

**TOWN OF ATKINSON  
BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING  
Tuesday, November 11, 2014**

Members Present:

Chairman Bill Smith  
Wendy Barker, Vice Chairman  
Kay Galloway  
Sue Carroll  
Craig Schuster  
Tom Mealey

Others Present:

Phil Consentino, Selectman Liaison

Chairman Bill Smith opened the meeting at 7:00 PM, Tuesday, November 11, 2014 and wished all Veterans a Happy Veterans Day.

Minutes: deferred

The Budget Committee reviewed Debt Principal - Mr. Consentino stated the Selectmen checked into refinancing the debt on the library but it would be hard because they are in a group. \$85,000 for debt principal. Interest is \$53,500. The Budget Committee proposed that principal be left at \$85,000 and interest be left at \$53,500.

Mr. Schuster commented that maintenance should be looked at as a whole rather than for each department. Ms. Barker asked if the Committee would also look at salaries and benefits. Ms. Galloway agreed and stated a spread sheet with just salaries and benefits pulled out would be a benefit. She would also like a justification from the Selectmen for making people full time. Mr. Schuster agreed to do an Excel spreadsheet with just salaries and benefits for the next meeting. Mr. Schuster also agreed to do an Excel spreadsheet with all maintenance expenses.

Chairman Smith asked Selectman Consentino what the Selectmen were thinking about when they set salaries. Ms. Barker pointed out that salary increases were not even across the line. Some people got longevity increases, some got a 2% COLA raise and some were made full time. Ms. Barker commented on the overlap in positions to train new personnel to replace people who are leaving. Mr. Consentino pointed out that the salary line for the Town Administrator was dropped down \$10,000 at the last meeting of the Board of Selectmen.

Mr. Consentino responded that the Selectmen are filling three positions. The Planning Administrator runs the whole planning and zoning office. The Selectmen need to find someone who knows about the job. Mr. Consentino is also concerned that people will be trained and leave if they are not given a decent salary. The Police Department lost two officers this year. As soon as they had experience, they went somewhere where they could get a higher salary. The other person the Town needs to hire is the Town Administrator. The Town has had problems hiring Town Administrators in the past. The third hire is the bookkeeper. They have hired someone who is being trained now. Mr. Smith agreed that the Selectmen's approach is a good one and asked if the Selectmen had started advertising. Mr. Consentino replied that the bookkeeper is leaving next month, the Town Administrator is leaving in 2016 and the Planning and Zoning Administrator is leaving in June.

Mr. Smith suggested the Committee wait for the spreadsheet for salaries and discuss them next week. Ms. Barker would like to know justification of salaries. Mr. Consentino has some of the information with him.

There was a proposal to give more hours to the Assistant Town Clerk position with a salary of \$17.50 per hour, but it was not approved. The Deputy Town Clerk is changing to a full time position rather than

hire a new person. Mr. Consentino stated he was surprised he did not get a list of all the personnel changes.

Ms. Galloway commented that with regard to health insurance, there is a certain amount for the individual, and if family members are added the rate goes up significantly. Mr. Consentino informed the Committee that anyone hired after December 2012 will automatically have 20% deducted from their pay. Those hired before December 2012 will have 5% deducted. The Committee discussed issues with health insurance. Mr. Consentino remarked that the policy has changed, previously the Town paid 100% of health insurance. Insurance is being put out to bid but there are not many companies who are willing to offer insurance to small towns. The Committee continued to discuss health insurance.

Ms. Carroll asked why more than \$60,000 in salary increases were voted on when one of the Selectmen was missing. Mr. Consentino replied that all the Selectman who was not at the meeting had to do was request to reconsider and the Board would have gone over the salaries again.

Chair Smith requested to move on from the salaries.

Chair Smith noted that the proposed changes added up to a 7.5% increase and the Selectmen brought it down to 6.3%.

The Committee went back to the Executive Budget and reviewed the other lines. Mr. Smith proposed that the Committee look at prior years expenses and his modified base line figure.

Prof/Tech Services - Line Number 41301.390.00: \$10,000 was proposed and the Selectmen approved \$10,000. The Committee agreed to come back to this line.

Town Reports - Line Number 41301.550.00: This line is already overspent. Ms. Barker explained that the Town Report is getting bigger every year so it is costing more to print it. Mr. Smith agreed it is in the right ballpark.

Miscellaneous - Line Number 41301.690.00: The current proposed amount of \$1,200 is about average.

Mileage/Gas/Maintenance - Line Number 41301.820.00: not big

Education/Conferences - Line Number 41301.850.00: is blank. Mr. Consentino explained that most of the conferences are put on by the State and do not cost the Town anything. However, someone will be coming to the Town to explain 91A - the cost will come out of the Education/Conferences line.

Public Notices - Line Number 41301.860.00: \$4,500 is requested for this year. It is expensive to advertise. \$3,500 was budgeted for 2014 and it is overspent already.

