

**OSSIPEE BUDGET COMMITTEE
PUBLIC HEARING MINUTES
February 15, 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 reconvened the Public Hearing at 7:00 PM.

Attendance by Roll Call (previously taken): – Joe Goss, Donna Gridley Roland Millette, Dallas Emery, Lynne Parker, Brian Keyes, Jennifer Brown, Jonathan Smith (Selectmen's Rep.), Matt Sawyer, Jr. (Town Administrator), and TJ Eldridge, (PW Director)

Absent:, Susan McGuire – Doyle (COFP, Rep.) and Andrea Picard (Finance Director)

Attendees:

Kellie Skehan, Town Clerk/Tax Collector

Michelle Capone – Ossipee Corner Fire Department and Clerk for the GWRSD

Robert & Edwina Bosse of 19 Bay Point Rd.

PUBLIC HEARING

2023 Town Budget Proposal: Chairman Goss informed the public he would read through each budget line item and if anyone has questions or concerns they were instructed to speak up and their concern would be discussed, otherwise he will continue to read through the budgets.

DEPARTMENT BUDGET PROPOSALS:

Selectmen's Salary in the amount of \$19,920.00

Town Clerk/Tax Collector in the amount of \$388,275.00

Elections in the amount of \$6,750.00

Voter Registration in the amount of \$5,515.00

Treasurer in the amount of \$8,230.00

Selectmen's Office in the amount of \$919,900.00

Economic Development in the amount of \$2,500.00

Legal in the amount of \$40,000.00

Planning Board in the amount of \$40,070.00

ZBA in the amount of \$17,153.00

Government Buildings in the amount of \$287,555.00

Trustee of Trust Funds in the amount of \$5,741.00

Cemeteries in the amount of \$43,745.00

Insurance in the amount of \$154,200.00

Police Department in the amount of \$1,299,950.00

Police Special Duty in the amount of \$25,000.00

Dog Officer in the amount of \$14,350.00

Fire Warden in the amount of \$21,995.00

Highway in the amount of \$1,398,350.00

Transfer Station in the amount of \$589,206.00

Goss proceeded to read each Outside Agency request for funding, as follows:

Outside Agencies - Total in the amount of \$131,866.00

Tri County CAP (Energy Assistance Program) in the amount of \$13,000.00

Caregivers of S. Carr. Cnty. in the amount of \$2,500.00

End 68 Hours of Hunger in the amount of \$7,000.00

Freedom Food Pantry in the amount of \$4,000.00

Kingswood Youth Center in the amount of \$5,000.00

LIFE Ministries in the amount of \$6,000.00

Green Mountain Conservation Group (Water Quality Testing) in the amount of \$2,400.00

Northern Human Services in the amount of \$4,425.00

OCC - Elderly Nutrition in the amount of \$20,000.00

OCC Day Care in the amount of \$7,000.00

Ossipee Children's Fund in the amount of \$22,000.00

Ossipee Historical Society in the amount of \$4,000.00

Starting Point in the amount of \$10,261.00

White Mountain Comm Health in the amount of \$4,780.00

Granite VNA & Hospice in the amount of \$14,000.00

White Horse Addiction & Recovery Center in the amount of \$0.00

Lake Host Program in the amount of \$2,500.00

Children Unlimited in the amount of \$3,000.00

Goss continued to read each line-item request for funding, as follows:

Ambulance (remainder of current contract) in the amount of \$449,000.00

Emergency Management in the amount of \$6,700.00

General Assistance (Welfare) in the amount of \$40,000.00

Recreation Department in the amount of \$219,355.00

Library in the amount of \$244,070.00

Patriotic Purposes in the amount of \$3,000.00

Conservation Commission in the amount of \$26,784.00

Interest on Line of Credit in the amount of \$10,000.00

Vehicle and Equipment Maintenance in the amount of \$274,291.00

Totals were calculated as follows:

Subtotal: **\$6,693,471.00**

Water Dept.: The 2022 proposed budget is \$223,180.00

Sewer Dept.: The 2022 proposed budget is \$232,150.00

Total Operating Budget including W&S: \$7,148,801.00

Chairman Goss read each Warrant Article requested as follows:

Warrant Articles Total in the amount of \$1,100,000.00

Article# 1 BTLA ordered complete revaluation in the amount of \$150,000.00

Article # 2 Make Govt Buildings Repairs/Improvements in the amount of \$20,000.00

Article # 3 Add to Government Buildings ETF in the amount of \$20,000.00

Article # 4 Paving in the amount of \$300,000 .00

Article # 5 Add to the Highway Equip CRF in the amount of \$200,000.00

Article # 6 Grader Payment in the amount of \$57,000.00

Article # 7 Add to Invasive Species ETF in the amount of \$25,000.00

Article # 8 Add to Bridge Repair/Replace ETF in the amount of \$25,000.00

Article # 9 Make the Water Bond Payment in the amount of \$58,000.00

Article # 10 Add to Benefit Pay ETF in the amount of \$15,000.00

Article # 13 Add to Solid Waste Disposal and Rec. ETF in the amount of \$20,000.00

