

**OSSIPEE BUDGET COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
November 8, 2023**

Minutes have been recorded for the convenience of summarization by Laura Nash, Boards & Commissions Secretary and are deleted once the minutes are board approved; any amendments to the minutes are noted in ***bold & italic*** type.

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

Pledge of Allegiance – was recited by all attendees.

Attendance by Roll Call: – Joe Goss, Lynne Parker, Dallas Emery, Jennifer Brown, Krystal Eldridge, , Robert Roakes, Jonathan Smith (Selectmen's Rep.), Matt Sawyer, Jr. (Town Administrator), TJ Eldridge, (PW Director) and Andrea Picard (Finance Director)

Absent: Michael Hunter, Susan McGuire – Doyle, and Brian Keyes,

Attendees: Police Chief Donald Babbitt, Police Chief

Meeting Minutes: Review to approve Meeting minutes of November 1, 2023.

A **Motion** by Emery to approved the Meeting Minutes of November 1, 2023 as submitted. J. Brown seconded. No discussion. J. Smith abstained. All others voted in favor. **Motion passed.**

Selectmen's Report: J. Smith reports that they received a check from FEMA in the amount of \$201,000.00 and there will be a final check in the amount of \$183,000.00. There will be a check in the amount of \$98,000.00 for the Pine Hill Rd when it's paved. TJ Eldridge confirmed these amounts are all from the December storms and the final numbers for the July 9th through July 16th storms will be determined by tomorrow night.

J. Smith reported and A. Picard clarified that they will be receiving a Highway Block grant in the amount of \$170,000.00, which was increased due to the state budget recently passed.

J. Smith reported that the valuation came in at 1.7 billion, which is a 112 % increase from the previous 800 million.

Zoning Enforcement: J. Smith reported on court cases as follows:

1. 132 Hanson Rd: Town was awarded a bid of \$75,000.00 to clean up the property.
2. 12 Leisure Dr: The Highway guys cleaned up and removed 4,500 pounds of household trash from the property. There are more items to be removed from the property of which they will be going back to court in order to get the property cleaned up.

Revenue Report: M. Sawyer reported that he brought one copy of the report if anyone wants to see it. But reported he felt good about the revenue projections to the point he recommending the same figures for next years budget.

Expenditure Report: M. Sawyer reported that he brought one copy of the report if anyone wants to see it. But reported they are on the same trajectory with no real changes. There will be a small surplus.

Goss inquired the percentage at this point. M. Sawyer reported that for October being 83.3% of the year expired and in the General Fund there is 27.75% remaining and it'll be fiscally sound year. Goss asked about

the TAN note. M. Sawyer and A. Picard both stated that they have not had to borrow at this time. J. Smith reported that tax bills will be late going out but come January they may have to borrow but at this point it's a wait and see.

2024 Proposed Budgets: Chairman Goss changed the order of presentation to accommodate those individuals who are present.

- **POLICE DEPARTMENT:** Requested 2024 budget of \$ 1,067,150.00

Being the Police Chief's first time in Ossipee doing the budget, M. Sawyer assisted the Chief in explaining the proposed budget. M. Sawyer explained that Salary, Wages, and benefits was predetermined by the Selectmen and is based on an 8 - Officer Roster with the addition of a part-time Prosecutor, who is an attorney by trade. Salary & Wages was increased for officer retention. Computers has a 9% increase because this department has to have a separate network from the rest of the municipal buildings. In discussion with the vendor the anti-virus cost has increased, cloud storage is expensive, and Microsoft licenses have also increased.

Police Chief, Police Chief Babbini explained that Training Services has increased. The police department has applied for accreditation through the state. So, the Training line item has been increased to account for the software for the accreditation training. The following line items have increased for Conference & Dues, Investigating Supplies due to increasing of finger printing, Uniforms and Maintenance has increased because the Chief wears a uniform daily and the other officers continue to keep and wear their uniforms but certain aspects have changed. Radio Maintenance has increased by \$500.00 due to changing the vehicles from vans to Tahoe's. Chief Babbini has a company in Colorado he has dealt with in the past for mobile radios. Mobile radios cost between \$10,000 and \$15,000. He bought a new radio for \$900.00 for the new Tahoe vehicle. The radios are new and reconditioned. The Chief found some extra handheld radios at the station and took them OMV to replace and get batteries. But has decided to get the batteries from Amazon where its more cost effective. The K-9 line item is level funded because the current dog will retire in May and eventually they will be working on another K-9. Computer Maintenance is level funded because the previous Chief did not have a maintenance contract with the vendor but now we do have a contract. Equipment and Building Maintenance are also level funded.

