

OSSIPEE BUDGET COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
November 29, 2023

Minutes have been recorded for the convenience of summarization by Laura Nash, Boards & Commissions Secretary and are deleted once the minutes are board approved; any amendments to the minutes are noted in ***bold & italic*** type.

Call to Order: Joe Goss called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM.

Pledge of Allegiance – was recited by all attendees.

Attendance by Roll Call: – Joe Goss, Lynne Parker, Dallas Emery, Michael Hunter, Susan McGuire – Doyle, Krystal Eldridge, Brian Keyes, Jennifer Brown, Jonathan Smith (Selectmen's Rep.), Matt Sawyer, Jr. (Town Administrator), TJ Eldridge, (PW Director)

Absent: Robert Roakes, and Andrea Picard (Finance Director)

Attendees: Carl Huddleston, Fire Chief (WOFP) and Greg Howard, Commissioner (WOFP)

Meeting Minutes: Review to approve Meeting minutes of November 8, 2023 and November 15, 2023.

Meeting minutes of November 8, 2023:

K. Eldridge noted on page 3, under Dog Officer: But between Chief Babbitt, Matt Sawyer, and "~~Andrew~~" should be ***Andrea*** watch her hours closely.

A **Motion** by Emery to approved the Meeting Minutes of November 8, 2023 as amended. L. Parker seconded. No discussion. All others voted in favor. **Motion passed.**

Meeting minutes of November 15, 2023:

L. Parker noted on page 1, under ~~Ossipee Corner Fire Precinct~~: Requested 2024 Operating Budget... Should be "***Center Ossipee Fire Precinct: Requested 2024 Operating Budget...***"

A **Motion** by Emery to approved the Meeting Minutes of November 15, 2023 as amended. L. Parker seconded. No discussion. Smith and Eldridge abstained. All others voted to approve. **Motion passed.**

Selectmen's Report: Selectman Jonathan Smith reported:

- The re-evaluation is done and are waiting for the MS-1 to be completed by the municipal assessor and once that's done; they will confirm with DRA to set the tax rate.
- Zoning cases:
 1. 132 Hanson Road: Clean up with the \$75,000 court order is almost done. TJ Eldridge was there to clean up trash that was 16 ft. deep.
 2. 12 Leisure Drive: Will continue to be cleaned up with another follow up court order.
 3. 174 Dorrs Corner Road: The building has been taken down. The gentlemen had put in a garage illegally, did not comply with request from the zoning office, was not built to code, the court ordered it to be taken down and TJ Eldridge and the highway guys took the building down.

Budget Report: Matt Sawyer, Jr. reported:

- Expenditures are on track

Revenue Report:

- Are slightly above where they projected but it will be really close. Revenues have been finalized with DRA today, which is the last one before the tax rate and the MS-1. Matt Sawyer noted a year or two ago they were getting approximately \$800,000 in motor vehicle registration. Matt Sawyer budgeted \$1,000,000 for the year and per the Town Clerk the Town will receive approximately \$1,150,000.00 in registrations.

L. Parker noted that Ossipee Corner Light & Power got there tax rate set already. Matt Sawyer commented that the Town cannot move forward until the other precincts get there tax rates set with DRA.

2024 Proposed Budgets: Chairman Goss called the order of presentation per order on agenda.

- West Ossipee Fire Precinct – Proposed 2024 Budget

Fire Chief Karl Huddleston and Commissioner Greg Howard were here to present the budget. Joe Goss started with a couple of comments noting they were supposed to have their budget ready on November 8th.

Commissioner, Greg Howard rebutted stating that as a courtesy they have usually received an email letting them know when to have their budget ready. In advance he kept checking the Town's website for the schedule. But the schedule posted was last years schedule. He received an email from Matt Sawyer and from Jonathan Smith apologizing for the out dated schedule. So, when they received notice of the meeting on November 15th, they realized they would not have numbers for the Committee because they only meet twice a month.

Commissioner, Greg Howard requested moving forward that West Ossipee Fire Precinct receive advance notice of at least two weeks to a month before they are to present their budget.

Commissioner, Greg Howard addressed another issue he was made aware of at the last meeting involving Chairman Goss making a snide comment asking who else wants to make fun of West Ossipee Fire Precinct. Joe Goss interjected stating he did not make that comment because if he did it would be in the secretary's recording and noted in the minutes. Joe Goss offered Commissioner Greg Howard a copy of the minutes from November 15th. Commissioner Greg Howard declined the minutes but was highlighting that a comment was made. Chairman Goss informed Commissioner, Greg Howard to check his facts before he starts running his mouth.

