

THE OGUNQUIT BREEZE

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

Town News

- **Two Public hearings** on warrant articles will be held: October 18th and November 1st
- **Absentee voting** applications available October 7th; last day to request a ballot is November 3rd
- Select Board sets **mill rate** at \$6.32 (see next page)
- Karen Fortier leaves as Town **Assessor**; Tracey Cutler leaves **Town Office**
- Only **36 Ogunquit students** are registered in Wells-Ogt school system
- **Vaccine walk in clinic**: Saturday October 15th at the Dunaway 9AM-4PM

Elections Have Consequences (for all of us)

Generally, more voters cast ballots in the years when Presidential or Gubernatorial candidates are on the ballot. Historically, Ogunquit voters tend to cast more votes at Annual Town meetings in June rather than at Special Town meetings in November. However, all elections matter. The language used in referenda and warrant articles also matters.

For example, last November (2021) when only 576 ballots were cast, Articles #4 and #5 were approved by the voters. On the surface, they appeared to streamline the annual approvals of liquor and entertainment licenses by the Select Board. Within the articles, however, was the language that the Select Board "may," as opposed to "shall," hold a public hearing related to a license.

These approvals are now contained within the "consent agenda," and no public hearing occurs unless a Select Board member extracts a particular restaurant or bar's application. As a result, potential complaints related to, for example, noise and the widespread effects of over-serving of alcohol go unheard. The serious drop in public attendance and speaking at meetings is undermining the purpose that Town Meeting was meant to serve when it was first used in colonial times.

The structure of Town Meeting was formulated to ensure the ACTIVE PARTICIPATION of the citizens and taxpayers in Town business and is unique to New England. The success of a town's government can only be achieved if its elected representatives (the Select Board) provide an atmosphere that encourages their constituents to feel comfortable coming to meetings and voicing their opinions. More on the history of Town Meeting and as it relates to Ogunquit in the next issue of the *Breeze*.

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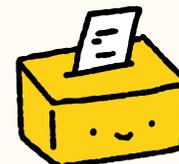
- Town News
- Elections Have Consequences
- FAQ's about Taxes & Budgets
- What's on the November Ballot?
- Migratory birds, injured seals and flocks



September 15th at the Dog Park

**Beware of a rash of local
car vandalism. Keep
contents out of view**

**Town and State
Elections
Tuesday,
November 8th**



**Plan To
Vote**

How does your property assessment determine your taxes?

How is the Mill Rate calculated? Divide the Town's Operating Expenses by the Town's Assessed Value.

This year's Rate is calculated as follows:

Operating Budget (per Town Meeting)	\$16,580,984	Total Assessed Value Base	\$2,035,515,035
Less: Budgeted Revenues	\$ 3,862,508	Initial Mill Rate \$6.25 + Overlay (cushion for tax abatement)	\$.07
Equals: Net Operating Expenses	\$12,718,476	Final Mill Rate	\$6.32

How are my property taxes determined? Multiply the Final Mill Rate by your property's Assessed Value.

For example, a \$1,000,000 assessed property x \$6.32 mill rate = \$6,320 annual property tax bill

How have my property taxes changed this year? Approximately 40% of Town properties have seen an increase in taxes, sometimes substantial, despite the Mill Rate being decreased from previous years. This may be as a result of the revaluation ensuring every homeowner pays their fair share, and because in many cases, property values have dramatically increased due to recent real estate sales.

How can property owners pay less in the future? If property values decline as a result of a revaluation, or the Town's operating budget decreases.

How will the Town pay for the proposed expenditures on the November ballot ?

The Town's budget, including operating expenses and Capital Improvement Projects, is presented to the voters every June at the start of the new fiscal year approaches (July 1st-June 30th annually). This November, additional funds are being requested. Articles #3-#10 will be paid for by using monies in the Town's **Unassigned Fund Balance**.

What is the purpose of the Unassigned Fund Balance? This fund is more commonly known as the **Rainy Day Fund**. It is a pool of money set aside to be used in times when regular income is disrupted or decreased in order for Town services to continue. The term usually refers to the funds set aside to help stabilize extreme, unforeseen budget shortfalls.

Is there a minimum amount recommended for our Town's Unassigned Fund Balance? Yes. The recommended **Minimum Fund Balance** is calculated as:

10% of current tax commitment	\$12,718,476	\$1,271,848
One month of current budget	\$16,580,984	\$1,381,749
Minimum Fund Balance		\$2,653,597

How much money is currently in the Town's Unassigned Fund Balance? Approximately **\$3,400,000**. If all warrant articles are approved, this amount will be reduced to approximately \$3,000,000: \$335,000 from Articles #4-#10 and \$150,000 from Article #3.

What would negatively effect the Town's Unassigned Fund Balance?

- if budgeted revenues decrease (for example, parking revenue)
- if actual expenditures are greater than those budgeted
- if there is an urgent or emergency need for funds

How do Operating Expenses and Capital Costs (CIP) differ?