J. Smith spoke highly of the Chief and his wealth of knowledge and level of experience and professionalism he's bringing to the department is a huge asset to the Town. The Selectmen are greatly appreciative that he's here because of the accountability, procedures and policies he's bring and that he's getting the department accredited is a huge asset.

L. Parker inquired of the Building condition. Chief Babbini commented that he speaks honestly and the building has been used but is not a great Police Department. The walls are thin and when he has a meeting with someone; everyone else can hear it. The Police Department is having growing pains and those growing pains needs to stay within these walls. Approximately a week ago, TJ Eldridge added a female locker room that it never had before. The building is workable but it's not the best. Parker noted this is something that needs to be planned for the future.

TJ Eldridge noted the paving of the Police Departments driveway was done because the highway guys would not have been able to plow it if they did not repave it. Last year they broke a plow frame on one tractor trying to plow the driveway. Chief Babbini noted that the Court House is back up on the market.

R. Roakes noted that the Building Fund is already over budget for this year but are requesting level funding. Is that going to be enough? TJ Eldridge explained that this line item is for things like office furniture, etc.... because the overall maintenance of the building is under Government Buildings that he himself is responsible for.

D. Emery inquired about the Gas/Deisel line item. It was explained that not all the expenditures have been disseminated out of the Government Buildings. Emery questioned if they know how much has actually been spent. It was again explained that it will be disseminated at the end of the year.

Goss commended Chief Babbin on the professionalism he's brought to the Ossipee Police Department and to the Officers. Chief Babbin thanked him for the comments and is very appreciated.

TJ Eldridge commented that the Chief has brought Officer accountability to the vehicles as well.

Chairman Goss stated the Budget Committee will take the proposed budget Under Advisement.

- **POLICE - SPECIAL DUTY:** Requested 2024 budget of \$ 25,000.00

M. Sawyer reported and Chief Babbin confirmed no changes and are level funding. Andrea Picard confirmed there is no issues with the billing.

Chairman Goss stated the Budget Committee will take the proposed budget Under Advisement.

- **DOG OFFICER:** Requested 2024 budget of \$ 14,450.00

Chief Babbin reported that he spoke with Matt Sawyer and the Board of Selectmen about the Police Department assuming control over Animal Control. He believes Animal Control needs to fall under the Police Department. He did get some flack from officers but it's in the best interest of the Town to have Animal Control under the Police Department. Chief Babbin spoke on several animal abuse cases the police have responded too and are moving forward to court. Chief Babbin commented that they hired Heather Callidandes, Animal Control/Part-Time Dispatcher for Wolfeboro. She came highly recommended and is doing a fabulous job for the Ossipee.

Chief Babbin stated previous to this, there were line items for a cellphone and mileage, and after a conversation with Matt Sawyer, they decided to offer her a little more money per hour and was able to remove those line items. She makes an hourly salary, uses her own cellphone, and she is not re-imbursed for mileage. She is a maximum of 10 hours per week. They gave her an email address and if a call comes in the officers will email her, she'll show up on scene and take care of situation. M. Sawyer clarified that her maximum is 10 hours per week but she needs to average 5 hours per week for her to stay within budget. Since then, citations have been issued and two horses have been seized.

D. Emery wanted clarification that she is 10 hours per week. Chief Babbin confirmed the 10 hours per week, some weeks maybe more and some maybe less. But between Chief Babbin, Matt Sawyer, and **Andrea Picard** watch her hours closely. Emery commented he's glad that Animal Control is now under the Police Department.

J. Goss commented he's glad that Animal Control is now under the Police Department. Prior there was never very much said about the budget.

Chairman Goss stated the Budget Committee will take the proposed budget Under Advisement.

- **SELECTMEN'S OFFICE:** Requested 2024 budget of \$1,396,200.00

A **Motion** by Goss to zero out the Selectmen's Budget. Unknown seconded due to several members talking at the same time. No discussion. Goss called for a vote. Goss, Emery, Roakes vote in favor to zero out the Selectmen's Budget. Again, several members talking at the same time and unable to hear any other votes from J. Smith, L. Parker, K. Eldridge and J. Brown. **Motion failed.**

M. Sawyer move forward with explaining the following line items: The Land Use Boards & Commissions Secretary's salaries have been moved into the Selectmen's Office Budget. There are 53 pay weeks this year and there some increase into the Salary & Wages line items which is out of our control. Building and Zoning Office has gone back to having two part-time employees which is the reason for increase to PT – Wages. The new Assessing Contract is \$100,000 per/year. The Assessor used to have M. Sawyer budget his rate around \$80,000 per year but do to various circumstances he was consistently over budget by \$15,000 - \$20,000. The new contract with AVITAR is a flat rate of \$100,000 with \$20,000 for an audit. Computer Maintenance is up 9% due to vendor anti-virus cost has increased, cloud storage is expensive, and Microsoft licenses have also increased. All other line items are level funded.

