

OSSIPEE BUDGET COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
October 15, 2020

Minutes 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, Cameron Quigley, Louise Sutherland, Lynne Parker, Donna Sargent, Martha Eldridge (Selectmen’s Rep.) and Matt Sawyer, Jr, Town Administrator

Meeting Minutes: Review minutes of September 16, 2020 and October 8th, 2020 at the next meeting.

Millette noted an error on the September 16, 2020 minutes page 4, “Millette inquired about the part-time Recreations Director reached out to the **OCC** group... should be **OACC** group.”

Ciarmella noted on the September 16, 2020 minutes page 2, para 5, “Water and Sewer revenue is **down but per Bo. But...** should be “***down per Bo, but***”

Sutherland noted on the September 16, 2020 minutes page 4, 3rd para from the bottom, “Joe Goss called for **vote of those in favor Louise retiring, please hands there hands...** should be “Joe Goss called for a vote of those in favor of Louise retiring by a show of hands.” Nash stated this was previously corrected.

A **Motion** by Millette to approve the minutes of September 16, 2020 and October 8, 2020 as amended. Gridley seconded. No further discussion. A unanimous vote was taken. **Motion passed.**

Selectmen’s Report: Martha Eldridge stated there is nothing new to report.

2020 YTD Budget Report: Sawyer reported with 23% in weeks remaining for the year to pay A/P and Payroll and 25% of the budget to expend, which includes absorbing the grader and other items. Without having the Rec. program due to COVID, some of the Recreation Budget was allocated to vehicle maintenance to get the fleet in better working order. In planning for 2021 health insurance rates will increase to 6.4%.

Revenues is expected to be better than anticipated in part by money from the **Care Act**. The Governor Office and the State Treasury have realized that municipalities were unable to claim most of the money because of strict ways in which it could be used. Originally it could only be expended fighting COVID. The Treasury Dept. has determined that the Police Dept. is on the front line and are in potentially constant exposure, so this will allow the Town to request the whole granted amount. Because it’s considered unanticipated revenue it will not help this year’s tax rate.

Gridley questioned if grant money is because of the Police Dept. shouldn’t the funds fall under the Police Dept. Sawyer commented the Police Dept. budget falls under the Towns budget and will be unanticipated funds, which goes into the general fund to be allocated where needed.

Goss listed several departments that have less than 23% and questioned if they will stay within the overall budget. Sawyer noted the Finance Director has found some expenses posted incorrectly. The line item in Selectmen’s Office for Computer Maintenance should have been expended from a warrant article and not the operating budget.

Highway Director, TJ Eldridge explained his budget.

Goss inquired about the overage of the Planning Board. M. Eldridge deferred to L. Nash. Nash explained the Planning Board is over budget due to extra advertising notices during the first few months of COVID.

Health Insurance – Sawyer explained the increased was do worker’s compensation from an injury.

Emergency Management – Sawyer was unsure of the increase but will follow up with Fire Chief, Dana Cullen. But did state that most Emergency Management expenditures should get reimbursed about 75% with FEMA.

Conservation Commission - M. Eldridge deferred to L. Nash. Nash explained it was due to the number of hours worked during COVID.

2020 Revenue Report:

Sawyer explained the State room and meals tax does not come until December. It’s going to leave the Town short about \$250,000.00 until it comes in. This year the Town is expected to receive the full amount, but it cannot be guarantee for future years. The Town just received \$120,000.00 in the State Municipal Aide for education. The Town is estimated to receive about six figures in Timber Tax according to the Forester, Rich Girard.

Interest Revenue on Late Property Tax: Late fees were not forgiven on Fees and Taxes for this year. When totaled the Town will be deficient by approximately \$260,000.00.

Parker questioned what falls into the Miscellaneous Revenue. Sawyer explained the grant, the trade-in value of the old grader, and anything else not previously discussed when doing the budget.

Property Taxes: Kellie Skehan informed the committee that the intake has slowed, and the second tax bill will be going out soon.

Sale of Town Properties: Goss noted was estimated for \$65,000.00. Sawyer commented after speaking with Ellen, budgeted the same amount. But do to COVID no sale of properties occurred this year. Goss asked if there will be a sale next year. Skehan replied it depends if any properties are taken. Goss advised if there is no plan for a sale of properties, then the line item should be zeroed out.

2021 Town Budget Proposal by Department:

Chairman Goss stated all budgets will be taken under advisement at this time.

