

**OSSIPEE BUDGET COMMITTEE**  
**MEETING MINUTES**  
**June 5, 2019**

Minutes recorded by and 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.

Attendance by Roll Call: – Joe Goss, Donna Gridley, Lynne Parker, Louise Sutherland, Roland Millette, Rachel Ciarmella, Martha Eldridge and Sue Simpson - Selectmen's Rep

Absent: Jonathan Smith, Shawn Marcotte, and Ellen White, Town Administrator

Meeting Minutes: The Meeting Minutes from April 3, 2019 were reviewed by the committee.

A **Motion** by Millette to approve the minutes of April 3, 2019 Budget Committee meeting as presented. Gridley seconded. No discussion. A unanimous vote was taken.

Budget Committee proceeded to meet with the Board of Selectmen to resolve issues they've encountered during the budget process.

Goss noted the areas of concern with the committee

1. Receiving department budget reports, a week prior to the Board of Selectmen's meeting with departments. Requesting more time to review prior to meeting with the department heads.
2. Request to receive the Selectmen's and department warrant articles as early as possible, to allow more time for review and make reasonable cuts.

Parker requested:

1. To have a Budget Committee Member representative on the Employee Contract Negotiations Committee.

M. Eldridge agreed with Goss' first request of receiving budget reports one week ahead of time. Eldridge referred back to when she was Town Administrator and will be requesting detailed budget reports from each department outlining the cost for any particular item, and each employee's wages. Eldridge informed the committee that Karen Anthony spoke with the school and has worked out a 12-month payment plan versus the current quarterly plan. This will give the town a set payment amount each month.

Ciarmella had no request at this time.

Gridley commented last year's budget season was very cramped and state law got in the way of re-examining the proposed budgets to effectively and responsibly make cuts. Eldridge agreed and committee discussion ensued on how they attempted to keep the budget cost down with no increase of the bottom line but leave it to the voters to either increase or decrease the budget based on warrant article votes. Goss noted every time they met to review the budget the numbers changed, and the revenue changed. Eldridge noted the audit results should be in this week.

Gridley requested:

1. Explaining to residents prior to Town meeting, how a warrant article impacts the budget and ultimately the tax bill. Suggested taking time at the last meeting to educate residents on the impact.

Eldridge agreed with Gridley, but discussion evolved into the declining attendance at public hearings and town meeting. Eldridge noted usually the Chairman of the Board will announce the figure being raised but if the Town votes to approve warrant articles it is going to affect your tax rate and tax bills.

Gridley spoke briefly on the Town re-evaluation taking place this year. Some residents believe it's only the lake front properties will be affected but it's actually a Town wide assessment re-evaluation.

Millette requested:

1. Need to improve attendance at Town meetings.
2. Departments or Outside Agencies with flat rate budget should still attend Board of Selectmen and Budget Committee hearings.
3. Departments or Outside Agencies need to justify the increase or decrease in proposed budgets with plans and detailed.

Sutherland requested:

1. Commented she likes the changes to Ossipee website which included department status reports but is requesting more calendar updates and to enter the state budget deadlines on the calendar.
2. Recommend a percentile for budget cuts and hold to individual department head's responsible for making the cuts, before the Selectmen or Budget Committee make the cuts for them.

Eldridge referred back to when she was Town Administrator and noted each budget committee member would have particular departments, they would represent while working on their budgets. The Committee stated they still do this practice and departments were assigned at the previous meeting.

Goss wants more time to review the budgets, work with Selectmen and departments to determine where increases or decreases need to take place. So, at Town meeting the Selectmen and the Budget Committee are on the same page. Discussion evolved into bringing businesses into the town and how to make it appealing to business owners.

Goss called for any public input. None was heard.

Parker suggested:

1. Providing justification for changing a part-time employee to full-time status.
2. Paying medical benefits for employee but if the employee wants to add a person or use the family plan – the employee should pay the difference.

### **BUDGET REVIEW**

Attendees: Kellie Skehan

Town Clerk – Overtime - Gridley questioned the Ballot Clerk line item budgeted for \$800.00 and is over budget by \$181.75 or nearly 22%. Skehan explained it was due to state training of personnel before election. Skehan fore warned next year she will have 4- elections to budget for.

Goss asked Eldridge for any comments on the budget. Eldridge noted she is requesting a full detailed budget report for the meetings.

Library: Parker informed Gridley that according to Maria Moulton, the library is in negotiations to have the carpet replaced throughout the library.

Ciarmella had no questions for the Selectmen at this time.

Gridley questioned the following line items over budget:

1. NHMA Dues: Gridley noted it's 50% over budget – it was explained that the bill comes in after the budget was approved and there was an unexpected increase.
2. Vehicle Maintenance (page 2): Gridley questioned what broke? Eldridge noted the highway department transferred an older truck over to the incinerator department for their use but also had to do a lot of work on it this year. But suspected a portion of the bill was transferred to the Selectmen's budget. But Eldridge is going to follow up on it.
3. Contract Services: Eldridge believes it's services to repair Mill Hill Bridge.

Millette had no questions for the Selectmen at this time.

Sutherland questioned the following line items over budget:

1. Highway Department: questioned if there is going to be issues come the end of the year for the highway department.
2. Contract Services: over budget by \$22,915.00 or 91.66 % to date.
3. Salt: over budget by \$8,994.51 or 14.99 % to date.

Eldridge noted due to the length and continued winter lasting into this year's budget, the town has had to expend from this year's totals which has reduced funds for the coming fall and winter of 2019.

4. NHMA Dues: Sutherland questioned how the increase is calculated.

Eldridge was clear of the reasoning but will follow up at the next meeting.

