

**OSSIPEE BUDGET COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
September 21, 2022**

Minutes summarized by Laura Nash, Budget Committee Recording Secretary, amendments are noted by ***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, Donna Gridley, Donna Sargent, Dallas Emery, Lynn Parker, Jennifer Brown, Matt Sawyer Jr (Town Administrator), TJ Eldridge, (PW Director) and Andrea Picard (Finance Director)

Absent: Roland Millette, Cameron Quigley, Brian Keyes, Jonathan Smith (Selectmen's Rep.),

Regular Meeting

Meeting Minutes: Review of Meeting Minutes from July 20, 2022.

The Committee reviewed the minutes and Parker noted she should be on the absent list, "**Absent: and Lynn Parker**" as she was absent from the July 20, 2022, meeting, a spelling correction on page 1, paragraph 3 "However, that was against the ***advice*** of the Assessor..." and Emery notice on page 1, second to the last paragraph the word "There" is on a line by itself. Picard believes it belongs to paragraph above.

A **Motion** by Gridley approve the meeting minutes of July 20, 2022, as amended. Emery seconded. No discussion. Parker and Sargent abstained. All others vote in favor. **Motion passed.**

Selectmen's Report: Sawyer reported that this year's audit was fantastic with no findings and trying to come up with recommendations, which is part of their job, was difficult for them to do. Much credit goes to Andrea and the improvements made over the last couple years with the software, reducing the chart of accounts, that not everybody liked, led to a clearer accounting process, appropriate recording and having an accounts receivable process, which we didn't have getting revenues to be correct. I have extra hard copies as well as it in pdf if anybody wants a copy.

The best news potentially out of the audit was the unassigned fund balances which started around \$800,000. The selectman implemented a policy that I drafted a couple years ago, and the policy was to be at 11%, which is the middle of the road of the DRA recommended and that includes all cash flow items. So even school, state, or county, if the town is collecting for it, it should be 11%, which is 2 months or so that would put us at 1.8 million as our target. Even with using unassigned fund balance last year to keep taxes low our municipal portion went down a few pennies which in this environment was unheard of and even with doing that, our new unassigned fund balance is \$2.3 million. So, we're in really good shape. We will probably use some of that this year to again offset taxes. My suggestion to the Selectman is going to be to not use too much of it this year, knowing that we kept the budget flat the last two to three cycles. Obviously, that's not going to be possible in this environment next year.

The ARPA funds which haven't been spent yet were earmarked again maybe up to \$130,000, or maybe \$150,000 that would be needed for the Whittier Covered Bridge. But when the project wraps up in the late fall, whatever is anticipated on having left of the ARPA funds, which might be around 350,000 +/- would likely over the next two years, maybe this year and next year in terms of a tax reduction. Essentially paying for general municipal operations out of that and then leading to more surplus, which can be used to offset taxes.

We have not used the tax anticipation notes (T.A.N.) to this point being more than 66% of the way through the year. That's due to Andrea being responsible with the money by maybe not paying some vendors as quick as they would like, but to our benefit and making sure that we get the revenue that's owed to us and staying on the cash flow issues.

We did sell 3 tax deeded properties this year, it wasn't nearly enough to have an option year. Which are typically attorneys anyway. So, Sawyer advertise for them by sealed bid and the Selectman open them on September 12th. Much to our shock, a little teeny place on Route 16 that was a total teardown, never even had utilities. it was basically a camp with an outhouse that was completely dilapidated on .37 acres sold for a whopping \$51,500 with the next highest bid being \$11,000. The official bank check was received this week and the Selectmen's deed has been signed and it's a done deal. So, we sold two other properties. All in all, will be an estimated \$70,000 in revenue for tax deed properties. There is one or two more we can sell pending some legal challenges.

Lastly, the Whittier Covered Bridge went across the water last Thursday. TJ and I were there for the better part of the morning, and it would have been nice to share the experience with everybody, but the contractors made it clear, they're going to do it right when it's time and they're ready and there wouldn't be time to announce it, but the ceremonial stuff will come when it's completed. The bridge is still suspended on cribbing, and a lot of supports under it and things will slowly get removed. We were up there with the meeting today, it's been nonstop meeting with them, but they've held their timeline, which is unheard of in construction. We haven't had any change in orders that would cause the project to be over budget. So, stay tuned for the ribbon cutting hopefully in late fall or depending on weather.

Chairman Goss called for discussion.

Parker's excited for the bridge but has concerns about the neighbors. Sawyer commented they are working on options with NHDOT. Parker inquired about the receipt of property taxes. Sawyer's not sure of the actual figure but does believe receipt is very good.

Emery is not in favor of more restrictions for the bridge. Sawyer noted there is aerial drone footage on the Ossipee , New Hampshire Neighborhood Happenings Facebook page.

Goss addressed the 2.3 million of the Unassigned Fund Balance and approximately 300,000 remaining from the ARPA funds and suggested the Town use some of these funds to offset taxes but not so much that it creates an up and down bell curve. Sawyer agreed noting the Selectmen may use 300,000 towards taxes and hold on to the remaining funds for any expensive projects that may creep up.

TJ Eldridge informed the committee that he received both final Dam reports. But needs some time to read through them because they are quite extensive. But he did not realize that he had to have these reports before being able to take the next steps towards fixing the dams.

2022 YTD - Expenditure Report:

Sawyer reported the Town should be 66.6% of the way through the year with 32% of the Police grant remaining. Sawyer noted on page 11, General Fund – 01 (which is General Municipal Operations) there is 39.55% available as apposed to 33.3% because not all the big expenditures have been received as yet.

