

Atkinson, New Hampshire

Town Facilities and Services

KEY FINDINGS:

- Atkinson has 8 municipal buildings including: the Police Station, the Town Hall, the Fire Station, the Kimball Library, the Community Center, the Town Garage, the Kimball House, and the Center School. These facilities are mostly centrally located in Atkinson near Academy Avenue and in the southern portion of town along Main Street.
- Atkinson also has several departments and services housed in these facilities. These include: the Atkinson Community Television (ACTV) Department, Building Inspections, Code Enforcement and Land Use Department, the Elder Services Department, the Recreation Department, the Fire Department, the Police Department, the Kimball Library, the Department of Public Works (Highway Department and Brush and Recycling Center), Town Administration, Town Clerk, Assessor, and Tax Collector.
- Like many communities, Atkinson has a few existing community facilities that need investment in the years ahead. These include: the Town Hall, the Police Station, the Fire Station, The Community Center, and the Highway Garage.
- One way to plan for investments to municipal facilities over time is through the development, adoption, and implementation of a Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). Atkinson does not currently use a Capital Improvement Planning Process.
- The Town could consider utilizing an asset management program to begin tracking maintenance and to plan for building and infrastructure investments.
- Atkinson does not have a public sewer system and currently relies on private septic systems.
- The water system covering part of Atkinson is privately owned and publicly operated by Hampstead Area Water Company (HAWC). As of December 2022, HAWC services 1,426 connections in Atkinson or about 3,565 people.

DATA SOURCES:

- Interviews with Department Heads
- 2017-2021 Town Annual Reports
- Town of Atkinson Website
- Timberlane Regional School Website
- Rockingham Planning Commission (RPC)
- 2015 Master Plan Update
- 2020 Atkinson Road System Action Plan
- 2020 Building Needs Assessment
- 2017 Atkinson Police Department Facility Study
- 2020 Facility Condition Assessments
- 2022 Hampstead Area Water Company Data
- 2022 Atkinson Fire Department Water Supply Study and ISO Review
- 2020 Fire Service Resource and Staffing Study
- 2021 Primex Report
- Atkinson Building and Code Enforcement Department

- Approximately 49% of Atkinson’s households are served by this privately owned public utility, and approximately 51% of the households in Atkinson utilize private wells.
- The Fire Department also has a need for better communication capabilities such as radio and dispatch. The west side of town experiences coverage issues currently.
- The community has experienced growth over the last five years and with continued growth projected, there are additional strains anticipated on the services that the Police and Fire Departments provide as calls for services increase.
- The existing Hampstead Area Water Company water system appears to meet the Town’s demand for drinking water in the area that it serves. However, the water system does not appear to meet the needed fire flow demands for many of the commercial properties in Town and some of the multi-family residential dwelling complexes.

INTRODUCTION

This section identifies and describes the Town facilities and services that Atkinson provides to its residents. Over time, with the growth of the town’s population, municipal services will need to be modified to keep up with the needs of the community. Older facilities may need to be updated or staffing of municipal departments and services may need to increase. New services and facilities may be needed to accommodate a growing elderly population or to meet other emerging needs. These changes will impact the way in which services are provided, the buildings which house them, as well as their capital needs, and therefore, the town budget. The information described in this profile is a synopsis of Atkinson’s current municipal facilities and services utilizing a compilation of resources. This includes documents posted on the Town’s website, presented in Town annual reports, interviews with Department Heads and other contacts, as well as information gathered from the 2020 Building Needs Assessment and other recent and relevant documentation. Together, these sources help to identify the status and condition of existing town facilities and anticipated future needs.

The Town facilities and services covered in this profile include:

- Police Department
- Fire Department
- Town Hall/Administrative Offices
- Schools
- Public Works Department
- Kimball Library
- Recreation Department
- Community Center
- Elder Services
- Utilities
- Communications

POLICE DEPARTMENT

The Atkinson Police Department is currently located at 27 Academy Avenue in the old Rockwell School that was originally constructed in 1840. In 1992, the Rockwell School building was remodeled into the Atkinson Police Station. The need for additional Police Department space has been identified as a need over the years. A Building Needs Committee was formed by the Board of Selectmen to evaluate existing community facilities and create a Building Maintenance Plan. In 2017, a Facility Study of the Police Station was completed. It concluded that a new Police Station was needed and should be constructed to accommodate the wider service needs of the community.

The existing Police Station is 3,720 square feet and is on an existing 0.5-acre parcel. The Police Department Facility Study identified that a minimum lot size of 0.9 acres is required for a new Police Station. In April 2018, the Board of Selectmen designated a town owned lot on Main Street as the site for a new Police Station. The 2017 Police Department Facility Study identified that an 11,777 square foot Police Station was required with anticipated future space needs included. The new Police Station will have general office space, supply and records storage space, Patrol Sergeant and Shift supervisor offices, a briefing/roll call meeting room, a kitchenette, a booking room, interview rooms, adult and juvenile holding rooms, report writing room, active sallyport bay required for general booking, one bay for cleaning/maintenance/vehicle evidence, a lunch/break room, a public lobby, a community room, men and women's locker rooms with toilets and showers, physical fitness room, staff restrooms, public restrooms, storage space, a multi-purpose training room, and mechanical/electrical/janitor rooms.

The initial costs associated with this new Police Station project including the needs assessment, site surveys, ground testing, station design, and current work by architects have been funded by asset forfeiture in previous years. 2022's design furtherance was funded by ARPA funds. Therefore, none of the design process expense has been funded by Atkinson residents. The Board of Selectmen is creating a Police Station Steering Committee in 2023 for further study to construct a new Police Station.

The Police Department has six marked cruisers, three unmarked cruisers, and one motorcycle. In the 2023 warrant article the Police Department is requesting to replace two of the oldest/high mileage vehicles. The Police Department maintains alternating years of replacement with two replacements one year, and one replacement the next. In 2022, the Police Department did not make a request for the replacement of vehicles as there was a delay in receiving one of the cruisers that was approved in 2021. However, the Police Chief indicated that as the Police Department continues to grow, in order to meet the needs of the growing population, there will be a need for more vehicles in the future.

Staffing

The Atkinson Police Department has eight full-time officers, and seven part-time officers, consisting of a part-time Police Chief, a Captain, a Sergeant, and a Dispatcher.

