

THE OGUNQUIT BREEZE

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

Town News

• Town Hall Surveillance



Notice: There is both video **and audio** surveillance inside and outside the Dunaway Community Center. **Did you know about this?**

CONTENTS

- Surveillance at the Dunaway
- Proposed Employee Salaries
- Resignations: Chair Kate Mitsch from BRC; Mark Dufton from Planning & Comp Plan
- 8 Shore Road
- Sewer Pumping Stations & Tree Killers
- Charter Revisions & Ethics
- Irish Dance & Marginal Way Volunteers

• Proposed Employee Salaries



At the combined Select Board and Budget Review Committee Meeting in January, salary increases contained in the Town's Operating Expense Budget proposed for 2022-2023 were approved to go on the June ballot by a vote 4-0 and 3-2 respectively.

Salary raises for Department Heads were **selective** and not necessarily based on experience or track record with the Town. Some only are receiving a 3% cost of living increase.

In addition and as separate ballot options, these other salaries have been proposed:

- **Cultural and Recreation Director** is included in the Parks & Recreation Committee Budget (wages & benefits \$117,314)
- **Natural Resources Director** has been added to the Land Use Department budget (wages & benefits \$120,000)

Management Position	Voted 2021-2022	Interim Raise by Town Manager 2021-2022*	Proposed 2022-2023	Plus Benefits
Town Manager	\$110,000	-	\$122,570	\$48,936
Treasurer	\$79,310	\$90,000	\$92,700	\$39,643
Clerk	\$79,623	\$90,000	\$92,700	\$56,146
Public Works	\$77,765	\$90,000	\$92,700	\$45,000
Fire	\$86,257		\$104,518	\$43,000**
Police	\$110,710		\$114,052	\$45,000**
Land Use	\$85,263		\$85,000	\$45,000**
Transfer Station	\$73,937		\$76,305	\$23,000**
Visitor Services	\$72,447 (2+ staff)		\$72,447	\$27,891
Info Services	\$38,820		\$45,000	\$19,649
Harbormaster	\$62,479		\$58,600	\$39,000**

***no notice of this action was given to the community** **estimated

Of note, the previous Town Manager, Pat Finnigan, with years of experience in municipal government, earned wages of \$113,300 in 2018-2019, \$114,170 in 2019-2020, and \$110,00 in 2020-2021 (interrupted by no contract).

Faces & Places

8 Shore Road

Commonly known as *Bessie's* and now *Crew*, the history of this iconic structure that has retained much of its original charm while situated in the middle of Ogunquit Square is interesting. Mistakenly listed on the Vision Appraisal website as being built in 1910, we know that in April of 1879, Wilbur F. Cousens rented the building from the owner, Henry Perkins, for 5 dollars a month. Called *Cousens Dry Goods*, he established a multi-purpose business selling, among other things, dry goods and fancy goods, boots, shoes, wallpaper and insurance while also offering land surveying, probate business and a notary public.

Mr. Cousens replaced Charles and Aaron Littlefield in the space as they had been running a grocery store on the first floor and a dry-goods store on the second at that time.

"I think almost my first customer was Nellie Brooks who bought a pair of kid boots. I confess, if I had been the least bit superstitious, I might have hesitated upon opening a business in a store where all previous attempts to succeed had been a failure."

-A reminiscence by Wilbur F. Cousens in
History of Ogunquit Village by Esselyn Gilman Perkins

He was highly successful in his business, ever expanding his inventory. A well respected and active member of the community, Cousens built an impressive home in Ogunquit for himself, as well as one for his daughter, "Meme," that is now *Abacus* at 213 Main Street.

Born in Kennebunkport in 1848, Wilbur F. Cousens attended Wesleyan University, class of 1872. His experience in business started in the boot and shoe trade in Boston, and after a few years as a traveling salesman and a year as a principal and instructor at a high school, he arrived in Ogunquit.

Cousens ran his business for over 40 years, retiring in 1921. He also served the town of Ogunquit in many important capacities including as Town Treasurer, Supervisor of Schools, and treasurer of the Ogunquit Village Corporation. When he was



Cousens Dry Goods

elected to represent Ogunquit in the State Legislature, Cousens was instrumental in fulfilling the Ogunquit Village Corporation's desires by making satisfactory arrangements with the town of Wells concerning the amount of money to be retained by Ogunquit for schools, roads, and other village improvements. Wilbur F. Cousens died in 1931 at the age of 83.

After Cousens' departure in 1921, 8 Shore Road was known as the *Ogunquit Spa*, first housing the *Ogunquit Market* which shared the ground floor space with George Sideris and his sister, Bessie Sideris Johnson, after it passed into their family in 1928. Earl Kennedy's *Hardware* store replaced the *Ogunquit Market* on the ground floor of the building but by the 1970's, Sideris occupied the whole first floor.

It wasn't until the 1940's that they officially changed the name to *Bessie's* as most of the customers referred to the restaurant in that way anyway due to Bessie's charm and personality. It was a favorite eating spot for a wide variety of people as it was a family style restaurant with a menu offering a variety of dishes. Open from the first of May until the first of November, it was one of the few eateries that remained open for 6 months.



