

**TOWN OF ATKINSON
BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING
Tuesday, November 17, 2015**

Members Present:

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

Others Present:

Bill Innes, Town Administrator

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

Agenda: Review minutes, review budget

General Discussion:

Chair Smith has input all the numbers to complete all first pass votes. The 2.63% figure is incorrect. Some of the numbers did not go to the Selectmen's column, making the Selectmen total wrong. The correct increase is 4.39% for last week. The latest spreadsheet shows the latest numbers. With the latest Budget changes, the Budget increase from 2015 is 4.04%. The Selectmen's Column should be 6.11% and the Proposed amount should be a 7.39% increase. To reach a 2% overall budget increase, the proposed increases need to be reduced by \$88,468.

First, the Committee needs to do a second pass. There are some lines that the Town has no control over such as insurance and electricity. The first task is to identify the lines the Town has no control over. Some questions are how much of a reduction is necessary and how much time the Committee wants to spend. Another possibility is to ask the department heads where they would like to reduce spending.

Mr. Mealey asked how much electricity is for lights and how much for air conditioning. Mr. Mealey recommends turning down the heat and the air conditioning. Ms. Carroll agrees that the Committee needs to go through the budget again, and also it is a good idea for the department heads need to go through their budgets again. Vice Chair Barker feels that most of the managers have done an exemplary job. Many of the departments are under budget, some are over for reasons such as insurance and heat. Also, the Committee needs to do another pass. Mr. Torosian stated the first step is to identify what items are locked in, then identify those items where the Committee has some discretion. Ms. Galloway is looking at areas that are up over 10%. Some departments have kept their budgets around or below 2%, others have not. Ms. Galloway agreed to ask the department heads to take another look at their 2016 budgets and suggested that the Committee look at building maintenance to see if some projects could wait another year.

Mr. Innes stated that 4% is more than he anticipated. Unemployment, workers comp and property liability have a \$34,000 increase. The responses to the RFP will be received on December 4th and it should take about a week to go through them. The cost for those lines could go up or down. The impact of electricity is \$12,935. There is a \$40,000 truck lease which is offset by a reduction in winter maintenance, contract snowplowing and maintenance line. The overall impact is around \$27,000. There is a \$14,000 increase in assessing and nothing the Town can do about assessment because it is the 5th year of a five year contract, the entire Town has to be assessed and a report has to be sent to the State. The impact is about \$14,000. The Dispatch contract is increasing from 2.5% to 2% or about \$6,000. The Town is also being assessed for maintenance for new equipment this year. The dispatch contract may come down, it is still being negotiated with the Town of Plaistow. The content portion of the contract has been negotiated but not the price. That leaves around \$126,000 that cannot be touched.

Mr. Innes agreed that building maintenance expenses may be reduced. Overall, the town buildings are in better shape than four years ago. Mr. Innes has done an analysis of the trash contract back to 2010. \$5,000 to \$8,000

may be taken out of the trash budget. Another \$7,000 - \$10,000 could be taken out of building maintenance. The bathrooms at Woodlock Park could be put off which would be a \$3,500 reduction, and only three coats of polyurethane could be put on the floor at the Community Center. Painting two sides of the Kimball House needs to be done. Also, replacing the tile on the second floor of the Fire Station could wait another year. This would save about \$3,750. The waterproof lights at the garage are another \$3,500. If the generator and switch are taken out of the Town Garage, that is \$8,750. That, and taking out the bathrooms out of Woodlock Park adds up to \$11,000 that could be taken out of the Building Maintenance account. The lights for the Conservation Commission are a safety issue.

Ms. Galloway suggested delaying refinishing the floor at the Community Center for another year which would save \$8,500.

Ms. Carroll asked why Elder Services needs \$5,000 for educational conferences.

Mr. Innes stated that \$15,000 could be taken out of the Solid Waste Contract, Line Number 43241.390

The proposed amount for Line Number 43241.390, Disposal Contract in the Solid Waste account is \$425,000. The Selectmen recommended \$425,000. Chair Smith made a motion for the Budget Committee to recommend \$410,000 for Line Number 434241.390, Disposal Contract in the Solid Waste account. Member Sue Carroll seconded the motion. All members of the Atkinson Budget Committee present voted in favor. Vote: 6/0/0.

