

Town of Atkinson
Budget Committee Meeting Minutes
January 10, 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 10, 2013 meeting of the Atkinson Budget Committee to order at 7:03 PM. The Committee will review the 2013 Warrant Articles. The Committee will review the 2013 Warrant Articles and make their recommendations. They will review money warrant articles only.

Proposed Warrant Articles

Article 2013 - _____ Cable TV Equipment – Shall the town vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Twenty-five Thousand Dollars (\$25,000 for the purchase and installation of studio and remote production equipment for Atkinson Community Television to ensure remote access and to purchase a character generator, such sum to be withdrawn from the Atkinson Community Television Capital Reserve Fund established for this purpose? No new tax dollars will be needed to fund this appropriation. This article will lapse at the completion of this project or on December 31, 2018, whichever comes first, and is in addition to Article 2013-_____, the Operating Budget?

Discussion

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. No new tax dollars will be needed. It is in the operating budget.

Mr. Childs explained that he voted against it because the Atkinson Community Television Capital Reserve fund was originally to build a cable TV studio. Dave Williams explained that ACT received \$120,000 in franchise fees in 2012. The money goes into the general fund and Mr. Innes is not sure how the money has been used. Not much equipment has been purchased. Mr. Williams explained that the cameras were purchased in 2006 and the remote multicaster station was purchased in 2009. Originally half the money was supposed to go to the Town and half to the ACT capital reserve fund. Mr. Morse called for a vote.

Recommend: Yes-5, Abstain-0, No-0, Absent-1.

Article 2013 - _____ - CASA

Shall the town vote to support the Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) and to raise and appropriate the sum of Five Hundred Dollars (\$500) for 2013? CASA is a statewide, nonprofit organization that recruits, screens and trains volunteers to advocate for abused and neglected children in New Hampshire Courts.

Discussion

Mr. Innes explained that CASA is specifically for children in the court system while other child services are not.

Recommend: Yes-3, Abstain-0, No-2, Absent-1.

Article 2013 - _____ Fire Dept Capital Reserve

Shall the town vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Ninety Thousand Dollars (\$90,000) to be added to the Fire Department Capital Reserve Fund, previously established for the purpose of acquiring fire equipment and vehicles, as outlined in the Board of Engineers' Capital Improvement Plan?

Discussion

Sue Carroll asked if \$250,000 was coming out of the capital reserves and only \$90,000 would be raised by taxes. Mr. Innes explained that a new fire truck costs \$500,000, if the town buys a new tanker, it will nearly deplete the fund.

Recommend: Yes-5, No-0, Abstain-0, Absent-1.

Article 2013 - _____ Fire Tanker Replacement

Shall the town vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Two Hundred and Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$250,000) for the purchase of a new Fire Tanker and associated equipment, such sum to come from the Fire Department Capital Reserve Fund established for the purpose of acquiring fire equipment and vehicles, and to apply for, accept and receive any Federal, State and/or local funds which may become available for this purpose? This article will lapse at the completion of this project or on December 21, 2018, whichever comes first, and is in addition to Article 2013 _____, the Operating Budget.

Discussion

Mr. Innes explained that 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.

Recommend: Yes-5, Abstain-0, No-0, Absent-1.

Article 2013 - _____ Fire Hydrants

Shall the town vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Thirty Thousand Dollars (\$30,000) for the purchase and installation of six (6) fire hydrants, to be installed on Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA'S) waterline expansion in the area of Belknap Drive, Brookside Terrace, Deer Run Road, Emery Drive and Island Pond Road, the final locations to be determined by the Fire Chief, and to apply for, accept and receive any Federal, State and/or local funds which may become available for this purpose? This article will lapse at the completion of this project or on December 18, 2018, whichever comes first, and is in addition to Article 2013 _____, the Operating Budget.

Discussion

There is contamination of the private wells in the Emery Drive area of Town. The EPA is looking at running a water line to that area. Chairman Morse is abstaining. Vice Chairman Bill Smith read the article.

