

**TOWN OF ATKINSON  
BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING  
Tuesday, October 13, 2015**

**Members Present:**

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

**Others Present:**

Bill Innes, Town Administrator  
David Weymouth

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

Agenda: Town Administrator, General Government Buildings, IT

**General Government Buildings - Account Number 41941:** Mr. David Weymouth and Mr. Bill Innes came before the Committee to present the General Government Buildings budget.

Mr. Innes informed the Committee that property liability insurance may be increasing 50%, 25% in 2016 and 25% in 2017.

The Selectmen opted for a 2% COLA and a 1% merit increase for 2016. The merit increase will be used by the Department heads at their discretion. The 3% is based on the Police Contract.

Mr. Innes discussed plans for maintenance for 2016.

Maintenance Supervisor - Line Number 41941.110.00: 2% increase

Town Hall Other Professional Services- Line Number 41941.110.00: from \$1,450 to \$1,700 for the Town Hall. \$1,660 was spent in 2015, Mr. Innes would like to budget \$1,700 for 2016.

Unanticipated repairs was taken out of the equation. Next year for the Town Hall, Mr. Innes would like new entry carpet and a variable frequency drive for the boiler.

Projects - Line Number 41941.110.00: \$2,400 less for 2016. It was \$10,700 for 2015 and will drop down to \$6,000 - \$7,000.

Electricity - Line Number 41941.110.00: Will go from \$10,000, to \$12,110 due to the 21% rate increase.

Septic - Line Number 41941.110.00: \$150 - it is pumped yearly.

Town Hall Line Number 41941.110.00: A 4.79% increase and may drop by a few thousand dollars bringing it closer to a 1% to 2% increase.

Town Garage - Account Number 41942: The Town Garage budget is increasing expenses by 75%. The majority of the increase is under the general maintenance line for waterproof lights; to paint, clean and pressure wash; and also to install a generator and switch. Also, for the waterproof lights, the money was in the 2015 budget but it was not spent. There is \$7,000 in the budget to repair, clean and paint the walls. The repair will be done by the Highway Department crew. The scaffolding and equipment to clean the walls will be rented and the department will buy paint. As planned, the cost will be reduced by about \$5,000.

Mr. Innes would like to purchase a generator and switch and put a portable generator at the garage. If the power goes out, there is no electricity, no heat, and no way to clean the plows. A generator and switch costs about \$1,500 for a 7500kw generator, that uses propane or gas with another \$750 for

installation and \$700 for a switch. Ms Barker informed Mr. Innes that she had a switch done for \$200. Mr. Innes said he would check.

Other Professional Services - Line Number 41942.390: is going from \$1,050 to \$750.

Police Station - Account Number 41943: The Other Professional Services line is down to \$1,250. The General Maintenance line is going to \$15,000. Mr. Innes has an estimate to repaint the walls on the sides of the building for \$7,375. When the pressure washing was done, mortar between the bricks came out.

Fire Station - Account Number 41944: The Other Professional Services line is going from \$5,500 in 2015 to a proposed \$4,100 for 2016. The septic is up by \$26 and The General Maintenance line is going from \$5,400 in 2015 to a proposed \$10,000 for work to replace the flooring on the 2nd floor.

All buildings need to be pressure washed. The Town does pressure washing every year.

Library - Account Number 41945: The Other Professional Services line is going from \$2,000 for 2015 to a proposed \$1,800 for 2016. The General Maintenance line is going up to \$3,500, the increase is for pressure washing.

Pressure washing goes out to bid, Mr. Innes will put a bid together for all Town buildings. One building, Collins Park, there is no water nearby so it may be more expensive.

Ms. Barker suggested investing in a pressure washer. The Committee agreed. Mr. Innes replied that the Town does not have a lot of resources. Mr. Weymouth does the maintenance, he is part time, 30 hours a week. The Town also does not have the equipment. The difficulty is resources and lack of manpower.

