

**OSSIPEE BUDGET COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
November 1, 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, Susan McGuire – Doyle, Jennifer Brown, Krystal Eldridge, Michael Hunter, and Robert Roakes

Absent: Brian Keyes, Jonathan Smith (Selectmen's Rep.), Matt Sawyer, Jr. (Town Administrator), TJ Eldridge, (PW Director) and Andrea Picard (Finance Director)

Meeting Minutes: Review to approve Meeting minutes of October 18, 2023.

A **Motion** by Emery to approve the meeting minutes of October 18, 2023, as submitted. Roake seconded. No discussion. A unanimous vote was taken. **Motion passed.**

2024 Proposed Budgets: Chairman Goss changed the order of presentations based on the sign in sheet.

- **OCC ELDERLY NUTRITION:** Requested 2024 budget of \$35,000

Misty Ryder, Executive Director presents for increased funding to \$35,000.00. OCC is a non-profit organization that provides services for Elderly Nutritional Meals located in Center Ossipee and in Moultonborough and they have the OCC Day Care. They put on the 4th of July Parade, the Santa Project, and a Night at the Gazebo.

The Elderly Nutrition Program is being increased by \$15,000.00 because over the past three years Ms. Ryder has been able to assess that it cost \$13.50 per plate served and is split up between towns. Ms. Ryder has kept track of which towns their clients eat in at OCC and clients for the meals on wheels program and has been able to figure out how much it cost OCC per town. Previous years OCC would request \$20,000.00 which calculated to only a few cents per plate. The actual cost per plate calculates to \$3.00 per plate and that would require asking Ossipee for \$80,000.00. Ms. Ryder instead opted to increase the requested amount by \$15,000.00, which only covers 8% of the actual cost and the remaining funds will have to be fund raised either through grants or penny sales.

Ms. Ryder explained the ongoing struggles with increased food cost, OCC being \$170,000.00 in the negative in 2022 and 2023 being \$3,000.00 in the negative, increase in staff wages to be competitive, minimal employee benefits and getting tougher to fund raise. Ms. Ryder explained the \$15,000.00 budget increase equates to \$1.32 per plate every other town is being asked for \$3.00 per plate and they serve most of Southern Carroll County.

L. Parker commented that it's about time they increase their requested amount because they've stayed at \$20,000.00 for years.

R. Roake inquired and Ms. Ryder confirmed that OCC is charging the same amount per plate, per town based on the number of client's served. Ms. Ryder noted she's working towards getting it even across the board.

D. Emery questioned why the operational expenses have decreased. Review of the Operational Expenses page specifically line item Professional Full Time Staff Salaries notes the previous fiscal year amount is \$138,029.00, the current fiscal year \$147,119.00 and the next fiscal year shows \$143,104.00. After discussion, it was pointed

out that there is an increase of \$5,075.00 between the previous fiscal year and the next fiscal year but the current year is well over budget at \$147,119.00.

J. Brown stated she believes this very reasonable. OCC does not want to scare anyone away but the increase is necessary.

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

- OCC DAY CARE: Requested 2024 budget of \$7,000

Misty Ryder, Executive Director presents for level funding at \$7,000.00. They currently have 36 children enrolled with most being Ossipee residents.

L. Parker noted and Ms. Ryder confirmed that OCC Day Care gets a donation from the Children's Fund. Ms. Ryder explained that parents will sign up for the Children's Fund, who in turn will assist with the payment.

Ms. Ryder noted they are almost fully staffed but are still seeking another staff member but it has proven difficult to get employees. But they are currently interviewing two people.

L. Parker inquired and Ms. Ryder confirmed that the Day Cares capacity is 46 children.

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

- NORTHERN HUMAN SERVIC: Requested 2024 budget of \$4,425

Valeda Cerasale, Behavioral Health Director presents requesting \$4,425.00. NHS is a non-profit community mental health center with offices are in Conway and the majority of Ossipee clients go to the Wolfeboro office. They offer an array of mental health services which include Emergency Service 24/7, Psychiatric services, Adult and Children Out-Patient Therapy, Case Management, Mobile Crisis Unit that deploys teams nightly from 5:00 pm to mid-night, Monday through Friday.