Police Activity and Calls for Service

Table 1 provides a breakdown of the Atkinson Police Department's annual police activity related to arrests, crimes, and incidents. In 2021, the Police Department had 12,150 calls for service. Since 2019, the Atkinson Police Department has seen an increase in the number of calls for service and has identified a need for more staff in

Table 1: Police Department Statistics Source: Atkinson Annual Town Report					
Activity	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Drug Overdose	-	2	1	1	2
Drug/Narcotic Violations	20	17	14	8	6
Drug Equipment Violations	7	11	10	8	6
Kidnapping/Abduction	0	1	0	0	2
Rape	0	0	0	0	0
Sex Crimes	3	2	1	0	2
Sexual Assault	-	0	1	0	2
Motor Vehicle Theft	1	0	3	1	2
Stolen Property Offenses	1	1	2	3	3
Domestic	13	42	30	28	17
Aggravated Assault	1	1	0	0	1
Simple Assault	5	12	7	3	6
Intimidation	3	3	0	0	0
Driving Under the Influence	16	17	20	13	15
Disorderly Conduct	6	4	0	0	1
Arson	0	0	0	0	0
Burglary/Breaking & Entering	5	4	14	1	1
Theft from Building/Vehicle	15	15	12	11	18
Destruction/Damage/Vandalism of Property	6	10	13	11	11
Bad Check	1	1	1	0	1
Credit Card/Automatic Teller Fraud	2	2	2	0	1
Impersonation	1	0	2	0	0
Identify Theft	0	11	20	37	25
Hacking/Computer Invasion	0	4	2	3	1
Counterfeiting/Forgery	2	1	3	0	2
Shoplifting	0	0	1	0	0
All Other Larceny	7	9	18	10	11
Animal Cruelty	0	0	0	0	1
All Other Offenses	59	52	61	59	70
Total	192	222	245	197	207
Arrests	85	100	100	88	97
Calls for Service	7,346	6,934	9,113	12,787	12,150

order to accommodate the growing demand. In 2021, compared to other years and incidents, the crime activity that increased the most was breaking and entering vehicles. There was a

slight decrease in calls for service from 2020 to 2021 (5%), and a 10% increase in the number of arrests made.

Police Department Programs

The Atkinson Police Department provides a variety of community services including:

- George Charitable Foundation (educate school children about substance abuse) officers trained in L.E.A.D. (Law Enforcement Against Drugs) direct these efforts,
- Participating member of the Timberlane Regional School District School Safety Committee,
- Implementing A.L.I.C.E (Alert, Lockdown, Inform, Counter, Evacuate) in schools districtwide,
- Participating member of the Atkinson Academy Emergency Management Team,
- Assists Community Center and Recreation Departments Summer “Sun n’ Fun” program with staff training.

Additionally, the Atkinson Police Department performs services for the elderly including giving presentations at the Community Center on Fraud/Scam prevention along with other law enforcement experts, including USPS Postal Inspectors. The Department also conducts home checks when requested by residents who are going away, and any other locations that the Department receives requests or information about where additional visits are needed. Some examples include if someone is hospitalized, a family concerned about a senior parent wandering from the home, etc.

Atkinson Police Department Emergency Notification System

The Atkinson Police Department has their own dispatch that corresponds to lobby hours: Monday through Friday 8am to 4pm. The town has a dispatch contract with Plaistow to provide dispatch services during off hours, weekends, and holidays. Plaistow also is the dispatcher for the Fire Department.

Recent Projects

The Town’s first emergency call box was installed at Woodlock Park in coordination with the Recreation Department. The call box includes a direct line to the Atkinson Police Department, and an on-board AED (Automated External Defibrillator) that was donated by Trinity Ambulance. There is also a camera at the top of this box that is monitored at the Police Station. The Atkinson Police Department is currently working to install an emergency call box at Collins Park as well.

In 2021, the Atkinson Police Department joined the Southern NH Special Operations Unit (SNHSOU). This consists of highly trained officers from twelve area departments that deal with high-risk or unusual incidents such as Active Shooter Responses, Hostage Situations, Barricaded

Subjects that may injure themselves or others, and High-Risk Warrant Service. Members are trained in special tactics that attempt to resolve incidents without harm to innocent persons, officers, or suspects. The unit consists of tactical officers, negotiators, medics, and a mental health clinician. There is one Atkinson Police Officer that is registered as a member of the SNHSOU.

Funding

The Town of Atkinson currently receives its funds for various specialty equipment and training through Asset Forfeiture. In 2021, these funds from Asset Forfeiture were used to: upgrade the Taser technology, purchase and train in state-of-the-art photography gear, and renewal of the lease for the Police Motorcycle. The fund also allowed for the training of an officer on multiple levels of crash reconstruction.

Future Needs / Projects

The national and New Hampshire industry standard for full time officers per thousand residents is 2.0 to 2.1. By that standard, and with Atkinson's current population exceeding 7,000 residents, the Police Chief indicated that the Department should have fourteen plus officers. It is also likely that an incremental increase in staff will be needed as the town continues to grow.

ATKINSON FIRE & EMERGENCY SERVICES

The Atkinson Fire Department is located at 1 Academy Avenue. The Atkinson Fire Station was constructed at this location in 2000 when land was purchased, as well as to expand the Atkinson Cemetery and provide space for the Town



Garage. As identified in the November 2020 Fire Service Resource and Staffing Study, the Fire Station has a general office for administrative purposes, a gear room, an eating area, a Chief's office, a training room, a radio room, a day room, a bunk room, a kitchen, officer's office, clean room, and a work room. The Fire Station also acts as an Emergency Management Communication Center when necessary. The Fire Station needs significant infrastructure upgrades as it is not currently set up to effectively accommodate department needs.

The Department manages a vehicle fleet that consists of: one 2008 F-450 Ambulance, one Utility – 1 1994 F-350, one Engine – 1 1993 Spartan Pump, one Engine – 2 2005 HME Ladder,

one Engine – 3 2016 HME Pump, one Tanker 1 – 2013 Kenworth T370, one Squad 1 - 2019 Ford F-550, and one 2011 Ford Expedition (Command Car). Engine 1 is due for replacement, and in 2023 a warrant article will be put forward to request its replacement. If approved, the delivery of equipment can take up to three years.

Staffing

The Atkinson Fire Department maintains a call department (support staff) that consists of twenty-four to twenty-eight personnel. The Atkinson Fire Department has one part-time Fire Chief (26 hours), one Assistant Chief, one Deputy Chief of Fire Prevention, one Deputy Chief of Operations, one Director of Emergency Medical Services, one Captain, three Lieutenants, one part-time Administrative Assistant (28 hours), four full-time firefighters, one Fire Inspector, one Fire Warden, six Deputy Wardens, and one Firefighter Association President. Besides the four full-time firefighters, the part-time Fire Chief, and the part-time Administrative Assistant, all other positions are paid on call (part-time) with no set schedules. The Fire Chief also serves as the Emergency Management Director, and leads the development, implementation, and update of the town's Hazard Mitigation Plan. The four full-time Firefighters have a schedule of four days on and four days off from 6am – 6pm, but from 6pm – 10pm there is no guaranteed coverage.

The Atkinson Firefighter Association is made up of all members of the Fire Department that hold meetings and fundraising efforts to support equipment replacement and upgrade. Prior to 2018, the Firefighter Association oversaw the Atkinson Fire Department. The Atkinson Fire Department is now overseen by the Board of Selectmen.