Goss questioned the following line items over budget:

1. Fuel: Goss noted all fuels and heating for all departments are nearly depleted. The fuel budgets are running 25% – 30 % remaining for the rest of the year.

But the committee noted that the heat is still on due to the lingering winter.

Goss noted most of the other budgets are in good shape with 50 – 60% remaining for the year.

Parker noted:

1. Emergency Management – Radio Maintenance is over budget by (\$44.50) or 17.80% because the Fire Departments were notified by the State that all radio's need to be changed, so this line item is going to be over budget this year.

## **WATER & SEWER**

Parker questioned based on prior statements from Jonathan Smith:

1. Are the Board of Selectmen getting to the point of setting a rate for line usage to cover the cost of expenses.
2. Opening a trust fund to cover the cost of repairs.

Eldridge report there has been an engineer hired to evaluate the usage and to determine a rate. But the figures were astronomical, and he has been sent back to the drawing board to re-calculate.

Goss suggested tabling the discussion until the next meeting.

## **WARRANT ARTICLES**

Goss noted the only monies spent were on the following:

Police Cruiser: Goss noted the new cruiser has been ordered.

Dog Park: Eldridge and Millette reported the equipment is up and about 80% of the landscaping is complete pending the remaining boards for keeping the chips within the playground. Parker commented that her and Kellyanne tested it out and it's very nice.

Ossipee Concern Citizens Building: Millette is working with Steve McConarty on a proposal for installing the new boiler system. Millette is getting quotes for the air conditioning and vinyl siding. Eldridge has not seen McConarty's proposal but will follow up with him in the morning.

Goss called for any further discussion on Warrant Articles. None was heard.

## **CONTRACT RENEWALS**

Goss inquired about the following contracts:

Ambulance Service: Eldridge reported it expires in March of 2020, it's currently in negotiations and should have the figures this fall.

Goss expressed the following concerns with the current service:

1. Trucks not available on-site
2. Crews not available on-site
3. Not holding up to the contract agreement
4. Ambulances Infected resulting in loss of vehicles

Eldridge report a letter was sent, approximately 3 weeks ago, to the ambulance company addressing the Town's concerns. The response returned from the ambulance company is it has been corrected.

Goss continued stating his grievances:

5. Cost of \$1,600.00 for a transport from County home to Huggins Hospital – Goss commented based on how much the Town pays for coverage...he believes the amount they charge the taxpayers needs to be addressed in the next contract negotiations. Eldridge agreed based on her own experience with the company.

Millette inquired if any comparisons have ensued. Eldridge reported there are talks about the ambulance companies merging but she has also heard they are not. So, it's a continued conversation with them.

6. Coverage areas – not getting enough coverage
7. Qualified staff – do not have enough qualified staff. Fire Departments are reportedly keeping track of the number of calls, medic intercept, request for a paramedic, etc...
8. Large fees and lack of service

## **OTHER BUSINESS**

Gridley inquire the status of the follow:

1. Cable Contract and the cable build out for the Town. Because supposedly if you live in a cluster of housing, there supposed to provide the service, but they not provided service. General discussion ensued on the various areas that have service or not. Eldridge stated the original contract expired in 2017, which they thought was supposed to provide service to the whole Town, but it ended up being in select areas

determined by Eversource. The committee inquired about the current contract and services that will be provided. Eldridge will look into it.

2. Sumner Brook Fish Hatchery – Sutherland inquired about the sale of the hatchery. Eldridge reported the ownership negotiations is in the respective attorney's hands.
3. Covered Bridge: Eldridge commented this has continued since 1999, when she was first hired to the Town, and Brad Harriman reports weekly that he is working with the State. Gridley commented the town is debating with the State about putting it back in the same location, but there's an easement, and replacing the footings within the wetlands, etc...

Gridley called for public input:

Krystal Eldridge commented that Comcast will be coming to the area and maybe they will expand cable and internet coverage to the areas. Discussion ensued over the distribution matrix used to determine coverage. Krystal Eldridge stated that Comcast matrix is 5 houses per mile.

Discussion to determine the next meeting ensued. The next meeting will be Wednesday, August 7, 2019 at 6:30 PM at the Freight House.

Goss invited all the Selectmen and anyone in the public is welcomed to attend and there is still a vacancy on the committee to be filled.

Selectmen, Sue Simpson commented that she has learned a lot from all the discussions and praised the Committee for a well-organized and well-run meeting, she has attended tonight. Selectmen, Martha Eldridge agreed. Goss spoke of having the Selectmen and Budget Committee work as a team to make the Town better for everyone.

Sutherland commented for the record praising Laura Nash for keeping the Budget Committee on track and organized and when the committee starts getting out of hand, she raises the recorder and says, "excuse me!" Parker agreed, noting it's very nice having a secretary and a much-welcomed improvement. Everyone else agreed.

The Committee thanked everyone for coming to the meeting.

Any Other Business Which May Come Before This Meeting: None came before the Committee.

Upcoming Meetings:

Wednesday, **August 7, 2019** - Budget Committee Public Hearing – 6:30 pm at Town Hall to start the 2020 Budget season.

Adjournment:

A **Motion** by Gridley to adjourn the meeting. Millette seconded. No further discussion. A unanimous vote was taken. **Motion passed.**

The meeting adjourned at 7:43 p.m.

Next Meeting: **August 7, 2019 @ 6:30 pm**

Minutes approved by majority vote of the Board on –

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Joe Goss, Chairman  
Budget Committee

\_\_\_\_\_  
Jonathan Smith, Vice-Chair  
(In the absence of the Chairman)