Buildings:

The Atkinson Budget Committee reviewed some accounts in the Buildings Department and made some recommendations.

Town Garage - Account Number 41942: Mr. Innes informed the Committee that \$3,500 could be taken out of Line Number 41942.430, General Maintenance for the town garage. The Committee discussed general maintenance for the town garage.

The proposed amount for Line Number 41942.430, Town Garage General Maintenance is \$9,150. The Selectmen recommended \$7,650. Chair Smith made a motion for the Budget Committee to recommend \$4,000 for Line Number 41942.430, Town Garage General Maintenance. Member Torosian seconded the motion. All members of the Atkinson Budget Committee present voted in favor. Vote: 6/0/0.

Fire Station - Account Number 49144: The Committee discussed general maintenance for the Fire Station and Mr. Innes informed them that \$3,750 could be taken out for replacing the tile floor on the second floor, making the line \$6,250.

The proposed amount for Line Number 41944.430.00, General Maintenance - Fire Department is \$10,000. The Board of Selectmen recommended \$10,000. Chair Smith made a motion for the Budget Committee to recommend \$6,250. Member Sue Carroll seconded the motion. All members of the Atkinson Budget Committee present voted in favor. Vote: 6/0/0.

Woodlock Park/Hearse House - Account Number 49147: Mr. Innes informed that \$3,500 could be taken out for repairing the bathrooms, Line Number 41947.430.00, making the line \$1,500.

The proposed amount for Line Number 41947.430.00, General Maintenance - Woodlock Park is \$5,000. The Board of Selectmen recommend \$5,000. Member Torosian made a motion for the Atkinson Budget Committee to recommend \$1,500. Member Mealey seconded the motion. All members of the Atkinson Budget Committee present voted in favor. Vote: 6/0/0.

Community Center - Account Number 41948: Mr. Innes informed the Committee that the amount to repair and refinish the wood floors in the Community Center can be reduced by foregoing a layer of polyurethane, reducing the cost to \$7,500. This would reduce the total maintenance budget for the Community Center from \$16,800 to \$15,000.

Discussion: The Committee discussed what to do about preventing the floor from getting gouged up. Mr. Innes is looking for new chairs. One issue is people stacking chairs and dragging them.

The proposed amount for Line Number 49148.430, General Maintenance - Community Center is \$16,800. The Board of Selectmen recommended \$16,800. Chair Smith made a motion for the Atkinson Budget Committee to recommend \$15,000 Line Number 49148.430, General Maintenance - Community Center. The motion was seconded by Vice Chair Barker. All members of the Atkinson Budget Committee present voted in favor. Vote: 6/0/0.

Next, the Committee discussed maintenance for Family Mediation and East Road and decided not to make any reductions. The Committee has taken \$26,950 out of the budget so far.

The Committee discussed dispatch and contract for the tower. There was a 2% increase over the three year contract and a fee for leasing part of the tower for Atkinson equipment. The contract is being negotiated. Mr. Innes explained that the Police Department uses Plaistow dispatch for second and third shift and on weekends. The Fire Department uses them 24/7.

Highway Department:

Tree Removal - Line Number 43122.890.01: \$15,000 yearly is budgeted for tree removal. It is for clearing trees on the side of the road to eliminate trees near power lines. Mr. Innes explained that the Road Agent goes around with a tree company to decide which trees need to come down and what the cost will be. The Town will pay Northern Tree Service. Ms. Barker asked why the Town has spent \$15,000 yearly for the past 6 years cutting down trees and how much longer it would take. The Committee questioned how much work is done by the utilities and the State and why the Town is spending so much. Mr. Innes explained that \$15,000 is 10 days of work, \$1,500 a day or \$190 per hour and will be \$15,000 for another number of years. Mr. Innes explained that Unitil has a budget for trimming trees, too. Mr. Innes added that Unitil cut trees on Old Coach Road, but not several other streets.