In 2021, the Fire Department began a recruitment campaign for new members as approximately one third of the fire department call force was at or near retirement. Since the recruitment campaign started the call department is sufficient as of 2022, but there is still room for improvement. The Atkinson Fire Department is still recruiting qualified personnel as more staffing needs is required in the near future due to community growth and the fact that the community is aging.

Emergency Medical Services

The Town of Atkinson Fire Department has a contract with Trinity Ambulance, a private ambulance service stationed at the 1 Academy Avenue Fire Station providing 24/7 services. Trinity Ambulance provides emergency transport service to several area towns including Atkinson, Hampstead, Danville, Newton, Plaistow, and Sandown. A Trinity Ambulance vehicle is located at the Atkinson Fire Department and another is located at the Hampstead Fire Department. Trinity Ambulance Services provides emergency and non-emergency ambulance and wheelchair van transportation to numerous communities throughout the Greater Merrimack Valley and Southern New Hampshire. Trinity is currently contracted with Atkinson and other communities to also provide emergency 911 service.

Calls for Service and Response Times

The Atkinson Fire Department follows the fire and emergency response time standards set by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA). Calls for service over the last six years are shown in the Table 2 and are broken out by fire and medical calls.

In general, there has been an increase in the number of calls for service over the last six years. As identified in the 2021 Annual Town Report, the Atkinson Fire Chief identified that the community has had significant growth within the last five years. With this continued growth, there are additional strains on the services that the Fire Department provides as calls for services increase. The increase not only pertains to emergency response services, but also to administrative services including permitting, inspections, and other service calls.

Table 2: Fire Department Responses to Calls for Service						
Source: Atkinson Annual Town Reports						
Call Type	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Medical Aid	359	371	420	436	421	438
Motor Vehicle Accident	47	31	40	26	25	36
Building Fire	4	7	5	3	5	2
Vehicle Fires	2	0	1	1	4	1
Chimney Fire	1	2	2	2	0	1
Alarm Activations	107	9	90	98	94	97
C/O Activations	17	12	6	14	19	9
Smoke Investigation	6	15	5	8	25	12
Power Lines down	9	10	5	8	2	4
Public Assist	41	26	38	27	33	35
Grass/Woods Fire	6	2	1	3	2	4
Illegal Burning & Misc.	6	9	10	11	15	17
Hazardous Material	1	7	6	7	3	
Mutual Aid	25 (3 received & 22 given)	33 (1 received & 32 given)	24 (3 received & 21 given)	34 (4 received & 30 given)	25 (4 received & 21 given)	58 (7 received & 51 given)
Total AFD Responses	628	616	650	659	653	710
EMS Services Responses:						
Patients Treated	450	430	487	457	480	525
Total Ambulance Transports	284	290	328	280	284	319

Dispatching Services

Plaistow Police Department dispatches for the Atkinson Fire Department and others. Atkinson Police provides its own dispatch services during lobby hours. If a fire is reported, Atkinson will also notify surrounding communities as they have an Automatic Mutual Aid agreement in place.

Water for Fire Suppression

In 2022, the Atkinson Fire Department conducted a Water Supply Study. The Town of Atkinson is served by Hampstead Area Water Company (HAWC). HAWC is a privately owned public utilities company that provides drinking water and fire protection water to some areas of the town. Areas that are not supplied by HAWC must rely on alternate sources of water for fire protection. The HAWC water provided to the Town of Atkinson comes from groundwater wells operated by HAWC either located within Atkinson, or from wells located in neighboring communities depending on the demand for water at the time of use. The Water Supply Study notes that this water system was originally designed to provide clean drinking water to residents, not necessarily to provide fire suppression in the form of pressurized hydrants. In 2022, HAWC supplied water to 82 fire hydrants throughout the town using a gridded distribution system with various sized water mains, pump stations, and a 1-million-gallon elevated storage tank. It was identified in the Water Study that this water system appears to meet the Town's demand for drinking water in the area that it serves. However, the water system does not appear to meet the needed fire flow demands for many of the commercial properties in Town and some of the multi-family residential dwelling complexes.

Department/Building Needs and Future Projects

Recent Projects – As mentioned above a recent water study was completed in 2022. The water study covers all firefighter water supply need areas throughout town including existing dry hydrants and other infrastructure. The Water Study also identifies that the town's population growth is influencing the Fire Department needs and services.

A recommendation identified in the 2020 Fire Service and Resource Staffing Study Report suggests that the Atkinson Fire Department work toward reducing their insurance rating. Currently, the Town of Atkinson has an Insurance Service Office (ISO) rating of 06/6X. ISO is an independent risk company that services insurance companies, communities, fire departments, insurance regulators, and others by providing information about the risk. ISO analyzes the relevant data and assigns a Public Protection Classification (PPC) – a number from 1 to 10. A rating of 1 is adequate and a rating of 10 is insufficient, and Atkinson received a Class 6 rating. This class rating places the community in the middle of having a commendable fire suppression program for its size. The Fire Service and Resource Staffing Study Report recommended that the Town ISO rating goal should be to move the Department from a Class 6 organization to Class 5 over the next five years, and ultimately, a Class 4 rating over the next ten years. In the fall of 2023, the Atkinson Fire Department will be undergoing a reevaluation. For

more information on the ISO and PPC ratings, please see the 2020 Fire Service and Resource Staffing Study Report completed by Municipal Resources Inc. (MRI).

Future Needs – The Board of Selectmen has requested that the Fire Chief produce a Staffing Plan. The Fire Department currently has a staffing need for 24/7 coverage in the station. Additionally, the Fire Department currently struggles to get qualified staff especially during day shifts. This will also be addressed in a future Staffing Plan. A strategic plan has not yet been developed as this request is in its early stages. The Fire Service and Resource Staffing Study Report identified that, *“the size of the Atkinson Fire Department from a call personnel perspective is not going to be adequate to handle the expected emergency workload”*. This study also identified aspects of the community that necessitate the need for increased staffing for the Atkinson Fire Department which includes community growth, community aging, missed calls, extended response times, and reduced staffing.

The existing Capital Reserve Plan needs to be updated to reflect current apparatus.

Looking ten years into the future, the Fire Station facility will also need updating and renovating. While a 2021 Primex Report includes some recommendations for improvements, a separate building needs assessment for the Fire Station is still needed. The Fire Station will also need additional space as the existing station is not set up for 24/7 services. Currently, Trinity Ambulance also occupies space in the facility. The Primex Report identified the following facility updates needed:

- Upgrade the Protective Gear Storage Room,
- Obtain and install a personal protective equipment gear dryer,
- Obtain and install a traditional washer and dryer at the station to be used for cleaning clothing, other than turnout gear,
- Relocate the ice machine out of the garage/apparatus bay,
- Eliminate the slip, trip, and fall hazards created by the protruding floor drains in the center of the apparatus bays,
- Eliminate the slip, trip, and fall hazards created by the plywood ramps at entry to the apparatus bays,
- Install wire cage guards over the sprinkler heads that are exposed and easily contacted in the areas of the mezzanine and in the attic areas adjacent to the sleeping quarters.
- Remove and/or discard old, unwanted items for the mezzanine area, both above and below, to allow for better access to needed items and to improve ergonomics when accessing items stored in these areas,
- Improve storage area.

