

**OSSIPEE BUDGET COMMITTEE**  
**MEETING MINUTES**  
**November 18, 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, Rachel Ciarmella, Louise Sutherland, Lynne Parker, Donna Sargent, Martha Eldridge (Selectmen's Rep.) and Matt Sawyer, Jr, Town Administrator

Absent: Roland Millette, and Cameron Quigley

Matt Sawyer, Jr. stated Roland Millette has been exposed to COVID and is being tested. He will inform Sawyer of the results but will not be at tonight's meeting.

Meeting Minutes: Review of minutes from November 4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup>, 2020.

A **Motion** by Sargent to approve the meeting minutes of November 4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> as presented. Parker seconded. No discussion. A unanimous vote was taken. **Motion passed.**

**Selectmen's Report:**

Martha Eldridge deferred to Matt Sawyer Jr. since she has been out for personal reasons. Matt Sawyer Jr. informed the committee that the overall tax rate has been set at \$17.05. The overall tax rate went down but the Town rate went up slightly. Revenues were discussed with Michelle Clark at DRA some items were clarified. As a Town, we've been overshooting the interest on prior years taxes owed on the interest and penalties by double which caused the cash flow not to match with the budget. Sawyer stated he's in the process of preparing the revenues and are very similar to what DRA's said they should be and it's going to be good and accurate. There is approximately 1 million remaining to expend with 6 pay periods remaining and year-end expenses should be fine. Tax bills are anticipated to go out Tuesday. Received the GOFERR (Governor's Office for Emergency Relief & Recovery) confirmation of approximately \$90,000 has been approved and is expected by year end. It will be cash injection and will not be included in this year's revenue because it's anticipated. It will help with cash flow.

**2020 YTD - Budget Report:** Sawyer noted several items were recharacterized within the general ledger.

1. There seemed to be no encumbrances of 2019 Computer Warrant Article, but it turned out there was one. So, they were able to take it off this year's books.
2. Grader – The artificial revenue and artificial expense due to the trade-in, which was legal advice from NHMA and confirmed by MRI. In working through the revenues with Michelle at DRA, she would not except the entry because it's an asset exchange. If it's not going on the revenue side then there's no off-set on the expense side. So, per DRA and confirmed in writing from the Town auditor, Plodzick & Sanderson confirmed it's permissible to leave the entry off the books, since it would zero each other out. So, under Highway Department line item of Equipment Purchased is improved due to an accounting practice.
3. Assessor: Sawyer spoke with the assessor about the budget and next year's going forward. Every 5<sup>th</sup> year is a re-evaluation year, and last year's reflected the \$35,000 budgeted when it should have been doubled. Next year's line item will have to correct the difference.

4. Transfer Station: The Selectmen voted mid-year to hire a new part-time employee which put the line item in the negative. TJ Eldridge, Public Works Director reported the Transfer Station is seeing record numbers of compacters being filled on the weekends than during the week. Town is saving \$100.00 a dumpster for every load of metal leaving. In the spring they switched to a different hauling company. Instead of paying \$100.00 for each load coming in and going out, the new company gets full price for the metal and there is no charge for hauling.
5. Emergency Management: Bottom line is over by \$501.00 due to the set up of the Emergency Operation Center (EOC) with purchases of radios and electronic equipment and (PPE) Personal Protection Equipment due to COVID pandemic. It was noted that some of the entry under Meeting/Mile should be for the Equipment line item. Sawyer will have the Finance Administrator review invoices for an explanation.

### **2020 Revenue Report:**

Sawyer reported initially the year started at about 2.9 with \$250,000 in Unassigned Fund Balance bringing us approximately within \$150,000. In working with Michelle at DRA it was determine that the Town was overestimating the interest on delinquent taxes by double. The income even without the Recreation Department this year the income from other departments was satisfactory.

### **2020-2021 Budget Schedule**

**2021 Town Budget Proposal by Department:** Chairman Goss stated all budgets will be taken under advisement at this time.

- Library - The 2020 proposed budget request is \$235,696.26 which is a decrease \$260.74. Maria Moulton present the budget request noting the 2% salary increase, health insurance is down due to one employee no longer on the family plan.

