

**TOWN OF ATKINSON
BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING
Tuesday, September 29, 2015**

Members Present:

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

Others Present:

Bill Innes, Town Administrator
Harold Morse, Selectman Liaison
Mike Murphy, Fire Chief
Paul Wainwright, Conservation Commission
Robert Patuto, Cemetery Trustee

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

Agenda: Ambulance, Fire Department, Homeland Security, Tax Collector, Cemetery, Conservation

Fire Department- Account Number 42201: Chief Mike Murphy came before the Atkinson Budget Committee to present the Fire Department budget and briefly recapped recent equipment which the Fire Department has purchased in 2015.

Chief Murphy informed the Budget Committee that there was a warrant for a fire truck in 2015, it should be delivered in January of 2016.

The Department has some grants. One grant the Department was able to get is for a number of Self Contained Breathing Apparatus ("SCBA"). The self contained breathing apparatuses that the Department is currently using will be outdated in 2016 and replacing them will cost \$125,000 to \$126,000. Chief Murphy received \$131,876 from FEMA, Grant Number EMW2014FO04638 and it is listed under self contained breathing apparatus and fill station. The Department also received a new fill station through the grant. All 20 SCBA's, masks, voice amps and fill station have been upgraded. They are compliant with the latest NSCBA regulations. Also with that grant, the Department purchased a rapid entry kit which would allow someone to go in and get him back on air if a firefighter went down. The kit has one hour on it.

The Fire Department and the Police Department also worked together to apply for a grant from the New Hampshire Highway Safety Department to upgrade the extrication tools. The grant was a 50% match up to \$4,500. Mr. Murphy wanted to purchase a battery operated extrication tool. All the other extrication tools are attached to the truck(s). The Atkinson Fire Association and the members contributed \$8,925 which it raised through donations, and together with the donations and the grant, the Fire Department was able to purchase the equipment.

Also, the monitor defibrillator was sent back to Phillips. The Department has worked with Phillips for years in its advertising campaign. Several Phillips employees are from Atkinson. For the Fire Department efforts, Phillips donated a monitor defibrillator to the Fire Department. It is a \$35,000 piece of equipment. This has greatly enhanced the emergency response.

The total value of equipment purchased through grants and donations is \$180,401.

Vice Chair Barker asked Chief who wrote the grants. Chief explained that he wrote the grant for the tanker that the Department purchased about two years ago. This year, he took the information from the first grant and used it to write the grant for the SCBA's. He met with a company called "The Grant Writers" and felt comfortable with the person he spoke to so he hired them to assist him. They charge \$2,500 to review a grant. Along with the approval for the equipment, FEMA also gave \$1,500 for the grant writer.

Ms. Barker asked how the fee is computed and Chief explained that it is per grant. He also explained that it takes him 40 to 50 hours to write a grant.

Chief Murphy then went through the Fire Department Budget line by line.

Chief's Salary - Line Number 42201.110.01: no change

Fire Personnel - Line Number 42201.110.02: level funded this year, projecting \$110,000 out of \$127,000. However, this line will come under the Fair Labor Act and there are some rules Chief Murphy was unaware of. The Department will have to pay personnel for certain things that weren't being paid for in the past. For example, the Department will have to pay personnel for Sunday duty, washing the trucks and this will have to be charged to the Fire Personnel line. The firemen can donate the pay back. It will cost the Department \$13,500 yearly. It amounts to about 30 personnel for 3 hours each Sunday for a total of 90 hours for one year. October 1st will be the start of paying the duty crews.

Clerk - Line Number 42201.110.03: an increase to \$15,000 from \$13,260 due to more reporting. The clerk also assists with the bids and he is working with FEMA on finalizing the grants.

FICA and Medicare for the above lines will change correspondingly.

Insurance - Line Number 42201.210.00: the line is being kept open at \$1.00. The Fire Department now gets insurance through the State.

State Retirement - Line Number 42201.230.00: this line is also being kept open at \$1.00 as the Town now longer pays for retirement.

