

**OSSIPEE BUDGET COMMITTEE  
MEETING MINUTES  
October 18, 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, Susan McGuire – Doyle, Brian Keyes, Jennifer Brown, Matt Sawyer, Jr. (Town Administrator)

**Absent:** Krystal Eldridge, Michael Hunter, Robert Roakes, Jonathan Smith (Selectmen's Rep.), TJ Eldridge, (PW Director) and Andrea Picard (Finance Director)

**Meeting Minutes:** Review to approve Meeting minutes of October 11, 2023.

Matt Sawyer noted on page 1: **Revenue Reports:** Matt ~~Swayer~~ **Sawyer** noted...

Joe Goss noted on page 4: ...that Brian ~~Ames~~ **Keyes** has to work...

Dallas Emery noted on page 3: ... the new platinum ~~depth~~ **Diesel Exhaust Fluid (DEF)** fluid ...

Dallas Emery also noted on page 3: ... the complete ~~depth~~ **Diesel Exhaust Fluid (DEF)** systems...

A **Motion** by Parker to approve the meeting minutes of October 11, 2023, as amended. Emery seconded. No discussion. A unanimous vote was taken. **Motion passed.**

**Selectmen's Report:** Matt Sawyer noted no new reports at this time.

**Expenditure Reports:** Matt Sawyer noted no new reports at this time.

**Revenue Reports:** Matt Sawyer noted no new reports at this time.

**2024 Proposed Budgets:** Chairman Goss changed the order of presentation to accommodate those individuals who are present.

- **Town Clerk / Tax Collector:** proposed 2024 budget of \$384,725.00

Kellie Skehan presented the following line items: Salary line item is increased due to the extra week and yearly increase in keeping with the union contract agreement. Overtime Wages is increased due to elections and training sessions they must go to in preparations for the elections. Longevity, FICA, Medicare, and Retirement are increased accordingly. Health Insurance is decreased. STD INS, Life Insurance, and Record Restoration are level funded. Recording is decreased by \$200.00. Seminar & School Expense is level funded. Mileage is increased due to more traveling for election classes and certifications. Supplies have increased due to elections and Equipment & Maintenance is level funded. The Committee had no questions.

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

- **Election:** proposed 2024 budget of \$21,600.00

Kellie Skehan presented the following line items: Elections - noted the reason for the increase is because the Town is going from having (1) election to having (4) elections in 2024. Ballot Clerks is increased to cover training classes and the work the (4) days of elections. Moderator, FICA, and Medicare increased accordingly.

Ballots have increased to cover to cost of coding the ballot counting machines. Advertising and Supplies have increased accordingly and Maintenance is level funded.

D. Emery commented and Kellie Skehan confirmed that these line items increase every (4) years. Kellie Skehan noted that these will decrease in 2025 but J. Goss stated that these will increase for the mid-term elections. But Kellie Skehan clarified that the mid-term elections are held in even years but the decrease will be in 2025.

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

- **Registration:** proposed 2024 budget of \$7,100.00

Matt Sawyer stated that he and Kellie Skehan prepared this together noting this has been level funded over the past few years but the following line items have been adjusted. Kellie Skehan explained the following: Supervisors shows the 5% increase because of the (4) elections. FICA, Medicare have been adjusted accordingly. Advertising, Postage, Mtgs, Mileage & Training increase because of the (4) elections and Supplies is decreased. Matt Sawyer explained they should have had some expenses but Andrea Picard is looking into it.

D. Emery requested clarification that the line item for Postage in the amount of \$100.00 was removed from other departments and was being expensed out of the Selectmen's Office. Matt Sawyer confirmed it should have been but he missed removing it from the budget. So, the revised proposed budget should be \$7,000.00.

Chairman Goss called for a motion to adjust the bottom line to \$7,000.00.

A **Motion** by Emery the to adjust the Registration's Proposed 2024 Budget to \$7,000.00 and re-allocate the Postage line item of \$100.00 to the Selectmen's Office proposed Budget. B. Keyes seconded. No discussion. A unanimous vote was taken. **Motion passed.**

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

- **Board of Selectmen:** proposed 2024 budget of \$20,840.00

Matt Sawyer presented the following line items: Salary is increased by 5% since the stipends have not been increased in many years. FICA - Selectmen Office and Medicare have been adjusted accordingly. The Committee had no questions aside from Emery's comment of why the Selectmen need an increase.

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

- **Legal:** proposed 2024 budget of \$75,000.00

Matt Sawyer explained the increase for the following line item stating there are 9-12 court cases pending zoning and health infractions. But, we actually have a \$67,000 lien that was awarded on one property on Hanson Road. Another lien was awarded for a Doors Corner property. So, a lot of the money will come back for the property cleanup, but if we're going to clean the town up we have to stay the course and we're going to be at least 75,000 this year and we didn't budget for it.

Sawyer reminded the committee that when he started, the budget had been 50,000 for several years on legal. Sawyer noted they weren't even coming close to that and Sawyer was using New Hampshire Municipal Attorney's for free and kind of pushed the boundaries on that pretty often. But once we really started doing the zoning and health enforcement to clean up some of these problematic properties that draw the crime and bring the value down, the only way to do it to the town attorney and we're getting results. Sawyer also noted that it's a year process to really make any progress on some of these properties but we also just won two court cases in the past week or two so there is progress it's just slow to come.

