

**TOWN OF ATKINSON
BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING
Tuesday, September 22, 2015**

Members Present:

Bill Smith, Chair
Wendy Barker, Vice Chair
Sue Carroll
Kay Galloway
Peter Torosian
Tom Mealey

Others Present:

Bill Innes, Town Administrator
Rose Cavalear, Town Clerk
Noriko Yoshida Travers, Community Ctr
Ted Stewart, Highway Department

Chair Bill Smith called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

Agenda: Town Clerk, Patriotic Purposes, Elections, Community Center, Recreation, Highway, Street Lights, Recycling, Solid Waste Disposal, Care of Grounds

Town Clerk- Account Number 41401: Rose Cavalear, Town Clerk came before the Atkinson Budget Committee to present the Town Clerk budget.

Ms. Cavalear informed the Committee that as of September 18, 2015, Town revenue is up \$54,972.19 from last year. \$1,123,867.73 is the total revenue for 2015 and 2014 total revenue was \$1,68,895.54. More people are buying vehicles. Also, the Town Clerk fee was \$1.00 per vehicle, with the new RSA, the fee is now \$2.00. The RSA went in to effect July 1, 2015. Last year, the revenue was \$9,000 at one dollar per vehicle.

Chair Smith requested that Ms. Cavalear review the lines that changed.

Ms. Cavalear informed the Committee that the Town Clerk's assistant line is \$52,360.00 which is up because according to her contract, she received a 25 cent raise after 6 months and a 50 cent raise after a year.

New equipment went down. Ms. Cavalear put in \$500 for new credit card machines. The line went down because \$10,552 was budgeted in 2015 and only \$4,720 was spent because the Town purchased used cabinets. Ms. Cavalear requested enough funds for 2 or three new cabinets and was able to purchase five or six used fire cabinets plus a couple of non fire filing cabinets.

Mileage went up \$200 to \$1,500 for classes for assistants.

Educational and conferences went up \$3.00. Ms. Cavalear is not sure why.

The grand total for the Town Clerks Office is \$157,950. The Town Clerk budget went down 8%. The Committee discussed postage. Ms. Cavalear said there was no increase.

Mr. Smith asked if there were questions. There were none.

Patriotic Purposes - Account Number 45831: Ms. Noriko Yoshida Travers presented the Patriotic Purposes budget.

Memorial Day expenses is \$1,430.

Mr. Bill Innes informed the Committee that flags will be \$3,300 and the Selectmen have agreed. The budget for flags increased from \$1,300 to \$3,300. The increase is for \$2,000 to replace the flagpole at Woodlock Park which was broken a couple of years ago.

Community Center- Account Number 45208: Ms. Noriko Yoshida Travers came before the Atkinson Budget Committee to present the Community Center budget

Telephone - Line Number 45208.341: was \$1,850 in 2015 and \$2,000 is budgeted for 2016, up \$150 due to an increase in the base fee. The Committee asked if the charges included the telephone for Elder Services and Mr. Innes explained that they are not.

Cleaning Services - Line 45208.360: is budgeted for \$5,600 for 2016. In 2015 it was \$4,784. The Town Administrator is negotiating the contract for 2016 so the amount for 2016 may change. The current contract runs out in February 2016.

There was a discrepancy in the columns for the Community Center Budget so Ms. Travers went through the budget line by line. The electricity budget was \$3,200 for 2015, it is up quite a bit to \$5,000. The budget for heat is \$5,000 for 2016. Water is \$950. Gas is blank. Office Supplies is \$600. Postage is \$200. Custodial Supplies is \$1,000 and minor equipment is \$500. Ms. Yoshida Travers salary is \$39,998, FICA is \$2,480, Medicare is \$580, Retirement is \$4,468 and Telephone is \$1,850 .

The Community Center received \$11,000 in revenue for rental fees in 2015. 2 years ago income was \$8,000. The rental fee has gone up, and there are more functions. Nonprofit groups are not charged. Ms. Yoshida Travers thanked the Committee for supporting the repairs.

The Committee returned to discussing the Community Center budget. Cleaning services is budgeted for \$5,600 in 2016. Electricity has gone up to \$5,000 from \$3,200 in 2015. This number is also proposed by the Selectmen. Mr. Innes explained that the increase in the rate is 21.1%. Ms. Travers explained that the increase in electricity is due to the rate hike and also usage. Ms. Travers explained that this summer was warm and a lot was expended for air conditioning. A light was also installed in the parking lot and it is an extra \$50.00 per month. Mr. Innes explained that it was very dark at night and the parking lot is not paved so there were a lot of complaints. It is on a timer. There is also a new light by the entrance that is on 24/7.