Commissioner, Greg Howard moved onto the budget. WOFP had an opportunity to purchase a piece of aerial equipment for \$250,000.00 out of New York. After conversation with DRA; WOFP was able to transfer from the Unassigned Fund Balance to help cover the cost for the new piece of aerial apparatus. Per DRA, they can finance the remaining \$150,000.00 for a 3-year term because they have an escape clause.

Warrant Articles will show a separate article to appropriate the sum of \$56,678.00 for the first annual payment of the three-year lease/purchase agreement of the financed \$150,000.00.

With the new extra line item, WOFP went through their 2024 proposed budget and referring to the comparison sheet. Some line items were level funded while some were appropriated down. One line item increase has to do with their Repeater System atop Mount Whittier. WOFP was made aware that the owner is selling the company and wanted WOFP to sign a 10 year at \$6,000.00 a year lease agreement. This resulted in a new line item of \$6,000 budget increase.

In planning for the future when the lease expires, WOFP is moving towards setting up a Repeater System to Gray Hill. This will also give the Town of Tamworth and Fire Wardens direct access. This will provide a significant decrease in cost for having a repeater providing service. The Executive line item was increased by \$2,000 because their including the cost for grant writing, their finalizing the design for the fire suppression system for the Jewell Hill Building because it does not have a cistern or a pump. The grant writing is towards getting a generator to work in conjunction with the eventual completed fire suppression system. They will continue to fund this from the unassigned fund balance and working with DRA to see what funds can be transferred. WOFP has an expendable trust fund setup for the fire suppression system at Jewell Hill.

Overall, WOFP has an 8.09% increase over last year. WOFP has had very small increases over the years and work diligently to manage their cost. Commissioner Greg Howard feels the budget will change again as this fiscal year whines down. WOFP will be executing purchase orders and making specific purchases of equipment and services that they were originally budgeting for next year but if they have the funds available their going to use those funds this fiscal year, so that there should be a lower bottom line for warrant article #2. Commissioner Greg Howard is working with DRA on the final wording of warrant article #4 for the lease/purchase agreement.

J. Smith inquired if they're buying an aerial ladder or tower ladder. Chief Huddleston stated it's tower ladder an '86 aerial scope devise that has been repurposed onto a 2010 chassis. Discussion ensued. Commissioner Greg Howard everything is fitting within their budget and adding \$50,000 to a Capital Reserve Fund for purchasing and maintaining vehicles and equipment to minimize any significant fluctuation from year to year and hit to our precinct residents.

L. Parker noted she looked at the increases and it's basically covering the cost of the new vehicle and thinks their residents will support and Ossipee Corner Light & Power was offered a generator and they turned it down because it's 15 years old and they do not have room for it. L. Parker suggested they speak with Center Ossipee Fire Precinct because their selling it.

D. Emery inquired if the new aerial platform is a replacement. Chief Huddleston confirmed it is because they have a 1980 Mac, which is 43 years old and still passes it's certification but the chassis is beginning to rust. They plan to seek approval from the precinct residents to dispose of the truck, if passed they will proceed to put it up for sale. D. Emery just wanted to make sure they are replacing one truck for another truck.

Commissioner Greg Howard informed the committee that West Ossipee Fire Precinct has on their website all the information related to the precinct where their precinct residents can keep track of what the precinct is doing. Commissioner Greg Howard also informed the committee that fire precinct personal now meet on the first and third Monday of each month.

J. Goss commented that WOFP need a very good job bringing the budget down. But advised there is need to put some of this money into a Capital Reserve Fund because the allotted \$20,000 a year is not going to cover the cost.

Chairman Goss stated the Budget Committee will take the proposed budget Under Advisement.

Commissioner Greg Howard informed the committee that once WOFP finalizes everything they will provide the final MS-734 to DRA. Chairman Goss noted that WOFP cannot finalize the MS-734 until after the public hearing.

Matt Sawyer stated that he spoke with DRA earlier today and WOFP needs to do the annual revenue report. Commissioner Greg Howard clarified that's the MS-734 of which has already been submitted. Matt Sawyer noted once the precinct submits the MS-734, DRA send back a finalized report for the precinct to review, verify and send back the final MS-734.

- Review Final Budgets:

Matt Sawyer highlighted the recent changes as follows: Revenues - Capital Reserve is not being used this year so, last year's amount was removed. Water and Sewer are being off set by a few thousand. The Unassigned Fund Balance will be discussed later. Under Warrant Articles – Paving was decreased by \$150,000 back to \$300,000 and look to use the FEMA money to offset the \$300,000 for paving. Property clean up was increased to \$75,000 and is now included on the warrant articles list. Solid Waste Disposal and Rec. ETF and the Police Vehicle and Equipment ETF were both increased between \$5,000 to \$10,000 due to cost quotes that were being received. This allowed us to present a budget with a 2.35% increase.

