

OSSIPEE BUDGET COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
August 26, 2020

Minutes recorded by and summarized by Laura Nash, Budget Committee Recording Secretary, amendments are noted by ***bold/italic*** type.

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

Pledge of Allegiance – was recited

Attendance by Roll Call: – Joe Goss, Donna Gridley, Roland Millette, Rachel Ciarmella, Louise Sutherland, Lynne Parker, Donna Sargent, Martha Eldridge (Selectmen's Rep.) and Matt Sawyer, Jr, Town Administrator

Absent: Cameron Quigley - Ctr. Ossipee Fire Dept – Rep.

Attendees: Sue Simpson, Selectmen and TJ Eldridge, Highway Director

Elections:

Chairman:

A **Motion** by Gridley to nominate Joe Goss as chairman. Parker seconded. No other nominations. All others voted in favor. Goss abstained. **Motion passed.**

Vice-Chair:

A **Motion** by Goss to nominate Gridley as Vice-Chairman. Millette seconded. No other nominations. All others voted in favor. Gridley abstained. **Motion passed.**

Meeting Minutes: Review minutes of February 6, 2020, February 6, 2020 Public Hearing and June 24, 2020.

A **Motion** by Gridley to approve the meeting minutes of February 6, 2020, February 6, 2020 Public Hearing and June 24, 2020 as presented. Millette seconded. No discussion. A unanimous vote was taken. **Motion passed.**

Selectmen's Report: Martha Eldridge corrected a statement made at the previous meeting where she stated the Town had borrowed one-million dollars against the TAN Note, but it was actually eight-hundred thousand. The cash balance to date \$2.25 million. Two new employees have been hired, Rick Cousins as the new Zoning Enforcement Officer/Building Inspector and Justin Chappey is new part-time Recreation Director. The Board of Selectmen will be reviewing applications for the Finance & Benefits Administrator's position. The Board of Selectmen voted to move forward with replacing the carpeting in the Town Library. The School Payment Schedule is included in the packets Matt Sawyer, Jr. provided. The new loader arrived and is being utilized. The borrowed grader has been returned and the new Town grader should arrive by the end of September.

Martha Eldridge praised TJ Eldridge on the excellent job he is doing for the Town and has saved the Town a lot of money from deals on purchased equipment. He hired an in-house mechanic which has saved money on repairs and has hired a part-time person for the Transfer Station.

Discussion inquired of the start date for the new employees. M. Eldridge stated both new employees will start after Labor Day.

2020 YTD Budget Report: The reviewed the latest reports. Matt Sawyer, Jr, informed the committee that the base does not reflect a huge savings due to COVID, they were not able to furlough the expenses as expected.

Martha had previously explained that TJ Eldridge had made reductions in other areas. But due to more mechanical failures this year than previous years the cost have been very substantial. Some figures potentially could be worse if it were not for the in-house mechanic and the sacrifices like the recreation department this year has allowed the Town to buy the mower that was desperately needed and to help fund some other unexpected expenses.

Martha noted the part-time Transfer Station employee is scheduled for 22-hours per week and will fill in during vacations and if their short staffed due to absenteeism. Matt sawyer, Jr, noted he plans on getting all his summer pay reimbursed under the CARES Act due to the increased amount of people in and around the facility this summer. TJ Eldridge stated previously it would cost in the mid-thirty dollars an hour for the highway guys work on the weekends at the Transfer Station.

Committee Discussion:

Donna Sargent inquired if there is any information on the absentee ballots. M. Eldridge stated the Board of Selectmen will meet with the Moderator - Katy Meserve on Monday at 3:00 PM. Parker noted to call Kellie Skehan and she will mail you the application requesting an absentee ballot. Complete the form and return it to Kellie and she will mail you the absentee ballot for the Primary and Election at the appropriate times. M. Eldridge noted that the Town Clerks office is open three nights a week and Saturday's for anyone wanting an absentee ballot. The hours are also listed on the Town's website.

Sutherland inquired on the status of Outside Agencies and how many have received funding. M. Eldridge stated they have been paid the first half of their funding. Matt Sawyer, Jr. stated they have asked from Jennifer Berkowitz to come back with a reduced number but have not heard back from her thus far.

Goss briefly reviewed the budget line items and have approximately 35% budget remaining on most line items except for highway department. TJ Eldridge reported that \$56,000 has been taken out of the budget for the first payment of the grader but it was a legal requirement to record it and Sawyer could elaborate further. Sawyer commented since they received a trade-in value on the old grader, NHMA stated to record it as revenue that did not really happen but it's offsetting an expense that really didn't happen. Sawyer noted they shifted line items, but the bottom line is accurate.

Highway Report: TJ Eldridge, Highway Director stated they have 100% sand on site and paid for. Gravel budget is approximately \$50,000 less than what is normally spent at this time of year. Salt pricing is about the same as last year and they are receiving a better quality of salt with a lot less water content. A discussion over the amount of salt per lane mile required was briefly debated. TJ Eldridge stated per the State it's 250 pounds per lane mile until there is a moisture rain and temperature under 20 degrees then it's 300 pounds per lane mile.

2020 Revenue Report:

The line items reported are yearend and are not distributed by the state until the end of December and Sawyer has been informed the rates are expected to be flat.

The Sales of Town Property and the Sale of Tax Deeded Property the Town had no option to sell any properties, so by yearends those totals will be zero. Tax payments are coming in, but the next tax bill may be different. Motor vehicle registrations have increased.