L. Parker inquired and M. Sawyer confirmed that the Zoning Officer's wages is under the PT – Wages.

R. Roakes asked what equipment is rented under the Equipment Contract line item. M. Sawyer stated the postage machine they rent has just expired and they have to get a new machine and are fairly expensive.

Chairman Goss stated the Budget Committee will take the proposed budget Under Advisement.

- **INSURANCE:** Requested 2024 budget of \$ 162,000.00

M. Sawyer stated the Town has Primex, which is the insurance company for NH municipalities. These increase are modest compared to others. M. Sawyer believes they've done a good job mitigating and controlling risk. They have been utilized to get form language for contracts written by HR professionals and attorneys. He has been able to contact their HR specialists on employment issues to avoid lawsuits with certain issues or disciplinary actions.

Andrea Picard noted that their Worker's Compensation personnel are very professional and have assisted her a lot.

L. Parker inquired about with PT- Wages going up is there enough in the worker's compensation line item. Andrea Picard stated these numbers are based on the contract.

R. Roakes commented it's good that Unemployment is decreased that means the Town is retaining personnel. Roakes inquired if Primex offers training for in order to get a better rate. M. Sawyer stated they do not offer a rate discount. But Chief Babbins commented that he contacted Primex because he has a couple of civilian employees that needed to get training towards the accreditation of the Police Department. They had the training online and it's done. He's going to contact them again for the drivers training. Also, as part of the state accreditation; the state is negotiating with Primex to get a discount on liability insurance for the Police Department once accredited.

D. Emery inquired of the amount of the current contract amount. M. Sawyer noted he would have find that for him. But M. Sawyer and J. Smith both confirmed that the new contract amount will be \$50,000.00. M. Sawyer came back noting the contract amount is \$49,625.00.

Chairman Goss stated the Budget Committee will take the proposed budget Under Advisement.

- **AMBULANCE:** Requested 2024 budget of \$ 435,000.00

M. Sawyer explained the requesting amount has decreased a little but could fluctuate slightly in either direction. M. Sawyer obtained the call data from the ambulance company and if it gets prorated again this year in accordance with the percentage of calls in each town this will determine amount requesting. They had a meeting the other day but not all members were in attendance. But M. Sawyer feels comfortable with the figures presented.

L. Parker inquired if the Town was represented at the meeting or was it just the fire department. M. Sawyer and J. Smith stated it was only the fire chief and nothing occurred because they were in and out in five minutes. L. Parker would prefer to have a Selectmen attend that meeting.

D. Emery wished that Mike Hunter was present because he believes Mike was going to attend that meeting.

J. Goss inquired about how many remain on this contract. M. Sawyer stated it was extended last year until 2029.

Chairman Goss stated the Budget Committee will take the proposed budget Under Advisement.

- **WATER DEPARTMENT:** Requested 2024 budget of \$ 240,780.00

TJ Eldridge reported that Full Time Wages increased due to union contract. The following line items were increased due to various reasons as noted:

- **WATER – EQUIPMENT:** increased in order to purchase a hydrant wrench instead of using a make shift one.

- **WATER - MAINT. / MONITORING:** increased in order to some maintenance to the pump station at the boat ramp. Their going to get some better paint to prevent rusting of the pipes due to the caustic soda that gets on the pipes and rust them and anticipate any unforeseen cost that may arise.

J. Smith explained to the new members how the water and sewer departments budget use to co-mingle and the money was never separated. A few years ago, these two departments budget have been separated in order to be standalone operating funds. TJ Eldridge noted that every bill was split 60/40. J. Smith noted the numbers presented are true numbers.

L. Parker inquired how the billing is working out for the residents. M. Sawyer commented no issues. Parker inquired and TJ Eldridge confirmed that the water department flushes their own hydrants twice a year.

R. Roakes offered to machine any wrenches in the future at his machine shop.

D. Emery asked for clarification about a tractor they are going to sell. TJ Eldridge explained the Town is going to buy it. The Water & Sewer Department is going to split the purchase and the use of the new tractor and the old tractor will go to little Chris for taking care of the ballfields at Constitution Park because Chris is currently using his personal tractor. TJ Eldridge informed the committee that the water bond has been paid off.