Chairman Goss questioned the off setting of the \$300,000 for paving. Matt Sawyer clarified that they are supplementing for paving. Thee \$300,000 will be supplemented from taxation and the \$150,000 will come from the FEMA reimbursement.

Chairman Goss called for any questions from the committee members. None heard.

Chairman Goss moved forward reading each line item of the 2024 proposed budget as follows:

- Selectmen's Salary - \$20,840.00
- Town Clerk/Tax Collector - 384,725.00
- Elections - \$21,600.00

Susan Maguire-Doyle inquire about why is there such a large increase. Chairman Goss explained it's because there are (4) elections next year and these budgets increase and decrease based on the number of elections each year.

- Voter Registration - \$7,100.00 - Chairman Goss explained it's because there are (4) elections next year.
- Treasurer - \$8,395.00
- Selectmen's Office - \$1,067,150.00 - Chairman Goss noting a 16% increase
- Economic Development - \$5,000.00
- Legal - \$75,000.00
- Planning Board - \$11,750.00
- ZBA - \$3,400.00
- Government Buildings - \$303,605.00
- Trustee of Trust Funds - \$7,040.00
- Cemeteries - \$58,550.00
- Insurance - \$162,000.00
- Police Department - \$1,396,200.00
- Police Special Duty - \$25,000.00
- Dog Officer - \$14,450.00
- Fire Warden - \$22,070.00
- Highway - \$1,483,850.00
- Transfer Station - \$602,035.00

Outside Agencies: \$142,929.00

OCC Elderly Nutrition - \$35,000.00

OCC Day Care - \$7,000.00

Granite VNA & Hospice - \$14,000.00

Northern Human Services - \$4,425.00

Tri County CAP - \$9,837.00

Life Ministries Food Pantry - \$6,000.00 – Total changed to \$8,000.00 with motion made under General Assistance (Welfare).

White Mountain Comm Health - \$4,780.00

Ossipee Children's Fund - \$22,000.00

Starting Point - \$9,987.00

Ossipee Historical Society - \$4,000.00

Kingswood Youth Center - \$5,000.00

Caregivers of S. Carroll County - \$2,500.00

Freedom Food Pantry - \$6,000.00 – Total changed to \$8,000.00 with motion made under General Assistance (Welfare).

End 68 Hours of Hunger - \$7,000.00

Children Unlimited - \$3,000.00

Green Mountain Conservation - \$2,400.00

Lake Host - \$0.00

Matt Sawyer noted there is no request from this year because they are disbanding because they cannot get help.

- Ambulance - \$435,000.00
- Emergency Management - \$6,700.00
- General Assistance (Welfare) - \$39,450.00

A **Motion** by L. Parker to reduce the General Assistance (Welfare) budget by \$4,000.00, with \$2,000.00 going to Life Ministries Food Pantry and \$2,000.00 going to Freedom Food Pantry. B. Keyes seconded. No discussion. A unanimous vote was taken by a show of hands. **Motion Passed.**

Chairman Goss read the new total for General Assistance (Welfare) will be \$35,450.00, Life Ministries Food Pantry total requested amount will be \$8,000.00 and Freedom Food Pantry total requested amount will be \$8,000.00.

- Recreation - \$226,505.00
- Library - \$268,841.00
- Patriotic Purposes - \$14,000.00
- Conservation Commission - \$10,350.00
- Interest on Line of Credit - \$30,000.00
- Vehicle and Equipment Maintenance - \$287,500.00

SUB-TOTAL: - \$7,141,035.00

- Water - \$240,780.00
- Sewer - \$244,250.00

OPERATING TOTAL: \$7,626,065.00

- Warrant Articles - \$1,125,000.00

TOTAL APPROPRIATIONS: \$8,751,065.00

- Overlay (not reflected on MS-737) - \$50,000.00
- War Service Credits (not reflected on MS-737) - \$173,000.00
- Revenues – estimate - \$3,407,030.00

TO BE RAISED BY TAXATION PER MS 737 - \$5,344,035.00 with a 2.45% increase.

TO BE RAISED BY TAXATION ESTIMATE - \$5,567,035.00 with a 2.35% increase.

Chairman Goss questioned if the allotted \$50,000.00 for the overlay will be sufficient considering the town's complete re-evaluation. J. Smith stated he spoke with the Town Assessor, who is confident it will not go over the \$50,000.00. The Assessor thinks property values will start to decrease in 2025.

