

Town of Atkinson
Budget Committee Meeting Minutes
January 8, 2013

Members Present:

Harold Morse, Chairman
Bill Smith, Vice Chairman
Wendy Barker
Craig Schuster
Sue Carroll

Others Present:

Fred Childs, Board of Selectmen
Bill Innes, Town Administrator

Chairman Harold Morse called the January 8, 2013 meeting of the Atkinson Budget Committee to order at 7:03 PM. The Committee will review the Selectmen's Warrant Articles, Money Warrant Articles only. Thursday the Committee will meet to approve the Warrant Articles.

The committee reviewed the minutes for the December 18, 2012 meeting. Sue Carroll pointed out that on page 3 at the top; the group total for highway and streets was \$423,358. If you add in the lighting the total is \$461,858, which is no longer a decrease. Both figures are lower than the proposed, not lower than last year. Chairman Morse amended the minutes as follows: The group total for highway budget committee recommended \$423,358, a decrease from the proposed budget of \$438,311. With highways and street lighting a total of 461,858 is a decrease from the proposed budget of \$476,611.

Sue Carroll said that on page 3 at the bottom it says the Committee returned to the recreation budget. It should state that the committee returned to the selectman's budget.

Sue Carroll stated that on page 4 states that the operating budget total for the budget committee column would be \$4,059,544. Before that it says that the committee recommended that the committee for filing cabinets.

Chairman Harold Morse said to strike the line; the information is on the following page.

Member Sue Carroll made a motion to accept the minutes of the December 18, 2012 meeting of the budget committee as amended. Member Craig Schuster seconded the motion. Vote 5/0 in favor.

Warrant Articles

Mr. Innes read through the warrant articles.

Article 2013 - _____ \$25,000 for Cable TV Equipment – Mr. Innes explained that the equipment is necessary to run the Cable TV operation and is part of an ongoing plan for the TV station.

Article 2013 - _____ - \$500.00 for C.A.S.A. – a statewide nonprofit organization to train and screen volunteers to help abused and neglected No questions

Article 2013 - _____ \$90,000 for Fire Dept Capital Reserve No questions

Article 2013 - _____ \$250,000 for Fire Tanker Replacement – the structure has been compromised, it is rotted out and it would cost almost as much to fix it as it would to replace it. The tanker was purchased in 1986. Chairman Morse asked about the ending date. Mr. Innes also explained that Chief Murphy is looking at getting a grant and if he does, the money will not be needed.

Article 2013 - _____-\$30,000 for Fire Hydrants – 6 fire hydrants to be installed on the new water line to the Belknap area. There is a contamination of the private wells in the Emory Drive area of Town. The EPA is looking at running a water line to that area.

Article 2013 - _____ \$135,000 for Shim and Overlay – Mr. Innes read the article. No questions

Article 2013 - _____ \$143,000 for Reclamation and Paving – no questions.

Article 2013 - _____ \$10,000 for Winter Capital Reserve – the Road Agent would like to build the Winter Capital Reserve Line to \$60,000. The money would come from the unreserved fund balance. No questions.

Article 2013 - _____ \$10,000 for Legal Capital Reserve – the Selectmen would like to create a capital reserve fund for legal expenses and appropriate \$10,000.

Article 2013 - _____ \$47,000 for Mosquito Expendable Trust - \$47,390 for insect control. The money in the trust was expended last year. Vice Chairman Smith asked about effectiveness. Mr. Innes pointed out that there was no West Nile, Triple E or other mosquito borne diseases in the Town last year. Mr. Smith asked about tick control. Mr. Innes explained that tick control for the Town is taken care of through care of grounds. All the ball fields were done. Mr. Childs pointed out that Atkinson was the only Town in the area that did not have a problem. Mr. Innes also informed the committee that his neighborhood pooled together and for a tick control program for their neighborhood.

Article 2013 - _____ \$ Police Cruiser - \$37,292 dollars to purchase and outfit a new cruiser. No questions.