Bessie's in the 1950s

A favorite of the after-theater crowd, it wasn't unusual to find yourself sitting next to the star of the show at the counter, as well as a fisherman or a politician. Everyone was welcome and felt welcomed.

The Sideris family sold *Bessie's* in 1970. Through the years it has remained a restaurant but it's noteworthy that, although the building has housed eating establishments for the major part of its existence, at one time, before you hopped on the trolley, you had time to go into 8 Shore Road and buy a pair of boots while at the same time get something notarized AND buy an insurance policy...how convenient!



Trolley turning south from route #1 onto Shore Road in front of 8 Shore Road, 1908

Natural Resources

Ogunquit Sewer District

The Sewer District operates 12 pumping stations scattered around Ogunquit and Cape Neddick, connecting 20 miles of sewer lines. Many are obscured by foliage or appear like unobtrusive boxes.

Station #1 in the Footbridge parking lot was reconstructed five years ago to elevate electrical controls and install submersible pumps. Station #2 located at the Sparhawk was upgraded in 2009. Stations 3, 4, 5 and 6 (Lighthouse, Cove, Route #1/Bourne Lane, and at the Norseman respectively) are slated for upgrades by 2025. Check out the [maps](#) of all the pumping stations and see if you can find them!



Footbridge Station Before



Footbridge Station Today



Can you guess where these Pumping Stations are?

Update on the Boston Farm Conservation Land

More than two miles of trails have been mapped out with work to begin this spring, including a one mile trail accessible to people with disabilities (the first ever for Great Works Land Trust!)



Invasive Tree Killers

Our native trees and forests are being threatened by invasive insects and diseases (originally not from the area) that live in dead and dying wood. In many cases, these pests are being accidentally spread to new locations by moving firewood from one location to another or one state to another. If you suspect any of these insects are in the trees on your property, report this immediately to the Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation & Forestry at 207-287-3200 or dacf@maine.gov.

Emerald Ash Borer

The infamous killer of ash trees is already found in parts of Maine, probably arriving from Asia in wood packing material. Adult beetles nibble on ash foliage but cause little damage; the larvae feed on the inner bark disrupting the tree's ability to transport water and nutrients.



[Video to learn more](#)

Southern Pine Beetle



The most destructive insect pest of pine trees, including the Pitch Pine that dominates the landscape of Maine. Trees attacked by SPB often exhibit hundreds of resin masses on the outer tree bark. The beetles can introduce blue-stain fungi into the trees which can not survive this invasion.

[Video to learn more](#)

Browntail Moths

These moths can harm trees and shrubs and cause rashes and allergic-like reactions. March is a good time to identify & destroy the winter webs.



[Video to learn more](#)

Revised Town Charter

Our Town Charter was originally approved in 1980 when Ogunquit became a Town. Since then, revisions and amendments have been added. Ideally revised every five years, the previous full revision by a Commission was accomplished in 2016. The current Commission has been made up of three appointed and six elected members. The vote on the final document was 6-3 in favor by Commission members.

Some of the notable revisions include:

- Non discrimination language added
- Non US citizens may be on Committees not required by law
- Non-resident taxpayers are excluded from voter registration per State of Maine
- The Town quorum of 25% remains but ballot questions must receive a plurality of votes (one vote more)
- Length of vacancy before a Special Town election extended
- Term limits for Planning Board members added
- No difference between excused or unexcused absences for Board/Committee members; forfeiture defined
- School Trustee vacancy must be advertised before appointment by the Select Board
- Conflict of interest expanded to include special interests
- Voting on budget items by Select Board and BRC limited to same amount; otherwise revert to amount of previous year

Ethics Committee Fails

A motion by member Terry Ann Lunt to add the following two sentences to the draft Charter Article 1, section 104 was proposed at the Commission meeting on February 10th :

"The Town of Ogunquit shall establish an independent Ethics Committee consisting of 5 voters of the Town elected at the annual Town Meeting to each serve a three year term.

That Committee will:

- Create an education program on the Code of Ethics established by the Select Board,
- **Provide a safe place to seek advice and counsel,** and
- Hear and investigate potential violations, when appropriate, resulting in a report for the Select Board's review and resolution.

The motion **failed by a 5 to 4 vote**. After meeting for 19 months, the Charter Commission membership has achieved **neither** compromise **nor** consensus on this vital issue of how to improve discourse in the Town. [See the Minority Report.](#)

Many thanks to those members who worked diligently on the proposed Town Charter!



Happy International Women's Day!
March 8th



Stillson School of Irish Dance

Sponsored by the Performing Arts Committee

[March 12th @ Dunaway Center](#)

[Get tickets online](#)

Help Keep the Marginal Way Preserved



The Marginal Way Committee is looking for volunteers to commit to walking the path 1 day per month from April to October.

Tasks include but are not limited to monitoring for erosion & carvings, taking photos, picking up litter, and filing a report. There will be a short Zoom training for those who sign up before the program begins in April.

If you are interested, please email:
marginalwaymonitor@gmail.com



Your interest & love of the MW is appreciated!