- **Town Clerk / Tax Collector** – Proposed budget of \$323,500.00. (Decreased by \$6,925.00)

Kellie Skehan presented the 2021 Proposed Budget line by line. Trisha is coming back part-time for 16 weeks and a second part-timer for the remaining year. Overtime is decreased by \$1,000.00. Life Insurance is increased by \$25.00 due to increase. Retirement is increased by \$1,000.00. Longevity is decreased by \$1,000.00. Telephone is increase by \$950.00 because of the new system. Mileage is decreased by \$700.00 due to a decrease of in-person seminars. Seminar & School Exp is decreased by \$1,200.00.

Parker inquired as to how many years remain on the record restoration project. Skehan replied it’s a 10-year project and they have completed 1-year.

Gridley inquired about the report on the Back-Tax Properties and the collection process or policy. Skehan explained years ago the Board of Selectmen decided if the property is the primary home, the Town/Tax Collector was to arrange a payment plan based on the property owners’ financial needs. If the Town took the home for back taxes, the Town would become responsible for finding the property owner a new place to live. Based on whether the property owner sells, moves away, or passes the Board of Selectmen does not want to remove anyone from their primary home. Any changes to the process are directed from the Board of Selectmen. Review of the report was discussed and the key listing was explained starting with “L” is Lien, “W” is Water, “P” is Property (encompasses all land and dwellings), “G” is Gravel, “S” is Sewer(just the haulers from Camp David), “T” is Timber and “U” is Under Current Use. Goss inquired if any of these

properties have a lot of acreage that could be subdivided and then sold to pay-off their back taxes. Skehan noted the Town maybe able to negotiate but the Town cannot force someone to subdivided.

Once a property is placed on lien, it starts the deeding process. Before a property would go to deed, it needs to be delinquent for 2-years and a day after being placed on lien. By law a notification letter would be sent to the homeowner, property owner and mortgage company (if applicable) and pay \$18.00 for the liening process. Skehan will work on a payment plan with the owner before taking someone property by deed. Millette questioned the average amount of back-taxes within a municipality. Skehan explained each Town is different. Some will work out a payment plan and some Town's will just take the property; it varies from Town to Town.

- Election - Proposed budget of \$6,085.00 (Decreased by \$13,035.00)

Skehan presented the proposed budget noting most items are decreased due to having a one election year. The Moderator set her own rate and is level funded. Maintenance is increased by \$25.00 per a rate increase to maintain the voting tabulating machines.

- Registration - Proposed budget of \$4,615.00 (Decreased by \$4,832.00)

Skehan noted this is not her department but explained for every year which ends in a one, there is a purge cycle. This is where they have to purge anyone who has not voted in a presidential election in the last 10-years. This requires sending a letter out to everyone on the list notifying them of removal.

Skehan noted there is an open position on the Supervisor of Checklist, if anyone is interested in the position.

- Recreation Department - Proposed budget of \$148,865.00 (Decreased by \$14,2005.00)

TJ Eldridge, Public Works Director presented the new director will be part-time until June 1st, with the anticipation of going fulltime after June 1st. So, the increase of \$38,000.00 is the difference between part-time to full-time status. Retirement is decreased to \$4,000.00; Chemical Toilets is increased by \$995.00 for a total budget of \$6,000.00 in order to place a chemical toilet at the Windows on the Ossipee, one at Mill Pond and one at Constitution Park. Vehicle Maintenance is increased to \$1,000.00 due to t the age of the vehicle and Equipment is increased to \$1,000.00 for the same reasons.

Discussion ensued over when the new director will begin employment, programs starting and COVID precaution's in place. Discussion over the soccer fields included re-lining, and the nets were re-done. TJ Eldridge spoke of working on a 5-10-year plan/ warrant article that would be level funded each year to the taxpayers. The plan will cover all work to be done at Constitution Park to get the fields growing grass, irrigation system, as well as other ideas they have for the area.

- Economic Development - Proposed budget of \$ 5,000.00 (Level Funded)

Matt Sawyer, Jr. gave a brief overview of a note from Matt Trahan basically stating they had a lot of plans but due to COVID, nothing took place.