Matt Sawyer noted it's important to include so you know the amount to be raised by taxation, but that information is not on the MS-737 and is based on an accumulation of data. The same extends to the War Service Credit amount. If anything is changed it's only going to change in the data not with DRA. Chairman Goss noted it would change the bottom line. Discussion ensued on possible scenario's.

Chairman Goss called for any questions or comments.

L. Parker had no questions but commented that the budget is tight.

D. Emery inquired about the amount to cover the Tax Anticipation Note (T.A.N.) and do the Selectmen think they are going to need it. Matt Sawyer has thought about it a lot and thinks it is a reasonable assumption that it should be budgeted for today and by Town meeting, if the town has not used it, it can be reduced on the floor. But has opted not to put out an artificially low budget and not represent that the TAN maybe needed. J. Smith commented that even though they have not had to use the TAN, they don't want to be without it if the revenues and/or the economy tanks. Chairman Goss noted that the TAN may not be needed for town use but for the school because we never know what the school is going to do. J. Smith noted even if the TAN is not used it goes back into the Unassigned Fund Balance which is at 2.6 million. Emery verified that the UFB is going to be kept at 13% going forward.

Chairman Goss called for a motion on the bottom line amount of \$5,567,035.00.

A **Motion** by J. Smith for the Budget Committee to recommend the amount to be raised by Taxation Estimate in the amount of \$5,567,035.00. B. Keyes seconded. No discussion. A unanimous vote was taken by a show of hands. **Motion passed 9-0**

A **Motion** by J. Smith for the Budget Committee to recommend the Revenues Estimate in the amount of \$3,407,030.00. K. Eldridge seconded. No discussion. A unanimous vote was taken by a show of hands. **Motion passed 9-0**

- Ossipee Corner Light & Power - \$548,640.00

A **Motion** by J. Smith to recommend the proposed 2024 Operating and Warrant Article Budget in the amount of \$548,640.00 for Ossipee Corner Light & Power. Emery seconded. No discussion. L. Parker abstained. All other voted in favor by a show of hands. **Motion Passed 8-0-1.**

- Center Ossipee Fire Precinct - \$946,150.00

A **Motion** by B. Keyes to recommend the proposed 2024 Operating and Warrant Article Budget in the amount of \$946,150.00 for Center Ossipee Fire Precinct. L. Parker seconded.

Discussion: Emery inquired about the fuel line item because there was a little disagreement at the last meeting. Susan McGuire-Doyle explained they have no idea how much, because COFP is no longer on town fuel. So, they have calculated the amount as if they have used it. Susan McGuire-Doyle explained part 2 of the issue is because they would never get a bill. Parker explained the confusion.

Chairman Goss called for any other questions. No further discussion. M. Hunter and Susan Mc Guire-Doyle abstained. All other voted in favor by a show of hands. **Motion Passed 7-0-2.**

- West Ossipee Fire Precinct - \$511,240.00

A **Motion** by Emery to recommend the proposed 2024 Operating and Warrant Article Budget in the amount of \$511,240.00 for West Ossipee Fire Precinct. L. Parker seconded. No discussion. A unanimous vote was taken. **Motion passed 9-0-0.**

Matt Sawyer noted that Tuesday, February 6th, 2023 is the last day to accept Warrant Articles according to NH Municipal Association. Discussion ensued over selecting the dates for the Public Hearing.

Next Meeting: Chairman Goss announced the next meeting and Public Hearing will be held on:

Wednesday, February 7, 2024 – 6:30 pm at the Town Hall Bud Avery Memorial Gymnasium

Wednesday, February 7, 2024 – 7:00 pm at the Town Hall Bud Avery Memorial Gymnasium

Thursday, February 8, 2024 – 6:30 pm at the Town Hall Bud Avery Memorial Gymnasium – SNOW DATE

Thursday, February 8, 2024 – 7:00 pm at the Town Hall Bud Avery Memorial Gymnasium – SNOW DATE

A **Motion** by D. Emery for the Selectmen's Office to supply refreshments for the Public Hearing. J. Goss seconded. No vote was taken. **Motion failed.**

Chairman Goss called for public input. None heard.

Any Other Business Which May Come Before This Meeting:

None heard.

Adjournment:

A **Motion** by D. Emery to adjourn the meeting. L. Parker seconded. No discussion. A unanimous vote was taken. **Motion passed.** The meeting adjourned at 7:23 PM.

Minutes approved by majority vote of the Board on –

Date

Joe Goss, Chairman

Lynn Parker, Vice-Chair
(In the absence of the Chairman)