Parker complimented the library on the change of carpet.

- Highway - The 2020 proposed budget request is \$1,453,004.62 which is an increase \$103,954.62.

TJ Eldridge, Public Works Director explained the insurance increase from \$217,000.00 to \$281,000.00 for any employees anticipates on getting married, having children, etc... Eldridge reviewed the previous budget line item and noted it was under funded, so he has revised the budget to adequately cover expenses.

Parker inquired of Contract Services. TJ Eldridge explained it's for when the truck comes in to suck out the catch basin, tree trimming, street sweeping, or any outside hire to provide a service. Parker questioned the policy on resident's getting sand. TJ Eldridge there's a pile outback of the garage and open to resident's.

Ciarmella inquire about the \$10,000.00 income from gravel. TJ Eldridge explained currently they get all gravel from Green Oak's gravel pit for road maintenance of Duncan Lake Rd. since their trucks use that road. But with the potential increase of a second gravel pit in Effingham but wanting to use Duncan Lake Rd. a letter was requesting the applicant reimburse Ossipee \$10,000.00 for the additional maintenance.

Sargent inquired how TJ Eldridge is going to address the overage for this year and whether he would lay-off anyone to off set the overage. TJ Eldridge replied he believes he's made enough cuts in other areas as to not layoff anyone. Sargent state something needs to be done to decrease the burden of healthcare cost for taxpayers and employees need to start paying more. TJ Eldridge noted the national average for municipalities is 20% which is what Ossipee is paying. Discussion ensued.

Sutherland inquired if the new equipment has arrived. TJ Eldridge stated it is in the US and should be here within two weeks. The new truck will be here next week.

- Water Department - The 2020 proposed budget request is \$213,347.00 which is a decrease of \$11,417.00 with \$48,980.00 in the Water Capital Reserve.

TJ Eldridge noted the Superintendent resigned and they will hire a highway guy and his salary is on the water budget, everything else is level funded except for a Private Contract Stipend of \$5,100.00. This is to have a certified contractor on call for \$425.00 a month, he has 20 minutes to get here if there is a water or sewer break, he is also a consultant resource, but it is required to have someone certified on hand just in case. The \$11,417.00 will be added to the Water Capital Reserve.

Parker inquired about a Warrant Article for the Water & Sewer. Sawyer noted it has not been discussed with the Selectmen but that an option. Parker recommended they add to the capital reserve in case of any major repairs needed. TJ Eldridge reported Water Capital Reserve has approximately \$50,000 currently with about \$12,000 to go into it annually. In working with Granite State Rural Water, they do not anticipate any catastrophic failure with the infrastructure. TJ Eldridge has a few more meters to install to control leaks. One will be placed at the Fire Department to monitor usage and determine any leaks or flow issues.

Gridley and TJ Eldridge discussion continued over contributions to the Water Capital Reserve, the system is not self-sustaining in the event of failure nor can the resident's afford a failed system. TJ Eldridge noted they have gone to monthly billing instead of quarterly and is working on a shut-off policy for non-payment.

Sargent strongly suggested expanding to get more people on the system as it was intended, especially around the lake.

- Sewer Department - The 2020 proposed budget request is \$231,066.00 which is an increase \$25,766.00 with \$180,421.00 in the Sewer Capital Reserve, which has \$230,000.00 currently.

TJ Eldridge noted Jim Champagne has been moved to Lead Operator, and they hired Joe Duchesne as a part-time employee, he did all the mowing at Camp David, and TJ Eldridge has taken over all the Administrative work.

Gridley questioned there is no backup if Jim Champagne goes on vacation. TJ Eldridge commented that Tracy Waterhouse transferred from the Highway department to Water & Sewer Department.

Sargent re-stated about expanding. TJ Eldridge stated they have seven new fields in the past 10 years.

Goss questioned how is owed from outstanding bills. TJ Eldridge noted Kellie Skehan would be better to answer but estimated around \$50,000 - \$60,000 in unpaid bills. Discussed options for non-payment which included shut-off, liens, etc...

- Fire Warden - The 2020 proposed budget request is \$21,995.00 which is Level Funded.