Sawyer spoke of small ticket items like stolen street signs which is effecting the budget more than expensive expenditures. So, the \$2,400 budget is up 400% do to increased cost of replacing the signs and the digital signs are also being stolen according to Police Chief, Cataldo. Discussion ensued over sending the parents of the kids stealing the signs a bill to re-imbursement the Town \$300.00 for the cost of the sign their kid stole. Discussion ensued over types of thefts taking place, specific residents that have been victimized, and the lack of respect and consciousness by these individuals that everyone ends up paying for it through their taxes being increased.

Parker inquired if the tax rate has been set with the audit being completed. Sawyer reported the town, school and county have to be complete before the DRA will set the tax rate. Their hoping for the end of October for the tax rate to be set.

Sargent inquired about any feedback on Police Department coverage. Sawyer reported statically there is not much activity during those hours. The Chief thinks the schedule is working. Sawyer commented that it was a misconception that there was 24/7 coverage. In discussions with the Police Chief there was often gaps in coverage, and the Police Chief would like to add at least one more officer to close up the gaps. Fiscally, they have 9-10 officers currently, and for a town this size, even if it passed through voting the Selectmen would probably not act on it to add another officer. There is an endless turnover through all communities and it's hard to get qualified officers.

Emery inquired if all maintenance is going to be budgeted through the Highway department. Picard corrected Emery noting the gasoline will be in the Police budget starting next year. TJ Eldridge stated nothing from the Police department is going into the highway budget. All vehicle and maintenance has it's own department now.

Gridley inquired where signs line item is located. TJ Eldridge noted it's under Safety for Highway Department, which was budgeted for \$2,500 and is currently over budget at \$6,000.00. the Board of Selectmen passed a policy this year that the highway department will no longer be responsible for replacing roads within a development. They are going to replace road signs that abut town roads.

Goss inquired about the Fuel line item. It initially gets charged to Government Buildings and when Picard gets the cards for the fuel it is then disseminated by department usage. Picard reported heating oil is locked in at \$3.77 per gallon. TJ Eldridge reported he had all containers filled at the old price of \$2.28 per gallon before the increase. Goss advised that all diesel and gas tanks should get filled before election day because there is expectation of an increase soon after election day.

2022 YTD - Revenue Report: Sawyer reported state funding is low until it comes in December, motor vehicle registration is up with approximately 75% collected, income departments are within 1%, is negotiating with Effingham to have a step rate contract for their kids to participate in the Recreation department programs.

Goss inquired about the collection for Police Special pay. Picard reported that it's rolling in and should be okay currently.

Sawyer noted on page 5 of the Revenue Report under Recreation Revolving Fund – Parks & Recreation, the balance of \$5,053.00 is a result of TJ and Neil Eldridge's funding raising efforts during the fishing derby and was the largest in the state with approximately 466 participants and 200+ kids registered.

TJ Eldridge speculated that NAPA may sponsor the event next year, the road will be closed down next year as well. The event committee met after the derby to discuss pros and cons and how to improve the event for next year. The fund raising was a huge success in a short amount of time from some very generous donators.

Goss reported he collects fishing poles if they are in need of extra's for the derby. TJ Eldridge reported that Karen and Mack MacIver owners of the Pizza Barn, whose the daughter of Donald Meader. They lost a son, Malcolm, who was an avid fisherman to suicide. They have created the Malcolm MacIver fund and donated \$3,000 - \$4,000 in equipment in honor of their son. Goss explained all the equipment he has collected and donates to boat patrols.

Department Distribution:

- 2023 Town Budget Proposal by Department: Goss explained the roles, responsibilities of each member and how to gather the department needs and wants for the coming year.

Joe Goss will review – Police Department, Police – Special Duty and Dog Officer Departments

Dallas Emery will review – Selectmen's Office

Brian Keyes will review - Transfer Station

Donna Gridley will review – Fire Warden, Emergency Management, and Highway & Streets Departments

- Gridley suggested removing the Ambulance Budget since it is per contract. Everyone else agreed.

Roland Millette will review – Government Buildings and Water & Sewer Departments

Cameron Quigley will review – Parks & Recreation Department

Lynn Parker will review – Library

Donna Sargent will review – Welfare Administration

Jennifer Brown – West Ossipee Fire Dept, for this year since it's her first year on the committee.

Sawyer informed the committee about the decrease in fundraising for the fireworks display during Old Home Week, so going forward the cost for fireworks will be a new line item on the Park & Recreation Department budget.

Next meeting: [Wednesday, October 5, 2022, at 6:30 PM – Freight House](#)

2023 Proposed Budgets:

- Board of Selectmen
- Legal
- Patriotic Purposes
- Cemeteries
- Treasurer
- Welfare
- Economic Development

Any Other Business Which May Come Before This Meeting:

Gridley inquired if the Town ever received the report from the Economic Development Council as the reason for their budget increase to \$5,000.00. Sawyer stated he has the report and forward a copy over to the committee for the next meeting.

Gridley inquired what is the EDC's topic of discussion is for Envision Night. Nash commented that according to Ash Fischbein one table will be to discuss the Rail Trail. Sawyer noted per Jonathan Smith the state has no intentions of handing over ownership of the corridor for the rail trails. Discussion ensued.

Adjournment:

A **Motion** by Emery to adjourn the meeting. Gridley seconded. No discussion. A unanimous vote was taken. **Motion passed.** The meeting adjourned at 7:22 PM.

Minutes approved by majority vote of the Board on –

Date

Joe Goss, Chairman
Budget Committee

Donna Gridley, Vice-Chair
(In the absence of the Chairman)