Ms. Carroll would like to revisit the Prof & Tech Services line. The Committee agreed to review the budget one section at a time.

**Town Administrator - Account Number 41302**: The Committee reviewed the Town Administrator budget.

Ms. Barker informed the Committee that the Data Processing Supplies line is coming out of the budget.

The Committee also discussed the postage line. The \$1885 for postage is just for the Executive Budget.

The Committee discussed the Office Supplies Line and it was suggested that since all the departments were in one building, there should only be one Office Supplies Line for all the departments. Mr. Consentino informed the Committee that that had been tried unsuccessfully before.

Education/Conferences/Dues - Line Number 41302.850: Ms. Barker would like to mark the line and ask Mr. Innes if that amount were for the class on 91A. Nothing has been expended in past years.

The Committee looked at the Clerical and Conflict of Interest budgets and did not recommend any changes.

### **Town Clerk - Account Number 41302:**

Chair Smith asked about health insurance. The Committee will talk about it next week along with salaries and benefits.

Telephone: the Committee discussed the telephone lines. There is an expense line in the Town Administrator's account and in the Town Clerk's account. The lines include desk phones for the Town Clerk and the Town Administrator as well as cell phones for the Selectmen and the Town Administrator. Next year there will be five Selectmen. Dave Weymouth, the Road Agent and the Police Chief also have cell phones. The Committee discussed if Town personnel need smart phones or if a regular cell phone would be enough. The telephone line for the Town Administrator is \$6,500 and the Town Clerk telephone line is \$1,279. The Committee requested Mr. Consentino give them more information on the cost of telephone service.

Microfilm - Line Number 41302.355.00: The Committee agreed to leave it.

New Equipment - Line Number 41401.740.00: \$17,302 is requested. Most of this amount is for fireproof file cabinets. The Committee discussed purchasing used cabinets or buying one a year. The Committee agreed to revisit this line.

The bulk of the increase for the Town Clerk budget is for salaries and the file cabinets.

The Moderator budget and Election Administration budget is low because 2015 is not an election year.

### **Financial Administration**

Bookkeeper - Line Number 41501.00: \$45,760 - the salary has dropped because the salary for the new bookkeeper is less than the salary for the bookkeeper who is retiring. The new bookkeeper is currently the assistant bookkeeper.

Assessing - Account Number 41503.110.00: Mr. Consentino explained that the Assessing Clerk/BOS Clerk line will go to the Town Administration lines. The only lines remaining will be 41503.390 - Assessor/Other Professional Services and possibly the postage line.

Ms. Barker would like to know why the Selectmen are increasing salaries. The Committee has copies of the Motion but no explanation as to why. Ms. Barker will make a list of all action items for Mr. Consentino.

### **Tax Collecting - Account Number 41504:**

Telephone Line Number 41504.341.00: \$600 is always requested and is always over.

Data Processing Supplies - Line Number 41504.342.00:

**Member Craig Schuster made a motion to delete Line Number 41504.342.00 - Data Processing Supplies. Vice Chair Wendy Barker seconded the motion. The Atkinson Budget Committee voted all in favor. Vote: 6/0.**

Microfilming - Line Number 41504.355.00:

**Chair Bill Smith made a motion for the Budget Committee to propose that the 2015 budget for Line Number 41504.355.00 - Microfilming be \$1. Member Sue Carroll seconded the motion. The Atkinson Budget Committee voted all in favor to recommend that the Line Number 41504.355.00 - Microfilming should be \$1.**

Other Professional Services - Line Number 41504.390.00: is for the tax forms.

Office Supplies - Line Number 41504.620.00:

**Member Craig Schuster made a motion for the Budget Committee to recommend \$800 for Line Number 41504.620.00 - Office Supplies. Member Sue Carroll seconded the motion. The Budget Committee voted all in favor. Vote: 6/0.**

Dues/Subs/Memberships - Line Number 41504.560.00: This expense is for dues for the tax collectors association.

**Treasury - Account Number 41505:**

Mileage - Line Number 41505.820: \$475 - 2015 is the first year they have had mileage expense. The Budget Committee agreed to revisit the line.

Education/Conferences - Line Number 41505.850: Money for education and conferences has never been requested before. \$100 is requested this year.

**Computers - Account Number 41506:** No changes

Hardware Purchase - Line Number 41506.440: This line is for 5 new laptops. The old laptops will be recycled.

**Budget Committee - Account Number 41509:**

Budget Committee Clerk - Line Number 41509.110: No Change.

Education/Conferences - Line Number 41509.850: is \$150. In case new members need training.

**Legal Services**

Legal Department Operations - Account Number 41531: revisit to see if the Other Professional Services can be trimmed.

**Personnel Admin - Account Number 41552:** defer

**Planning & Zoning**

Postage - There is a postage account for the planning budget and the zoning budget. The Committee questioned if it could be a lump sum. Ms. Galloway feels postage for zoning could be left at \$1,000.