\$68,426 is the total requested for the Community Center. The increase is 3.04%. Resurfacing the Community Center floor is in the Town Administrator maintenance budget. The biggest increases are for the cleaning contract and electricity.

Recreation- Account Number 44421: Ms. Noriko Yoshida Travers came before the Atkinson Budget Committee to present the Recreation budget.

There was a big increase in counselors' salaries. An additional column was added to show counselors' salaries through August 31, 2015. There is one director, two assistants and 19 counselors. A junior counselor salary is \$7.25 per hour, the counselor salary is \$7.75 per hour and senior counselors are \$8.25 per hour. Ms. Travers requested to increase each tier by \$.25 because counselors are under paid compared to other towns, but the Selectmen did not support the increase. There is a problem because the senior counselors do not stay. Ms. Travers showed the Committee comparisons for other towns. The Committee discussed raises. Mr. Innes explained that the Selectmen believe that there are enough applications so a raise is not justified. Revenue for 2015 is up \$4,000, \$42,000 from \$38,000. There were 146 children. About half the children from Atkinson Academy go to Sun and Fun. The total increase would be \$1,000. The Committee agreed to discuss it later. Mr. Mealy asked about sponsorship. The money is partly for children who cannot afford to belong to a sports league, and also for equipment for sports leagues. Some money also goes to children who cannot afford the Sun and Fun program. There are 19 positions for counselors, and 230 applications.

Ms. Carroll asked about the \$1,000 in equipment maintenance for 2015. Ms. Travers explained that it was repair of the fence and gate on the playground. Also, an inspection was done and it was found that a number of posts for a piece of playground equipment were rotted. The bid to repair it was \$8,500. More money had to be spent on woodchips and mulch. The money came from the equipment

maintenance and the building maintenance accounts. The increase on contract labor and equipment was for crack repair on the tennis courts. The money was taken from the recreation budget and also the maintenance budget.

Also, Atkinson Youth Ball and Softball uses the field in Woodlock Park. They were losing a lot of balls, there were a lot of ticks and poison ivy. For 2016, Ms. Travers is requesting \$1,000 for a high wall and a net. Mr. Stewart will put the nets up and take them down each year. Ms. Carroll asked about getting rid of the poison ivy. Mr. Stewart, the Road Agent explained that it is too difficult to get rid of it. Mr. Stewart has sprayed other areas in Town and it cost about \$300.00 for one time. A wall and net is a better solution. Even with the poison ivy gone, ticks are still a probably.

Chair Smith asked if there were any more questions. There were none.

Highway and Streets: Mr. Ted Stewart came before the Committee to present the Highway Department budget.

Administration - Account Number 43111: The Assistant Road Agent's salary went up to show the full cost of the salary for 2016. The budget for 2015 was for only for nine months.

The only line that was increased from 2015 is the telephone, it will be almost 30% over.

Mr. Stewart tried to make some cuts. Contract Labor for summer was budgeted for \$25,000 in 2014, \$20,000 in 2015 and \$15,000 for 2016. The cut is because the Town has its own equipment.

Chair Smith asked about the proposed column for the assistant road agent. It is for the Assistant Road Agents medical. Salary, Medicare, FICA and insurance all went up 25% to show a full year. The \$46,146 salary increase is for the assistant road agent who was employed full time in 2014. \$35,000 was spent in 2015 and Mr. Stewart is requesting \$47,000 for 2016. This amount was approved by the Selectmen. The retirement and insurance lines also increased for Medicare, FICA and Retirement for the Assistant Road Agent. These will be the amounts when Mr. Innes has the numbers which will be by the end of October.

Engineering - Account Number 43112: Phone increased and other professional services increased \$10,000 for the added cost of storm water management impact. There is a lot of testing and designing. It is an unfunded federal mandate. Mr. Innes put storm water management in the Road Agent budget for 2016. In future, storm water management expenses will go to the Selectmen's budget. It is a six part program. In 2014 the initial MS4 permit was received, then a comment period. EPA took information and made a new set of documents and the Town will need a new permit. The Town will have another comment session which will begin in October. Final permit will be given in early 2016. It is a 5 year program with 6 parts. Year 1- the goal is public education and outreach to schools and residents so that the community will understand all things that affect storm water. The second part is measuring inflows and outflows to the Town and is done twice per year, once in the wet season which is spring and in the dry season which is fall. There are four other parts, the most impactful is working with contractors, for contractor containment of runoff from building sites. There will be additional inspections for the code enforcement officer and the building inspector. Mr. Innes explained that every town in the country is affected.