Mr. Innes explained that there are no hydrants and no ponds in that area. Water for firefighting would have to be trucked in with tanker trucks. There are 56 fire hydrants in town currently. Budget is \$14,000 yearly. It covers painting and insurance. The master plan originally called for ponds but it has been determined that they are a hazard, too.

Recommend: Yes-4, Abstain-1, No-0, Absent-1.

Member Wendy Barker asked when the new water line would be installed. Mr. Innes explained that he is expecting an answer within the next two weeks. It should be installed within the next two years.

Article 2013 - _____ Shim and Overlay

Shall the Town vote to raise and appropriate the sum of One Hundred Thirty-five Thousand Dollars (\$135,000) to shim and overlay Jericho Road, Sawmill Road and Summit Drive, and to shim Meditation Lane; all work to be done under the supervision of the Road Agent? This article is in addition to Article 2013- _____, the Operating Budget.

Recommend: Yes-5, Abstain-0, No-0, Absent-1.

Article 2013 - _____ Reclamation and Paving

Shall the town vote to raise and appropriate the sum of One Hundred Forty-three Thousand Dollars (\$143,000) to reclaim and pave Summit Drive from Walker Road to Sawmill Road; all work to be done under the supervision of the Road Agent? This article is in addition to Article 2013- _____, the Operating Budget.

Recommend: Yes-5, Abstain-0, No-0, Absent-1.

Article 2013 - _____ Winter Capital Reserve

Shall the town vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Ten Thousand Dollars (\$10,000) for the Winter Capital Reserve Fund, and to appoint the Board of Selectmen as agents to expend such funds; this sum represents the unexpended balance of the 2012 Winter Maintenance account, and will come from the Undesignated Fund Balance. This article is in addition to Article 2013- _____, the Operating Budget.

Discussion

Mr. Innes explained that there is currently a winter capital reserve and there is \$15,000 in the fund. It is for salt and plowing. The money usually comes from the undesignated tax fund. The committee discussed if a winter capital reserve is needed and how money in the general fund is designated. Mr. Morse asked if there were more questions.

Recommend: Yes-0, Abstain-0, No-5, Absent-1.

Article 2013 - _____ Legal Capital Reserve Fund

Shall the town vote to create a Legal Capital Fund under RSA 35.1 V, for the unanticipated legal expenses, to appoint the Board of Selectmen as agents to expend such funds, and to appropriate Ten Thousand Dollars (\$10,000), such sum representing part of the unexpended balance of the 2012 legal account? This article is in addition to Article 2013- _____, the Operating Budget.

Recommend: Yes-5, Abstain-0, No-0, Absent-1.

Article 2013 - _____ Mosquito Expendable Trust

Shall the town vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Forty-seven Thousand Three Hundred Ninety Dollars (\$47,390) for the purpose of insect control, such funds to be put into the Mosquito Control Expendable Trust Fund created for that purpose, and to name the Selectmen as agents to expend this money? This article is in addition to Article 2013- _____, the Operating Budget.

Discussion

Member Sue Carroll said Atkinson spends three times what neighboring towns spend and the town should negotiate a new contract. Also, encourage people to spray and fog their own houses since the town does not spray private property. Also encourage people to put up bat houses around town and encourage a bat population.

Recommend: Yes-3, Abstain-0, No-2, Absent-1.

Article 2013 - _____ Police Cruiser –

Shall the town vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Thirty-seven Thousand Two Hundred Ninety-two Dollars (\$37,292) dollars to purchase and outfit a new police cruiser? Three Thousand Dollars (\$3,000) to come from the Undesignated Fund Balance, and Thirty-four Thousand Two Hundred Ninety-two Dollars (\$34,292) to be raised by taxes. This is a non-lapsing appropriation and will not lapse until the project is complete or until December 31, 2014, whichever comes first. This is a Special Article in addition to Article 2013-_____, the Operating Budget.

