

**TOWN OF ATKINSON  
BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING  
Tuesday, October 6, 2015**

**Members Present:**

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

**Others Present:**

Bill Innes, Town Administrator  
Sue Coppeta, Planning and Zoning Admin  
Jim Cobb, President of the Trustees  
Diane Heer, Library Director

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

Agenda: Planning and Zoning, Building Inspectors, Library

**Planning and Zoning - Account Number 41911:** Sue Coppeta, Planning and Zoning Administrator, came before the Committee to present the Planning and Zoning Budget.

Ms. Coppeta gave a summary of the Planning and Zoning and Building Inspector Departments. It has been an active year. She explained that they budget for Planning Board hearings 11 out of 12 months. The Planning Board budget is the same as last year. She would like to note that with both Planning and Zoning, they take in application fees and charge for abutter notification fees. The revenue offsets postage and printing expense. Revenue is on line 34011. She did not do an analysis of the revenue. So far, the Planning Department has only spent 45% of the 2015 budget and 40% of the Zoning 2015 budget has been spent. The biggest discrepancy is the recording clerk line for the Planning Board, which is lower than planned. The Zoning Board is \$175 per meeting or \$2,100 if there were a meeting every month. Only \$1,225 was spent this year, there were only 5 or 6 meetings so far in 2015. Mr. Innes explained that there were not as many Zoning Board meetings this year, if no one applies for a hearing, they do not meet.

**Building Inspectors - Account Number 42401:**

The Building Department has been busier than it has been in a few years. There are 5 houses under construction at present. There is a new project starting this year, Sawmill Ridge, which is a 100 condominium development. The main increase for the budget is due to the Sawmill Ridge project for building inspection. Ms. Coppeta explained how she arrived at the cost of building expenses. The Building Inspector does a worksheet based on what is to be built. There will be one foundation and two residential units for each buildings. Ms. Coppeta calculated the cost of inspecting the buildings. Lewis Builders expects to do 13 foundations and 26 units for 2016. Ms. Coppeta gave the Budget Commission a spreadsheet of the costs of inspections. Mr. Innes informed the Committee that there are also fire inspections and utility inspections. The total cost of the foundation inspection is \$3,484 and the cost of the unit inspections is \$18,395. \$16,697 is the total revenue. \$12,675 is the expense. The difference is the application fees as well as the square footage of unfinished and finished space. The inspector is paid \$30.00 for the inspection. The extra revenue offsets some of the expenses in the department. Ms. Coppeta took the \$12,675 compared to last year and it was 30%. She increased the plumbing, building and electrical lines accordingly, and also the office supply lines. The other increases are FICA and Medicare.

Ms. Coppeta explained that the difference is roughly \$4,000.

Mr. Mealey suggested raising the fees in order to make more revenue. Ms. Coppeta explained that the Department charges \$.04 for every unfinished square foot and \$.05 for every finished square foot. Ms. Coppeta agreed to see what other towns charge.

The Committee discussed what the procedure is if a project is running late or stopped. Mr. Innes explained that if the project is ongoing, but running late, then the Department usually does not take action. If it is stopped completely for a long period of time, then the developer may have to apply for new permits. Ms. Coppeta informed the Committee that most of the increase is due to the Sawmill Ridge Project. It is a three year project, so expenses should increase for that time, then go back to previous years once the project is finished. The Committee also discussed what happens if a project is ahead of schedule. Ms. Coppeta also explained that revenue for building inspection always exceeds expenses, even in slow years.

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

**Library - Account Number 45501:** Jim Cobb, President of the Trustees and Diane Heer, Library Director came before the Board to present the Library budget.

Ms. Heer explained that not all expenses appear on the current spreadsheet, she just submitted some invoices. She expects to finish at or a little below budget by the end of the year.

Ms. Galloway asked how many library patrons there are and Ms. Heer explained that the Library has about 4000 patrons or active library cards.

Ms. Heer informed the Committee that the Library had a very active summer. The Children's Librarian, Kathy Watson, won Children's Librarian of the Year for the State of New Hampshire. The Children's programs are very popular. One staff member left, but they were able to hire another staff member who is from Atkinson. The Friends of the Library pay 100% of the adult program which is approximately \$10,000 per year. There are press releases every week. They send everything to the Eagle Tribune. There is a web site, a Facebook Page, and a Twitter account.