Mr. Stewart explained that Atkinson is impacted because the water from Atkinson flows into the Merrimack River. The two watersheds affected by runoff from Atkinson are part of a water drain area and also part of an area of large population. Mr. Stewart explained that there is not a big problem for Atkinson, the biggest thing Atkinson will find is a possible failed septic system. The Committee discussed the impact of storm water management on the Town of Atkinson. Atkinson has swales and open drainage so it does not cause as much of a problem with drainage. If there is less flowing out of the

Town then what comes in, then there will not be a problem. Mr. Innes explained the cost estimate for a small town is \$50,000 to \$80,000 for the first five years. The EPA can fine a Town up to \$135,000 per day for not complying. Mr. Innes would like to budget \$10,000 for 2016. Residents need to be educated on the types of fertilizer among other things. Good quality drainage is important and education is important. Having fewer impervious surfaces is also important. Mr. Innes feels good quality testing the first time will allow the Town to manage testing in future years. The Town has 5 years to complete all the phases. It will cost \$10,000 to hire a contractor. The Town Engineer will also be involved in storm water management. An engineer has to write the report. The storm water management expenses will be moved to the Selectmen budget in future years.

Cleaning and Maintenance - Account Number 43122: is the bulk of the highway budget. Mr. Stewart would like to change equipment repairs. It should be \$14,000 by the end of 2015. He is recommending \$4,000 for next year. He is cutting repairs to offset the lease line to replace the 2008 truck.

The truck lease line is \$55,000. It is for the 2015 truck and for the backhoe. The line is also to replace the 2008 truck which has a lot of maintenance issues. \$3,500 was spent for repair on the 2008 truck in 2015. This amount does not include the cost for a new engine and or a new transmission. Mr. Stewart estimates the cost to lease a replacement truck is \$15,000. It is a yearly payment. The first \$40,000 covers the lease for the backhoe, and the 2016 truck. He is hoping to get a trade in. The lease cost for the backhoe, is \$19,900 per year. Mr. Stewart gets his trucks from Grappone Ford.

The crack sealing line changed. There was a bid in 2015 on Maple Avenue and all the roads off of Maple Avenue for \$32,000. There was \$15,000, enough money in the 2015 budget to do Maple Avenue and Willow Vale. The remainder of the bid package was \$17,500. This will be enough to do all of Kelly and Coventry the other streets off Maple Avenue except Blackford and Little River Road. The Road Agent started off of East Road. Crack sealing on a regular basis increases the life of the road. It costs about \$7,000 per mile to crack seal and about \$50,000 to shim and overlay per mile. Mr. Torosian asked if there was a decrease in asphalt cost due to the decrease in gas prices. Mr. Stewart put out the bid last year and if there is a change in price, it will show when he comes in later.

Salt is \$54 per ton. The rate went up \$6.00 per ton for 2016. Eastern Minerals has the State contract for District 6 for 2016. Mr. Stewart is \$400 over budget on other materials for 2015. It is a catch all line for unanticipated expenses like safety chips. \$1,500 was spent for woodchips under the playground equipment in 2015. 9 inches of woodchips is recommended.

The next line change is summer contract labor. The line is reduced by \$5,000 which is the savings between paying a contractor and using Town equipment.

Snow and ice control - Account Number 43125: The Selectmen budget is \$120,000 for contract labor, a \$49,000 decrease in 2015 expenditures and there are 6 weeks of winter left in 2015. This reflects having 3 pieces of equipment for 2015. From 2009 to 2015 there were years that were \$47,000 and \$72,000 but the last 3 years, 2013, was \$113,000; 2014 was \$131,000 and the expense for 2015 was \$170,000. The reason that snow removal cost for 2012 and 2010 was so much lower is half the snow amount. The Committee discussed if the leases for new equipment would offset the expenses. The backhoe was delivered in July and the truck is in transit from Detroit. Mr. Stewart explained that the contract labor line is reduced by \$50,000.