Telephone - Line Number 42201.341.00: is going from \$5,800 in 2015 to \$6,500 for 2016 based on additional services required in the Fire Department. One such service is the air card which will be needed for the new defibrillator.

Cleaning Service - Line Number 42201.360.00: increased to \$3,600 based on the bid price. Part of the floor had to be replaced because the tiles were coming up and there was some carpet work. Chief Murphy would like to maintain it. A yearly program of shampooing carpets and stripping and resealing the floor has been started. It will cost \$1,300 yearly to strip, clean and reseal the floor and to clean the carpets.

Electricity - Line Number 42201.410.00: Mr. Innes explained that there will be a 21.1% increase due to the new contract.

Heat - Line Number 42201.411.00: a small increase from \$8,000 to \$8,400

Water Contract - Line Number 42201.430.00: This is for pressurized hydrants. There are 6 additional hydrants maintained through the water company.

Dues and Subscriptions - Line Number 42201.560.00: Increased from \$1,000 in 2015 to \$1,500 budgeted for 2016 because professional publications went up in price.

Hazmat - Line Number 42201.560.01: \$1,00

Office Supplies - Line Number 42201.620.00: level funded at \$4,000

Postage - Line Number 42201.625.00: A decrease from \$300 in 2015 to \$250 budgeted for 2016 because more information is sent electronically and also because the Department is not sending certified mail notices to businesses before a fire inspection.

Education and Conferences - Line Number 42201.850.00: level at \$10,000

The total Fire Administration Budget is \$237,892.

Fire Fighting - Account Number 42202

Truck Maintenance/Labor - Line Number 42202.110.01: \$1.00

Water Line/Fire Protection - Line Number 42202.412.00: dropped to \$1,000 based on usage. There was a mix up with the meters.

Hydrant Maintenance - Line Number 42202.430.00: \$3,000 to maintain the dry hydrants around town. The money is to maintain fences and paint. Chief Murphy is trying abandon them and replace them with pressurized hydrants.

Minor Equipment - Line Number 42202.630.00: level funded at \$2,000

Gas and Oil - Line Number 42202.635.00: reduced from \$5,000 to \$4,500 due to the drop in gas and oil prices.

Truck Maintenance - Line Number 42202.660.00: dropped from \$13,500 to \$10,000 budgeted for 2016 Chief Murphy expects to spend less because a new truck has been purchased.

Chemicals/Hazmat - Line Number 42202.680.00: \$500 is requested for 2016. It is for foam.

New Equipment - Line Number 42202.740.00: \$11,500 is requested for 2016. Chief would like to maintain that line at that level. He is still in the process of prioritizing equipment and new equipment, and will need money to outfit the new truck.

Food - Line Number 42202.810.00: level at \$1,200 for 2016.

Uniforms - Line Number 42202.870.00: Chief is requesting \$10,000, down from \$13,000 in 2015. Membership is dropping, also all interior firefighters gear has been upgraded. He plans to roll the money into the capital reserve account because the firefighters gear has to be replaced every 10 years. Also, SCBA's are only good for 14 years and money to replace them is also going into the capital reserve, along with money for apparatus purchases.

The total fire fighting account has dropped from \$50,901 for 2015 to \$43,700 requested for 2016.

Fire Prevention and Inspection - Account Number 42203

Fire Inspection Line Number 42203.110.00: Chief has spoken with the developer for Sawmill Ridge. They are getting in 50 foundations. 3 inspections will be needed for each foundations for a total of 150 inspections. Chief has requested an increase in the budget to \$8,600 for 2016 from \$5,100 in 2015. The developer will cover the costs. Fire inspections generate revenue.

Printing and binding - Line Number 42203.550: level funded

Training - Account Number 42204: Instructional materials are level funded at \$500.

Communications - Account Number 42205: equipment repair is level funded at \$7,000 for 2016.

Medical Services - Account Number 42207:

Physicals - Line Number 42207.350.00: level funded at \$3,000.

Professional Services - Line Number 42207.390: \$1,800 for contracts to service the defibrillators

Medical Supplies - Line Number 42207.680: Chief is requesting level funding at \$5,000.