Gridley noted last year the budget was \$2,500.00 and they requested and received an additional \$2,500.00 for a UNH survey, bring their budget to \$5,000.00. This year it's level at the \$5,000.00. Sawyer read the email from Matt Trahan who listed their intents with the budget, as follows:

1. Finished yearlong project with UNH Co-op
 2. Downtown and Trails Program
 3. Feasibility study on converting the Rails through Ossipee into a Rail Trail
 4. Plan for Street lighting and other finishing touches to the sidewalks
 5. Continuing the Sidewalks with hopefully matching grant money from the USDA
 6. Envision night and studies to bring affordable housing to the area
- Government Buildings - Proposed budget of \$ 228,449.81(Increased by \$16,670.31)

TJ Eldridge, Public Works Director presented the proposed budget with increased cost of health insurance and an employee aging out of his parent's health insurance and other employee benefits. Maintenance increased by \$5,000.00 due to anticipated construction repairs and Dam Maintenance due in part to the last time the dams were properly inspected was 1997. The paperwork had not been properly sent in and the Town was subject to \$2,000.00 a day penalty. Eldridge believes there should be a separate line item of \$5,000.00 for the repairs to the dams instead of it coming out of the highway or selectmen's budget.

- Highway Department - Proposed budget of \$1,395,881.62 (Increased by \$46,831.62)

TJ Eldridge, Public Works Director presented the proposed budget increase cost of FT Time Wages due to a Union 2% increase in wages and a \$2.00 an hour increases for the Assistant Foreman's position. Increased cost of health insurance and other employee benefits. Uniforms increased by \$1,500.00 for boots and uniforms per union contract, Road Signs is decreased \$2,000.00, Contract Plowing decreases by \$3,000.00, Radio Maintenance is decreased by \$1,000.00, Dust Control is increased by \$10,000.00 due to the number of trucks anticipated on Duncan Lake Rd. and Tar decreased by \$500.00.

Millette questioned the \$108,000.00 spoken about a previous meeting for equipment. TJ Eldridge stated it is part of the 10-year plan he is working on for a Capital Improvement Fund.

Ciarmella inquired about what is used for dust control. They use calcium chloride liquid which holds moisture in the road and \$10,000.00 due to the number of trucks anticipated on Duncan Lake Rd due to a new gravel pit seeking approval to operate and use Duncan Lake Rd for travel.

Goss questioned where the cost for the grader has been expended. TJ Eldridge replied Contract Equipment, but the cost has not been expended as yet. The cost is \$12,000.00 a month to rent, the new one was bought through the same dealer, they are charging \$6,000.00 a month on the rental and their allowing the Town to rent through November. The new grader will arrive in the USA November 14th, 2020.

- Transfer Station - Proposed budget of \$540,844.38 (Increased by \$27,844.38)

TJ Eldridge, Public Works Director presented the proposed budget increase with wages and employees benefits up 2% per union contract. Part-time is increased to \$21,000.00 which is an average of 22-hours a week for the new part-time employee. Overtime is decreased by \$2,000.00 but may be adjusted after speaking with the Supervisor, who noted it's used for training time. Uniforms/Glove/Shoes increased by \$600.00, Maintenance/Equipment is decreased by \$3,000.00 because it's now being perform by the in-house mechanic, Scale Maintenance is decreased by \$4,500.00 because the plan is to submit a warrant article for a new scale. Hauling & Dumping increased by \$823.00, Recycle Disposal is decreased by \$5,000.00 and Test Well Monitoring increased by \$440.00.

Millette inquired on the cost of the new scale. TJ Eldridge noted between \$30,000.00 - \$45,000.00. Sawyer noted this year's revenue from scale is about \$108,000.00, so the cost would be justified since the current scale has failed inspection and is deteriorating.

Sutherland questioned the cost of stickers this year. Sawyer commented they are \$10.00 per year and the stickers are good for 2-years at a cost of \$20.00 total.

- A **Motion** by Gridley to take the Proposed 2021 Budget for Town Clerk / Tax Collector, Election, Registration, Recreation Department, Economic Development, Government Buildings, Highway Department, Transfer Station under advisement. Sutherland seconded. No discussion. A unanimous vote was taken. **Motion passed.**

A brief discussion on when the committee will receive the packets for the outside agencies for review prior to the meeting.

Next Meeting: Scheduled for **October 21, 2020**, 6:30 PM at the Freight House and the following departments will present their proposed budgets:

- Selectmen's Office
- Conservation Commission
- Planning Board
- Zoning Board of Adjustment
- Trustees of Trust Funds
- Police Department
- Police - Special Duty
- Dog Officer

Any Other Business Which May Come Before This Meeting:

Parker would make a recommendation to the Selectmen during contract negotiations over the Health Insurance, an employee is covered as a new hire but if the employee wants family coverage, the employee will pay the difference, and the percentage of coverage should change with each new hire. Discussion ensued.

Adjournment:

A **Motion** by Gridley to adjourn the meeting. Sutherland seconded. No further discussion. A unanimous vote was taken. **Motion passed.** The meeting adjourned at 8:15 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)