Sargent inquired if there has been an increase of people moving up here. M. Eldridge had no specific numbers to support aside from conversations with friends in other towns. Per the friend there have been 59 new second graders registered in Moultonborough school. But Eldridge suspects there maybe an influx with remote learning. Discussion ensued over the rapid number of housing sales occurring in the valley. Sawyer is to call the School system to inquire of any potential increases occurring.

The collection of back taxes is coming in slowly, and final letters will be going out this week. Millette inquire if it's homeowners or businesses. Eldridge was unsure but noted initially Skehan had a huge stack she presented to the Board of Selectmen. Parker assumed the line items listed by year indicates the amounts owed. Eldridge confirmed.

Highway Block Grant: Sawyer stated it's level funded from the State, the line item is currently down 13%, which is expected at the end of the year. He stated this years amount is safe but there will be decreases coming in the future.

Telephone & Eversource Pole Tax: Goss questioned if the Town is receiving tax reimbursement for duplicate poles because their supposed to be paying taxes for each double pole. Eldridge noted it would be part of the property tax collection. There is no specific line item on the revenue report to identify double pole revenue. Sawyer is to check with Town Assessor, Todd Hayward.

2020-2021 Budget Schedule:

The Committee reviewed the schedule and Sawyer clarified any questions or concerns. M. Eldridge reported that Karen Anthony, Finance Administrator sent 2021 Proposed Budget Worksheets out to department heads last week. Goss noted that John Picard of the Dam Authority is currently in the area and the committee might want to have him at the next Budget Committee meeting before he leaves for the summer. Sawyer clarified if any paperwork goes out to the outside agencies prior to the meeting. The Committee informed him that all paperwork needs to go out and returned by October 21, 2020, so the Board of Selectmen and the Budget Committee can review before the they come in for their meeting to request funding. Discussion ensued over possibly making changes to questions on the application and how many Ossipee children are receiving support.

Goss inquired in lieu of COVID and Outside Agencies services that are not taking place; are they still receiving Town funding. Sawyer and Eldridge stated they have received their first half of funding. Goss questioned why? Sawyer noted these groups have had to transform into different services whether it's food outreach services or some other form of service. Discussion ensued over whether the Outside Agencies file updated reports on how the funding is being utilized, because the Board of Selectmen are responsible for ensuring the Town is receiving some benefit for any funding of service from an Outside Agency. Discussion ensued over adding the question to the application of what services have you provided during the COVID outbreak?

Chairman Goss called for any other discussion over the schedule.

Sawyer reported further updates from the Selectmen's office. With assistance from Selectman, Jonathan Smith, they met with Lakes Region Water on possibly purchasing the Water and Sewer System. But they had no interest at this time. Still waiting on the re-evaluation rates. The Board of Selectmen had a non-public meeting with the Fire Precincts and planning for the future on possibly merging but there was no interest at this time. After discussion with DRA the Board of Selectmen have renamed the Surplus Fund to the Unassigned Fund Balance. Mill Pond Dam and Big Dan Hole Dam both had violation letters from the State that had not been dealt with and a \$2,000 a day fine was about to be imposed. But through discussions with the State, they have given the Town two years to have the dams surveyed by a licensed engineer to evaluate the best option for the dams. The cost is approximately \$45,000.00 for the engineered survey plans and inspection of the two bridges and dams. Discussion ensued over the condition of the dams, possible grant funding from the EPA or Army Corp of Engineers are to be reviewed. Mill Hill has been closed because the road is eroding out from underneath the granite making the wall very unsafe. There are two options of repair which include 1) Replace the wall with work to be done by engineers which would require submitting a warrant article for approximately \$180,000.00 or 2) Slope the area and back fill the wall and put a guard rail up with work to be done by the highway department employees (recommended by TJ Eldridge) but either way they would be keeping Mill Hill. Discussion ensued over the slope ratio and the yard amount of fill required to repair the slope and shore up the wall.

Millette inquired about the excavation work on Moultonville Rd. TJ Eldridge explained there are two different drainage systems on Moultonville Rd. Eldridge noted they pumped 8,000 gallons of water in the drainage pipes and no water came out. TJ Eldridge brought in a company and bored the pipes but hit a blockage at the (OCC) section. TJ Eldridge explained the configuration of the water lines and the work needed to repair and simply the configuration. Discussion ensued.

New Members: Matt Sawyer, Jr. reached out to Katherine Parish but due to COVID has declined to become a member. There remains one position available formerly held by Jonathan Smith.

2021 Town Budget Proposal by Department:

Donna Gridley will review - Recreational Department

Roland Millette will review – Government Buildings and Highway and Transfer Station Departments

Louise Sutherland will review – Selectmen’s Office

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

Rachel Ciarmella will review – Library

Lynn Parker will review – Water & Sewer Department

Donna Sargent will review - Town Clerk/Tax Collector

Next Meeting:

Scheduled for **September 16, 2020**, 6:30 PM at the Freight House.

Any Other Business Which May Come Before This Meeting:

Sutherland inquired of TJ Eldridge as to who is responsible for replacing any tools broken or damaged the new mechanic uses. Eldridge explained the different scenarios of who would be responsible.

Adjournment:

A **Motion** by Sutherland to adjourn the meeting. M. Eldridge seconded. No further discussion. A unanimous vote was taken. **Motion passed.** The meeting adjourned at 7:46 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)