The Fire Department total has increased from \$302,230 to \$308,607 requested for 2016.

The Committee had some questions. Member Sue Carroll asked about minor equipment, only \$3,700 was spent in 2015. Chief Murphy explained that the money is for a radio for the new truck. The

Department originally planned to take the radio from the old truck but it is no longer supported by Motorola. The radios cost \$4,000 each. The radios and portables in the trucks now were obtained through a grant ten years ago, partly due to 911.

Member Torosian asked if Chief had considered Kenwood radios. Chief Murphy stated that the Department does due diligence.

The Committee discussed \$5,200 for fire inspectors. 13 foundations and 26 units will be put in for 2016. There is a significant amount of property moving in the community.

Mr. Torosian asked about membership. Chief explained that the department has 31 members. In order to volunteer for the fire department, it is necessary to go to the Fire Academy. Young members work with the department for training and then go to other departments. Chief Murphy informed the Committee that the department may have to hire full time firefighters. Chief Murphy makes an effort to recruit firefighters, but it is becoming more difficult and it is a dangerous business. All the firefighters, EMTs and paramedics in the Atkinson Fire Department are fully trained. Plaistow has around 5 full time firefighters including the fire chief, and Hampstead has two or three as well as per diem personnel. They also have a pay call force. The full time firefighters cover the day time, and some firefighters perform pay call work on a per diem basis. The cost to send a firefighter to the Academy is from \$800 to \$1,000. This does not include the cost of new gear. Plaistow has a \$562,000 fire department budget. Hampstead has a \$811,000 budget. There is no retirement age. The minimum age is 18. There are woman firefighters, too.

There were no more questions.

Ambulance- Account Number 42152: Mr. Mike Murphy, Fire Chief, came before the Atkinson Budget Committee to present the Ambulance budget. It is level at \$0.

Homeland Security- Account Number 42901: Chief Mike Murphy came before the Atkinson Budget Committee to present the Homeland Security budget. He is requesting level funding. He is hiring an assistant director to help rebuild the department. 2016 will decide what direction the Homeland Security department will take. The new Assistant Director works for FEMA in Boston. Chief Murphy explained that Homeland Security takes over in a disaster. It will set up warming centers and is responsible for communication with Federal and State authorities. Chief Murphy has been in charge of Homeland Security, however someone else needs to be trained.

Vice Chair Barker expressed concern about going over 50 employees for the Town. Mr. Innes stated that the Town now has about 48.5 employees.

Conservation- Account Number 46111: Mr. Paul Wainwright came before the Atkinson Budget. The Conservation Committee is requesting to be level funded for 2016. Mr. Wainwright explained that the job of maintaining open spaces is unpredictable. The money is to cover contingencies, such as a leak in the dock on Big Island Pond, mowing fields, trail maps, putting gravel down. The Conservation Committee wants to maintain its budget at \$9,000. Mr. Wainwright explained that the dock is beyond the Sunoco Station, in Boulder Cove on Big Island Pond. The Conservation Commission put in a floating dock 7 or 8 years ago. It used to be for Atkinson residents only, but is open to the public.

Mr. Innes asked if there were other questions. There were none

Cemeteries Account Number 41951: Mr. Robert Patuto, Cemetery Trustee and Mr. Innes came before the Committee to present the Cemetery budget. The 58% increase year over year. The State requires the Town to bury the dead and take care of people who need assistance. There are 19-20 single plots, 40-50 double plots and several more quad plots. There are two goals, the first is to use all the land in

the cemetery and the second is to purchase more land. A capital reserve account was initiated last year. Ms. Carroll asked if donated land could be used for the cemetery rather than for Conservation.

Wages went from \$11,730 to \$20,800. There is currently one cemetery laborer who works 40 weeks, 30 Mr. Patuto, a cemetery trustee, volunteers 30 hours per week. Mr. Patuto can no longer do the work so Mr. Innes would like to bring someone on for 10 hours per week, to assist. FICA and Medicare will also increase accordingly.