Article 2013 - _____ Recreation Capital Reserve - \$15,000 for recreation fields and facilities. Mr. Smith asked if it would be used for East Road. Mr. Innes explained that the money for East Road came from private donations.

Article 2013 - _____ Town Hall Generator – \$35,000 for a standby self starting propane generator 50% of the cost will come from a FEMA grant and 25% from in-kind services, the goal is to raise \$8,000 from in kind services, and about \$18,000 from FEMA. If the Town applies for the FEMA grant and FEMA refuses the money raised will go to the general fund.

Article 2013 - _____ Town Webmaster – 3 year term appointed by the Selectmen and appropriate \$3,000 as an annual stipend.

Article 2013 - _____ Railroad Study – the committee requested to discuss the railroad study article. Mr., Innes, Mr. Barbera met with state and MBTA officials to discuss extending the commuter rail service to Plaistow, NH. Mr. Barbera made a presentation explaining the Town of Atkinson position. Plaistow does not want to remove the Westville site from the study. Mr. Sununu suggested a warrant article and bring the study to a vote in both towns. Mr. Morse asked about the selectmen vote. Mr. Innes explained that the selectmen voted to put it on the ballot. It was decided the selectmen vote should be a no. Ms. Barker informed the committee

Mr. Morse asked if there were questions. There were none. The committee will go through the money warrant articles again on Thursday, January 10, 2013 and vote. The committee discussed cutting the Town budget by \$60,000. Vice Chairman Smith said that a 1.5% cut on every line would accomplish it. Mr. Schuster suggested cutting hours for the Collector's office. If one day a week were cut, it would save \$10,000. If five hours a week were cut from the Library budget it would save the town \$23,000. Mr. Innes pointed out that the Town Clerk sets her own hours. Vice Chairman Smith suggested a study to find out the least busy hours. Sue Carroll suggested cutting the materials of trade line for the Library.

The committee returned to the computer budget which is up \$40,000 for the new police department computers. Line #41506.430 – financial administration. Chairman Morse said that year one is \$14,800 for hardware and

\$3,000 for support. Mr. Smith asked if it could be a warrant article. Mr. Innes pointed out that the deadline for warrant articles was 5:00 pm today. Mr. Morse asked for a vote.

Mr. Innes suggested taking \$15,000 to \$17,000 off the solid waste line. He also pointed out that if a program informing residents about recycling were run it would be possible to take \$20,000 from solid waste. Chairman Morse requested a motion to change the solid waste line from \$471,034 to \$451,034, line number 43241.390.

Vice Chairman Smith made a motion to reduce Line #43241.390 in the Solid Waste Disposal budget, the disposal contract, by \$20,000. Sue Carroll seconded the motion. Vote: 5/0 in favor.

Sue Carroll requested to discuss the reverse 911 line; Line #42901.560 under the Homeland Security section. Vice Chairman Smith said he would be comfortable removing it. Chairman Morse asked for a motion.

Member Sue Carroll made a motion to reduce Line Number 42901.560 to \$100. Member Craig Schuster seconded the motion. Vote: 5/0 in favor.

Chairman Morse asked about cemetery wages. Mr. Innes stated that a new person was hired and is working now. Last year the person they hired was not there most of the time.

Chairman Morse proposed removing \$5,000 from the Code Officer's line in the Building Inspections budget; Line #42401.110.01.

Vice Chairman Bill Smith made a motion to reduce line #42401.110.01 by \$5,000. Member Sue Carroll seconded the motion. Vote: 5/0 in favor.

The committee returned to discussing Line #45501.670, materials of trade in the library budget.

Member Sue Carroll made a motion to drop Line #45501.670 back to \$30,000. Vice Chairman Bill Smith seconded the motion. Vote: 5/0 in favor.

Chairman Morse returned to discussing the legal fund. Mr. Innes explained what the fund could be used for. He also informed the committee that there is a legal minimum for the fund. Mr. Innes explained that the selectmen would like to have 8% in the fund.

Member Wendy Barker asked about charities. Mr. Innes explained that the Town does have proof, most of the charities track what services they provide to Town residents and report it to the Town.