J. Goss inquired about how the collection of overdue bills is going. J. Smith stated everyone is paying their taxes. Once the Town stopped the illegal tax payment plans that was going on forever which coincided with unpaid water bills; people are paying their taxes and paying their bills.

Chairman Goss stated the Budget Committee will take the proposed budget Under Advisement.

- **SEWER DEPARTMENT:** Requested 2024 budget of \$244,250.00

TJ Eldridge reported that Full Time Wages increased due to union contract. The following line items were increased due to various reasons as noted:

- **HEATING FUEL:** is increased because the cost of heating oil has increased.

- **EQUIPMENT MAINTENANCE:** For the first time in the sewer department history, they are in compliance with NHDES at Camp David. It took 1.5 years to get the sewer cart built, but it's done. The cart is a nasty piece of equipment because it filters out all the plastic and debris that the haulers haul down. NHDES is bringing a lot of people to see the cart because it's a one of a kind piece of equipment. TJ Eldridge and a

metal fabricator designed and built the cart for \$20,000 but it works. Pittsburg, NH has one but it's 16 inches wide and 5 feet long, but Ossipee's is 6 feet wide and 14 feet long. It's similar to a big strainer.

R. Roakes inquired if they're going to patented it. TJ Eldridge commented that they're thinking about it because when they first built it, they thought they would need 6 months to make it work. But within two hours after they built it they had to strengthen the inlet for the truck because it would cause the truck to pound. They strengthened the inlet and the lengthen the shoot and now it's flawless. They can pump about 3,000 gallons through it in about 10 minutes.

Chairman Goss stated the Budget Committee will take the proposed budget Under Advisement.

- **WARRANT ARTICLES:** Requested 2024 budget of \$1,200,000.00
- **Make Govt Buildings Repairs/Improvements:** TJ Eldridge commented it's for D. Emery's cupola. TJ Eldridge commented that they're going to try and install the cupola this year but it may get bumped another year because the second floor of the Town Hall building is having heating and air conditioning issues.
- **Add to Government Buildings ETF:** TJ Eldridge commented they're going to continue to add to the fund.
- **Paving:** TJ Eldridge commented that paving has been at \$3,000 for 10 years and their not getting ahead on the paving. So, they're requesting an increase \$450,000.00 in funding.
- **Add to the Highway Equip CRF:** TJ Eldridge commented this amount will stay the same. This year there going to buy a small truck and the following year when there's over \$200,000 in the account; the money will be there.
- **Grader Payment:** TJ Eldridge commented is fixed rate based on the loan.
- **Add to Invasive Species ETF:** M. Sawyer noted this remains the same amount each year for Milfoil control. Unfortunately, milfoil was found in the river near the channel. The state may not have funding for this after this year but their going to try and find other funding.
- **Add to Bridge Repair/Replace ETF:** TJ Eldridge commented they have two bridges to repair due to accidents. One is on Granite Rd. and the other is on Valley Rd. The one on Valley Rd. once the highway guys repair it per the Police Chief, their insurance will reimburse the cost since they were the ones to hit the guard rail. TJ Eldridge commented they have no more bridges on the red list but they need to maintain the repairs.
- **Add to Benefit Pay ETF:** M. Sawyer noted adding the same amount each year for long time employees at retirement.
- **Add to Solid Waste Disposal and Rec. ETF:** TJ Eldridge commented there is some funds in the account but by adding the \$60,000 it will allow them to but a skid steer this year. The current skid steer is 26 years old and is tired. J. Smith commented that the skid steer is a vital piece of equipment and if it breaks down they will not be able to do any recycling.
- **Add to Police Vehicle and Equipment ETF:** TJ Eldridge commented the requested \$70,000 is for a new Tahoe, which is what Ossipee needs instead of the sports cars.
- **Add to Recreation ETF:** TJ Eldridge commented this is for Justin Chaffee for equipment he needs.

- **Schools Out:** M. Sawyer commented that School's Out has not submitted their petition yet but they are working on it. J. Smith stated that the Select Board is waiting to for the petition, if no petition is submitted it will be removed from the list.

- **Library Heating /Cooling System:** TJ Eldridge commented the current heating system is burning 330 gallons a week in the middle of summer. The heating and colling repair guy has evaluated the system to make it more efficient and has replaced one of the furnaces. He wants to replace the steam boiler with a standard furnace and mini splits.

