

THE OGUNQUIT BREEZE

A MONTHLY EMAIL NEWSLETTER FOR THE COMMUNITY
FROM THE OGUNQUIT RESIDENTS ALLIANCE

Town News

- **Open seats:** 1 Select Board; 4 Budget Review Committee; 1 School Board; 1 Sewer. Nomination Papers on [Town Clerk site](#)
- Town Manager announces \$3.4 million in **Federal Funding** for Cove Dredging in addition to \$2.85 million to replace Bridge
- Police Chief **Pat Arnaudin** retires April 28th after 41 years
- Many useful updates from Town Treasurer on the Town website: [Financial Transparency](#)

Residential homeowners pay more than 80% of Ogunquit's property tax revenue*

Each parcel has an assessed property value. Below are the major categories and their assessed values:

- Residential - \$1.2 billion (which includes homes, condos, and apartments)
- Commercial and industrial property - \$221 million
- Mixed-use property - \$74 million
- Exempt - \$41 million
- Special Open Space - \$639K

The assessed total property value for 2022 has now increased to \$1.495 billion

- **Residents are assessed 80.5%**
- Commercial - 14.8%
- Mixed-use - 4.5%
- Open space - 0.2%

Town revenue for this fiscal year is budgeted at \$15.9 million made up of:

- \$12 million: all property taxes including:
 - **Residential - \$9.6 million**
 - Commercial - \$2.4 million
- \$2.1 million - visitor services
- \$1.3 million - excise, permits, licenses
- \$500K - use of rainy day fund

The revenue raised to cover the budget

- **Residents pay: 60.4%**
- Business - 15.1%
- Parking - 13.2%
- Permits etc. - 8.2%
- Rainy day fund - 3.1%

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Correction: The current Fire Chief salary is \$101,192 instead of \$86,257 as previously quoted in the March issue.



Residents contribute **4 x** as much as businesses to the costs of running the town.

Given that residents bear the largest share of the tax burden and are the largest source of Town funds, are we receiving our fair share of benefits?



*Data obtained from Town Assessor's Office

Faces & Places

The Old Village School

The future of the Ogunquit Village School is on residents' minds these days as the Town's Building Needs Committee focuses on its use within the proposed design of a Municipal Campus Plan that includes the Dunaway Center and Police Station.

This distinctive two story building, easily identifiable as a school, didn't start out looking that way but was initially a one story, two room structure with a basement when it was built in 1907.

The land that the school sits on (165 square feet) was owned by John J. Littlefield and sold to the Town of Ogunquit, with the voters' approval, on May 9, 1905 for \$500. A town meeting later that year authorized and approved a sum of money to service the interest and debt payments for construction of the new school and work began in 1906. Total cost for building and land was \$3,608.57.

It's interesting to note that at the time that all this transpired, there were two schools already in existence in the Ogunquit section of Wells.

Known as Division 5 and Division 13, one was located in the Scotch Hill Section



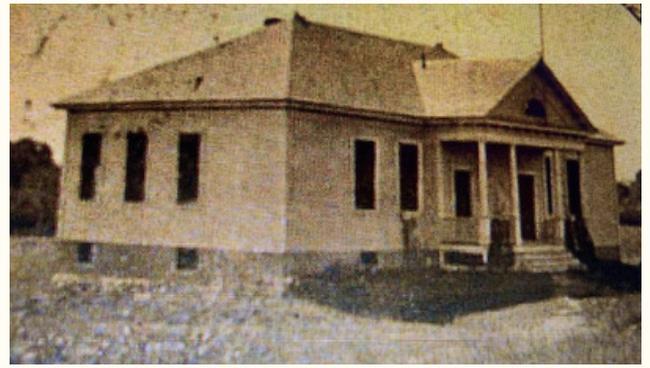
17 Glen Lane

of town (17 Glen Lane) and one was at the corner of Stearns and Shore Roads. One housed the primary grades while the other the grammar grades.

During the 1898/99 school year, the Division 5 school needed new shingles while the Division 13 school, new flooring and a flag pole. The following year, 1900, as attendance jumped from 17 to 29 at the Glen Lane school and from 24 to 31 at the other, a recommendation was made to build a new school in a location in town between the two existing buildings. The Ogunquit Village School was born.

By 1919, when Blanche Staples, a well known Ogunquit resident went there, OVS had primary grades K-4 in one room and grades 5-8 in the other. Her recollection was that there were 30 children in each classroom.

Continued ↗



Original school 1907

Students would begin the school year with their desks on the right side of the room and gradually would move to the left as their grade increased. They all walked to school every day with their bagged lunches but if you lived nearby you could walk home for lunch.

With the 1928 census predicting overcrowding in the school and with rental space already being utilized in private homes for children in the primary grades, it wasn't surprising that the spring 1929 Superintendent's Report recommended enlarging the Old Village School. Estimating that between 95 and 100 students would be attending in the fall, a second story was needed. This was achieved by lifting the first floor of the building up and building a new first floor under it.

When Blanche Staples returned as a teacher in 1937 there now were 4 classrooms, each containing 2 grades plus a cafeteria. The desks were bolted down to the oiled wooden floors which had to be covered with paper if you wanted to sit on them without staining your clothes.

And so the Old Village School continued until 2004 when it closed due to lack of students. Now it waits to see what its next chapter will be.