Member Sue Carroll made a motion to reduce the other professional services line #41531.320 under Legal Department Operations by \$10,000. Member Craig Schuster said he could not support the motion. The Committee discussed the motion. Member Wendy Barker is for it. Mr. Innes recommended adjusting the warrant from \$10,000 to \$20,000. Chairman Morse said he would support \$10,000 in case the warrant article did not pass.

Vice Chairman Bill Smith made a motion to reduce the other professional services line #41531.320 by \$10,000 to \$5,000. Vote: 2 in favor and 3 against with Member Sue Carroll and Vice Chairman Bill Smith in favor; and Member Wendy Barker, Member Craig Schuster and Chairman Harold Morse against.

Vice Chairman Bill Smith made a motion to reduce line #41531.320 from \$15,000 to \$7,500 Vote: 4/1, with Member Craig Schuster opposed.

Member Craig Schuster requested to discuss line #41401.740 in the Town Clerk's budget. It is for the fireproof cabinet.

Member Craig Schuster made a motion to reduce the line to \$2,175. Mr. Innes recommended leaving at least \$500 in the line in addition to the fireproof cabinet.

Member Craig Schuster made a motion to reduce line 41401.740, new equipment in the Town Clerk's budget to \$2,675. Member Sue Carroll seconded the motion. Vote: 5/0 in favor.

Member Craig Schuster made a motion to reduce the moderator budget line #41402.740 down to a \$1. Member Sue Carroll seconded the motion. Vote: 5/0 in favor.

Vice Chairman Bill Smith requested to discuss the Planning Board line #41911.390, other professional services. It was budgeted at \$21,000 last year due to a special project, this year the Board requested \$10,000, historically expenditures have been not much over \$7,000.

Vice Chairman Bill Smith made a motion to reduce line #41911.390, other professional services in the planning board budget, from \$10,000 to \$8,000. Member Craig Schuster seconded the motion. Vote: 5/0 in favor.

Chairman Harold Morse asked about the Library Budget line #41945.430 budgeted at \$900 last year. Mr. Innes informed the committee that it was for the ADA compliant pad.

Member Wendy Barker asked about the fire station garage, line #41942.430. The garage door repair was pulled into the 2012 budget.

Member Wendy Barker made a motion to change line #41942.430, town garage to \$1,725. Vice Chairman Bill Smith seconded the motion. Vote: 5/0 in favor.

Member Craig Schuster asked to discuss Line #43122.820, highway budget – mileage.

Member Craig Smith made a motion to bring line #43122.820, mileage of the highway budget to \$500. Vice Chairman Bill Smith seconded the motion. Vote: 5/0 in favor.

Member Wendy Barker asked to return to the fire station garage; line #41942.430. The money to repair the panel was taken from the 2012 budget.

Member Wendy Barker made a motion to reduce line #41942.430, fire station garage to \$17,225. Vice Chairman Bill Smith seconded the motion. Vote: 5/0 in favor.

The committee discussed the highway department line, reducing the amount for sealer. Mr. Innes disagreed.

Member Wendy Barker asked about the legal services budget for the police department. Mr. Innes pointed out that historically the money has been spent. Member Wendy Barker questioned why it was so much and why it was separate from the Town legal services line.

Member Craig Schuster requested to discuss a line under the Town Clerk's budget which had not used in 3 years – equipment repair, line #41401.430 and recommended reducing to \$1.00.

Member Craig Schuster made a motion to reduce line #41401.430, equipment repair, in the Town Clerk's Budget from \$500 to \$1.00. Member Sue Carroll seconded the motion. Vote: 5/0 in favor.

The committee discussed the police department part time officer's line. It was cut to \$80,000 but the sixth officer was voted in, so it should not be as high. Chairman Morse informed the committee that \$20,000 was for the DEA officer. Mr. Innes said that some of that money had come in from the Federal government; it was delayed due to computer glitches.

The Committee discussed line #42105.341, telephone, in the police department budget \$8,500 was proposed, the Selectmen recommended \$6,500, and the budget committee recommended \$7,000.

