative when the Town pursues an issue with diligence. That's how we've reduced the number of "double poles" in Town.

It's why we're in close contact with National Grid about its impending project to replace towers for regional electric power lines running through Pittsford. Its project will involve expanding the width of its right-of-way along the towers' pathway. National Grid has agreed to consult with the Town before making final decisions, since those decisions could affect Pittsford neighborhoods adjacent to the power lines. At Town Hall we're keeping a tight watch on this one.

### Railroads

The Federal Railroad Administration ("FRA") regulates all railways in the United States. The FRA holds exclusive jurisdiction over railroads and rail safety, including train

speeds, track conditions and highway-railroad crossing signals. The CSX Railroad, whose West Shore Line runs through Pittsford, is responsible to the FRA, not to the Town. Again, we can ask, but that's about it. CSX has proven cooperative when we've asked for meetings to discuss specific issues.

### Erie Canal

The Erie Canal is owned by the New York State Canal Corporation, since 2017 a subsidiary of the State Power Authority. The Town has had an excellent relationship with the Canal Corporation and its leaders. You'll recall that this relationship came under strain when the Canal Corporation's new owner, the State Power Authority, pursued a plan to clear-cut trees along the length of the Canal, including in Pittsford. The Town objected strenuously to this plan. Yet the Power Authority had full jurisdiction over the matter. Here the Town was able to insist upon its rights. It was clear that the Power Authority had neglected some fundamental environmental requirements before proceeding with its plan. We had to take them to court, where Town Attorney Robert Koegel argued the case himself, for Pittsford – and for Perinton and Brighton, which joined us in the suit. We won. The State complied with its legal obligations and to date has not pursued the clearcutting.

### Separate Jurisdictions Within Town Government

Everyone's thrilled to learn that the value of their house has increased. Except when the happy news comes from the **Town Assessor**. That's why State law gives assessors sole and exclusive authority over assessments, including when and how to do them. It's analogous, if you will, to having a completely independent government for the Village of Pittsford in the center of the Town. Here we have a completely independent officer within the government of the Town. The Town Board appoints an assessor for a specified term. But that's it. When and how any reassessment is done must comply with State guidelines and mandates, but that's between each town's Assessor and the State. It's the Assessor's call.

Why the State sets things up this way should be self-evident. Is there anything a local government does that annoys, upsets, even infuriates residents more than a reassessment? That's why the State takes the decision-making authority away from elected officials completely. If it didn't, there'd be no reassessments at all, would there? And the policy of the State of New York is that property taxes must be levied upon the current fair market value of each property – which requires periodic reassessment of value. Hence the sole and exclusive authority of the Assessor.

Similarly, State law confers on the **Planning Board** and the **Zoning Board of Appeals** completely independent authority. Again, the Town Board appoints the members of each, but there the Town Board's role and the Supervisor's role ends. Planning boards and zoning boards of appeal have fully independent decision-making power within their respective areas of authority.

Continued on page 3

## “With the taxes we pay...”

These words often preface requests from residents to Town Hall. Especially in an era of high inflation, taxes are a legitimate and central concern for every Town resident.

So let’s talk about the taxes we all pay.

*Did you know:*

- *Town of Pittsford* tax comprises just *8 cents of every dollar* you pay in property tax.
- Supervisor Smith’s budgets have *reduced the Town tax rate* each year from 2018 through 2022 and have kept the rate *flat with no increase* since 2022.
- The Town tax you pay funds a range of services more extensive than those of most other towns – including our Library, Community Center, parks and trails, community events, roads and sewer maintenance, yard debris and leaf collection and more.

Here’s the breakdown of your property tax bill:



**Other Taxing Jurisdictions: 92¢**

**Town: 8¢**

We’re committed to maintaining tax restraint for the Town budget. The Supervisor’s priority for the budget we’re working on now, for next year, is to hold Town taxes flat once more. That’s important.

Just as it’s important to remember that for our *Town* taxes we receive among the broadest array of Town services of any town in Monroe County. For our *School* taxes we get one of the very best school districts in the state: important for your kids; important to maintaining the value of your home.

These advantages derive from Pittsford’s decades-long legacy of wise and responsible financial management. The Town Administration has carried forward an approach to fiscal management that has made the Town of Pittsford the only town of its size in the United States to have a perfect, Triple-A credit rating. An approach to fiscal management that puts taxpayers first.

### From the Supervisor

Continued from page 2

#### Intermunicipal Cooperation

The reality of different jurisdictions doesn’t mean those jurisdictions can’t cooperate to accomplish mutually held practical goals. For this purpose Pittsford has in place a number of standing intermunicipal agreements with neighboring towns, the Village, the School District, the County and the Fire District. From time to time we enter into an intermunicipal agreement for a particular project. Intermunicipal agreements make possible a cooperation that jurisdictional boundaries otherwise could preclude.