The Committee discussed the cost of leasing the new truck. Mr. Stewart explained that the lease line increase is \$55,000. Other costs decreased \$65,000. The truck will not be built until the budget passes deliberative session. The price of a dump truck with plow, wing and sander unit is \$95,000. It is a lease to buy and Mr. Stewart expects to be able to use the truck for seven to eight years. The Town will pay \$15,000 over 5 years or \$75,000. Mr. Stewart explained that the periphery items on the old truck could

not be recycled to the new truck. The computer is 12 years old, the sander was recycled from the previous truck and the plow and wing are over 8 years old. The truck as equipped is worth about \$15,000, the 12 year old sander and the plow and wing would not be worth anything separately.

Mr. Smith summarized the 25% increase is for an anticipated tough winter. If there is a mild winter, and the money is not used, it will be returned to the general fund. Mr. Innes explained that the Town was over spent \$75,000 in winter contract labor for 2015. \$13,700 was spent to shovel roofs and \$17,000 to \$18,000 was spent to repair roofs. This makes around \$35,000 in unanticipated expenses plus with the \$75,000 in contract labor, the Town is over \$100,000 in debt due to the hard winter. Mr. Innes is trying to manage this year's budget without going in to the winter capital reserve.

There were other unanticipated revenues. The goal is to bring expenses in on budget. Mr. Innes is trying to under spend where he can. A little was spent to repair buildings. Mr. Innes would like to put \$130,000 to \$140,000 into the general fund. Mr. Torosian asked if the Town under spent any years. Mr. Stewart informed the Committee that 2014 was the second worst year. Mr. Innes informed the Committee that he would find out. Mr. Stewart informed the Committee that several roads have also been added such as Little River Road and Winslow Drive. Also, the Selectmen's' policy to have pavement black as soon as possible after a storm has an impact. His department is plowing as soon as there is 2 inches of snow and continues to plow until it stops snowing. Mr. Torosian asked about sodium runoff. Mr. Stewart informed the Committee that the EPA is not testing for sodium in runoff. Mr. Stewart also informed the Committee that Atkinson does a lot to reduce sodium runoff. The Committee agreed that the Highway Department does an excellent job. 13 trucks were hired last year and 10 will be hired this year.

There were no more questions.

Street Lighting - Account Number 43163: Ted Stewart presented the Street Lighting budget. It is a direct reflection of electric rates.

Recycling - Account Number 43234: Ted Stewart presented the Recycling budget. It is not Atkinson's year to host hazardous waste. Money reduced for contract labor because using backhoe to push up brush.

Solid Waste- Account Number 43241: Mr. Innes informed the Committee that in 2014 the Town spent \$240,000 and this year the cost for solid waste disposal was \$225,500 because of an increase in recycling there is less solid waste. Mr. Innes was able to bring down the cost of the contract and saved \$15,000 for 2016. Service has improved significantly. Mr. Innes has worked with Northside Carting, the major issue is Tuesday, there is one truck for trash and one truck for recycling, the trash truck had a longer route, now they are using two trucks for trash and one for recycling and not missing as many houses. Missing trash now is about one house per week. The trucks leaking hydraulic fluid have been fixed.

There were no more questions regarding solid waste.

Grounds Maintenance- Account Number 45202: Ted Stewart presented the grounds maintenance budget. It is flat year to year. Grounds maintenance is out to bid. Mr. Stewart is hoping fertilization costs will go down because it is a petroleum product.

There were no more questions for Mr. Stewart.

Elections- Account Number 41402: Mr. Innes came before the Atkinson Budget Committee to present the Elections budget.

There is 109% increase in the moderator's budget because there are 4 or 5 elections this year, last year there were one or two. It is the same for the supervisor of the checklist.

There will be more mailings and more printing ballots. Also, 4 days will be spent at the polls. The other cost is prework. The Committee discussed the increase in professional and technical services. Mr. Innes will find out. Ms. Barker asked about election administration. \$40 was spent in 2012 and nothing has been expended for the last four years.

Mr. Smith asked if there were more questions. There were none.

Ms. Galloway asked if there was a cable committee. Mr. Innes replied that there is none.

Mr. Innes left the meeting.

Minutes: - deferred.

Member Peter Torosian made a motion to adjourn the September 22, 2015 meeting of the Atkinson Budget Committee. Member Tom Mealey seconded the motion. All members of the Atkinson Budget Committee voted in favor. Vote: 6/0/0.