Kimball House - Account Number 41946: The Other Professional Services line is going from \$600 to \$700. The Electricity line is up. The Heat line is going down from \$3,000 to \$1,500. They will get a tank of oil in December which will get them through a couple of months. Water line usage is going from \$450 to \$500. General maintenance was budgeted for \$4,275 in 2015 but only \$680 was spent. Mr. Innes is not anticipating spending more in 2015. For 2016, an increase to \$5,500 is proposed. Mr. Innes had planned on painting one side of Kimball House a year but it has not been accomplished. \$5,000 of the \$5,000 is to paint 2 sides of the Kimball House.

Woodlock Park/Hearse House - Account Number 41947: \$400 was spent on the septic system for 2015, \$150 is proposed for 2016. General Maintenance is going from \$5,400 in 2015 to \$5,000 for 2016. The bills are still coming in. The Town just fixed some rotted boards. Plastic boards were used. Both peaks need to be painted, the stain has faded. Mr. Innes would like to restain in 2016. The cost will be \$800 per side. The Police Department trustee may do it, and if not it will go out to bid. General Maintenance is going from \$1,900 to \$750 for 2016, reduced by 23%.

Community Center - Account Number 41948: The grease trap in the kitchen needs to be cleaned 4 times per year and costs \$75 to \$100 each time, it was replaced and the new trap needs to be cleaned for the first time. General Maintenance is going from \$9,500 to \$16,800 there are a couple of areas that need work. The floor needs to be refinished. Mr. Innes has one estimate for \$8,500 to sand and put on 4 coats of poly. The structure has needed work for the last 3 years. The floor is supported by lally columns, 4 metal and 3 brick. All the brick columns are deteriorating. The metal at the bottom of the lally columns is rusted through. The price is \$1,250. Mr. Innes will try to do it in 2015 if he can find the money. Materials are the only price, Mr. Weymouth and Mr. Innes will do the labor and buy jacks. There are cracks in the beams and all the lally columns need to be supported. This will be a permanent fix.

Mr. Innes informed the Committee that he has a call in for some gently used chairs to replace the ones in the Community Center. There are bumpers, but they all came off. There is plastic on the bottom but it is scarred and deteriorated. Mr. Innes is not sure about a solution for the tables.

Family Mediation - Account Number 41949: Other Professional Services is the same; General Maintenance is up, the primary issue is repairing the walls. Mr. Innes does not have a price.

5 roofs were damaged in the snow storms of 2015. One was the roof on the shed at Family Mediation. It leaked and the walls inside the building have been damaged. Mr. Innes does not know if there was mold. Mr. Innes is proposing putting on a new roof with 50 year shingles, and a 30 year manufacturer guarantee for shingles and decking. It will be a lifetime roof. Ice and water sheathing will go over the whole roof. It will be necessary to check for insulation and mold. The bid does not include insulation or mold removal. The mold will probably be in the top of the wall.

The Committee questioned why the Town wants to save the Family Mediation building. Mr. Innes explained that they are in the building 8 hours a day and use it at night. In 2015 the Town spent less than \$2,500 in repairs. Family Mediation pays the electricity and oil. The only costs for the Town are for upkeep. Once the roof is on, it is good for 40-50 years. Mr. Innes informed the Committee that there is no other place in Town that has room for Family Mediation.

Conservation - East Road Building - Account Number 41950: General Maintenance is \$1,000. It is not a high priority, it has a relatively new roof, it has been sided, it is clean and there is a dirt floor. Lights are needed in the interior and it needs to be pressure washed. General Maintenance is going from \$1,000 to \$1,400 in 2016.

Mr. Innes returned to the Community Center. There was a Boy Scout project for the Trinity Room and the table room. The bathroom was gutted. This added \$7,000 in value to the building. \$200 to \$300 in supplies was the only cost. The Boy Scouts are also rebuilding a room in the basement. It will cost \$400 to \$500 in Town maintenance and will add \$15,000 to \$20,000 in value to the building and will also add storage. There is a Scout project for a ramp on each side of the platform. Handicapped parking can be taken to the back of the building. The automatic door opener was moved and cost \$200. All other costs were paid for by the Boy Scouts. Another project is going on at the cemetery at no cost to the Town. The Scouts also built a bridge by the Community Center at no cost to the Town.

There were no more questions.

**Executive - Account Number 41301**: Mr. Bill Innes, Town Administrator, came before the Committee to present the Town Administrator Budget.