The majority of their funding is received through Medicaid reimbursement. They have received a couple of grants to fund other programs, such as the A System of Care Grant, which allowed them to hire a full-time school liaison, who works with the Governor Wentworth School District. The school liaison was hired to help kids from Ossipee and other towns in the district to receive mental health services in the school.

One of our most important programs that we offer is the 24/7 Mobile Crisis Service which staffs several full-time master's level licensed mental health professionals, who respond to psychiatric evaluations in the community, along with psychiatric consultations. Whereas it's one of the most important program, it's also one of the most underfunded programs that we have. They never turn anybody away, especially if they're an emergency crisis. Ms. Cerasale noted it's a very costly program and the state requires NHS to offer that service. The state only gives NHS roughly \$90,000.00 a year to fund it. The \$90,000.00 barely covers the cost of one master level admission. The program usually runs on the deficit every year. In the packets during 2022, NHS served 115 residents from Ossipee for approximately \$120,000.00. But NHS is requesting level funding at \$4,425.00. All funding received from Ossipee goes directly to Ossipee residents.

L. Parker inquired about how a resident would access NHS programs. Valeda Cerasale conveyed several ways:

1. If the resident is in Emergency Crisis; they are to call 988 (state hotline) and a NHS team will provide direction.
2. For Non-Emergencies in Conway area; they are to call 603-447-2111 and the office will contact them the next day.
3. For Non-Emergencies in Wolfeboro area; they are to call 603-569-1884 and the office will contact them the next day.
4. For anyone going through a rough time, they can call the NHS office and a triage service will be provided.
5. Anyone can also request a physician referral

M. Hunter inquired about the extension area of services provided by towns. Valeda Cerasale stated NHS covers from Wakefield up to Pittsburg, and Conway over to Littleton.

R. Roakes inquired about how the charges are calculate per town. Valeda Cerasale explained she thinks it's based on a unit of service which equals \$205.00. So, the formula equates to:

- Number of residents seen = 115
- Multiplied by average hours = $5.12 \times 115 = 588.8$
- Multiplied by cost for 1 unit of service = $205.00 \times 588.79 = \$120,701.95$ cost for services in Ossipee.

D. Emery questioned the differences between why line item for Wakefield, Sanbornville and Union actual cost is much less than Ossipee's. It was explained that Ossipee had twice as many hours of service charged than Wakefield, Sanbornville and Union.

J. Goss inquired on the percentage of client's between various age groups i.e., Adults, Minors, and Veterans. Valeda Cerasale explained she did not have the actual numbers but noted there has been a major influx in children and teenagers being referred for services mostly from Ossipee and south. As for the percentage of veteran's Valeda Cerasale stated she did not have that information but could provide it to the committee. Goss commented that they're providing services to veteran's but are not seeking funding from the Veteran's Administration. Valeda Cerasale noted most veteran's will go through the VA for services and NHS may see a veteran on an emergency basis until they're transferred to a hospital, usually the VA Hospital. Goss stated there is grant funding available for psychiatric care for minors. Valeda Cerasale stated she is aware there is because that's how they were able to fund the School Liaison position.

Goss inquired if there has been an increase in services due to the increase of immigrants coming into the country. Valeda Cerasale stated not so much with immigrants but when COVID hit their numbers skyrocketed and the world currently, their seeing an increase in services.

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

- **STARTING POINT:** Requested 2024 budget of \$9,987

Raetha Stoddard, Starting Point Outreach Specialist presents requesting a slight decrease in contribution from \$10,261.00 to \$9,987.00. Starting Point provides free and confidential services 24/7/365 days a year for all victims of domestic violence, sexual assaults, stalking and human trafficking in Carroll County, along with prevention programs in all the schools. Services include emergency housing, permanent housing support, crisis intervention, emergency shelter, 24/7/365 crisis line, court advocacy, hospital accompaniment, personal advocacy, financial empowerment training, support groups, transitional housing and supportive services, transportation, prevention education, food pantry in their shelter, and outreach and professional development for program and community partners. They also operate a shelter for 13 people which includes 5 adults and up to 8 children and it's always full.

