

**OSSIPEE BUDGET COMMITTEE**  
**MEETING MINUTES**  
**December 9, 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, Louise Sutherland, Lynne Parker, Donna Sargent, Roland Millette, Cameron Quigley, Martha Eldridge (Selectmen's Rep.) and Matt Sawyer, Jr, Town Administrator

Absent: Rachel Ciarmella,

Attendees: West Ossipee Fire Chief – Carl Huddleston  
Ossipee Corner Fire Chief – Adam Riley  
Center Ossipee Fire Chief – Dana Cullen, Jr.  
Center Ossipee Commissioner – Dennis Legendre  
Ossipee Corner Commissioner – Jim Spencer  
Cindy Spencer

While the minutes were being reviewed, Joe Goss read an email from BC member Rachel Ciarmella explaining why she was unable to attend tonight's meeting. The Budget Committee will send healing well wishes to Rachel and husband.

Meeting Minutes: Review of minutes from November 18, 2020.

Nash reported errors on page 3 under Fire Warden; citing Chief Dana Cullen when it should have been Chief Adam Riley.

A **Motion** by Gridley to approve the meeting minutes of November 18, 2020 as amended. Sutherland seconded. No discussion. Roland Millette and Cameron Quigley abstained. All others voted in favor. **Motion passed.**

**Selectmen's Report:**

Martha Eldridge reported the tax bills have been sent out and are due January 9, 2021. To date \$800,000.00 in taxes has been collected. Vehicle registration has yielded \$100,000.00 year to date. November yielded 50 new vehicle registrations. The new grader arrived. The water & sewer monthly payments will start in January, and \$15.00 will be assessed for any late payments. The Finance department reports less than 15% of the budget remains for the year. The T.A.N note is to be paid off by December 31, 2020. The Board of Selectmen are working on bringing in a new computer system into the accounting office. Warrant Articles and Revenues were reviewed at the Selectmen's Monday meeting.

**2020 YTD - Budget Report:**

Matt Sawyer, Jr. reported there will probably be a small surplus at year end. There is 14% of the budget to expend with three weeks remaining. Return of unencumbered gravel funds from the Highway Department helped to improve the budget balance.

**2020 Revenue Report:**

Matt Sawyer, Jr. reported the Town may receive 1-2 timber checks before year end, the Town received \$105,000.00 from the Cares Act, Sawyer had applied for on behalf of the town.

Martha Eldridge commented there reviewing all the Town owned properties on file to determine which properties can go to auction. Sawyer reported through Avitar software, the Town owns 103 properties. Most of these are government buildings, conservation land or other parcels that cannot be sold. But they are working on coming up with a total number of potential parcels to possibly auction off next year.

Sargent inquires of when the Outside Agencies will receive final warrant article disbursements. Sawyer replied they are slated for disbursement next week.

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

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

- Fire Precinct - Center Ossipee – present were Commissioner Dennis Legendre and Chief Dana Cullen Jr.

Legendre reported they went to an outside accounting source which has given them a better understanding on the reporting. Cell phones was decreased by \$1,600.00 by reducing the number of cell phones from 6 down to 1 cell phone for the Chief. Insurance increased from \$37,000 to \$40,205 for an increase of \$3,200.00. Precinct Expenses increase by \$1,500 for a total request of \$12,115.00 due COVID expenditures, some of which will be reimbursed. Street Lights expense increased by \$2,400.00 which is a set bill. Water & Sewer increased by \$300.00, Hydrants increased by \$2,500.00, Executive Payroll increased by \$200.00 but Department Operations decreased by \$516.00. The total precinct expenses are increased by \$9,484.00 for a total of \$543,834.00 for the 2021 proposed budget.

Chief Dana Cullen Jr. explained the operating budget is decreased by \$516.00. Most increases for Street Lights, Water & Sewer, Hydrants, etc... are determined by other entities. Executive Payroll was increased by \$200.00 for adding a Treasurer and Ballot Clerks onto the executive payroll. Previously, the Treasurer and Ballot Clerks payroll was being expensed through the operation budget.

Commissioner Joe Deighan is pending the wording for drafting the warrant article on the truck the department wants to purchase. Legendre and Cullen were unsure of the specific details and the Committee would have to wait to discuss with Joe Deighan. But Chief Cullen did state the truck cost is \$642,000, \$110,000 would come from Capital Reserve Fund, leaving a balance of \$532,000 to finance and a yearly warrant article payment of \$87,127.00. The vehicle itself an engine truck similar to the current truck.