There is no change in the request for the Cemetery deeds line at \$300. The telephone line will remain the same. If Town goes to multiple cemeteries, the trustees will need a software package. Vice Chair Barker suggested the computer, software and deeds line be moved to technology. Mr. Innes explained that currently there is no money in it, and wants to leave it in Cemetery budget for now.

The other professional services line was \$13,000 and the trustees are requesting \$21,000 for 2016. Around \$9,000 was spent this year. One area of the cemetery needs to be opened up to make room for more plots. It is in the back corner and currently it is all trees. There is a slope and possibly water at the bottom. Mr. Innes is planning to open up that area. It will cost \$13,425 to cut down all the trees, do some stumping and some grading. This does not account for the cost of fill. The Town spent requested \$10,000 for engineering work last year and \$4,000 was used. The rest will be used for planning for roads. Once that is done, the Town will need money for fill.

The Care of Grounds line went from \$18,000 to \$24,000 requested for 2016. Mr. Innes is not planning to spend it all. Next year, the money will be used to continue to open up the back corner of the cemetery and to fill, loam, seed and fertilize it. The total size of that area is over an acre.

For 2016, the Trustees are requesting \$1,000 for office supplies. The department is not spending the money now, they are getting office supplies from other areas. The amount can go in the other, new line.

Mileage is up from \$125 to \$500. People who work for the cemetery make trips for supplies, and to take deeds to Brentwood, and have not been putting in for mileage.

The Cemetery budget is going from \$45,900 to \$72,600 requested for 2016. Most of the increase is in wages, other professional services and care of grounds. The Town has to pay for the work Mr. Patuto has been doing and to open up more areas.

The Committee asked about cemetery plots and Mr. Innes explained that there are single plots, double plots and quads. The quad plots are 15 by 10. Roads are needed and two 2 foot walkways and one 4 foot walkway are needed. The area to be opened up should be about an acre and will add 200-300 plots. The total number of acres for the cemetery is unknown. There is 5000 feet of road, and Mr. Innes is estimating 10 to 12 acres. Mr. Innes estimates the cemetery including the new area will be full in 5 to 6 years. Only Atkinson residents are allowed to be buried there. Mr. Smith asked if the cemetery buried poor people. Mr. Innes explained that the Town is not responsible for burials. It costs \$600 to open a grave on the weekend and \$500 during the week. Mr. Mealy remarked that the prices are too low. Mr. Innes informed the Committee that the prices of plots is reviewed yearly. It is currently \$300 for a single plot.

Minor equipment from \$3,000 to \$1,500. It is flat year over year.

Financial Administration -Tax Collector- Account Number 41504: Mr. Bill Innes came before the Atkinson Budget Committee to present the Tax Collector budget. The Tax Collecting budget is consistent year to year. Other professional services is going to \$3,540 from \$3,402 due to an increase in mortgage research. There is a \$138 increase. Another line item, postage is increasing from \$3,748 to \$3,800 due

to an increase in postage in January or February. The State requires that records be kept on paper or on microfiche.

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

Minutes: - September 15, 2015 were reviewed and September 22, 2015 minutes were deferred

- Page 1 - Elder Services - telephone expense incorporated with the Community Center should say incorporated with Town Hall telephone expense
- Page 2 - Police Administration - clarify 6 full time officers on the first line
- Page 5 - the second line from the top should say, "Rose Cavelear found low priced filing cabinets and Mr. Innes negotiated better rates for gas."
- Page 5, 4th paragraph, should say, "Mr. Stewart was part time and went to full time employee. He is a contractor with respect to equipment."
- At the end, Harold Morse abstained from the vote, not Tom Mealy.

Member Peter Torosian made a motion to accept the minutes of the September 15, 2015 meeting of the Atkinson Budget Committee as corrected. Member Kay Galloway seconded the motion. All members of the Atkinson Budget Committee present voted in favor. Vote: 6/0/0.

Member Kay Galloway made a motion to adjourn the September 29, 2015 meeting of the Atkinson Budget Committee at 9:00 PM. Chair Bill Smith seconded the motion. All members of the Atkinson Budget Committee voted in favor. Vote: 6/0/0.