

Brighton-Pittsford Post – “From the Supervisor” column – January 30, 2014 issue
Submitted by Pittsford Town Supervisor Bill Smith

Expect changes in meetings and town website

Town board to conduct monthly ‘working sessions’

Starting in February, those of you who stop by a meeting of the Pittsford Town Board will notice a different and, I hope, improved way of doing business.

Our first meeting each month will consist of a public "working session" at which the council members and I will discuss in detail upcoming matters for our consideration. We'll discuss these matters among ourselves, with town staff and with others (consultants, etc.) involved in each matter in order to ask questions, gather the information needed to clearly understand the issues presented, and determine whether a particular matter is ready to come to a vote.

If you're familiar with the way a congressional or county legislative committee does its work, by airing and questioning the details of matters proposed for adoption, you get the idea. If you're not familiar with it – then come and see how it works!

Working sessions also will serve as a venue for Town department heads and staffers to propose and discuss new matters for consideration by the Town Board. While we always have had such discussion at Town Board meetings, my goal in instituting these changes is to make even clearer to Pittsford residents the many factors considered, the many questions asked, and the depth of information examined that precedes a vote.

Our second meeting each month will be our legislative session, where matters brought forward from the working sessions will be presented for a vote, together with more routine items, such as approving previously budgeted expenditures, for example.

Of course, at legislative sessions there will be additional discussion of matters on the agenda for a vote, and from time to time we may vote on one or more time-sensitive matters at a working session. But generally, the working session-legislative session model is essentially how we intend to proceed. No doubt we'll identify desirable refinements along the way.

Our goal is to provide residents with the fullest understanding possible of the reasoning that guides our votes and the factors that inform our reasoning.

In pursuit of that goal, and to help the public get as much as possible out of our Town Board meetings, earlier this month we made it easier than ever for the public to review the documents, memoranda and reports that the Town Board will review in connection with matters on its agenda at each meeting. You will now find these documents on the town website together with the agenda for each meeting, in content-tabbed format, by mid-day on the Friday before each Town Board meeting.

I'll have more to tell you in the weeks ahead about our changes to the Town website, designed specifically to make it easier to find information.

Our Town Board will continue to meet on the first and third Tuesday of every month at 7pm at Pittsford Town Hall, 11 South Main Street. If you can't make a Town Board meeting but are interested in an agenda item, I hope you'll call me at 248-6220, or stop by Town Hall to share your ideas.