The Committee discussed what population the Library serves. Ms. Heer informed the Committee that the Library does not track the cards that way, but circulation would show that the Library probably serves more adults than children.

The Committee also discussed why the Library budget is more than the Fire Department budget. Ms. Heer explained that the Library is open 55 hours a week. Mr. Mealey suggested cutting hours. Mr. Innes explained that the Fire Department is a call Fire Department and is not staffed every day. Mr. Innes also remarked that the overall cost of the Fire Department is probably more than the Library if Warrant Articles are included. The Fire Department probably spends \$500,000 every few years on a new truck. Mr. Mealey stated that he goes by the Library often and there are very few cars in the parking lot.

Mr. Cobb informed the committee that the Library circulates 96,000 items per year, it is 30th out of 230 libraries in New Hampshire. For small towns, the library is in the top five. Ms. Heer has been tracking circulation. The Library has been going through a reorganization. She feels that there should be three people in the Library at all times because of the size of the building and for safety reasons. If she and the Children's Librarian are there, then two might be manageable. Mr. Mealey suggested that the Library could close one day a week and Ms. Carroll agreed. Ms. Barker stated that two people are contracted to work 40 hours per week and that the Library is used every day, students use it after school and adults use it for job hunting and taxes.

The Committee discussed how cutting hours would save money. Mr. Cobb and Ms. Barker explained that there are many programs going on. Ms. Carroll stated that the Library has a very large budget and many people in the Town did not want the warrant to build the Library passed. The focus of the Library should be providing learning tools for school children. Ms. Heer agreed that the Library has changed its focus, but it has been due to changes in demands. Mr. Cobb informed the Committee that support of libraries is written into the New Hampshire RSA's.

Ms. Heer stated that the biggest expenses are salaries and utilities. She explained that the Director and the Children's Librarian are contracted to work 40 hours per week. There are about 12 employees, and two have a fixed salary. The Library is open 55 hours per week, Monday through Friday 10 hours and five hours on Saturday.

The Committee discussed how to cut costs. Saturday's can be slow or busy. Many children's programs are on Saturday. Also, more patrons are interested in learning computer technology and Ms. Heer would like to help. Ms. Heer explained that the biggest cost is salaries and the next is utilities. The Selectmen have set a policy that the Director and the Children's Librarian have to work 40 hours. Ms. Heer explained that there are 12 library employees, 2 full time and 10 part time, including high school pages. Mr. Smith asked if the other 10 could work fewer hours.

The Library is open Monday through Friday 10:00 am to 8:00 pm and five hours on Saturday. This is in line with other Towns in the area of Atkinson's size. Ms. Heer explained that there is a big cost to opening the building. She agreed that closing one day might save utilities. Chair Smith asked which days are the busiest and Ms. Heer explained that Monday and Friday are the busiest days. Judging by circulation, Thursday would be the slowest day. Mr. Cobb stated that cutting a day would not reduce costs significantly. There would be some savings on utilities. Chair Smith asked if there was interest for the Library to open on Sunday and Ms. Heer responded yes.

Mr. Cobb went through the salary lines. The Trustees set the salary for the Director and the Children's Librarian.

Director's Salary - Line Number 45501.110.01: is set by the Board of Trustees. 5% raise for this year and 5% next year. This puts her in the middle of people in the same position.

Youth Services Director - Line Number 45501.110.02: \$1.00 per hour increase for this year and she is full time. She got an award. Ms. Barker explained that she does a tremendous amount.