The committee discussed the police department line for heat. It was down \$2,200. Some of it was due to the mild winter; some might be due to the new ductwork and insulation. It is line #42107.411. \$2,759.32 was expended in 2012.

Sue Carroll requested to discuss the equipment repair line #42109.430 and asked if it could be dropped to \$3,000. She had a question on cruiser gas. Mr. Schuster said the Town got it from the Mobil station in Haverhill. Sue asked why the Town purchased the gas from a place in Massachusetts. Member Craig Schuster explained that the Mobil station is the only one where they could use a card. Member Sue Carroll recommended taking \$2,000 from the police department gas line and \$750 off the equipment repair line.

Member Sue Carroll made a motion to reduce the police department budget, line #42109.430, cruiser repair to \$3,000 and line #42109.635, cruiser gas to \$38,000, down \$2,000. Vice Chairman Bill Smith seconded the motion. Vote: 5/0 in favor.

Member Craig Schuster asked if line #42151.660, vehicle maintenance, in the Elderly Affairs was expended.

Member Craig Schuster made a motion to reduce line #42151.660, equipment maintenance, in the Elderly Affairs budget from \$2,000 to \$1,000. Vice Chairman Bill Smith seconded the motion. Vote: 5/0 in favor.

Member Craig Schuster asked about fire truck maintenance line #42202.660. The department is requesting \$20,000 and in 2012 it used just over \$10,000, the average is about \$20,000.

Member Sue Carroll made a motion to reduce line #42202.660 by \$2,000 down to \$18,000. Vice Chairman Bill Smith seconded the motion. Vote: 5/0 in favor.

Member Craig Schuster asked about care of grounds, field mowing in the conservation budget. The Town expended \$275 in 2012. The committee reviewed the figures.

Member Craig Schuster made a motion to reduce line #46111.650, care of grounds, field mowing in the conservation budget, by \$900 to \$1500. Member Bill Smith seconded the motion. Vote: 5/0 in favor.

Member Craig Schuster asked about the minor equipment, cable operations line #45892.630. Member Harold Morse informed the committee that \$1,260 was expended in 2012.

Vice Chairman Bill Smith made a motion to reduce line #45892.630, minor equipment, in the cable operations budget by \$900 from \$2,400 to \$1,500. Member Sue Carroll seconded the motion. Vote 5/0 in favor.

Vice Chairman Bill Smith made a motion to reduce line #43112.390, other professional services, engineering in the highway department budget by \$2,000 from \$10,000 to \$8,000. Member Sue Carroll seconded the motion. Vote: 5/0 in favor.

The Committee returned to the police department heating oil line.

Member Craig Smith made a motion to reduce the police department heating oil line #42107.411 from \$5,000 to \$4,000. Member Bill Smith seconded the motion: Vote: 5/0 in favor.

The committee discussed the recreation department budget.

Member Sue Carroll made a motion to reduce the equipment maintenance line #45201.430 in the recreation department budget to \$1,000. Vice Chairman Bill Smith seconded the motion. Vote: 5/0 in favor.

The Committee discussed charities.

Member Sue Carroll made a motion to reduce the Sad Café line #44151.350.02 in the Health and Welfare section to \$1,500. Vice Chairman Bill Smith seconded the motion. Vote: 4/1, with Member Craig Schuster voting against.

The committee discussed the IT budget. Mr. Innes recommended taking \$1,000 out of the hardware line #41506.740 and another \$1,000 from line #41506.430 maintenance support upgrade.

Vice Chairman Bill Smith made a motion to reduce line #41506.430, maintenance support upgrade by \$1,042 to \$35,600 and line #41506.740, hardware, by \$1,000 from \$12,000 to \$11,000. Member Craig Schuster seconded the motion. Vote: 5/0 in favor.

Member Craig Schuster made a motion to adjourn. Vice Chairman Bill Smith seconded the motion. Vote 5/0 in favor. Chairman Harold Morse adjourned the December 18, 2012 meeting of the budget committee at 9:57 pm.