Article # 14 Create Police Vehicle and Equipment ETC in the amount of \$50,000.00

Article # 15 Create a Recreation ETF in the amount of \$10,000.00

Article # 16 Create Property Cleanup ETF in the amount of \$100,000.00

Jonathan Smith explained there are several properties under investigation for being either dilapidated, a junkyard or health hazard, and it's breeding criminal activity. These properties will be going through the court system but eventually funds will need to be available to clean these properties up. So, the Town put forth a Warrant Article to Create a Property Cleanup ETF (Expendable Trust Fund) to only be used, through a vote by the Select Board, to clean up some of these rundown, and health hazard properties. The cost to cleanup a property will result in a tax lien or a lien on the property/owner until the Town receives the money back via the tax lien or takes possession of the property. Either way the money needs to be available to clean up the properties and the funds will go back into the General Fund.

Article # 17 Schools Out in the amount of \$45,000.00

Article # 18 Economic Development Council's Signage Project in the amount of \$5,000.00

Total including W/A: **\$8,248,801.00** a difference of \$803,983.00 or a 10.85% increase.

Estimated Overlay: **+\$173,000.00** (for Abatements)

War Service Credits: **+\$50,000.00** (for Veteran's Exemptions)

Estimated Revenues: **-\$3,033,330.00**

Total Raised by Taxation Per MS-737 **\$5,215,471.00**

Total Raised by Taxation Estimate: **\$5,438,471.00**

Budget Increased Over Last Yr.: **\$869,612.00**

Overall Percentage Increase: **18.93%**

Goss called for any questions from the attendees. Edwina Bosse questioned why the Police Departments budget differs between the Board of Selectmen and the Budget Committee. Goss explained the reason for the \$25,000.00 reduction is because at the end of the year (2022) the police chief resigned. The Selectmen are looking to hire a new chief but it's going to take a 3-6 months. Smith stated this will result in unspent money, so they reduced the police budget by \$25,000.00. Goss noted there is also a Patrolman position open so the Budget Committee felt the \$25,000.00 was the minimum amount to reduce the budget because the proposed budget was for a full year but they would be without two officers for at least half the year.

Edwina Bosse inquire if the Town is paying the officer's enough to keep them. Smith noted their pay is towards the top of the pay scale and the chief left for personal reasons not the pay.

Robert Bosse asked why Paving was its own warrant article isn't the Highway Budget enough to cover paving. TJ Eldridge, PWD explained the highway budget would not cover the paving expense. The increase to highway budget is due to the cost of salt and discussed decreasing the calcium amount for the gravel roads but decided not to. But the cost of salt, calcium, etc... increased by one and half times the amount and the costs continues to increase due to inflation. The Paving budget has been consistent for a few years, so discussions have taken place about possibly increasing the Paving amount next year.

Goss noted most of the increases are due to contracts, insurances, and overall inflation cost. Goss commended the Town Administrator, Selectmen and Department Heads for trying hard to stay within their budgets.

Edwina Bosse inquired why the (estimated) Revenue is decreasing. Matt Sawyer explained because the Selectmen started tax deeding properties according to the law and holding folks accountable a few years ago. There was huge inventory of properties that were tax deeded and sold at auction over the past couple of years which resulted in increase of revenues. People now know that they have to pay their taxes like everybody else. The collectables from prior years use to be over a million dollars now it's in the \$300,000.00 range.

Parker praised Kellie Skehan for making herself available and staying open later if someone made an appointment to come in to pay their taxes.

Goss praised the Selectmen for an extremely good job for holding the line on the budgets and getting things done with any available excess of funds, so the town's people would not incur a huge expense later.

Goss moved on and read the Fire Precincts budgets.

Ossipee Corner Light & Power Precinct

Total Operating Budget in the amount of \$537990.00

Center Ossipee Fire Precinct

Total Operating Budget in the amount of \$745,950.00

West Ossipee Fire Precinct

Total Operating Budget in the amount of \$472,983.00

Any Other Business Which May Come Before This Meeting:

Goss reminded everyone to come and vote on March 14th, 2023 and the Annual Town Meeting is on March 15th, 2023.

Goss noted there is a vacant position on the Budget Committee for anyone is interested in volunteering for the position.

Next Meeting:

- **February 22, 2023** – Meeting to sign MS 737's - 6:30 PM at the Freight House
- **March 14th, 2022** – Town Election: **at the Town Hall Bud Avery Gymnasium**
- **March 15th, 2022** – Annual Town Meeting: **at the Town Hall Bud Avery Gymnasium**

Adjournment:

A **Motion** by Millette to adjourn the meeting. Gridley seconded. No further discussion. A unanimous vote was taken. **Motion passed.** The meeting adjourned at 7:19 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)