Library Aides - Line Number 45501.110.03: \$113,340 was the base for 2015. A \$2,267 merit increase becomes the base for this year. The Trustees voted to add 10 hours of time costing \$7,800. This represents the increase in the salary line. They are all part time and hours range from 10 to 35 hours per week. Regarding the added 10 hours, the Trustees looked at the mission of the Library. The Library mission is more technology oriented than it used to be. For example, the reference section is much smaller. The Director and the Children's Librarian are the technology people and they are both directors. There are some Kindles at the Library that are loaned out, and patrons need to be trained on how to use them. The 10 hours is added to the library aide line in order to hire someone technically oriented to give courses and to train the staff on the electronic equipment in the library so that the directors do not have to do all the technology assistance. The Directors also update the website daily. The Committee questioned if an outside company could be used. Hours will be added for the current staff to assist the Director and the Children's Librarian with technical support. Ms. Heer explained that many staff are not comfortable with technology.

The Committee discussed whether any current library aides could assist with the web development service. Ms. Heer explained that 3 aides can assist with the web site. They only do elementary web

maintenance. Ms. Heer would like to train someone from the staff to assist patrons with technology questions. The Committee discussed what priorities are for hiring. Ms. Heer explained that they are replacing someone in the Children's Room. She would like to find someone with good computer skills, but more important in that area is children's skills.

Ms. Heer also explained that a donor offered a 3D computer, but there is an issue with training someone to use it.

There are 3 Kindles, one nice one, and most of the them came from donations. There are 2 IPADS in the Children's Room purchased by the Friends.

The Library has its own budget for technology. The Library has a lot of requirements that are different from the rest of the Town departments.

Employee Merit - Line Number 45501.110.04: raises are 2%, the aides salaries are reviewed every year. It is a salary increase, not a bonus. Mr. Innes explained that they used the Town numbers to decide on the size of the merit raises.

Health Insurance - Line Number 45501.210.00: It depends on the contract for the Town.

FICA, Medicare: Line Numbers 45501.220.00 and 45501.225.00: These lines depend on salaries.

Retirement - Line Number 45501.230.00: This line is for the Library Director and the Children's Librarian and is unchanged.

Telephone - Line Number 45501.341.00: flat

Cleaning Service - Line Number 45501.360: There is a 3 year contract, 2016 is the last year and it is flat.

Electricity - Line Number 45501.410: A 21% increase based on the Town bid. It was up this summer because of increased air conditioning.

Heat - Line Number 45501.411: The Library is heated with propane. Delivery just started and it is every 2 weeks. It is based on 9200 gallons every 2 weeks during the winter.

Dues/Subs/Memberships - Line Number 45501.560: flat

Library Supplies - Line Number 45501.610: flat

Postage - Line Number 45501.625: flat

Materials of Trade - Line Number 45501.670: flat, Mr. Heur explained that it goes for paper books, ebooks, audio books, magazines, etc. Mr. Smith asked if they buy used books. Ms. Heer explained that she buy used books if they are out of print. She also explained that she combines with other towns and goes through a vendor, Baker and Taylor, and gets a 45% to 48% discount. If something is missing or damaged, she does shop around and buys on Amazon.

Equipment and Maintenance - Line Number 45501.740: flat

Mileage - Line Number 45501.820: flat

Youth Programs- Line Number 45501.840: flat

Education and Conferences - Line Number 45501.850: flat - There is a conference in Manchester and a national conference as well. Library Aides are allowed to go to classes, and they are paid for the time. There is sometimes technical training, the State Library has good technical training.

Other Professional Service - Line Number 45502.390: Other Professional Services is going out to bid. The increase of \$70 per month is because the present vendor, First Choice, has started to charge for a software program which was previously no cost.

Water - Line Number 45502.412.00: flat

Software - Line Number 45502.730.00: \$45 additional or \$70 per month - the software contract has not gone out to bid.

Hardware - Line Number 45501.740.00: down to \$7,000 from \$10,000. They need to buy a new copier, theirs is 7 years old. The library charges to use it, and the fees pay for the paper and toner. They should be able to use the money they have to pay for half of it. Ms. Heer plans to go to the Library Board of Trustees.

Mr. Cobb explained that the Library purchased a new TV with the help of the Friends of the Library and Trustees funds. It is an 84 inch LG TV in the meeting room. It has a camera and a mike so it can be used with Skype and is very high resolution. One use could be for training.