Discussion: Parker inquired of the year of the truck being replaced. Chief Cullen noted it's a 1994 truck. Parker noted the Total Precinct Expenses for 2020 is stated to be \$534,350.00 but it's actually \$582,350.00 approved by the State. Cullen noted that was money raised on the floor, but the Commissioners did not add it into the totals. Chief Cullen explained the difference in responsibilities between the auditor and treasurer and which line item they are paid through. The Insurance line item encompasses all like the building, trucks, worker's comp. etc... There was discrepancy in reporting of line items to include Precinct Expenses, Executive Payroll, and Accounting. Parker inquired and Legendre replied to having 85 street lights their responsible for. Discussion ensued concluding with the Budget Committee wanting to see a more detailed budget report per state formatting and properly written warrant article.

A **Motion** by Goss to not consider the Center Ossipee Fire Precinct 2021 proposed budget until it is corrected, properly formatted per State reporting and the warrant article is properly written by the next meeting on December 16, 2020 – 6:30 PM at the Freight House. Parker seconded. No discussion. A unanimous vote was taken. **Motion passed.**

- Fire Precinct - Ossipee Corner – Chief Adam Riley and Commissioner Jim Spencer and wife Cindy presented minimal changes. Telephones increased by \$400.00, Insurance decreased by \$1,175.00, Department Operating budget increased by \$10,000, Street lights is level funded for 15 – 20 lights, and they are requesting 4 warrant articles. 1. Fire Apparatus for \$95,000, 2. Building Fund for \$30,000, 3. New Equipment for \$10,000 to come from the Capital Reserve Fund (Not from Taxation) and 4. Cardiac Monitor for \$20,000 to come the Unreserved Fund Balance.

Parker thanked the Budget Committee for volunteering their time to review the budgets each year.

- Fire Precinct - West Ossipee - Chief Car Huddleston presented starting off with they have 4 Street Lights for \$150.00 each for a total of \$600.00 budgeted. Insurance cost increased this year. They've instituted daytime staffing because no one was available to leave work to respond to a call. This increased the overall budget by \$41,460.00 for approximately a 9% increase. They are not buying anything this year. They will be making the second payment of \$59,369.00 of three on the truck bought two years ago. The total operating budget is \$446,175.00 and one warrant article for \$20,000 for Fire Department Equipment to come from the Capital Reserve Fund.

Discussion ensued on the location of the 4 street lights and cost. Sargent inquired about getting Christmas trees lit in various parts of Town. Huddleston and Swayer noted they would look into possibly having trees lit for Christmas. Parker would like to see the itemized detailed report of expenses. Chief Huddleston did report the lights in West Ossipee were finished today. Discussion ensued on record retention, policy and the difference between the Precinct verses the Town municipality. Cindy Spencer conveyed on particular documents and the length of retention.

Cindy Spencer inquired if there are any guidelines for Town Meeting concerning COVID. Sawyer noted some came out this week but it's still too soon to report of the process for Town Meeting.

- Revenues – Sawyer reported the tax rate was just set and unless something major happens to effect it, it should be set based on what was reported to DRA. The whole process was eye opening with some items being significantly overly inflated. Interest & Penalties on Delinquent Taxes for 2020 was \$260,000 was actually double from what 2021 is proposed at \$130,000.00. Capital Reserve Funds for 2020 was \$159,000.00 and 2021 is proposed for \$12,700.00 due to no warrant articles to utilize the funds, other than eliminating the two existing Solid Waste Funds and starting a new broader fund, and with essentially no capital reserve or unassigned fund balance the Selectmen felt the fund could be user friendly without breaking policy. The total Source of Revenue is \$2,370,613.00 is modest but very accurate projection and very fiscally responsible. Depending on evaluation the Town tax increase will be approximately \$0.50 per thousand.

- Warrant Articles – Sawyer reported on each line item noting:

Purpose	Request	Capital Reserve/ Expendable Trust Funds	General Taxation	Notes
Dam Engineering	44,900.00		44,900.00	Required by State – TJ Eldridge was able to get (2) engineer evaluations for the price of one.
Add to Bridge Repair Fund	20,000.00		20,000.00	Annual expense
Transfer Station Scale	50,000.00	12,700.00	37,300.00	Current Scale Failed State Inspection from rust underneath. The \$12,700.00 comes from eliminating the (2) Solid Waste Funds and the \$37,300.00 will come from taxation.