The Fire Department also has a need for better communication capabilities such as radio and dispatch. The west side of town experiences a coverage issue and the Fire Chief is trying to create a Capital Reserve Plan to address these needs.

TOWN HALL

The Atkinson Town Hall is located at 19 Academy Avenue and was built in 1985. The Town Hall replaced the former Atkinson Grange Hall that was built in 1913, which previously housed the



Atkinson Town Hall. When the new Town Hall facility was built in 1985, it was projected to adequately provide public services for a maximum population of 10,000 residents. The building houses offices for Atkinson's town services including Atkinson Community Television, Assessing, Building/Land Use Department, Tax Collector, Town Administration, Town Clerk, and Financial Management. The Town Hall currently houses six full time employees and nine part-time employees and several elected and appointed officials. The Town Hall is also where local boards and committees conduct their meetings including the Board of Selectmen, Planning Board, Zoning Board, and others.

The 2020 Building Needs Assessment identified that the condition of the Town Hall was rated as "poor". When considering how well this facility would meet the needs of Atkinson's population over the next decade, the Town Hall condition received the same "poor" rating. In addition to the town department offices, the Town Hall has two public restrooms, three storage closets, a small kitchen, and break room. The Board of Selectmen's Office also serves as a meeting room for other boards and includes the Atkinson Cable TV broadcasting room and accompanying video equipment. The Board of Selectmen's Office and meeting room can be divided into two meeting rooms.

The iconic pond located in front of the Town Hall adds to the unique character of the town. In winter, the pond is often utilized for ice skating, and in the autumn, it provides habitat for migratory birds. This pond is also utilized year-round by the Atkinson Fire Department as a fire pond.

Future Needs

The Town Administrator identified the need for a centralized air system, a back-up generator, and a reconfiguration of offices within the facility.

PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

In 2023, the Town of Atkinson consolidated to a Department of Public Works which includes the Care of Grounds personnel, the Highway Department, and the Recycling and Brush Center. These departments are overseen by the Department of Public Works Director.

Highway Department

Atkinson's Highway Department is located at the Town Garage at 1B Academy Avenue behind the Fire Station. The Town Garage is a 60-foot by 40-foot garage facility with a one-bay garage door and a side pedestrian entrance. The garage has a mezzanine/loft for a small 6-foot by 20-foot office for the Director of Public Works, as well as some space that is currently utilized for storage. The Town Garage also has one half bathroom. Located adjacent to the Town Garage building is a road salt building.

Table 3: Highway Department Vehicle Fleet	
Vehicle Type	#
2015 Ford F550 Dump Truck	1
2017 Ford F550 Dump Truck	1
2015 CAT 415F Backhoe	1
2022 Chevy 2500 pickup	1
Plows	3
Wings	2
Sanders	2

The Highway Department is responsible for maintaining and overseeing the infrastructure of the town including all town roads, town-owned buildings, the Dow Common, Atkinson parks, and Atkinson's stormwater infrastructure. The Town of Atkinson hires a private contractor to mow recreational facilities and open spaces. The Highway Department owns a vehicle fleet and equipment as shown in Table 3.

Staffing

The Department has three employees, a Road Agent and two Highway Laborers. These three positions are full time from 6:30am – 5pm Monday through Thursday as well as overtime during the winter season.

Roads

The Highway Department maintains over 60 miles of roadway in Atkinson. The Department also maintains and updates the "*Atkinson Road System Action Plan*" which tracks road maintenance and improvement projects. This document was originally created in 1999 by the Town Engineer and Road Agent and was last updated in 2008. It served as a tool for the planning of prioritized annual spending made by the Town for capital improvements to Class V public streets through 2019. In 2020, the Town Engineer and Road Agent began the implementation of a Pavement Management Plan, included in the Atkinson Road System Action Plan, as an extended Action Plan for 2021 to 2029. During the 2022 construction season, 4.05 miles out of the 4.38 miles of

roadway scheduled for maintenance were completed due to the demands on the budget because of increased cost of gas, materials, etc.

The Highway Department also completes drainage work such as installing new catch basins and culverts; replacing and cleaning of catch basins and culverts, headwalls, shoulder gravel, tree work, ditch work, guardrail replacement; and improving grades to ensure compliance with the Town's Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System Program (MS4). This data is collected by the Road Agent and provided to the Town Administrator who completes the MS4 documentation to submit to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The Road Agent is also trained to follow the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services Green Sno-Pro Salt Reduction Program practices to reduce the environmental impacts of road salt usage. This includes the calibration of all equipment and keeping consistent records of salt applications. The Road Agent intends to have the two Highway Laborers take these courses as well.

Future Needs

The existing Town Garage does not sufficiently meet the needs of the Highway Department. The facility does not have a break room and only has one bathroom. With the Department's recent transition to becoming a Department of Public Works, investments in new equipment are quickly resulting in additional space needs for this facility.

Municipal Waste

Brush And Recycling Center

The Town of Atkinson's Brush and Recycling Center is located on Woodlock Park Lane, off Westside Drive, opposite the tennis courts. Prior to the creation of the Brush and Recycling Center, the Town had a municipal dump that operated before 1970 and was located on Meditation Lane. The Brush and Recycling Center is open on Saturdays and Sundays from 9am to 4pm. The Brush and Recycling Center is a gated gravel piece of land with two storage trailers (one utilized by the baseball field for netting equipment and the other stores town totter carts and trash bins). There are also three to four dumpsters and a deposit pile for brush and leaves. There is currently no structure present except an unused, condemned 4-foot by 6-foot shed. One Department of Public Works staff person works at the Brush and Recycling Center. The Brush and Recycling Center is for Atkinson residents only and requires a permit for use. From 2021-2022, Atkinson residents generated 330 tons of brush materials. The Town has a contract with Casella Waste Systems to pick up the recycling material and collected trash in the Brush and Recycling Center's dumpsters.

Curbside Waste Pick-up Services

The Town of Atkinson has curbside waste pickup through a contract with a private company. In 2018, the Town partnered with Casella Waste Systems for this service. Atkinson residents are provided one trash and one recycling cart. Pickup of household trash occurs every week, and

recycling every other week, Tuesday through Thursday. Once Casella Waste Systems picks up the household trash it is hauled to the Raymond Transfer Station located in Raymond, NH.

Other Municipal Waste Services

In addition to curbside pick-up and the Brush and Recycling Center, the Town also offers Bulk Waste Collection, which occurs three times a year. Residents can submit a bulk pick-up form and payment to the Town Administration Office at the Town Hall if the volume of trash exceeds that of the average household trash size. For residents who cannot bring their waste to the Brush and Recycling Center, or have it collected as bulk waste, Atkinson residents may use the Raymond Transfer Station to drop off their waste.