They have partnerships with dozens of local businesses, no-profit organizations, and other entities along with protocol with all the hospitals and walk-in clinics so if a victim presents there, a call is made to Starting Point and an advocate is dispatched. They work with the local Police Departments Lethal Assessment Program (LAP protocols), so if they go on a call for domestic violence, which can be some of the most dangerous calls for a Police Officer, they would screen and Staring Point would be dispatched to the location. They have a 24/7 crisis center, serve a huge population of homelessness, mental health issues and addiction.

They are requesting \$9,987.00 and served 67 Ossipee residents and provided almost 2,000 services. There has been increase in everything from cost and numbers since COVID.

L. Parker inquired if they have a relationship with Hope House or the Advocacy Center. Raetha Stoddard explained that they have MOU with the Advocacy Center. So, if a child is going through an investigation, Starting Point will dispatch an advocate for the non-offending parent.

R. Roakes inquired about the differences between Conway and Ossipee and questions if the calculating formula is correct. Raetha Stoddard stated that a lot of people who present to us from Conway, that's the last place of their homelessness. But they are often from a neighboring town, so some of their numbers, their population is high, but also some of their numbers, we're trying to count that differently. But our coalition uses the last place of residency and it's often like a hotel or something in Conway, but they might be a resident from also be from Albany or some other towns. R. Roakes continued noting it just looks to me that if Ossipee has 67 people served and Conway has 100 more people served and paying just double what the town of Ossipee is paying. I've ran the numbers on a couple of other towns and the percentages have not come out to the same as what is listed. If you're doing a percentage, you should get the same base. Raetha Stoddard explain there is the same base and then the percentage is based on the number of services. R. Roakes noted if you run the three-year average and the number services, you end up with the three year average of services provided. And you look at what you're asking for, it just seems like it's skewed. Raetha Stoddard stated she have to have the administrator review and answer that question. Discussion and review of the figures ensued. Raetha Stoddard noted the calculations are based on the cost per service. Different services have different cost.

D. Emery noted last year Starting Point requested \$10,000.00 and this year, Starting Point is asking for \$9,987.00. Emery inquired why not round up and ask for the \$10,000.00. Raetha Stoddard stated because they are federally funded they have to provide accurate numbers.

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

- GRANITE VNA & HOSPICE: Requested 2024 budget of \$14,000

Sarah Hinley presents requesting level funding of \$14,000.00. In full disclosure, the application and data included was submitted by our new Vice President of Strategy, Julia Stones submitted directly to Mr. Sawyer, but believes they had a conversation.

A little bit about Granit VNA, who might recognize us formally as Central VNA & Hospice out of the Laconia and Wolfeboro. Most recently Central VNA and Concord Regional VNA joined forces to form Granit VNA. We are a home health and Hospice agency along with a 10 bed Hospice House on the campus of Concord Hospital. We provide visiting nurse services to elderly and eternal child health, women's prenatal and post-natal support, infant child health, skilled nursing services, physical and occupational therapy, speech therapy, home health aide, and licensed medical social workers under their home health program. The hospice program that employs skilled nurse, also provides physical and occupational therapy, and licensed medical social workers and home health aides, who can to assist through the end stages of life.

Granit VNA is requesting level funding for this year until the new CFO get acclimated to the position and assesses the budget going forward. Last year, they services 218 people in the Ossipee area and this is projected to be around 220 people. They are a not-for profit. They do bill insurance companies but they do not turn away anyone who is underfunded, or does not carry insurance, they rely on town funding, fundraising, and private donations to help offset the cost.

L. Parker noted the data sheets are from 2021 but it was stated that they served 218 people and questioned where that is shown. Sarah Hinley noted the information is stated on page 3 of the application.