Discontinued Solid Waste Funds	0.00		0.00	Eliminate Funds over discrepancy of its use.
Establish Solid Waste Disposal and Recycle Fund	20,000.00		20,000.00	Establish a new fund which encompasses all solid waste and recyclables.
Add to Invasive Species Fund	20,000.00		20,000.00	Annual expense for Milfoil Control
Add to Chickville Church/Meeting House	5,000.00		5,000.00	There is reserve account buy no funds to maintain repairs on the building. This account will create an annual contribution towards building repairs.
Establish a Government Buildings Fund	10,000.00		10,000.00	Establishes an annual contribution fund to build upon towards maintaining government buildings.
Ossipee Water System Bond	58,500.00		58,500.00	Annual payment of water bond for 2021, 2022, and 2023.
Purchase two Police Cruisers	102,000.00		102,000.00	Police Department wants to continue their (1) cruiser, (2) cruiser year cycle and this is a (2) cruiser year for \$102,000 per quote.
To make the annual grader payment	55,000.00		55,000.00	Annual Grader payment which contains a non-appropriation clause and is therefore totally legal however, if the Town does not vote to fund it, there will be no grader.
Purchase a pickup truck for the Highway Department	25,000.00		25,000.00	The cost is approximately \$40,000 with a \$15,000 trade-in value for the current truck leaving \$25,000 to come from taxation. The current truck is used by the (4) highway employees and the Director. The truck is a diesel and is not meant for short distance driving which causes issues with the depth system, which is costing a lot in repairs. The Highway Department should have a gasoline vehicle for the amount of driving utilized.
Add to the Highway Equipment Fund	45,000.00		45,000.00	Per TJ Eldridge's (10) year plan, this is an annual contribution fund towards appropriating new equipment. So, the Town does not have the same expenses as this past year.
Adopt 41:9-a (non-monetary)	0.00		0.00	Establishment of Fees
Ratify the Union CBA	26,952.00		26,952.00	The Collective Bargaining Agreement contract for approval with the 2% increase for employees and additional raises for underpaid employees to bring them into the appropriate pay scale.
Road Paving	300,000.00		300,000.00	TJ Eldridge wants to return the \$300,000 to the annual expense towards maintaining the roads.
Re-Evaluation Year	15,000.00		15,000.00	Martha Eldridge informed Matt Sawyer, Jr. that the Re-Evaluation Fund was not on the Warrant Articles,

				So Sawyer hand wrote it in at the meeting but will properly add it to the Warrant Article for Town Meeting.
Totals:	797,352.00	12,700.00	784,652.00	The total of \$784,652.00 to be raised by taxation at Town Meeting.

Discussion: Parker questioned why the CBA 2% increase is reflected in both the operating budget and as a warrant article? Discussion ensued over how the Ratify the Union CBA is voted in as a warrant article the first year, then added into the operating budget the following years. Sawyer will confer with DRA on rewriting the warrant article or reducing the budgets of the 2% increases for the Highway Dept., Water & Sewer dept., Transfer Station, Selectman's Office and Boards & Commissions Office.

Sawyer discussed the 2021 Proposed Operating Budget was adjusted to reflect what the tax rate is actually set to:

ACCOUNT NAME	2020 Budget As Voted	2021 Selectmen Recommended	2021 Budget Committee Recommended	20-21 Difference	% Increase
<b>OPERATING TOTAL</b>	<b>\$6,001,181.00</b>	<b>\$6,432,068.00</b>		\$ 430,887.00	7.18%
Warrant Articles	\$858,272.00	\$782,352.00		-\$75,920.00	-8.85%
Overlay	\$75,000.00	\$75,000.00			0.00%
War Service Credits	\$174,500.00	\$174,500.00			0.00%
Grand Total including WA's, Overlay and Tax Credits	\$6,934,453.00	\$7,214,420.00		\$279,967.00	4.04%
Revenues - estimate	\$2,449,210.00	\$2,370,613.00		-\$78,597.00	-3.21%
<b>TO BE RAISED BY TAXATION</b>	<b>\$4,485,243.00</b>	<b>\$4,843,807.00</b>		<b>\$358,564.00</b>	<b>7.99%</b>
Reduce from Operating Budget	26,952.00	26,952.00		26,952.00	
<b>TO BE RAISED BY TAXATION</b>	<b>\$4,458,291.00</b>	<b>\$4,816,855.00</b>		<b>\$331,612.00</b>	

Discussion ensued the cost of the ambulance contract moving from warrant article to operating minus lost revenue for an approximate overall budget increase of r \$53,000.00, which isn't too bad and are making up for short falls. Goss and Sawyer both agree that come next years budget it should look markedly improved.

Sargent commented to Sawyer again that the insurance rates cannot keep going and relying on tax payers to pay for employees spouses and families. The Town should only be providing insurance for the employee and if the employee wants spouse and/or families covered, they can pay for it themselves. General discussion ensued over insurance rates, and school district rates.

#### Next Meeting:

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

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

#### 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 7:47 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)