Ms. Carroll asked about the hardware line. Prior to 2014, the lines were much smaller. Ms. Heer said she would check the numbers and get back to the Committee. Mr. Innes explained that there is a 5 year plan to replace all the computers, they have been replacing 5 per year. Previously, the library only bought one computer per year. Mr. Cobb explained that the Library was built in 2008, everything was new, then everything started needing to be replaced in 2013. Mr. Innes explained that there is a five year plan to replace the computers. The Committee discussed when to replace a server.

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

Mr. Innes came before the Board to present the request to the DRA for an emergency over expenditure. The Town is \$108,000 over expended; \$5,000 in plowing for 2015 and there are six weeks of winter left. Shoveling roofs cost \$13,000. One roof needed to be replaced and three needed to be repaired costing about \$17,000. Mr. Innes gave the Committee a letter to the Department of Revenue Administration requesting that the Town be allowed to over spend the Budget by \$105,000. Mr. Innes believes that the Town should be on or close to budget, but would like the emergency space in case there is another emergency like a big snowstorm. Mr. Innes is requesting the Committee sign the letter to the DRA. The letter has already been signed by the Selectmen. At present, the Town is \$10-\$20,000 to the good, but Mr. Innes would like the flexibility to cover unexpected expenses.

There is \$105,000 - \$108,000 in unanticipated revenues. These can offset unanticipated expenses. Mr. Innes can get approval from the DRA to attach to unanticipated revenue, but it will impact the tax rate. The Town cannot use the money unless the budget is overspent. Mr. Innes picked the number due to the \$105,000 in unanticipated expenses. The Committee discussed under what circumstances money from an emergency over expenditure request could be spent. It could be another major storm or a breakdown in equipment. The \$80,000 fine has already gone into general revenue. A certain amount of money has to be kept in the undesignated of roof repair and storm damage for 2015. The roofs were an emergency, so a bid was not necessary. Lambert Roofing was the contractor for the roofing. The Town Garage roof needs to be totally replaced. There is water damage across the ceiling and the walls. Lambert is doing the roof for the Community Center and Family Mediation.

Mr. Innes explained the process of sending bids out for repairing and replacing the roofs. Previously, when a roof was bid out, it went to the lowest bidder. Now, the Town only bids for roofs with 35 year warranties. The warranty will be for labor and all materials. A bid from AJ Wood was for \$12,500 with 50-year shingles and a 15 year warranty on the rest of the roof. The bid from Lambert is \$12,000 with Certainteed shingles guaranteed for 35 years. Lambert was the only company that could meet the bid.

Next the Committee discussed whether any expenses will be reimbursed by FEMA. Mr. Innes explained that a request has been made.

Mr. Innes explained that unanticipated revenue goes to the general fund. Mr. Innes also explained the process to spend emergency funds. Any expenditure would have to go to a vote of the Selectmen. The Committee debated whether the money could be spent other than for emergency snowplowing and repair of Town roofs. The money can only be used for plowing and repairing roofs. It is permission from the DRA to expend money from the General Fund. Mr. Innes explained that the Town is requesting risk management for the budget. The Town is at risk of overspending because of the \$105,000 in emergency expenses. Any FEMA money would also go to the General Fund. The Town has received \$13,000 and will receive about \$12,000 from Social Security because of money that has been overspent. At present, there is \$40,000 in the winter capital reserve and if there were a storm, unanticipated expenses would come from that account.

Mr. Innes informed the Committee that he would report any unanticipated expenses to them. The Committee signed the letter.

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

**Minutes:** - September 22, 2015 minutes

- Page 3 - 2nd paragraph engineering account 6th line, put a period
- Last paragraph 2nd sentence page 3- should say the two watersheds are part of a water drain area
- Clarify sentence about mulch on page 2
- Last page - get rid of the word "at"

**Member Peter Torosian made a motion to accept the minutes of the September 22, 2015 meeting of the Atkinson Budget Committee as amended. Member Kay Galloway seconded the motion. All members of the Atkinson Budget Committee present voted in favor. Vote: 6/0/0.**

**Member Sue Carroll made a motion to adjourn the October 6, 2015 meeting of the Atkinson Budget Committee at 9:15 PM. Member Peter Torosian seconded the motion. All members of the Atkinson Budget Committee voted in favor. Vote: 6/0/0.**