

**TOWN OF ATKINSON
BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING
Wednesday, August 14, 2013**

Members Present:

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

Others Present:

Bill Baldwin, Selectman Liaison

Vice Chairman Bill Smith called meeting to order 7:05 pm.

Agenda:

- **Setting Calendar for 2013-2014 Budget Season**
- **Appointing Liaisons for Department Heads**

Vice Chairman Bill Smith passed out a prior year calendar. It was recommended that the committee meet through September in order to go through the process of meeting with the department heads regarding modified zero based budgeting.

The committee agreed on the following liaison assignments for committee members:

- **Highway Department – Craig Schuster – includes street lights, recycling and curb side waste, care of grounds, conservation and highways**
- **Fire, Ambulance and Homeland Security, Planning and Zoning– Sue Carroll**
- **Police Department and Elderly Affairs, and Cemetery – John Feuer**
- **Library, Cable, Government Buildings, Recreation, Community Center, Memorial Day and Animal Control –**

The Selectman Liaison, Bill Baldwin, suggested Animal Control be included with the Police Department because the Animal Control Department will be merging with the Police Department

- **Information Technology, Building Inspectors, Elections Town Clerk, Tax Collector, Town Administrator, - Bill Smith**

Calendar –

The committee discussed when to hold the first meeting and September 17, 2013 was recommended. Should it be before or after department heads present their budget to the Selectmen. Chairman

Morse informed the Committee members that liaisons should meet with their department heads 2 months before the first meeting.

Mr. Baldwin suggested that the ground work needs to be started before the first meeting.

Bill Smith requested committee look at second page of hand out and use the email that Mr. Barbera sent out 2 years ago to the department heads regarding the budget process as a guideline.

It was suggested that liaisons point out the line items that have had significant jumps, and that the budget committee will be looking more closely at expenses for the last five years. Also that some lines like retirement and utilities would not be up for discussion.

Bill Smith pointed out that the current spreadsheet was almost exactly the same as that used in past years. Mr. Smith wants to eliminate some columns from the spreadsheet and include the lowest column for the last five years for discretionary expense.

Wendy Barker reminded the committee that there are some lines entitled miscellaneous that the committee needs to look at with the department heads. The zero balance lines also need to be discussed.

The committee agreed to draft a letter based on the email that Mr. Barbera sent out with the modifications discussed above. Also, that the committee should meet again to look at the lines to be discussed, in September, liaison with the department heads and meet again in mid-October.

Another question raised is departments that bring in money. It was agreed that the committee should discuss revenue with the departments so that department heads will know what revenue they are bringing in and how much they are expending. The committee was informed that most of the money that comes in goes in to the general fund, with the exception of asset forfeiture money and detail revenue for the police department. Mr. Baldwin informed the committee that the Community Center budget will be skewed, because of the cost of repairs.

Vice Chairman summed up that the Committee should meet on September 17th to go over the lines discussed above again and to send out the letter. Then, the liaisons can meet one on one with the department heads. The first regular meeting of the Budget Committee will be on October 22nd. Then the committee will meet on October 29, November 5, November 12, November 19, November 26 and the last meeting will be on December 3rd. Make up dates will be December 10 and December 17.

Chairman Morse would like to review the default budget on September 17th as well. He requested the committee think about one-time expenditures for last year. Some information is also needed from the Town Administrator. Warrants are due in January. The Committee will need to look at the warrants for money that has been allocated by warrants in years past. A big issue has been charitable donations. The committee discussed whether it was legal for the Town to give money to charities.

Mr. Smith read the budget lines that went to charitable donations. The lines start at 44.151.350.

Family Mediation
Sad Café
Rockingham Visiting Nurse

**Rockingham Community Action
A Safe Place
Greater Salem Caregivers
Sexual Assault Support Services
RSVP and more**

Donations range from \$125 and up. Most of the agencies send a letter every year. The total amount is about \$39,000.

Another point brought up is that when someone presents a budget, they should have a bid or a contract to show the committee in order to avoid large over expenditures. One problem has been that the department head gets an estimate then by the time the money is voted expenses go up. The committee discussed whether overages were their responsibility. The issue is department heads going back to the Selectmen and asking for more money.

Mr. Baldwin would suggest that the department heads be aware of the expectations of the Budget Committee. Liaisons can ask contacts specific questions about projects.

The committee discussed how to approach the department heads. It was decided to send a letter out informing the department heads how the new budget process worked and requesting a meeting.

Member Craig Schuster made a motion to adjourn. Vice Chairman Bill Smith seconded the motion. All members present voted in favor. Vote 6/0.

The August 14, 2013 meeting of the Budget Committee adjourned at 8:00 PM.

The next meeting will be September 17, 2013.