Susan McGuire – Doyle noted that Miscellaneous Expenses the previous year was \$217,045.00, the current year is \$591,681.00 and the projected year is \$591,681.00 and is this a result of the merger. Sarah Hinley referred to the communities served map prior to the merger the Belmont - Gilmanton line and north was the territory of Central NH VNA & Hospice and everything below was the territory of formerly Concord Regional VNA. After the merger they doubled from 41 towns to 82 towns.

R. Roakes asked how the merger is progressing with combining staffing, etc... Sarah Hinley spoke of her history and progressing in the healthcare industry, but her soul purpose in life is to speak in front of a doctor's office, a hospital, a town's appropriation committee to spread the good work that we can do to serve the people that don't necessarily have access to what they need.

D. Emery inquired if Granit VNA is affiliated with Caregivers of Southern Carroll County. Sarah Hinley noted they do serve Carroll County and have contracts within specific counties but to the best of her knowledge they are not affiliated with Caregivers of Southern Carroll County.

J. Goss noted that his mother used both their services of VNA and Hospice and both services are excellent.

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

- **OSSIPEE CHILDRENS FUND:** Requested 2024 budget of \$22,000

Jane Podsen, Board of Director's Member of Ossipee Childrens Fund presents requesting \$22,000.00. We thank you so much for your past support. We are a non-profit organization that helps and supports families in the community in Ossipee, Effingham, Madison and Freedom that are low income with their childcare, school year childcare, summer season childcare, recreation, education, drivers education, and enrichment. We are asking for level funding again this year of \$22,000. We also incorporated during the pandemic by partnering with Hannaford. We gave \$100 gift cards to anyone who qualify because there was a great need to help, and we've continued with since.

L. Parker inquired about the driver's ed program. Jane Podsen reported that last year OCF would pay a portion of the driver's ed expense. But this past year, OCF has decided to pay the whole tuition for driver's education for students which has help out with the family budget. OCF assist funding for many services from childcare, recreation department, summer camps, after school programs, and with a lot of children who over the years that were left out during their school days.

M. Hunter inquired about the cost of driver's education. Jane Podsen noted that the cost is approximately \$700.00 and OCF funds the whole cost. Each student is awarded a scholarship based on low income qualifications.

R. Roakes thanked them for the services they provided and was especially helpful when his children were home.

L. Parker inquired about the \$12,000.00 for School's Out Program you're sponsoring the request of the family for assistance but not directly to the School's Out Program. Jane Podsen noted the request goes to the parent. The parent completes the application and submits it to OCF and OCF pays School's Out Program. There's never any money paid to the family it's paid directly to the service.

K. Eldridge inquire to how long has OCF been around. Jane Podsen noted 34 years and she's been with OCF for 32 years.

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

- **LIFE MINISTRIES FOOD PANTRY:** Requested 2024 budget of \$6,000

Bill Connors is the President of Life Ministries Food Pantry. They are a 501C-3 non-profit organization and was established 1985 as an outreach program of 7 churches in the Wolfeboro, Alton and Tuftonboro area. Is overseen by a 15-member Board of Director's and operate by approximately 65 volunteers. Their mission is to provide food and personal hygiene items to eligible people according to the family size and nutritional needs, supporting the security of our community as well as the dignity and respect of our clients. We work on a drive through operation the first and third Wednesdays of every month, and we distribute sufficient food to provide 12 meals a week for each family member.

The demand for our services began to increase dramatically beginning in the latter part of 2022 and with the combined impact of inflation and the reduction of benefits extended during the COVID-19 pandemic which has since come to an end, people have begun to struggle. As of October, we distributed 175,338 meals, which is an increase of 53% over the same time last year. Early 2022, we were providing approximately 110 families for distribution that has gone up steadily on the last few we have ranged between 175 and 185 families per distribution. By the end of this morning's session, we were at about 142 for the week, which will put us