In collaboration with surrounding communities, Atkinson participates in a Household Hazardous Waste Collection Program. These Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) events occur twice a year and Atkinson residents are limited to ten gallons or equivalent of household waste. Proof of Atkinson residency is required at these events. The Household Hazardous Waste events are hosted in a different community each year. These events are town-coordinated and managed, and some funding is received through the State of New Hampshire. Some of the items acceptable to bring to a HHW Collection include the following:

- *Kitchen/bathroom Waste* - Aerosol Cans, bug sprays, floor care products, metal polish, furniture polish, oven cleaner, bathroom cleaners tile cleaners, disinfectants, batteries
- *Garage/shop Waste* - old gas, gas/oil mix, brake fluid, auto repair products, transmission fluid, other oils/cleaners, paints (oil based only), paint thinner, paint stripper, varnish, antifreeze
- *Garden/Misc. Waste* - chemical fertilizer, fungicides, rat poison, artist's paints, fiberglass epoxy, gun cleaning solvents, moth balls, pool chemicals, photographic chemicals, fluorescent bulbs

Data is collected at each of these Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) events not by the total tonnage collected by town, but by the number of drop-offs per driver's license. Table 4 shows the most recent data from the HHW event in June 2022 and shows Atkinson's usage of this program in comparison to surrounding communities. In June 2022, a total of 231 residents of the six towns listed in Table 4 utilized the HHW event and 14% of participants were Atkinson residents.

Future Needs/Projects

The Department of Public Works Director indicated that an employee shack is needed at the Brush and Recycling Center (with air conditioning) for staff to have a designated, covered place to check in residents for waste drop-offs. Additionally, regrading of the gravel land was identified as a need, as well as new signage for the Brush and Recycling Center.

Table 4: June 2022 Household Hazardous Waste Event Data		
Town	Number of Cars	% of Total Cars
Atkinson	33	14%
Chester	84	36%
Danville	19	8%
Hampstead	41	18%
Kingston	30	13%
Plaistow	24	10%
Totals	231	100%

CEMETERY DEPARTMENT

The Town of Atkinson has one cemetery that is organized into 6 sections and another which is under development. The Cemetery has an original entrance on Main Street, into Section I which was created in the late 1700’s. Section II and III were added during the 1800’s and through the 1900’s. Then, a section known as "the New Cemetery" began behind the Kimball House through the early half of the 1900’s. Finally, during the 1990’s the two areas were connected by the purchase of land and the opening of Section IV, which lies behind the Fire Station and Highway Garage. Section V was developed behind Section III in the early 2000’s. The next portion will be referred to as Section VI when it is completed in 2023, and that will utilize all the land that the Town has established as a cemetery up until this date. Burials continue today in Section III, IV, V, and the New Cemetery (Section VI). There are two convenient access gates located directly behind the Kimball Library building on the land donated by the Kimball Family in 1907.

Staffing

The Cemetery is managed by three elected Cemetery Trustees. The Cemetery has one paid employee (Care of Grounds Personnel) who works seasonally from April through December as needed to caretake the property, as well as arrange for and supervise all burial activities. The Care of Grounds Personnel currently has been offered full time, year-round employment in the Town through assignments to other departments during the winter months.

Future Needs and Projects

The Cemetery Department has an identified need for more cemetery space. Currently, there is a small undeveloped section in the back of the Atkinson Cemetery waiting to be loamed and seeded after years of bringing in in fill to this parcel. Once complete, this parcel will complete the expansion of the Atkinson Cemetery and will accommodate an additional 200 graves. This land would ideally be dry land without bedrock near its surface. As of 2022, there are still openings in Atkinson Cemetery section IV and V. However, when looking at the projected need for cemetery space, the Town should ensure additional land is secured to provide future Atkinson generations with burial space.

SCHOOLS

Atkinson students are part of the Timberlane Regional School District (SAU 106). There is one elementary school located in Atkinson (Atkinson Academy) and the Timberlane Regional School is in Plaistow, NH. The core capacity of the Atkinson Academy facility (library, gymnasium, cafeteria) and the facility’s classroom capacity can be seen in Table 5.

Table 5: Atkinson Academy Capacities	
Academy Facilities	Capacity #
Library	Approx. 60-70
Gym	285
Cafe	185
Grades K and 1	20
Grades 2 & 3	23
Grades 4 & 5	26

The schools include:

Atkinson Academy

Atkinson Academy was founded in 1787, but the original school burned down in 1802. In 1803, it was rebuilt. Today, Atkinson Academy is located at 17 Academy Avenue and is known as the oldest standing co-ed school in the nation. Atkinson Academy provides education to pre-kindergarten through fifth grade. Though this structure was renovated many times since the 1800's, some of the most recent major additions were constructed in 2001, which included a library, gym, administrative offices, a nurse's office, and ground floor classrooms. In 2007, kindergarten classes were added. Currently, Atkinson Academy has twenty-four full-size classrooms, eleven smaller rooms/offices (guidance, nurse, occupational therapy, etc.), one recreation field that includes a baseball diamond and a large playground with various pieces, six sets of boy/girl bathrooms, and five adult bathrooms. As of June 2022, student enrollment for Atkinson Academy was 344 students according to the Timberlane Regional School District 2022 Enrollment Report.

Timberlane Regional School

The Timberlane Regional School District serves the communities of Atkinson, Plaistow, Danville, and Sandown. Each of the other towns also support their own local elementary school and send their middle school and high school students to the regional middle and high school in Plaistow. The District also offers a central preschool, Timberlane Learning Center, that is located in Sandown, as well as other individual preschool programs at each local elementary school in the region. Timberlane Regional School also oversees and maintains the Timberlane Performing Arts Center located in Plaistow which is a state music and drama facility.

Funding

The Town provides funds to the Timberlane School District by paying for its proportional share based on the number of Atkinson students enrolled. Starting in 1998, the Town of Atkinson instituted School Impact Fees in accordance with state RSA's to help pay for required capital improvements. These impact fees can also be used to pay for Atkinson Academy improvements or to help pay Atkinson's share to the Timberlane Regional School District.

Future Needs/Projects

Atkinson Academy has identified that the 1803 portion of the building will require repairs and renovations soon. The rest of the building will need regular maintenance and upkeep projects as expected for a school facility. Although the school is fully staffed as of 2022, there may be a need for an additional teacher or other staff members in the future if the student population grows or changes.

KIMBALL LIBRARY

Atkinson's Public Library, the Kimball Library, is located at 5 Academy Avenue. The original Kimball Library was located at 3 Academy Avenue which is now the Atkinson Historical Society. In 1977, the town voted to turn the Kimball House into a museum. The original Kimball Library was referred to as the Kimball House because in 1907 this structure served as the home of the first Atkinson librarian and her family. The current Kimball Library was constructed in 2008 and was designed to incorporate energy efficient construction methods. The existing building is 11,400 square feet and has an average of 32,000 visitors per year. The Kimball Library acts as a key community space for Atkinson residents of all ages and backgrounds.