- **Start Deer Run Trail ETF:** J. Smith noted that the Friends of Constitution Park Ossipee (FOCPO) is a non-profit organization, Chaired by Edwina Bosse has spent countless hours working to regenerate the park. The Selectmen want to support the repair work needed on the Deer Run (Boardwalk) Trail down to the water. They have applied for a reimbursement grant but they need to have the funding upfront before they can get reimbursed.

The Boardwalk was install back in 1991 and some pillars were replace last year. There is also a fundraiser tomorrow night and Hobb's for \$100.00 a ticket which includes a buffet and a 3 hour event.

- **Cemeteries Mower:** TJ Eldridge commented he sees no reason not to approve this because for all the cemeteries that Ossipee has the amount of work Krystal Eldridge and the other trustees do. There is no reason not to have a backup mower because if breaks down the Town has no others mowers capable of going between the head stone.

- **Collective Bargaining Agreement:** M. Sawyer reported this is the ratification of the union contract. This is the amount of wages increase.

J. Goss called for any discussion on any of the warrant articles.

R. Roakes inquired if the heating guy has done any calculations on saving by changing the heating system at the Library. TJ Eldridge commented they have a detailed report but it does not include a saving comparison. But J. Smith read through the report and noted there will definitely be some saving on the heating system. TJ Eldridge added that the state says it will not pass inspection next year.

D. Emery questioned if the Cemetery Trustees could have expended the cost of the mower out of this years budget, since they seem to have not expended very much out of this years budget. J. Smith noted that this year was a very wet summer, so the normal amount of mowing did not take place because of all the rain. D. Emery was looking for the final number it cost for thew mowing this year. M. Sawyer reported at this time they have 22% remaining for the year.

Chairman Goss stated the Budget Committee will take the proposed budget Under Advisement.

- **REVENUES:** Requested 2024 budget of \$3,082,330.00

M. Sawyer reported all he did was mirror last year's revenue.

J. Goss inquired if there are any decrease in any of the normal revenues. M. Sawyer explained the sale of municipal properties due to the policies of the Board and the collection of the taxes. M. Sawyer stated he cannot predict if they will have any tax deeded properties next year and this year they only had the one property noted. M. Sawyer stated they do not want to tax deed any properties if they don't have too.

R. Roakes inquired if Intent to Cuts will decrease. J. Smith commented it would depend on whether the demand for lumber decreases. R. Roakes commented on the number of housing lots by his house. J. Smith noted that the Town does not get any timber tax on small house lots. J. Goss clarified it's only on anything

over \$20,000 or 10,000 cord feet.

Chairman Goss stated the Budget Committee will take the proposed budget Under Advisement.

• **Documents Due:**

- Fire Precinct - Center Ossipee – **Received**
- Fire Precinct - Ossipee Corner – **Received**
- Fire Precinct - West Ossipee – **Pending** – J. Goss asked J. Brown if Mr. Howard has been notified of next weeks meeting. J. Brown stated she hopes so.

Next Meeting: Chairman Goss announced the next meeting will be:

Wednesday, **November 15, 2023 – 6:30 pm at the Freight House**

- Fire Precinct - Center Ossipee
- Fire Precinct - Ossipee Corner
- Fire Precinct - West Ossipee

Wednesday, **November 29, 2023 – 6:30 pm at the Freight House**

- Review Final Budgets
- Draft – MS 737

Any Other Business Which May Come Before This Meeting:

L. Parker inquired about the bleacher seating at Constitution Park and hopes it's not replaced with wood. TJ Eldridge stated that it will be replaced with pressure treated wood because it's actually part of the bank. Emery commented that all the schools were made to replace all there pressure treated wood with a non-toxic version.

L. Parker followed up on her suggestion for signage at the Transfer Station. TJ Eldridge stated that new brochures with dates and times for the Transfer Station are being disseminated at the Town Clerk's Office. Parker asked about a schematic showing where each of the recyclables are located. TJ Eldridge noted he has it in the operation plan but that would be difficult because of the Permit By Notification permit he is seeking because it will be very fluent on what they do and don't take.

D. Emery suggested a billboard posted as you drive in. TJ Eldridge stated he cannot do anything until he get his new permit.

R. Roakes inquired if they store recyclables until the market changes. TJ Eldridge confirmed they that they do.

Adjournment:

A **Motion** by J. Brown to adjourn the meeting. R. Roakes seconded. No discussion. A unanimous vote was taken. **Motion passed.** The meeting adjourned at 7:33 PM.

Minutes approved by majority vote of the Board on –

Date

Joe Goss, Chairman

Lynn Parker, Vice-Chair

(In the absence of the Chairman)