Ms. Barker asked if the postage line for planning should be reduced. The Committee will revisit the line. Mr. Consentino explained that notices have to be sent every time there is a subdivision request. Some notices need to be certified.

Postage -Line Number 41913.625: Chair Smith requested a motion to reduce the zoning postage line to \$1,000.

**Member Kay Galloway made a motion to reduce Line Number 41913.625 - Postage from \$1,500 to \$1,000. Member Craig Schuster seconded the motion. All members of the Budget Committee voted in favor. Vote 6/0.**

### **Buildings**

Mr. Schuster is doing a spreadsheet on maintenance for OPS and general maintenance. The Committee agreed to defer and discuss buildings along with maintenance at a later meeting.

### **Cemeteries - Account Number 41951:**

Vice Chair Wendy Barker asked if the Committee made a motion to remove the computer software line. Mr. Smith replied that he did not change any of the lines, he just added the Selectmen proposals. He will compare with the bookkeeper.

Minor Equipment - Line Number 41915.630.00: Chair Smith requested a motion to changed the line from \$2,000 to \$1,500.

**Member Craig Schuster made a motion to change Line Number 41915.630.00 - Minor Equipment to \$1,500. Member Kay Galloway seconded the motion. The Budget Committee voted all in favor. Vote 6/0.**

Telephone - Line Number 41915.341: The committee questioned if there was a cell phone for the cemetery trustee and agreed to ask. The line has never been expended.

Care of Grounds - Line Number 41915.650: Mr. Consentino explained that the previous groundskeeper did not get much money. For awhile the trustee did the grounds keeping. The Selectmen have hired a new person and the cemetery has never looked better.

**Other Insurance - Account Number 41969.620:** is the pool

**Advertising/Regional - Account Number 41974.855:** Ms. Carroll is opposed. This line is for the Regional Planning Board. Mr. Consentino explained that the expertise given by the person from the Rockingham Planning Board gives is irreplaceable for Zoning and Planning hearings. The person works for the Rockingham Planning Board. Mr. Smith asked if there were other contractors. Mr. Consentino replied that the Town would have to hire an engineer. They also assist with the Master Plan and the CIP Plans. The Committee would like to revisit this line. Mr. Consentino said he would ask Sue Killam what the circuit rider from the Regional Planning Board does for the Town.

### **Police Department**

Ms. Carroll asked about the crossing guard. The Town has not spent more than \$4,000 since 2010. Ms. Barker remarked that the crossing guard is paid hourly.

**Member Craig Schuster made a motion for the Budget Committee to propose \$4,000 for Line Number 42101.110.05 - School Crossing Guard. Chair Bill Smith seconded the motion. The Budget Committee voted all in favor. Vote: 6/0.**

Ms. Galloway asked about the Sergeant's line. Mr. Schuster asked about the overtime lines. Ms. Barker asked about the Chief. It is a part time position. The Selectmen are proposing \$70,000 for 2015. Mr. Consentino explained that that is in his contract.

Legal Services - Line Number 42101.320.00: The Town Attorney has a retainer for the Police Department for \$2,500. It is also an expense for a prosecutor for the Plaistow District Court.

Mileage - Line Number 42101.820: Mr. Smith asked about the mileage line. Mr. Consentino explained that it is in case an officer needs to use his own vehicle to go to a class.

Training Instructor Pay - Line Number 42104.390: Nothing was expended in 2014. Mr. Consentino explained that the department brought in officers from other departments and there was no charge.

Telephone - Line Number 42105.341: This line jumped due to the new telephone service.

Education Training/Supplies - Line Number 42104.850: This line includes officers going out to the range, there are also in-house supplies. Mr. Consentino does not know if it includes ammunition.

Postage - Line Number 42105.625:

**Member Kay Galloway made a motion for the Budget Committee to propose \$500 for Line Number 42105.625 - Postage. Member Craig Schuster seconded the motion. The Committee voted all in favor. Vote: 6/0.**

Cleaning Service - Line Number 42107.360: The Department had to get a service to wax the floors. Ms. Carroll commented that the Trustee painted the interior and it looks really sharp.

Town details - Line Number 42106.110.01: This line covers Town events where a police officer is needed. It is not the same as paid details.

Cruiser Maintenance - Account Number 42109: \$10,000 is budgeted for the other new line. Mr. Consentino informed the Committee it is to outfit the new committee. Mr. Smith suggested that the committee come back to it. Ms. Carroll suggested combining the other/new line with the new equipment line.

Ambulance Contract - Line Number 42152.350: \$1

The next regular meeting of the Budget Committee will be Tuesday, November 18, 2014 at 7:00 PM.

**Member Kay Galloway made a motion to adjourn the Tuesday, November 11, 2014 meeting of the Town of Atkinson Budget Committee at 8:45 PM. Member Craig Schuster seconded the motion. All members present voted in favor. Vote: 6/0.**