#### A Duty of Advocacy

For me as Town Supervisor, it’s always a disappointment when I must tell a resident that the Town has no authority to address a legitimate request, or is prevented by law from taking steps to address it. Those more cynical may think we’re just “passing the buck” and don’t care. The reality is quite the opposite: *if only* the law gave us authority to make these decisions and take action.

What we *can* do is to advocate as vigorously as possible for the interests of Pittsford’s residents. Which is what we do here at Town Hall every day.



# Using Federal Funds Wisely for Pittsford Residents

## Update from Supervisor Bill Smith

Like all other municipalities across the country, Pittsford received funding from the federal government in 2021 to assist in recovering from the consequences of the Covid pandemic. The Town received \$2.8 million under the American Rescue Plan Act (“ARPA”).

Because of its exceptional fiscal health and perfect credit rating, the Town of Pittsford only rarely qualifies for such federal largesse, so this grant offered a singular opportunity, especially inasmuch as it permitted almost full discretion over how to use the funds. Of course, my first question was whether the Town could use ARPA money to offset municipal taxes and give residents a break. The answer was “No.” The basic condition laid down by the ARPA law is that the money must be *spent*.

With a benefit of this magnitude comes commensurate responsibility: how best to use this money for the benefit of Pittsford residents and taxpayers. Consequently, before considering any particular uses for these funds, I felt we should reasonably define a principled basis for allocating them. The Town Board agreed. We came up with the following principles to advise our thinking.

- Choose projects with tangible, broad public benefit.
- Seek infrastructure improvements by which residents can see these funds put to beneficial use.
- Pursue projects that can be fully completed with the ARPA funds we allocate to them, without requiring supplemental funding.

With this in mind, in 2022 the Board solicited suggestions from the Town’s department heads about projects of importance they felt deserved inclusion on our ARPA list. The departments considered projects which had been deferred pending available funding, as well as other necessary and desirable projects and improvements. At the same time we solicited suggestions from the public, through the Town’s website, newsletter and social media, and through a suggestion box at our Paddle and Pour Festival in May of that year. The effort yielded the following projects approved by Town Board:

**State Street Median** – a pedestrian crosswalk and a median island between Wood Creek and the entrance to the Canal Trail.

**Fairport Road Sidewalk** – from Alpine Drive to the pedestrian crossing at St. John Fisher’s Murphy Hall.

**Tobey Road Sidewalk Engineering Work** – with engineering under way we expect to begin work in 2025.

**Mounted Speed Radar Units** – eight additional units; four already installed.

**Pittsford Community Library** – building improvements, outdoor seating, technology updates and more.

**Bird Harbor and Pollinator Garden at Great Embankment Park** – opened in June.

**New Copper Beech Park** – work now under way on North Main Street by Library entrance.

**Information Technology Upgrades** – hardware, software, training, risk assessment, and security improvements.

**Four New Regulation Pickleball Courts** – at Thornell Farm Park.

**Sewer System Improvements** – relining piping, improving pump stations.

**Pittsford Youth Services** – additional funding to help meet substantially greater demand for counseling services.

**General Road and Highway Improvements** – road maintenance throughout Town, full repaving of an additional neighborhood, repair of aging culverts and catch basins in two neighborhoods, sidewalk improvements to improve pedestrian access and boost connectivity, fleet maintenance and more.

In pursuing these and other initiatives, continual improvement for the benefit of Pittsford’s residents remains my principal goal, and principal motivation, as Town Supervisor.

To continue to do this successfully I need, as ever, to hear from you. Please reach out about your suggestions for improvements, or about any problem you may be having in your neighborhood where the Town can help. I maintain an open-door policy in the office, answer my own phone unless I’m in a meeting or on another line, and have a monthly Saturday open house for residents at the Library’s Fisher Meeting Room. You can reach me at (585) 249-6220 or by email at [wsmith@townofpittsford.org](mailto:wsmith@townofpittsford.org).



Find our 2024 Public Works project updates – including Road Work, Sewer, Parks, and Sidewalk projects information – online at [bit.ly/public-works-2024](https://bit.ly/public-works-2024).