**Chief Adam Riley** presented a level funded budget. **Chief Adam Riley** discussed his frustration with respect to 400 issued online fire permits and trying to keep track of them, the hand written permits for a total usually around 700 permits, and then tracking the illegal burns.

Gridley questioned if the online permitting took into account the weather conditions and the State issued fire danger levels before allowing a permit to be issued. **Chief Adam Riley** reported when the fire danger was too high the State shut the system down for about two weeks without notice to the Fire Warden's. Which prompted multiple calls to the station from people wanting a burn permit. Another issue that arose from user error when users selected the wrong type of permit whether it be seasonal or one day and thinking they selected the other.

- Long-Term Debt (Interest On Line Of Credit) - The 2020 proposed budget request is \$10,000.00 which is Level Funded.

Sawyer is going to retitle this to Interest On Line Of Credit because it's not Long-Term Debt and it's been level funded for next year.

- Insurance - The 2020 proposed budget request is \$145,500.00 which is an increase \$17,500.00

Sawyer reported based on industry wide insurance payouts and subsequent premiums increases across the industry couple with the Towns increased risk rating. The agent reported the rate would increase about 13% – 14 %. But Sawyer is shopping around for other rate quotes but because of the pending Police Department lawsuit which goes to court in 2022, it still hurts the Towns risk rating.

Goss questioned with court case pending until 2022, and the insurance rates are being increased, if they lose can the Town go back and re-coup the increased insurance premium. Sawyer replied legally he's not heard of it happening but without being able to put a monetary value it would be difficult to recoup. Sawyer will look into the additional cost to the Town and whether the Town can legally recoup from the Police Department.

- Emergency Management - The 2020 proposed budget request is \$6,700.00 which is Level Funded

Sawyer report it's level funded. There are no plans but it's there if needed.

Parker questioned what has been expensed. Sawyer with get report from the finance administrator.

### **Pre-Review:**

- Fire Precinct - Ossipee Corner

Parker reported there is an additional proposed warrant article for \$20,000 to come from the Unreserved Fund Balance towards the purchase of a cardiac monitor. The other warrant articles are \$95,000 for Fire Apparatus and \$30,000 for Building Fund Warrant Article Trust.

- Fire Precinct - West Ossipee

Sutherland stated West Ossipee Fire will not physically be present for the December 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting but would participate via a conference call. Sutherland expressed COVID concerns with the December 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting being so close to Thanksgiving and everyone socializing with family. Discussion ensued over rescheduling to a later date. After discussion, Nash is to speak with the Conservation Commission to see if they would either reschedule or cancel their meeting on December 9<sup>th</sup>, to free up the secretary to be at the Budget Committee meeting. Discussion included the location for the next meeting, and it was decided to have at the Town Hall Bud Avery Memorial Gymnasium to comply with 6ft. social distancing. The secretary is to email the Budget Committee with the date and location of the next meeting.

- Fire Precinct - Center Ossipee

Review of budget and proposed warrant article for fire apparatus of a truck. But the information was not submitted in warrant article format is unclear of how the transaction is to take place.

### **Next Meeting:** Reschedule December 2, 2020

- Revenues & Warrant Articles
- Fire Precinct - Center Ossipee
- Fire Precinct - Ossipee Corner
- Fire Precinct - West Ossipee

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**Next Meeting:** [Reschedule to December 9, 2020](#) – 6:30 PM at the Town Hall Bud Avery Memorial Gymnasium

**WorkShop Session:** [December 16<sup>th</sup>, 2020](#) – 6:30 PM at the Freight House

A **Motion** by Gridley to take the Proposed 2021 Budget for Library, Highway, Water & Sewer Department, Fire Warden, Long-Term Debt (Interest On Line Of Credit), Insurance, Emergency Management under advisement. Ciarmella seconded. No discussion. A unanimous vote was taken. **Motion passed.**

**Any Other Business Which May Come Before This Meeting:** None presented.

**Adjournment:**

A **Motion** by Gridley to adjourn the meeting. Parker seconded. No further discussion. A unanimous vote was taken. **Motion passed.** The meeting adjourned at 7:57 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)*