The Kimball Library building consists of a lobby entrance, a large meeting room that holds 105 people with an attached kitchen, and a main circulation desk area where the adult and teen collections are located. Behind the circulation desk is a 10-foot by 12-foot glass office for the Library Director. There are three conference rooms. One has capacity for ten people, one for six people, and one for four people. There is a staff bathroom with an attached staff work room and break room, which also houses the mechanical equipment. There is a children's program room and there are two children's bathrooms. There are also two public bathrooms in the main lobby area. Lastly, there is an outdoor venue behind the Library that consists of a courtyard/amphitheater which is utilized for summer concerts, cookouts, and summer programming. The 2020 Building Needs Assessment identified that the Kimball Library received a rating of "poor condition" due to HVAC, façade, and interior deficiencies.

Programs

The Kimball Library provides a variety of educational, informational, and recreational programs for adults. This includes speakers, performances, classes, craft and exercise programs, and book, film, and Mah Jongg clubs. The Kimball Library provides youth programming including a robust summer reading program, story times, Mother Goose on the Loose, STEAM and coding classes, performances, book clubs for

children, and various craft programs. The Kimball Library also provides teen programs including interactive movie nights, monthly book discussions, and teen nights.

In 2022, 8,606 adults, teens and children attended over 708 programs including Summer in the Courtyard Performances and NH Humanities programs. The participants in these programs, events, and daily library use indicate that the Kimball Library is an important town service.

Table 6: Library Statistics 2022	
Circulation (total)	50,542 items
Adult and Teen	24,537
Children's	14,351
In 20Digital	11,654
Total (physical) items in collection	37,866
Items added	2,562
Items withdrawn	4,413
Library Card Holders as of October 2022	4,256

Services

In 2021, the Kimball Library launched the Aspen Discovery Library in collaboration with Southern NH Library Cooperative which includes the neighboring communities of Plaistow and Sandown. Much like the State of New Hampshire's Interlibrary Loan Program, the Southern NH Library Cooperative provides access to over 130,000 titles to Atkinson, Sandown, and Plaistow residents by combining their inventories and providing access to residents in each of these three communities. This program is provided through a non-profit organization, the Kimi Nicholas Center. This organization works with disabled community members and their aids to deliver requested books amongst the libraries of Atkinson, Sandown, and Plaistow. The Kimball Library also participates in the Interlibrary Loan Program which allows all New Hampshire residents to request books and other content online to be delivered to their requested library. The Kimball Library also provides a "Library of Things" program, provides one on one technical support to residents, notary services, passport services, and homebound book deliveries in cooperation with the Elder Services Department.

Collections

The Kimball Library also maintains a diverse circulating collection for all ages including books, magazines, newspaper subscriptions, audiobooks, and DVD's and Blu-rays. A wide variety of e-content both in print and audio formats, digital magazines and newspapers, and music and films to stream are available. The Kimball Library offers video games, Launchpads, and themed backpacks for children. Additionally, the Library provides WiFi, a specialized AWE kids computer, Hotspots, and a "Library of Things" including snowshoes, a telescope, games, and a radon detector. The Kimball Library maintains an inventory of computers, printers, and laptops, and provides access to a fax machine, a copier/scanner as well as items needed for conferences such as microphones and projection equipment.

Staffing

The Library has four full-time staff (some staff serve in multiple positions) including a Library Director, Assistant Director/ Manager of Youth Services, Head of Cataloging/Adult Programming, and a Children's Librarian. There are also eight part-time positions including Pages, Library Assistants, and Children's Services Personnel.

Future Needs/Projects

Recent improvements to the Library include the re-siding of the entire building as it was discovered that the original siding was not installed correctly when the building was built in 2008. With the number of programs and events the Kimball Library hosts, the Library Director indicated that the facility has storage space needs.

Staffing – Currently, the Library is not open all day on Saturday but there is an emerging demand for greater access. The Kimball Library would also like to provide an additional service to Atkinson residents by adding a Reference Librarian.

Building/Facility Needs – The mechanical equipment is aging and there is not a source of funding provided for the repair or replacement of this equipment. Carpets will need to be replaced. Additionally, through a recent Community Satisfaction Survey administered by the Kimball Library, residents state that they would attend more programs and events if more parking were provided. Therefore, the Kimball Library has identified a needed parking lot expansion.

Future Project – The Kimball Library is collaborating with the Energy Committee to install solar panels when the library's roof needs to be replaced, however, this project is still in the research phase.

RECREATION DEPARTMENT

Atkinson's Recreation Department Office is in the Community Center at 4 Main Street.-The Recreation Department provides many services to Atkinson residents including, but not limited to:

- A diverse cultural community and special event activities for all family members of all ages and abilities
- Well-maintained parks
- Rental of community building recreation facilities, and playing fields
- Weekly, biweekly, and monthly programs and activities for adults and seniors of all abilities
- Organize day trips for adults and seniors
- 6-week Youth Summer program Sun 'n Fun

Staffing

The Recreation Department has a full-time Director that also serves as the Director of Elder Services for Atkinson. There are also 10-12 seasonal part-time employees hired in the summer for the children's summer program, Sun n' Fun. This includes one Sun 'n Fun Director, one Assistant Director, and approximately 8-10 counselors. The volunteer 5-member Recreation Commission, which represents the community at large, works with the Recreation Director to meet the community's recreation needs.

Facilities

The Recreation Department and Recreation Commission manages the following facilities:

Woodlock Park

Woodlock Park is located at 80 Woodlock Park Lane on the west side of town. This town park includes a pavilion, public restrooms, four baseball fields, two tennis courts (including four lined pickleball courts), two soccer fields, a playground, and the Woodlock Fit Trail System located behind the park on the Chadwick Town Forest Land.

Collins Park

Collins Park is located at 17 East Road. Collins Park consists of a lacrosse field, two multi-purpose fields, a walking path around the perimeter of playing fields, a small parking lot, and a portable restroom, which could be placed by one of the sports leagues.

Atkinson Community Center

Atkinson's Community Center is located at 4 Main Street and is home to the Departments of Recreation, Elder Services and Supervisors of the Checklist. The Center is also home to many senior programs, seasonal luncheons, and hosts many civic organization meetings and fundraisers.

The Community Center building was formally the Trinity House Camp which the Town of Atkinson purchased along with the fifty-acre parcel in 1985. The land was originally sold to the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests and the parcel was subdivided into two lots. The Trinity Pond is located on the Community Center Property where the Fishing Derby has been held for many years sponsored by the Atkinson Recreation Department. One of the parcels included the Trinity House and five acres of land which the Town converted into the Community Center. The rest of the land (forty-five acres) that surrounds the Community Center is owned by the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests. The original Trinity House remains a part of the Community Center today. The Trinity House has three floors, and an attached single-story banquet room that was existing when the town purchased the property in 1985 but was later renovated. The second and third floors of the Community Center are utilized for storage due to the handicap inaccessibility of the building. Therefore, only the first floor of the Community Center is utilized for the public.