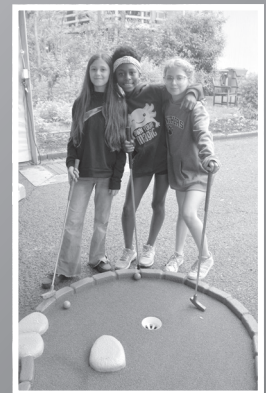
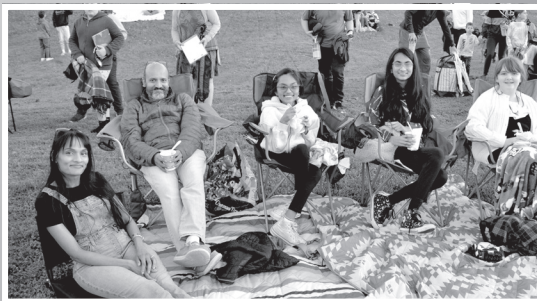
# New Pollinator Meadow and Educational Signs at Bird Harbor

With help from volunteers from Color Pittsford Green, the Town held our first-ever Pollinator Week June 17-23. The week featured pollinator programs, garden tours and our Pollinator Celebration and Ribbon Cutting (June 22) at Bird Harbor in Great Embankment Park. The celebration unveiled our new educational signs and new pollinator meadow at Bird Harbor and included seedling giveaways, children's activities and plenty of tips to help pollinators thrive. Many thanks to Color Pittsford Green for assisting with the programs and activities, and to Girl Scout Troop 60448 for planting perennials at Bird Harbor during the week. Thanks as well to our Parks Department crew for our pollinator-friendly improvements to the park!



# Summer Celebrations

Everyone had a great time at our summer events this season!







## Leaf Collection Under Way – Can You Leave Some Leaves for Pollinators?

Our crews will be in your neighborhood **approximately every three weeks through December 13 to collect loose leaf piles.** After December 13, leaf collection will continue as needed, but with no set schedule. Please remember:

- **Keep leaf piles off the street** and behind the curb.
- Keep branches, sticks and other debris **separate from leaf piles.**

Leaves in the street create traffic hazards. Sticks in leaf piles damage our leaf vacuum, sidelining it for repair instead of collecting your leaves on schedule.

To see when leaf crews will be in your neighborhood, use our online Leaf Collection App - find it here: <https://gis.townofpittsford.org/LeafCollection>.

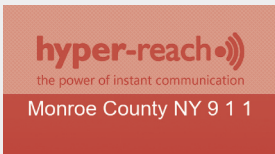
**Please remember leaf collection is on a separate schedule from yard debris collection.** Yard debris in reusable bags/containers continues to be collected during the regular weekly schedule; see <https://gis.townofpittsford.org/YardDebris> for your Yard Debris pickup day information. Loose brush continues to be collected on an ongoing basis (no set schedule).



### Looking for a sustainable way to help your lawn and our local pollinators this winter?

Consider keeping some leaves in your yard. Rather than rake all your leaves to the curb, leave some on the lawn and mulch them with the mower – they’ll break down and act as natural fertilizer. Leave some leaves in your garden beds and around trees and shrubs too. They

not only protect the plants from the cold but provide the perfect shelter over the winter months for beneficial pollinating insects like butterflies, moths, bees and fireflies. It’s good for the plants and pollinators and will help ensure a healthy lawn and gardens next spring!



## Sign Up to Get Emergency Alerts



Pittsford residents can sign up to receive local emergency alerts through Monroe County’s Hyper-Reach Emergency Notification service.

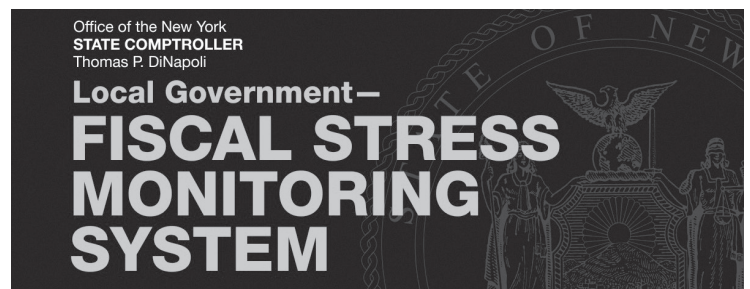
Signing up allows your

cell phone, email and/or TDD to be notified for local emergencies and community alerts as well. The program uses your address to provide alerts targeted to your specific geographic area. Sign up is simple and free. Use the QR code or go online to [bit.ly/hyper-reach-signup](http://bit.ly/hyper-reach-signup).

## State Comptroller Gives Town Perfect Fiscal Score

The State Comptroller’s office annually evaluates every New York municipality for fiscal stress. The Comptroller rates each town on a scale of 1 to 10. The more stress, the higher the number. It’s like a golf score: the lower the number, the better you’ve done.