between 170 and 180 families per distribution. We're expecting Thanksgiving distribution to be a record breaker. This year our clients come from 24 communities and that varies from year to year, but usually in the 24 to 26 range of communities. Ossipee had 25% provided services, which is second to Wolfeboro, which has 27%. The month of October, we served 148 individuals from 44 households in Ossipee. Of those people 18 were over the age of 60, and 69 of them were children under the age of 18 and provided Ossipee residents with 5,906 meals. As the need for our services has increased, so have expenses. Our food budget for the current fiscal year is \$210,000, that compares with \$133,000 for the prior fiscal year. The food pantry is funded solely through grants and donations, and although we're dealing with the increase of demand and cost we are requesting level funding in the amount of \$6,000.00. We are grateful to all of our donors, individuals, corporate and municipal.

L. Parker first wanted a thank you conveyed to all the volunteers. Secondly, she is astonished by the number of Ossipee residents served. If their serving 25% from Ossipee, then Life Ministries is definitely not charging Ossipee 25% of the cost with minimal administrative cost.

K. Eldridge inquired and Bill Connor's confirmed that they have approximately 65 volunteers.

M. Hunter inquired if this is strictly a volunteer support. Bill Connor's stated they normally have 2 employees, but currently they have 1 – open position. One employee is the food coordinator, who is minimally compensated and the other employee is the open vacancy for a clerical position for 30 – 40 hours per month.

M. Hunter inquired if they run any metrics on the utilization for the program, per individual on how often they use the service. Do they use it for years or for 6 months and eventually graduate out of the service. Is there a percentage of how long one individual or a family uses the program compared to others. Bill Connors reported he thinks they could provided that information but they basically keep the doors open for people. Bill Connor's explained the software they used called Food Pantry Manager. M. Hunter inquired if they provide individual or families with educational services for graduating out of getting the services. Bill Connor's noted they started a couple of years ago providing a social services guide to new applicants and it's on their website, which provides a comprehensive guide to social services in the area.

R. Roakes and J. Brown conveyed their appreciation for the services and to thank all the volunteers.

J. Goss expressed his appreciation for the services and to thank all the volunteers. Goss referred to Tennessee where they publicize for donations from sportsmen who are out hunting to provided meat to the food pantry. Does Life Ministries accept meat from sportsmen. Bill Connor's does not recall ever being approached by sportsmen wanting to donate to the food pantry. K. Eldridge noted that Freedom Food Pantry takes deer meat donations. R. Roakes stated the Maine Warden Service puts out a bulletin to sportsmen that if their not going to eat their deer meat they can donate it to a list of organizations.

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

J. Goss called for Public Input: Jane Podsen informed the committee that Ossipee Children's Fund will probably reach the 2 million mark in what they have given away from private donations, grants, appropriations and fund raising in the 34 years of operation.

- TRI COUNTY CAP: Requested 2024 budget of \$9,837

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

- WHITE MTN COMM HEALTH: Requested 2024 budget of \$4,780

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

Next Meeting: Chairman Goss announced the next meeting will be: Thursday, [November 2, 2023 – 6:30 pm at the Freight House](#)

- **Outside Agencies: Cont....**

- OSSIPEE HISTORICAL SOCIETY
- KINGSWOOD YOUTH CTR.
- CAREGIVERS OF SOUTHERN C.C. – J. Goss referenced the submitted letter explaining and apologizing for not being able to attend the meeting tomorrow night.
- FREEDOM FOOD PANTRY
- END 68 HOURS OF HUNGER
- CHILDREN UNLIMITED, INC. FAMILY RESOURCE
- GREEN MOUNTAIN CONSERVATION
- LAKE HOST
- NEW - WOLFEBORO CHILDRENS CENTER: J. Goss advised the committee to read through the application if they are not familiar with this organization.

Any Other Business Which May Come Before This Meeting:

Adjournment:

A **Motion** by Emery to adjourn the meeting. Roakes seconded. No discussion. A unanimous vote was taken. **Motion passed.** The meeting adjourned at 7:29 PM.

Minutes approved by majority vote of the Board on –

Date

Joe Goss, Chairman

Lynn Parker, Vice-Chair
(*In the absence of the Chairman*)