Operating expenses in a Municipality are those costs usually providing continuing services to the community. They are consumed/used during the operating year. **Capital Costs** (long-life) are purchases of assets (such as vehicles, equipment, structures) which serve a useful purpose for many years, rather than being totally used up in one year or less. Their costs are spread out over time in annual budgets.

Notable Warrant Articles

Article 2 Summary: This Citizen Petition is asking the Town to rezone the front part of the current Molly Trolley depot lot to allow for the development of 2 buildings with 40 total units for Ogunquit's 55+ community, with 20% set aside as affordable housing as defined in the Ogunquit Zoning Ordinance (225-2.2).

A Yes Vote will: Allow this single lot (the front section of the lot only) to be rezoned similar to what was done for the Playhouse. Building 40 units in two buildings, with 8 units (20%) set aside for affordable housing, would make this development comply with the new state law related to affordable housing and increased density, LD 2003, which goes into effect in July of 2023.

A No Vote will: Keep the Zoning Ordinances as currently written and not allow for the development of 55+ housing on this lot.



Current property on ballot Article #2

Article #5: "Shall the Town vote to appropriate the sum of **\$50,000** from the Unassigned Fund Balance to pay for the IT (**Information Technology**) Upgrades Project"?

A Yes Vote will: Approve further funding

A No Vote will: Not approve further funding

Note: Previous funding for IT:

November 2021 ballot	IT upgrades	\$20,000
	Software	\$ 6,536
	Software	\$ 9,880
2022-2023	American Rescue Plan	\$47,490

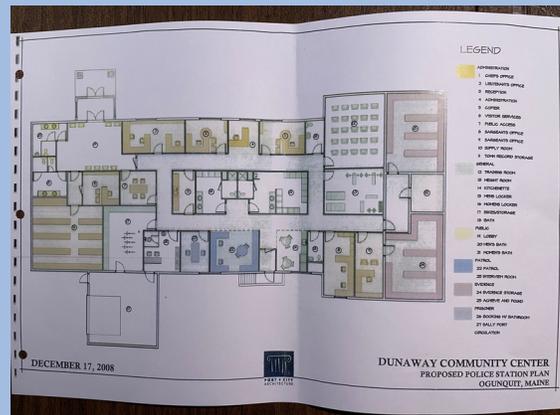
IT Department budget:

2021-2022	\$106,205
2022-2023	\$149,799

Article #3 Summary: This Citizen Petition will allow spending up to \$150,000 from the Unassigned Fund Balance to provide pre-construction costs to expand and upgrade the lower level of the Dunaway Center for the police department.

A Yes Vote will: This funding would allow for the creation of a strategy for the project including design, cost estimates, permitting, bid documents, etc. so that a final plan of action can be on the ballot for June, and allowing the police to participate in the plans now.

A No Vote will: Take no action on the Police Department for 2022-2023.



2008-2009 architectural, construction and engineering plans for police department on the lower level of the Dunaway

What is the purpose of Reserve Accounts?

Reserve accounts are similar to a savings account, whereby funds are put aside for **future** expenses for both large anticipated purchases (like a fire truck) or for unexpected repairs. Reserve funds are built over time. The advantage to them is so that these kinds of expenses don't have to be accommodated by a current operating budget. Reserve accounts, when properly administered, can help to avoid additional long term debt.

Article 7: "Shall the Town vote to create a Reserve Account entitled **2022 Police Equipment Reserve Account** and to appropriate the sum of \$85,000 from the Unassigned Fund Balance to fund said account"? (Leaves \$0 in a Reserve Account after purchase of radios)

A Yes Vote will: Create a new Reserve Account and fund new police radios at this estimated cost.

A No Vote will: Not fund new radios



Did You Know?

October 9th is
World Migratory
Bird Day

*Dim the Lights for
Birds at Night*

Artificial light is increasing globally by at least 2 per cent per year and is known to adversely affect many bird species. Light pollution is a significant threat to migratory birds, causing disorientation when they fly at night, leading to collisions with buildings, perturbing their internal clocks, or interfering with their ability to undertake long-distance migrations.

Dimming or turning off building lights during migration phases in spring and autumn can help birds migrate safely. Dark Sky ordinances in Ogunquit only address commercial properties.

Marine Mammals of Maine responds to stranded marine mammals and sea turtles in southern and midcoast Maine, cares for sick, injured and abandoned seals from all over New England, studies East coast marine mammal populations, and educates about global marine mammal conservation.

Report a stranding 1-800 532 9551



Injured female on Ogunquit Beach awaiting rescue

No, it's not the Canada
geese, it's the pink
flamingoes!

Project Graduation benefiting the
Wells-Ogunquit class of 2023
is flocking yards!



An anonymous donor pays \$30 to flock a friend, neighbor, or business in the area. The flock remains for three days and then is forwarded onto the next contact. When you have been a lucky victim, please clip your order and payment to the "You've been flocked" sign, and your donation will be picked up when the birds are moved.