Parker inquired about a property on Chickville Rd. that has a lot of volks wagon bugs and questioned if it's a business or a residence. Sawyer believes it's a business that has been in operation for approximately 40-50 years and obviously pre-dates zoning and he's not aware of any complaints. But if someone comes forward

to complain then they would have to look into it. Discussion ensued over cleaning up some of the eye sore properties and Parker seems to think this is pone of them. Sawyer noted there are other properties in that general area that pose a lot more health hazards with lack of septic etc.... and they're prioritizing those first.

Susan McGuire – Doyle asked who is the legal firm for Ossipee. Sawyer stated after Rick Sager retired over a year ago the Town went with Drummond/Woodsum, who are one of the biggest municipal firms in New Hampshire. Each attorney has a specialty so they use Attorney Huddy for zoning situations and Attorney Matt Serge for high risk cases.

D. Emery inquired how long are the liens good for until they sell the property. Sawyer noted for all cases involving health and zoning where there's a lien on these properties it includes legal fees, fines per Zoning Ordinance and RSA. If the non-compliance goes on long enough the court order will include a provision for the Town to clean up the property and this will create a tax lien on the property for the amount of the cleanup. Sawyer believes the fines and legal fees would probably sit on the property until it sells, but the other liens for the actual cleanup will become a tax bill and that would have to get paid within three years or the property could be tax dedeed. Sawyer noted through the attorney's they are looking at legal options for recouping expenses. They will recoup the expenses but he's not sure on how long it may take. Discussion ensued.

B. Keyes inquired about the cost of dues to be a member of NH Municipal Association. Sawyer stated roughly \$5,000.00 yearly and that is expensed through the Selectmen's Office budget.

J. Goss noted the representation of it being "offset" by the fines and sale of the property; isn't necessarily true because reimbursement will be down the line and most of the money would go back into the general fund because it will not be received in time to balance out this year's expenditures. The cost is a direct expenditure to the tax payers plus requesting an additional \$35,000.00 going into 2024 budget year. Sawyer explained that he did not mean to represent that it would be offset in a current year with revenue not at least until that's a perpetual thing that starts in future years.

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

- **Patriotic Purposes:** proposed 2024 budget of \$14,000.00

Matt Sawyer explained the increase to Patriotic Purposes is because they moved the Fireworks Expenditure into this budget by popular demand.

Susan McGuire – Doyle requested clarification for the increase. Sawyer explained that the fireworks and markers for veteran's graves are expended from this budget. The fireworks expenditure use to be under the Recreations Department's budget but by popular demand it was re-allocated to the Patriotic Purposes.

D. Emery commented he was all for the moving of this budget. But asked if the cost of fireworks had increased. Sawyer noted that they added \$1,000.00 to the fireworks line item for this year because last year it went over the allotted \$10,000.00.

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

- **Treasurer:** proposed 2024 budget of \$8,395.00

Matt Sawyer presented the following line items: Salary is increased by 5% to the stipends. FICA and Medicare have been adjusted accordingly. Seminar, Mileage, and Supplies are level funded. The Committee had no questions.

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

- **Welfare:** proposed 2024 budget of \$39,450.00

Matt Sawyer presented the Welfare budget is being level funded.

Parker commented she has hard time with this budget not being expended. It bothers her to think that there is somebody out there with their needs not being reached in our community. She not sure if it's the hours, office, or if it's the paperwork. Our youth go to the food banks and anywhere else that they can get help with heating assistance and so forth. But they're not coming to our town and something doesn't equate. We've got this money sitting there every year and it's not expended. It's just boggling to me that people don't come and ask. I know it takes a lot of pride.

Sawyer noted the application process is very robust and we have a reputation of being a tougher town to get assistance, whereas Conway has a reputation for being easy so, that's where everybody goes. The fact that there are food banks and tri-county CAP and other agencies, but there are several options to get assistance.

The Committee members are all in agreement that there are residents in Ossipee that either need or require assistance. But the argument every year is the Welfare budget does not reflect that assistance is being provided and the Budget Committee wants to know, why? Are these people not coming in or calling? If they are coming in are they given assistance? Is the application process too cumbersome? What is the issue?

The Committee members are requesting the Board of Selectmen to look into whether or not the Town is doing assistance process right or wrong. Is there a way to make the application process simpler? Is there a way to way to improve availability?

J. Goss stated it's tough to burden the tax payers with an increase to the budget that is not being used. Discussion ensued over possibly cutting the budget if it's not going to be use. Sawyer stated no matter what the Committee decides to fund for the Welfare Department. The Town is liable under law to fund the Welfare Department and provide services to residents in need whether there are funds allocated or not. If not, funds would have to be extracted from other areas to provide these services. It would be better to have the fund available up front and not use them than to try and allocate from other areas.

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

**Next Meeting:** Chairman Goss announced the next meeting will be: [November 1 & 2, 2023 – 6:30 pm at the Freight House](#)

- **Outside Agencies**

Matt Sawyer noted the deadline for the Outside Agencies budget submittals are due by and he will have the packet ready next week for pick up. Matt Sawyer will send out an email when the packets are ready.

Matt Sawyer asked to poll the Committee to see if the committee is willing to approve a 2-3 day grace period past the deadline until October 25, 2023 for existing applicants.

L. Parker – Yes D. Emery – Yes S. McGuire – Doyle – Yes B. Keyes – Yes J. Brown – Yes J. Goss - Yes

**Any Other Business Which May Come Before This Meeting:**

**Adjournment:**

A **Motion** by B. Keyes to adjourn the meeting. J. Brown seconded. No discussion. A unanimous vote was taken. **Motion passed.** The meeting adjourned at 7:12 PM.

Minutes approved by majority vote of the Board on –

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Joe Goss, Chairman

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