On the scale of 1 to 10, Pittsford’s number? **Zero.** On a fiscal stress scale of 1 to 10, we’re not on the scale at all. A perfect score. No fiscal stress whatsoever. This ranking is a result of our effective Town budgeting and Town policy over many years – an approach we are committed to continuing.



## Pittsford Farms – A Family Tradition

Our Town has a rich agricultural history that dates back to its founding in the late 18th century. Pittsford’s earliest settlers committed to working the land and made farming the foundation of their local economy. Over the past 235 years, farming in Pittsford has evolved, adapting to changes in markets, technology and community needs. Thanks to the Town’s “Greenprint for the Future” plan enacted in 1996, our Pittsford farms remain an integral part of our local identity, culture and economy. Our Greenprint plan preserved two-thirds of the remaining farmland at that time. It ensured Pittsford’s agricultural legacy continued into the future.

We’re proud of our farmers and look forward to harvest season, when our local markets offer an abundant and diverse selection of fresh fruits, vegetables, commercial crops, and other homegrown and homemade items. This season, be sure to support our local farmers – take a drive through our beautiful farmlands and do some shopping at our Pittsford farm stands. To learn more about our Greenprint farms and the families behind them, visit [www.townofpittsford.org/greenprint25](http://www.townofpittsford.org/greenprint25).

### Pittsford Greenprint Farms:

#### Hopkins Farm Stand

Corner of Calkins Road and Clover Street

#### Knickerbocker Farm Stand

164 Knickerbocker Road

#### Powers Farm Market

161 Marsh Road

#### Willard Farm Stand

116 Willard Road

#### Lehman Farm and Snyder/Lehman Farm

Hillside horse pasture with sunset view  
Mill Road, between Thornell Road and East Street



## Zoning Code Update Next Steps

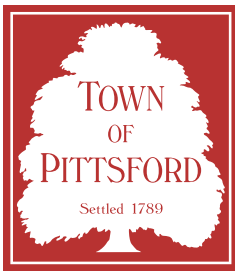
The Town Board has been going through the Code section-by-section. Its work is approaching completion. The final phase will involve a public hearing on the complete revised Zoning Code. Of course, the proposed revised Code will be publicly available well before the public hearing. At this stage we can reasonably expect this to take place in the months immediately ahead. The Town will provide ample public notice.

Our Zoning Code Update will bring the Town Code into line with directives and recommendations in the Town’s most recent Comprehensive Plan, which was completed in 2019 and culminated five years of extensive public engagement and public input. The update meetings and the public comments submitted have helped assure an eventual outcome consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and in tune with the broad consensus of our community as expressed in the Plan. We request your continued input! Please be sure to check the Town eNews, website and Facebook page for updates regarding the Zoning Code Update Draft and public hearing and let us know your thoughts about the proposed Zoning Code Updates.



For updates and info on our Zoning Code Update, visit [www.townofpittsford.org/zoningupdate](http://www.townofpittsford.org/zoningupdate)





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The Pittsford Messenger Summer-Fall 2024

[www.townofpittsford.org](http://www.townofpittsford.org)



## Improved Access to Dog Park

We're working with Monroe County to upgrade the locks on our Pittsford Dog Park to the County's key card access system. The new system is expected to be installed by the end of November. Key cards will be needed for access once the system is in place. If you previously registered for our dog park and can't find your key card, you can contact the Monroe County Parks Department at [mcparks@monroecounty.gov](mailto:mcparks@monroecounty.gov) or **753-7275 (PARK)** for a replacement card.

Our Pittsford Dog Park features two off-leash areas, one each for large and small dogs. Dogs have access to play structures and owners can relax on benches and at picnic tables.

From spring through fall, the park also has drinking fountains available for thirsty pups and a dog washing station to hose off muddy paws. In keeping with the Town's commitment to walkability and bikeability, the park is connected to two Town trail entrances as well.

**Please note: as our Dog Park is part of the Monroe County Dog Park system, dogs must be registered with the County to participate.** Find registration information on the County website at [www.monroecounty.gov/parks-DogParks](http://www.monroecounty.gov/parks-DogParks).

The Pittsford Town Dog Park is located at 34 East Street. It's open year-round from 7:00am until dusk.

## Honor a Pittsford Veteran – Commemorative Brick Orders

The walkway around our Pittsford Veterans Monument provides space to recognize Pittsford residents past and present who have served in our armed forces. Each brick depicts name, rank and details of military service. The cost is \$50 and includes an 8½" x 11" certificate suitable for framing. Find order forms online at [www.townofpittsford.org/vet-monument](http://www.townofpittsford.org/vet-monument) or at Town Hall, 11 South Main Street. The Pittsford Veterans Monument is located in William A. Carpenter Park at the Port of Pittsford, 22 North Main Street.