The first floor, which is open to the public, includes the banquet room, three meeting rooms, two bathrooms, a kitchen, storage area for tables/chairs, the Recreation Director's Office, and the Elder Services Office. The banquet room has a 120-person capacity and is available for rent to the public for fundraising events, private parties, and meetings. The Community Center is heavily utilized as a gathering space. According to the 2020 Building Needs Assessment, the Community Center received a rating of fair condition defined as *"subject to wear but is still in serviceable and functioning condition"*. Looking out to the next decade at the time of this report (2020-2030), the Community Center was rated as being in "poor condition" which is defined as *"subjected to hard or long-term wear. Nearing the end of its useful or serviceable life"*.

Maintenance

The Care of Grounds personnel maintains and supervises the playing fields and trash pickups. The Town of Atkinson hires a private contractor that mows the town recreation facilities. The Recreation Department and Recreation Commission send requests to the Care of Grounds personnel to notify them when facilities need to be mowed or to address other maintenance requirements. The Recreation Department's budget supports maintaining playground structures, tennis courts, a pavilion, restrooms, and the Fit Trail.

Recent and Future Needs/Projects

Recent Projects – In 2020, the Atkinson Community Center installed a new entry system called “Kisi”. It is a cloud-based access control system and acts as a security system for the building. The Kisi system can be monitored remotely and doesn't need keys picked up from Town Hall. This system allows the Recreation Director to program for locking and unlocking of the Community Center's main entry door remotely for renters of the facility's space.

The Community Center has two small decks, one of which is located off the banquet room and one located in the front of the building with steps (which both serve as emergency exits). In 2022, these two decks were reconstructed in the same footprint in order to stabilize and replace the former weathered decking. The main entrance two-way wheelchair ramp, which was done as an Eagle Scout project, needs to be reconstructed and this project is currently included in the ARPA funds project.

Future Needs - The Recreation Department has identified a need to resurface the tennis courts at Woodlock Park, paving the parking area, expanding playing fields, adding a new basketball court, and there have been discussions about installing a temporary ice-skating rink at Woodlock Park. None of these projects are underway, and the Recreation Department is currently requesting ARPA funds.

As identified in the 2020 Building Needs Assessment, the fire alarm system in the Community Center was updated in 2020. The facility still has an anticipated need to mill, overlay, seal, and stripe the asphalt parking.

The Community Center needs more space to accommodate the increased usage by elder residents and to meet the rental demand for events which has increased over the years. The Recreation Director would like to construct a new Community Center that is entirely ADA accessible and complies with all related codes, but more research needs to be done on what the property could accommodate given the conservation easement on the five acres and given that the forty-five acres of the surrounding property is owned by the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests. There may be possible restrictions. Additionally, there appears to be demand for a gymnasium to incorporate more sports programs. The deck railings of the pedestrian bridge on Trinity Pond needs replacement. In 2022, the Fishing Derby was held at

the Atkinson Town Hall Pond and is expected to be held there in 2023 as well until the railing on the pedestrian bridge on Trinity Pond is repaired.

For more information on recreation activities, programs, and facilities in Atkinson, visit the Recreation Profile of this Existing Conditions Report.

ELDER SERVICES DEPARTMENT

The Town of Atkinson maintains an Elder Services Department which is in the Atkinson Community Center. The Atkinson Elder Services Department provides complimentary transportation by appointment, lends a variety of donated medical equipment as needed, and acts as a link to information regarding helpful community resources. The Elder Services Department also offers Wellness Checks, reliable contractor's information, referral to Veterans Administration services, and works to collaborate with the Atkinson Recreation, Fire, and Police Departments. The mission of the Elder Services Department is to *"serve the needs of our senior citizens, be a resource for referrals to community resources, and provide safe and reliable transportation"*.

Staffing

The Elder Services Department staff consists of one Director of Elder Services, one Assistant Director, one Schedule Coordinator, and nine Drivers. The Director of Elder Services is a full-time position and also serves as the Town's Recreation Director.

Transportation Services

Atkinson's Elder Services Program maintains 5 vehicles to provide transportation to Atkinson seniors. To be eligible for these transportation services, it's required that the person be an Atkinson resident that is sixty years of age or older. The rides are free of charge and are available Monday through Friday between 8:00am to 5:00pm. The phone line to request a ride is staffed Monday-Friday from 8:30am-12:00 noon. This program for transportation services is funded by the town's annual operating budget and the five vehicles were funded by donations, which are managed by the Trustee of the Trust Fund. In 2021, the Atkinson Elder Services Transportation Vehicles provided 1,800 rides and travelled nearly 51,000 miles for medical appointment transportation, delivered library books through the Kimball Library homebound program, and delivered medical equipment rentals. The vehicles make trips specifically for elder services to medical appointments, prescription pickups, hair appointments, and grocery shopping for some eligible residents. The Elder Services Department vehicles include: two 2015 Toyota Venza, one 2017 Dodge Grand Caravan - wheelchair accessible minivan, one 2019 Toyota Rav4 Hybrid and the most recent addition, a 2022 Toyota Rav4-Hybrid.



Medical Equipment Services

Atkinson Elder Services lends out a variety of gifted medical equipment as needed free of charge to Atkinson residents.

UTILITIES

WATER AND WASTEWATER INFRASTRUCTURE

Water System

Atkinson's public water system is owned and operated by Hampstead Area Water Company (HAWC). As of December 2022, HAWC services 1,426 connections in Atkinson or about 3,565 people. This accounts for about half (49%) of the town's population. It should be noted that there is a small commercial sector included in this connection count. However, 90% or more of the HAWC customers in Atkinson are residential. The remainder of the town's population is served by private wells. The residents served by the public water system are generally located in the center and east side of town as well as a small area in the southeast side of town along the Plaistow town line (and near Bryant Woods Condominiums). The Hampstead Area Water Company also has 18 wells and 82 hydrants in Atkinson.

For a water system to be considered to have adequate water supplies, its supply capacity must be capable of meeting its maximum day demands. Water storage tanks are essential for ensuring adequate service pressure, meeting instantaneous water demands, providing required fire flow, and providing for short-term emergencies when the supply capacity may be out-of-service. The public water system is served by an atmospheric tank located at Page Farm (behind Winslow Drive), and a tank with booster pumps behind the HAWC shop at 54 Sawyer Ave. Water is also supplied through Southern New Hampshire Regional Water Project which delivers water from Manchester.

Sewage Disposal

The Town of Atkinson does not have a public sewer system; therefore, properties require individual on-site wastewater treatment systems. It should be noted that the Town of Atkinson has agreement with Manchester, New Hampshire to receive septic waters. However, most properties in town have these individual septic systems which are owned and maintained by the individual property owner. Once the septic gets pumped, the sewage goes to the Lawrence Public Sewer Facility for treatment.