A merit increase is in line 41301.110. Mr. Innes did a worksheet of all jobs and salaries that will get increases. \$10,700 is 1%. \$33,000 is the total impact.

Mr. Innes informed the Committee that Property Liability and Workers Comp will increase 50%, relating to a 25% increase for the year because Workers Comp goes from July to July.

Selectmen Salaries - Line Number 41301.130: This line is up. The number of Selectmen has increased from 3 to 5. The first 3 months of 2015 there were 3 Selectmen and in the last 9 months there were 5. The increase in the line is due to more Selectmen.

Miscellaneous - Line Number 41301.690: \$1,200, discuss with the Selectmen

Mileage - Line Number 41301.820: \$250 is proposed for gas and maintenance in 2016 down from \$375. The Selectmen did not spend as much in 2015.

Town Administrator - Account Number 41302: The numbers reflect a new Town Administrator, Mr. Innes picked a mid range salary of \$86,600. The Selectmen get the names of the finalists tomorrow, interviews start next week, and a decision will be made within 3 weeks. There are 3 candidates, one sitting Town Administrator who wants to move to this area for personal reasons, one who has significant municipal experience including as Town Administrator, both candidates would require mid range salary. One candidate Mr. Innes does not want to discuss. The Town received 92 resumes, The hiring committee did a ranking from 1 to 10. The Town advertised in 5 municipal management publications in New England, and advertised on Linked In and Indeed. The Town got a couple of good candidates from Linked In, and others came from municipal sites. The Selectmen and the Town Administrator discussed 33 or 34 with the Selectmen. There were 13 candidates for the selection committee, 10 were interviewed, 3 pulled out, The selection committee ranked them, discussed, and ended up with 3 to present to the Selectmen. The Town will do a background check of the top candidate, and if that candidate doesn't pass, the Town will move on to the second candidate.

Ms. Barker asked if there would be conversations between Selectmen and prior employers. Mr. Innes explained that it is a relatively small communities and all three are known.

Assistant Town Administrator - Line Number 41302.120: COLA and health insurance are increasing. FICA and Medicare will follow. Retirement will go up. Retirement is 11.1% of salaries.

The Telephone expense is up. The rental lease for the Pitney Bowes machine is \$1,885 every year, but may come down with the new Pitney Bowes machine. Dues and subscriptions are up because The New Hampshire Municipal Management Association dues are up. Mr. Innes regularly deals with legal entities through them, gets lots of information and the do lots of training. They did the training for 91A.

The postage meter expense is up. It was \$5,000 for 2015 minus \$619 in the expended line. It is loaded at the beginning of the year with \$5,000. For 2016 it will be \$5,750. It is used by the departments and the expense is credited back to them. The copier service contract was \$1,500 and is increasing to \$1,750 for 2016.

Clerical - Account Number 41304: The biggest decrease is for the planning assistant salary. Sue Killam will provide back up support. Sue Killam, the previous planning assistant made more than the new Planning Administrator and there is no overlap so the line is down 36%. Sue Capeta works 15 hours per week.

Mr. Torosian asked about copay for Health Insurance and Mr. Innes explained that anyone hired after 2012 pays a 20% copay. For anyone hired before 2012, the copay will be brought to 20%. Last year the copay was 5%, this year it will be 10%, and so on. The insurer may go up this year. Employees will absorb the increased percentage.

Conflict of Interest - Account Number 41305: Is going from \$64 in 2015 to \$303. The Code of Ethics Clerk will take minutes. Office supplies are up. The Other new line is budgeted for \$100.

Committee Support - Account Number 41306: The Safety Commission is budgeted for \$1.

Energy Commission - Account Number 41307: They are requesting \$50 for a professional services program they want to work on this year.

There were no questions.

#### **Financial Administration:**

Accounting and Financial - Account Number 41501.110:

Bookkeeper - Line Number 41501.110: will receive a 2% cola increase.

Assistant bookkeeper Line Number 41501.120: down. Sue Coppeta, the Planning Administrator will back up the bookkeeper. Her rate is \$22.50 per hour, and she plans to work overtime. It is an hourly position.

Health Insurance - Line Number 41401.210: Is the family plan, FICA and Medicare follow. Retirement follows at 11.71%.

