

Budget Committee  
Town of Atkinson  
October 4, 2005

Attending: Mr. Acciard, Chairman, Dave Paquette, Marsha Bassi, Paul Tracy,  
Jim Blackadar, Jack Sapia, liaison

Mr. Acciard opened the budget meeting at 7:30 pm.

Mr. Acciard says he is often asks, why the budget committee in past years waste so much time over hundred dollar line items and such minuscule expense reductions when we allow big things. Mr. Acciard takes a moment to explain this, so people at home will understand what we do here, as we enter a new budget season. There are 453 line items in a budget. Therefore, if we can reduce \$100.00 on each one; we can come up with a \$45,000 reduction which is a nickel off everyone's tax rate. A nickel doesn't sound like much but to the average taxpayer it is about \$30.00 off their taxes. The towns valuation this year came in at \$870,000,000 so when we are looking at the budget we know that for every \$87,000 we can reduce the budget or keep it from going up; that is a dime off everyone's tax rate and for an elderly person living on a fixed income having your taxes go down by \$100 beats them going up by \$300. So that is why we argue over \$1500 line items in the budget.

The budget committee now takes the opportunity to introduce its new and standing members: Jim Blackadar, this is his first year on the budget committee and he is looking forward to serving the town, Paul Tracy, he is a new to the budget committee, he lives on Mill Stream Drive, he also looks forward to participating and obtaining an understanding of how this all works, Marsha Bassi, this is her 3<sup>rd</sup> year on the budget committee, and Dave Paquette.

Mr. Acciard explains that the budget committee has exchanged e-mails during the summer as well as met with the selectmen. He expresses that he has a personal goal set for this year. He would like to level fund the budget. He understands that every chairman comes in and says we want to level fund the budget, they are talking about discretionary spending. I would like to try and actually level fund the budget; so if something is going up such as heating cost, oil, I would like to find a dollar for dollar offset. He mentioned over hearing, Mr. Sapia, talking about reigning in some of the larger budget in town and actually looking toward cutting a couple of them and I think we should look very hard at that. This is just a broad guideline for the year.

Mr. Acciard declares that we are meeting pretty much every Tuesday for the rest of the year with the exception of Thanksgiving week, Christmas week and the week after. The budget committee continues to set the appointments for the department heads to meet with them and Mr. Acciard tell the members of the budget committee that he will formulate the schedule and they will receive it via e-mail.

The budget committee goes on to discuss the change of particular line items from one department budget to another department's budget. Dave Paquette goes on to say that for the accounting purposes and analysis, it appears that Russ put together 7 account groups: General Government, Public Safety, Highways & Streets, Health and Welfare, Culture and Recreation, Conservation and Debt. Furthermore, out of each of those groups, Russ has individual budgets. Mr. Acciard adds that Russ is redefining the

budgets by purpose rather than by geography. Mr. Paquette continues to inform the committee that the budget worksheets have been moved around and torn apart based on who is going to present the budget to the budget committee and the selectmen. For the most part Russ is putting them where they should have been. Mr. Paquette shows that for Russ's accounting and analysis, Russ wants to break things up and merge others. Mr. Acciard mentions that it makes more sense from a housekeeping stand point. Marsha Bassi points out that some of the changes have been made; these aren't proposed changes? Mr. Paquette shows that these are Russ's budgets and not the worksheets that the committee has been working by. It is noted that Russ has made changes that he uses. Now Russ is trying to get the budget committee to accept his changes. Mr. Acciard expresses his concern about their monthly expense printouts from Sandy, our budget sheets to do our budget from and the preparation of the ms7 for DRA and state. Do these changes affect Russ's documents? It is believed that Russ is changing budgets for the purpose of statistical analysis verses changing what falls under a particular budget. It is the consensus of the committee that these changes are for the housekeeping purposes. Mr. Paquette believes that what we should end up with when we are done with Russ's changes and any other changes necessary; is something that matches what Sandra puts together. Mr. Paquette notes that when we get something from the bookkeeper and look at revenue lines, we should match it to our lines which we could not do last year. Russ has already taken steps to rectify that. This year we should make sure that the two matches up and if there are differences either we or Sandra has to change. Mr. Acciard agrees we should all be looking at the same numbers.

It was also brought to the attention of the committee that our worksheet always showed the account numbers in a different format than Sandra uses. The committee compared the worksheets received from Sandra and Russ and noticed the difference in the account numbers. The conclusion is that the numbers are the same; however, the dots are in different places. This is a housekeeping item that is to be addressed at the beginning of this budget season.

The budget committee continued to lightly touch upon budget line items that are noticeably over expended such as Town Moderator, Town Administrator Postage, Accounting and Audit, Computer Software, and New Equipment Town Hall. Many of these will be discussed in length with the department heads. An overall discussion concerning the pro and cons of renting, leasing and/or buying will be addressed with department heads, respectfully.

Mr. Paquette, speaking for the library, asks if anyone on the committee has any experience with municipal bonds and would consider working with the library regarding this. Mr. Tracy states that if there is no conflict of interest he would like to become involved.

With no other items for discussions Mr. Acciard adjourned the meeting at 9:14  
Thank you, very much for attending.

Respectfully submitted  
daj