Stormwater Management

The Town's stormwater collection system has evolved over time, as the town developed, and streets were constructed. This system encompasses many roads in town, and ranges from open culverts/swales to catch basins and associated piping. As road improvements have been made over the years, the Town has evaluated and addressed drainage improvements. The Highway Department and the Town Administrator's office are cooperatively working together to comply with the requirements of the Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) permit issued on May 1, 2018 by the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). A Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) includes the stormwater collection, conveyance, and outfall structures within a city or town. These structures include (but are not limited to) catch basins, drain manholes, culverts, stormwater basins, and swales. Along with approximately sixty other municipalities in NH, the Town of Atkinson's MS4 permit is regulated under the EPA Clean Water Act (CWA).

The Stormwater Management Program (SWMP) describes and details the activities and measures that will be implemented to meet the terms and conditions of the 2017 NH Small MS4 General Permit. The SWMP document should be updated and/or modified during the permit term as activities are modified, changed, or updated to meet permit conditions. The main elements of the SWMP are:

1. A public education program in order to affect public behavior causing stormwater pollution,
2. An opportunity for the public to participate and provide comments on the stormwater program,
3. A program to effectively find and eliminate illicit discharges within the MS4,
4. A program to effectively control construction site stormwater discharges to the MS4,
5. A program to ensure that stormwater from development projects entering the MS4 is adequately controlled by the construction of stormwater controls, and
6. A good housekeeping program to ensure that stormwater pollution sources on municipal properties and from municipal operations are minimized.

The Highway Department has undertaken an effort to reduce its road salt and sand use (which impacts water quality), perform annual ditch cleaning and culvert reinforcement, and, during

road replacement, ensure that the replacement of culverts are sized up to accommodate for increased precipitation and storm frequency.

ENERGY INFRASTRUCTURE

The Town of Atkinson and its residents are primarily serviced by the following utilities: Eversource and Unitil. It should be noted that Unitil has the vast majority of town while Eversource has a very small portion. However, Atkinson residents have also been investing in installing solar panels on their homes. Table 7 depicts the number of solar panel specific building permits granted by the Building and Code Enforcement Department. During 2017 and 2018, there were no solar panel permits granted, but in recent years (2019 to 2022) it appears that the number of solar panel permits granted has started to increase again overall.

Table 7: Solar Panel Permits								
Year	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
# of Permits Granted	24	13	-	-	4	1	5	16

As mentioned in the Kimball Library description, the Library is collaborating with the Energy Committee to install solar panels when the library's roof needs to be replaced. This project is currently in the research phase.

Energy Commission

The Town of Atkinson established an Energy Commission that consists of a Commission Chair and five members. The Energy Commission is an all-volunteer group that was appointed by the Board of Selectmen. The purpose of the Energy Commission is *“to coordinate, assist, and promote energy efficiency and conservation within the town, and to work with town officials to develop a capital improvement plan and a comprehensive energy plan for the town. It also works to identify and obtain funding through state, regional, and federal sources in support of energy conservation. It also coordinates outreach and awareness activities in the community”*.

Previous Projects – A recent project the Energy Commission completed in 2022, is the conversion of 180 streetlights to LED lights in collaboration with Unitil Electric Company. This project was partially funded by rebates and the other half of the cost for this project is being paid off over time. Unitil is allowing the Town to finance the other half of the project cost on its electric bills every month at 0% for 5 years to pay it off. The vendors that completed this job were paid in full and were compensated by Unitil. There are two remaining streetlights that are under Eversource Electric that the Atkinson Energy Commission would like to see converted to LED lights as well.

Current Projects – The Energy Commission is currently in the process of increasing the energy efficiency of all municipal buildings where possible. This was first approached by looking at the

existing town buildings to maximize their energy efficiency as much as possible through simple methods, such as replacing gaskets around doors, and converting interior lighting to LED. The Commission recognizes that it is important to establish the Return on Investment (ROI) prior to advocating further funding be allocated for the updating of town facilities to the highest energy codes possible. This ongoing project includes contacting vendors to look at town facilities and which buildings would be best for solar energy infrastructure. So far, solar vendors have identified the Kimball Library, the Community Center, and the Fire Station as south facing roofs which are good for solar energy generation. The Energy Commission also encourages the construction of all new town facilities, such as the Police Station, to be constructed to the highest level of energy efficiency and consider renewable energy production.

Atkinson Ordinances Supporting Renewable Energy Initiatives

The Town of Atkinson's Zoning Ordinance allows for the installation of solar panels and small wind energy systems in all zoning districts where structures of any sort are allowed. This is intended to encourage the use of renewable energy. For more information on small wind in Atkinson, visit Section 4100 Small Wind Energy Systems Ordinance of the Zoning Ordinance. The Energy Commission has suggested that a complete review of the land use regulations and local permitting requirements be completed. This review, or audit, will help to identify any unintentional barriers that may exist to the construction of renewable energy systems in Atkinson. It will also provide an opportunity to identify any incentives that can be adopted to encourage more property owners to install renewable energy systems.

COMMUNICATIONS

Comcast/Xfinity holds a non-exclusive franchise agreement with the Town of Atkinson for cable television services, telephone services, and high-speed internet service. This contract between the Town of Atkinson and Comcast/Xfinity was negotiated in 2014, and negotiations for the next renewal are currently underway under the formal process outlined in Federal Law. Comcast/Xfinity is the primary internet provider for the Town of Atkinson however, Consolidated Communications/Fidium is also an option for many but not all to provide telephone and fiber optic services.

Atkinson Community Television (ACTV)

Comcast provides cable services for the Town of Atkinson. Atkinson's Board of Selectmen, Zoning Board, Planning Board, Conservation Commission, Budget Committee, and Kimball Library Trustee meetings are broadcasted on Atkinson's Community Television Station (Channel 20) and on the Town Website (via Vimeo). In addition to government meetings, ACTV also broadcasts election results, parades, and other public events. Atkinson Community Television is a Public and Government Cable Access Channel maintained and operated by the Town since 1989. The Town of Atkinson employs a full-time Director of Communications to staff ACTV, and provides training and resources for the residents to produce and broadcast their own shows for the education, betterment, and entertainment of the Atkinson community.

ACTV's Broadcast Control Room is located behind the Selectmen's desks in the public meeting chambers located in the Atkinson Town Hall. This space serves as the Cable Department's control room, the Director of Communication's Office, and the storage facility for most of the equipment and is approximately 70 square feet in area. There is also a separate Server Room where all permanently installed equipment resides in a different part of the Town Hall building. The server room is approximately 80 square feet and is a shared space with the Town's server equipment.

Future Needs

Over time in this industry, there is always an anticipated need for new equipment as advances in technology continue. Large cable equipment purchases are only made annually via approved warrant articles utilizing monies from the Cable Capital Reserve Fund, a revenue source that does not currently impact the taxpayers or their property tax rate.

It should be noted that Atkinson internet provider speeds and bandwidth is poor. With more people working from home, this is a difficult obstacle. Many areas of town also have poor cell service.