Mileage is up due to training. Some training is over the internet but they will be attending some conferences. Educational Conferences is up from \$100 to \$700. Next year there will be significant training on the bookkeeping system.

Auditing - Account Number 41502: from \$1,280 to \$1,320. 2016 is the last year of a three year contract and this is the contractual increase.

Assessing - Account Number 41503: Will be increasing from \$41,000 to \$53,000. There are three areas that are needed; the maps need to be redone at a cost of \$8,000; the annual fee for the assessor will be \$35,200; and because 2016 is the 5th year of a 5 year reassessment. New assessing cards need to be sent to everyone in Town. A statistical update needs to be done and a book needs to be created. The 3 things come together, The five year statistical update is around \$10,000, \$8,000 for mapping and \$35,200 for the annual fee. Postage will increase from \$500 to \$1,800 because assessing cards must be sent out 100% homes. Rod Wood is the assessor.

The Town has been joined in a lawsuit with Northern Telephone over pole taxes and licensing fees. The Assessor has been working with B. Snicer, the Assistant Town Administrator, the Town Attorney and the Town Administrator to figure out the number of poles, the fees and the rights of way. Some poles are on private property. The suit is saying that the Town has no right to tax poles on public right of ways. Poles installed between 1987 and today should not be taxed or are taxed too much.

Treasurer - Account Number 41505: Bank services are budgeted for \$440 for 2016. The number of services was reversed, this year services will cost about \$511.

Tax Collector - Account Number 41504: Salaries are up due to the 2% COLA. FICA and Medicare follow, Telephone expense is flat. Other Professional Services is up due to maintenance. It is going from \$3,402 to \$3,540. Dues and membership are flat. Office supplies are flat. Postage is up 1.39% because the cost of stamps is up. There is less than a 2% increase, the majority is for COLA. The FICA and Medicare numbers might be wrong.

Computer- Account Number 41506: There is a 9% drop in the computer budget. Mr. Innes has worked with the technology committee and the software maintenance, software, and hardware lines are down \$3,000 each for 2016.

Legal Services - Account Number 41531: is flat year over year. \$4,600 was spent in 2015. There are a couple of issues and legal services should be at or below \$7,500 for 2015. Defense proceedings up to \$250. The Town Attorney was not charging for defense proceedings, but will start charging in 2016. There are more filings due to a law suit. There are no open law suits other than the one with Northern. There are no legal proceedings, only 2 or 3 Planning Board issues and they are all cleaned up. The Town is collecting portions of the \$170,000 to \$180,000 in fines. One person owes \$17,000 and is paying \$200 per month, another is paying \$1,000 a month. The person paid a lump sum of \$10,000. There was another \$80,000 fine that was paid in a lump sum. The money goes to the general fund. The Town collected \$86,000 to \$87,000 this year and \$15,000 in 2014. The rest will be collected over several years.

Personnel Admin - Account Number 41552.250: Unemployment Compensation and Workmens Compensation are budgeted for \$6,500 for 2015 and the Town spent \$6,520.

Other Insurance - Account Number 41969: Property Liability Trust, Property Liability, and Workmens Comp. The insurer has broken into 2 parts, the Health Trust and the Property Liability Trust. There is a lawsuit and they are fighting it, and may be allowed to stay in business. RFP can be used for Workmens Compensation. Mr. Innes is searching for a property liability carrier. He talked to Property Liability Trust, they are a pooled insurance company, so that kept prices down. The only other pooled carrier is Primex and they are 50% more expensive. Based on whatever Towns have moved, Atkinson can expect to pay 50% to 80% more. Last year it was \$54,000. Other Insurance will be \$62,000. Mr. Innes expects to pay 50% more in 2016.

Mr. Innes sent out RFPs to Primex, Hub, Davis Toll, and one other company. Mr. Innes met with Davis Toll and asked what to expect to pay, and was told to plan on a 50% increase. The Town has an excellent track record. There has been one claim over the last 4 years. There has been one unemployment one and one large property liability claim 2 years ago. Property Liability Trust and other insurance carriers work from July to June. Mr. Innes took a 50% increase and applied to half the year, half to 2016 and half to 2017. If Property Liability Trust is allowed to stay in business, then the Town will not see increases. Mr. Innes will know in 2 - 3 months.

