

**TOWN OF ATKINSON
BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING
Tuesday, November 15, 2022**

Members Present

Wendy Barker, Chair
Peter Torosian, Vice Chair
Sam Butler
Bob Malo
Mark Sakakeeny
Bill Smith

Others Present

Angela Wesson, Ass't Town Administrator
Dave Paquette, Selectmen Liaison
Karen Brown, Library Director
Brian Murray, Fire Chief

Agenda: Attendance, Minutes, Reviews of Library Funding, Ambulance, Homeland Security and Fire Dept.

Chair Barker called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Chair Barker took attendance.

Town Administrator Update

Ass't Administrator Wesson reported the following:

- All budget lines have been compiled in a list
- Administrator Apple reached out to those charitable organizations that did not submit the form but he has not heard back from them.
- The tax rate has been set. The preliminary rate was \$12.43; the BOS decided to buy it down to \$12.27.

Liaison Paquette stated that the Hydrants would have its own budget line under **Water Distribution/ Water Services, Line 43324.332.100** or **Line 43390.412.00**.

Library Response to Anonymous Request

Karen Brown responded with the following:

- Other than the three raises described when speaking with the Committee, there are no raises for the Staff Line. Any raises for the nine (9) staff members would come from a COLA.
- The increase in hours to safely staff the Library is 5.75.
- Library Assistants' wages range from \$16.00 an hour to \$18.00 depending on their experience and responsibilities.
- Two pages work during the evenings and Saturdays. Their weekly hours are not expanding.
- Because the fair market wage situation was extreme in the case of the Children's Librarian, and because the Trustees are trying to retain her as an excellent employee, this raise will go into effect in January.
- Cola raises won't take place until April.
- Also included in the Library Staff Line is the wage for one of our two pages which was mistakenly not included in the 2022 budget. We have been able to manage this year, because Director Brown took unpaid medical leave. (9.5 hours *52 weeks at \$12.50 an hour = \$6,175) \$11,279 minus the page's wage is \$5,104.
- There are eight (8) part time employees in the Library Staff line. Only the part-time staff are impacted by the increased number of weekly hours.
- Predicting the budget for the part-timers is complicated because their wages and hours vary. They have a basic schedule, but they also cover some desk hours when staff takes vacation or someone is out sick, or there's a big event. When they themselves are out, they are not paid. So, the actual personnel costs do fluctuate.

- In the past 3 years, other than the Assistant Director and the Director, there has been one staff raise included in the budget. That occurred in the 2022 budget and was to address the increased responsibilities that had expanded over the course of years and that were not reflected in her wage. The other increases in the staff line over the last few years have been made with cost of living adjustments.

Fire Department, Ambulance and Homeland Security

Chief Murray reported the following:

Ambulance

- No changes. Still at a \$1 bid.
- Multiple communities are not happy with the ambulance service.
- In the process of drafting an RFP in the event that we're on our own.
- Contract expires in February 2024.

Member Butler made a motion to tentatively accept the Ambulance budget for \$1.

Vice Chair Torosian seconded the motion. The motion passed. **Vote: 6/0/0**

Homeland Security

Vice Chair Torosian made a motion to tentatively accept the Homeland Security budget for \$3.

Member Smith seconded the motion. The motion passed. **Vote: 6/0/0**

Fire Department

Member Smith made a motion to tentatively accept the Fire Department budget for \$947,976.

Member Butler seconded the motion. The motion passed. **Vote: 5/1/0**

Minutes for November 1, 2022

Chair Barker made a motion to approve the Minutes as amended.

Member Butler seconded the motion. Motion was passed. **Vote: 6/0/0**

Chair Barker made a motion to adjourn.

Vice Chair Torosian seconded the motion. Motion was passed. **Vote: 6/0/0**

Next Budget Committee Meeting: **Tuesday, November 22, 2022**

On November 22, there will be reviews and votes on entire budget.

The Atkinson Budget Committee Meeting adjourned at 9:25 p.m.