Natural Resources

Water Quality Strategy

The Sustainability Committee has spent the past 6 months developing an [implementation plan](#) presented to the Select Board on March 15th (see [video](#) starting at 26 minutes). It focuses on stormwater and erosion control; sewer and septic systems; outreach and education; water testing; and infrastructure maintenance- all aimed at addressing the ongoing and rapid degrading of our water resources. Included in the report are extensive references and appendices.

Positive actions that may move us forward

- The Select Board agreed to engage Acorn Engineering to make recommendations for **stormwater management**
- The District is checking **sewer lines** at all new construction, major renovations and demolitions
- The Town Manager has committed to a **pervious surfacing** of the beach parking lot as part of the revetment plan
- The Public Works Department is cleaning the 2 existing **catch basin filters** in the parking lot and will maintain them
- Additional **storm drains** will be stenciled by Healthy Rivers to remind us that the contents flow into the ocean
- A broader recognition that pollutants from the **west bank of the river** (Footbridge to Little Beach) are contributing to the decreasing water quality and contamination



What actions need to be urgently addressed

- The Planning Board in consultation with Acorn engineering must **develop and enforce ordinances** for managing stormwater run off, and erosion and sediment control regulations
- **Catch basins and filtering systems** in the main beach parking lot and along the west bank of the estuary must be installed and maintained

Continued ↗

Did You Know?

The 2022 Maine Department of Environmental Protection [Report](#) named 3 beaches as **IMPAIRED**, meaning that they test at the maximum amount of pollutant allowed, in this case, enterococci (bacteria from feces).

One of them was **Riverside Beach, Ogunquit**.

The 2021 [Report](#) from Environment America Research and Policy Center Research & Policy Center and Frontier Group determined that Riverside Beach in Ogunquit was unsafe in 10 of the limited 19 days tested; Little Beach in 8 of 17 and Main Beach in 4 of 14.

Fecal contamination makes beaches unsafe for swimming. If fecal indicator bacteria levels exceeded the U.S. EPA's "Beach Action Value" associated with an estimated illness rate of 32 out of every 1,000 swimmers, the water is unsafe.

- **Increased engagement** with other towns that make up the majority of the watershed land to coordinate efforts
- Further **genetic and rapid testing and monitoring** will be key to ensure public safety, identify sources, and determine if efforts are achieving results
- Land Use office must inspect **construction sites** for use of buffering and other techniques to limit run-off
- Maintain **rain gardens** in lower lot
- Work with sewer district to **capture stormwater** especially in plans for Stearns area road construction
- Build **environmental protection measures and conservation land acquisition** into the proposed Comprehensive Plan
- **Educate and warn** families and swimmers about when Riverside water activities are ill-advised
- Develop an itemized **timeline** for priorities and accompanying **budget** so that residents will support plans and financial commitments



The Town Committee Story

THOSE WERE THE DAYS

Serving on a town committee used to be pleasurable and apolitical.

You'd submit your application form to the Town Clerk, indicating that you had attended at least 2 committee meetings prior to applying. You enumerated your specific experiences and interests that could contribute to your success on the committee.

Your interview with the Select Board included questions exploring the qualifications you felt you brought to the table. Your name was then formally nominated by a SB member and a formal vote was taken. Every person who submitted an application to a committee was treated in this manner.

THESE ARE THE DAYS NOW

Serving on a town committee is **VERY** political.

You still submit the same application form to the Town Clerk but many times no attendance at committee meetings is indicated and the applicant's qualifications to apply for the seat are rarely noted.

The Select Board interview process is varied, from a superfluous conversation with no substantial questions asked, to a confrontational inquisition. Some applicants are not even interviewed; many are delayed or ignored. The Select Board nomination process to fill committee seats is a random affair. A few applicants are nominated and voted on while others, who have submitted their forms, are given no consideration at all.

Every person who submits an application to a committee is **NOT** treated equally. This lopsided treatment gave rise to the sobriquet "Friends of the Select Board" (FOTSB).

Placing people on committees with no knowledge of what the committee actually did, as well as seating others on established boards who were newcomers to town and knew even less, has been par for the course. Attendance and contribution is ignored. Showing up at the right moment for a vote may be the key element to membership.

A SAD SITUATION GETS WORSE

Not satisfied with their manipulation of committee memberships, the Select Board also wants to ensure that these groups will not act independently, but will instead fulfill their viewpoint of what the committee should be.

To accomplish this, they've weaponized the word "liaison." The Select Board's overreach in its effort to interfere with the autonomy of committees and commissions by using their liaison positions to push their own agenda onto these boards has been a disaster.

Impressive boards who were working hard to fulfill their mandates, producing admirable results, were interfered with and disrupted when Select Board members began to inject themselves into the conversation.

All this interference has had a negative effect on the workings of committees, the lack of volunteers willing to serve on them and the slow loss of the democratic way that a successful town must have to function properly.

Committee Resignations in the Last Year



Age Friendly Committee

3 resignations: **Chair and Co-Chair** and 1 member

Bike Ped Committee

2 resignations: 1 member and 1 alternate

Budget Review Committee

2 resignations: **2 consecutive Chairs**

Conservation Committee

4 resignations: **1 Chair** and 3 members

1 member removed against her will

Covid Task Force

3 resignations: 3 members

Marginal Way Committee

1 alternate resignation

Historic Preservation Committee

4 resignations: **1 Chair** and 3 members

Planning Board

3 resignations: **1 Chair**, 1 member, 1 alternate

Sustainability Committee

3 resignations: **1 Chair**, 2 members

Wells-Ogunquit School Board

1 **Trustee** resignation

Comprehensive Plan Committee

2 members