

## Good Government

My Town Board colleagues and I share a fundamental sense of purpose: we’re here to provide good government for the people of Pittsford. Two words – good government – that take in the full sweep of complexity, action and choices that successful municipal government demands.

It depends upon elected officials coordinating the many “moving parts” to work best for Town residents. Of the duties involved, many are plainly evident: road maintenance, leaf collection, snowplowing, maintaining parks and trails, responding to residents’ concerns and requests. Yet much of municipal governance requires, of those of us entrusted with its care, knowledge and experience in areas far less obvious day to day.

In addition to establishing broad policies, our Town Board members and I are closely involved in budgeting, financing, facilities management and purchasing, in hiring and code enforcement, in establishing public programs and more. Board members must understand not only how each Town department works, but how outcomes from one department affect another. We must understand how best to support them in working harmoniously for the best outcome across the board.

We work closely with members of the Town staff, relying on them, on their training and experience, for information and advice. We rely on *you* – our bosses – for direction. Priorities expressed by residents are just that – priorities. At the risk of boring you because I say it so often, we need to hear from you! Whether at our public comment sessions at Town Board meetings – a long-standing tradition – or by email, letters or phone, please let us know your ideas and concerns.

As elected officials, we draw as well on our own expertise and experience, from our professional careers and from previous public service. We reach out to community partners, to other levels of government and to neighboring municipalities. And when they seek guidance or assistance in return, we are there to help them.

Our Pittsford Town Board consists of Mary Doyle, Jared Lusk, Kate Munzinger, Matt O’Connor and me. Collectively, we bring to your service 50 years of experience in government, in one capacity or another. From that experience we’ve learned a lot about what good government requires:

- First, a willingness to dig into the less glamorous aspects of municipal administration, including budgeting, operations, and business considerations. All part of our day-to-day work, it’s also crucial to long-term planning for the Town. Altogether it underpins decisions that bring effective and efficient services, well-maintained facilities and a practical plan for the future.
- Having the interest and ability to work in concert with Town department heads and staff, tapping their knowledge, training, and experience in various fields.
- Commitment to open and frequent connection and communication with residents, in person (board meetings, community events, one-on-one conversations) or through correspondence (email, phone, letter) or at public input sessions called for this purpose. The numerous and well-publicized public input sessions we’ve organized for our Comprehensive Plan, our Active Transportation Plan and for our Community Center planning process have been central in getting the right outcomes for the Town in each case.
- Ability to cultivate and maintaining relationships with other levels of government, whether for improvements to the many State-controlled roads in the Town, grants for projects and

amenities such as our East Ave sidewalk now under construction and new park playgrounds, or funding for such undertakings as our “Clean Energy Community” initiative. Pittsford maintains numerous cooperative agreements: with Brighton for snowplowing on various roads, with East Rochester for Cable Channel 12 operations, with the Village of Pittsford for numerous municipal Services, with the Pittsford Central School District for athletic fields and much more. And these few examples barely scratch the surface in describing the extent of our inter-municipal commitments.

- Cultivating connections and working in concert with community organizations: the Fire Department, Pittsford Volunteer Ambulance, Historic Pittsford, youth sports teams, veterans’ organizations, Scout troops and the Chamber of Commerce to name a few. These are our partners, each sharing with us a vested interest in Pittsford’s success

Good government means working for you. It means focusing on delivering the superior services and amenities our residents need, deserve and have come to expect. It means doing so in a manner that’s effective, efficient and fiscally responsible. Getting these things right supports those aspects of Pittsford life we all appreciate most. The physical beauty of our town, with protected expanses of open countryside. A place where we can live in safety. Our outstanding parks and trails. Our preservation of the Town’s unique historic aspects and its agricultural legacy. A fine variety of shopping, restaurants, entertainment and business amenities. Our broad and diverse range of housing options. A long-standing cooperation with the School District that contributes to Pittsford’s first-class educational system.

“Focus” means paying attention. It also means not getting distracted. You hired us to maintain a functioning municipality that works well for you. You won’t find the Pittsford Town Board debating resolutions on nuclear disarmament. As citizens, we care about the larger issues of our time. As your employees, hired for a purpose that affects us all at the closest level, the ***largest*** issue for us is paying attention to the business of good government.

Pittsford benefits today from the cumulative effect over time of this approach to good government: effort, long-range planning and deliberate intent. What all of us enjoy in Pittsford today is the result of careful planning and wise governance by our predecessors in Town Hall going back decades and longer.

As your elected servants, my colleagues on the Town Board and I have the duty to build on that legacy. As it ever has for ourselves and our predecessors, it takes a combination of experience and knowledge, of ability and effort, of judgement and a striving toward wisdom.

In these columns I usually discuss specific projects, policies, initiatives or events. But every now and again it’s a good idea for us to share a broader take on the whole picture. Such is the work our Town Board performs. We are committed to continue this work on your behalf.

As always, if you have comments or questions about these or any other topics, please stop by my office in Town Hall, call me at 248-6220 or send a message to [bsmith@townofpittsford.org](mailto:bsmith@townofpittsford.org).