The Committee discussed property liability carriers.

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

Other insurance was \$52,000 in 2015 and will be \$76,000 in 2016, an unavoidable increase. The Committee discussed deductibles.

Advertising Regional - Account Number 41974.855: 96 cents per capita in 2015 and will be 97 cents per capita in 2016, a 7.8% increase

Health Admin - Account Number 44111: The numbers are flat except a 2% COLA for the health officer. He checks septic systems and the numbers are going up. There will be an increase in septic systems in 2016 due to the Sawmill Ridge project. The Town has 2 health inspectors, the primary is Mike Dorman, other is one of the Selectmen, Mr. Friel.

Health Agencies - Account Number 44151: There are a couple of big increases, Mr. Innes put down what was requested. The American Red Cross received \$300 in 2015 and is asking \$3,000 for 2016. The Center for Life Management received \$1,000 for 2015 and is requesting \$7,500 this year.

Mr. Innes explained that the Town gets requests every year.

Community Health Services is requesting \$3,500 for 2016.

Greater Salem Health Care is not requesting money this year because they are not providing services, perhaps one or two rides per quarter.

Sad Cafe - is gone and Rockingham Visiting Nurse is gone.

The Committee was copied on a memo from Pat Goodridge from Rockingham. The Director for the Center for Life Management gets a big salary. They provide services to 120 Atkinson residents. The Committee discussed contributions.

Mr. Innes informed the Committee that American Red Cross and the Center for Life Management provide significant services and also have significant management structure.

Mr. Innes asked if there were questions. Most requests are the same year over year, except American Red Cross and the Center for Life Management. Mr. Innes will send the Committee the number of Atkinson residents serviced by organizations. Mr. Innes will also send a description of each organization.

General Assistance - Account Number 44421: This account is held flat year over year, \$4,000 was spent in 2015. \$2,000 more was spent since the numbers came out, there will be one more invoice. The Town will not spend all the \$18,500 budgeted for 2015, they will probably spend \$9,000 to \$10,000 for 2015. Mr. Innes does not want to lower the amount. He will talk to the Selectmen. General Assistance is separate from Elder Services. Another woman is seeking food assistance. There was one person who was abusing the service, so stopped the Town stopped assisting that person.

Ms. Barker asked if the Town notified other agencies. Mr. Innes responded that they do. If someone requests assistance, the Town asks if they have applied elsewhere, if not, they are told to apply to other agencies first, they ask for pay checks, a rental form, utility bills and calculate bills. There is an assistance book and the Town never pays more than what the assistance book recommends. The Selectmen write a check.

There were no questions.

Long Term Debt Principal and Interest: Long Term Debt Principal is \$85,000 per year, it is a 20 year bond, The Town is 7 years in, the principal is constant. Long Term Debt Interest diminishes. It was \$53,500 in 2015 and \$49,300 in 2016. The Town may try to refinance, if it can get a lower rate, this will provide a check back to the Town. Mr. Innes found a lower rate, but it will reduce payments starting in 2017 or 2018, and there will be no check back.

There were no more questions.

The Committee discussed electric rates, with American Power the Town will pay a higher rate all through the year. It balances out.

Ms. Carroll passed out information on EPA. The 6th Court of Appeals has ruled that storm water management is illegal. Mr. Innes will check and if that is the case, \$10,000 will go out of Highway Budget. A contingency line can be put in the budget and restrictions can be put on it. Or a warrant article can be put in for a contingency line. Mr. Innes asked the Budget Committee if they would prefer a warrant article or contingency line. The Budget Committee would prefer a warrant article with strict controls. It would have to be a majority of the Selectmen and possibly the head of the Budget Committee.

There were no other questions.

Mr. Torosian asked about the signed document last week, perhaps it should have waited a week. Better not to make it a common practice to sign something immediately.

**Minutes:** - September 29, 2015 - deferred

**Member Sue Carroll made a motion to adjourn the October 13, 2015 meeting of the Atkinson Budget Committee at 9:00 PM. Member Peter Torosian seconded the motion. All members of the Atkinson Budget Committee voted in favor. Vote: 6/0/0.**