

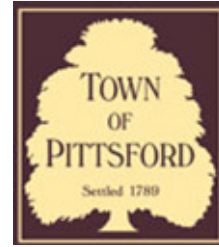
# MEMORANDUM

From: William A. Smith, Jr.

To: Town Board

Date: October 15, 2019

Re: Proposed Budget for 2020



Submitted herewith is my proposed Town Budget for 2020.

## **Supervisor's 2020 Budget Cuts Town Taxes 2nd Year in a Row**

- Town taxes cut
- Sound budget reserves protect taxpayers, uphold fiscal health
- Town's AAA credit rating reflects superior financial stability

State Law assigns to the Town Supervisor responsibility for preparing the annual budget and submitting it to the public and the Town Board. Pending the public hearing on my proposed budget for 2020, I'd like to share with you some key provisions of my proposed Town budget for 2020.

This year, for the second consecutive year, my proposed budget for 2020 **cuts Town taxes**. It cuts the Town tax rate by a further 1.5% and cuts the general tax levy. Together with the tax cut in this year's budget, it represents a cumulative cut in the Town tax rate of 8.1% since 2018.

My first duty to Pittsford residents is to devote Town resources – meaning your tax dollars – to the services and amenities for which municipal government exists as efficiently and effectively as possible. This is the key to the continual improvement that preserves our quality of life and the character of our community.

This discipline keeps Town taxes low while:

- maintaining and improving our parks, roads, trails and sidewalks
- maintaining and improving our Library, Community Center and Recreation programs
- pursuing responsible environmental practices
- maintaining a regular leaf collection schedule and weekly yard debris collection, matched by few other towns
- providing timely and effective response to snow, ice and emergency conditions

This approach includes keeping Town taxes low, maintaining necessary budget reserves and maintaining our excellent credit rating – Triple A -- the highest of any town in New York north of Westchester County.

**Cutting Town taxes** while preserving the quality and range of services takes resourcefulness, commitment to efficiency, lean staffing and clear understanding of Town operations and needs both current and future.

We're all burdened by high New York state taxes. For the part of the picture we have actual control over at Pittsford Town Hall – we control it! **Out of every dollar you pay in property tax, less than nine cents is Town of Pittsford tax.**

Of the 18 towns in Monroe County, Pittsford's Town tax rate is 7th lowest. If you don't count towns that make money from big landfills, and towns with big box commercial areas much bigger than Pittsford's, we're 5th lowest. And Pittsford provides municipal services that not all of the other lower-taxed towns do, such as regular and frequent leaf pick up, yard debris pick up, a community center, recreation programming and a Town-financed library, just to name a few.

My 2020 budget cuts the general Town tax rate and the general Town tax levy, preserves existing services and amenities, and funds the following new services and amenities, among others:

- maintains increased funding for residential road repaving program
- improvements to our Pittsford Community Library
- increased support for Pittsford Volunteer Ambulance
- increased funding for Pittsford Youth Services
- a new kayak launch on the canal, handicapped accessible and easier for seniors
- support for Elderberry Express
- our continuing environmental initiatives that save taxpayers money while protecting our natural resources
- upgrades to King's Bend Park
- more recreation programs

**Budget reserves** are funds set aside to cover longer-term expenses expected beyond the current budget year and unexpected costs. They're the municipal equivalent of personal savings, to fund a roof replacement you've planned for next year, for example, or to get a new furnace when the old one dies.

If the Town had to borrow in order to buy a \$247,000 truck to plow snow, it would cost taxpayers more. Much more than buying the same truck from available funds. Pittsford prepares properly.

The same principle of intelligent fiscal management applies to preparing for emergencies. Again, Pittsford is prepared. We're not at the mercy of lenders who can gouge with the highest interest rates a municipality that hasn't planned ahead.

Responsible financial management such as this is part of creating **tax stability**. Towns that suddenly have to borrow at high interest rates to cover an emergency will have to hike taxes to pay for it. Pittsford doesn't have to do that. We're prepared. We have adequate reserves. Our reserves keep to the State Comptroller's guidelines. Most are earmarked for specific purposes, such as vehicle and equipment purchases, building repairs and sewer improvements and repairs, and are required by the State Comptroller to be used solely for the purposes specified.

Pittsford can deliver the best value to our residents because of the Town's **AAA credit rating**. It's the highest rating possible. Pittsford is the *only* town in all of upstate New York – everywhere north of Westchester County – to have it. So when we take on a major project, such as building the Pittsford Community Library or, more recently, renovating the Spiegel Community Center, or refurbishing our athletic fields and parks, we can borrow at the most favorable interest rates available to a municipal government.

Pittsford residents pay the least. Because our credit rating is the best.

For this 2020 budget and beyond, my priority in budgeting is protecting our taxpayers by continuing to keep Town taxes low, maintaining Pittsford's high standards of services for residents, and planning carefully to provide adequate funding for expenditures down the road and for unexpected expenses.