Discussion

Mr. Innes informed the committee that the cruiser will be a police Ford interception utility cruiser because the Ford Taurus cruisers are too small for the officers to get in and out of. It is a high end six cylinder; it is two wheel drive but can be changed to four wheel drive. The committee discussed the new cruiser. Mr. Childs asked if they are trading a vehicle. Chairman Morse informed the committee that he is giving an old cruiser to Elderly Affairs. Vice Chairman Smith asked if that should be part of the article. Mr. Innes said he did not know. The committee looked for the minutes.

Recommend: Yes-5, Abstain-0, No-0, Absent-1.

Article 2013 - _____ Recreation Capital Reserve –

Shall the town vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Fifteen Thousand Dollars (\$15,000) for the Recreation Capital Reserve Fund, established in 2004 for the purpose of acquisition, design, renovation and development of recreation fields and facilities? This article is in addition to Article 2013-_____, the Operating Budget.

Recommend: Yes-3, Abstain-0, No-2, Absent-1.

Article 2013 - _____ Town Hall Generator

Shall the town vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Thirty-five Thousand Dollars (\$35,000) to purchase and install a standby self starting propane electric generator which will provide enough electricity to power Town Hall in an emergency situation, allowing the Town Hall to remain operational during a power outage?. 50% of this expense will be from Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA's) grants, 25% will be from in-kind services, and 25% will be from taxation. This article will lapse at the completion of this project or on December 31, 2018, whichever comes first, and is in addition to Article 2013-_____, the Operating Budget.

Discussion

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. It is approximately a 50,000 watt generator. If the Town does not get the FEMA grant, it will not purchase the generator. They are hoping to obtain in kind services to run the wires, dig trenches and other services. It is a good possibility the Town will get the grant.

Craig Schuster asked if a generator was needed at Town Hall since there is one at the library, one at the police station and one at the fire department. Mr. Innes explained that most of the Town records are electronic and information could not be obtained without electricity. Mr. Williams pointed out that when Town Hall goes down,

the station goes down. With power the only thing stopping the cable from working is the Comcast lines. With cable it would be possible to broadcast emergency messages.

Recommend: Yes-4, Abstain-0, No-1, Absent-1.

Article 2013 - ____ Town Webmaster

Shall the town vote to establish the position of Town Webmaster, a three year term, to be appointed by the Board of Selectmen, whose duties shall include, but are not limited to posting up-to-date minutes, calendars and news on the Town's web site and coordinating web services as needed with the Town's Information Technology Provider; and to raise and appropriate the sum of Three Thousand Dollars (\$3,000) as an annual stipend for this position?

Recommend: Yes-3, Abstain-1, No-2, Absent-1, Selectman Fred Childs voted yes to break the tie.

Article 2013 - ____ Railroad Study

Are you in favor of the Atkinson Board of Selectmen supporting a Six Hundred Fifty-nine Thousand Dollar (\$659,000) federally-funded study to evaluate the economic and environmental feasibility of the extension of commuter rail service, operated by the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) from Haverhill, MA to Plaistow, NH, that may include the need to construct a passenger station and a layover facility?

Discussion

The committee requested to discuss the railroad study article. Mr. Innes and 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.

Recommend: Yes-0, Abstain-0, No-5, Absent-1.

The committee returned to discussing the budget. Member Craig Schuster recommended cutting another \$500 from the conservation, care of grounds, field mowing budget, line number 46111.650.

The committee asked about line number 46111.390, other professional services in the conservation budget.

Line number 42101.410.03 is only in the budget line, not in the expense report line. It is \$2,500 for the contract buy out. Mr. Innes requested that the sheets be validated. Mr. Smith requested that the committee discuss more cuts off line.

Chairman Morse asked if there were more questions. A member of the audience pointed out that the committee needed the revenue numbers before the open meeting and the MS7 numbers before. Every warrant article needs a recommend or not recommend as well as the tally.

Vice Chairman Bill Smith made a motion to adjourn. Member Craig Schuster seconded the motion. Vote 5/0 in favor. Chairman Harold Morse adjourned the January 10, 2013 meeting of the budget committee at 8:30 pm.