Member Torosian stated that he would call Unitil to see what they are planning. Chair Smith would like to know what streets have already been trimmed. Ms. Galloway stated that the Road Agent has a master plan for the roads and he probably has a master plan for tree trimming. She will talk to the Road Agent to see if he has a master plan for trimming trees and if he coordinates with Unitil.

Ms. Barker asked why the cost of sealer was up 6.67% to \$17,500. Mr. Innes explained that the price of sealer has gone up. Also, if the State wants the Town to take over sealing some roads. The State has cut its budget significantly in those areas. The State has offered to give the Town 9 acres of land by the Lake if the Town takes over the road. It will bring Academy Avenue up to Town standards. However, the Road Agent is concerned that future standards for maintenance would be too high. Now, the State is offering to give the Town nine acres if the Town does the work on Academy Avenue. The State would also like the Town to take over North Broadway.

Member Torosian asked about the agreement for plowing. Mr. Innes explained that at the end of October the Town has a 1.8% float with two months to go. He is confident that the emergency funds requested from the DRA will not be needed. There are still bills coming in including about \$17,000 in roof repair bills coming in. He is hoping to put 1% of the budget into the General Fund.

Ms. Galloway asked if there was money to do some maintenance such as the bathrooms for Woodlock Park this year. Mr. Innes explained that it is too late to put out RFP's. It might be possible to do some small repairs. Mr. Innes explained that he is comfortable that the emergency funds will not have to be used, but there will not be much money for the general fund.

Chair Smith thanked Mr. Innes for assisting with reductions in Building Maintenance. Mr. Innes reiterated that most of the increases in the 2016 budget are due to expenses like increases in electricity and insurance that are out of the control of the Town.

The Budget Committee continued to review the budget, starting with the first line to see if any other reductions could be taken. Ms. Barker asked about the \$5,169 number in the Town Administrator line. That amount was not included in the Town Administrator total. Chair Smith will delete it.

Vice Chair Barker asked about Dues, Subscriptions and Memberships for \$7,000. Mr. Innes explained that it is part of NHMMA.

Next, the Committee discussed Office Supplies.

Member Carroll made a motion for the Atkinson Budget Committee to recommend \$5,000 for Line Number 41302.620, Office Supplies. Member Mealey seconded the motion. All members of the Atkinson Budget Committee present voted in favor. Vote: 6/0/0.

Discussion: Mr. Innes suggested rescinding the previous motion and reduce line number 41302.620, Office Supplies to \$5,500 and to decrease line number 41951.620, office supplies -cemetery from \$1,000 to \$0.

Member Sue Carroll withdrew her motion to recommend \$5,000 for Line Number 41302.620, Office Supplies and made a motion to recommend \$5,500 for Line Number 41302.620 and recommend \$0 for line number 41951.620, office supplies cemetery. \$7,000 was proposed for Line Number 41302.620 and the Board of Selectmen recommended \$7,000. \$1,000 was proposed for Line Number 41951.620 and \$1,000 was recommended by the Board of Selectmen. Member Torosian seconded the motion. All members of the Atkinson Budget Committee present voted in favor. Vote: 6/0/0.

Cemeteries - Mr. Innes informed the Committee that the engineering estimate to open the second part of the cemetery is \$172,000. It will have to be done with a warrant over several years. It will take around 5000 cubic yards of fill. The Committee discussed obtaining another parcel to expand the cemetery rather than expanding the current cemetery. If the Town finds another piece of property, it will take about one year to prepare a portion of it. The cemetery currently has enough plots for about 3 years at the current death rate.

Next, the Committee discussed how much it had saved so far. The Town Garage budget was reduced by \$2,900, the Fire Station budget was reduced by \$3,750, the Community Center budget was reduced \$1,800 and Woodlock Park was reduced by \$3,500. Solid Waste is reduced by \$15,000. That plus the reductions in office supplies for the Town Administrator and Cemetery makes a total \$28,450 reduction in the budget so far.

The Committee did not find any reductions in the rest of the Executive budget.

Financial Administration:

Bookkeeper - Line Number 41501.110 and Assistant Bookkeeper - Line Number 41501.120: The Committee discussed overtime. Mr. Innes explained the money for overtime was to allow her time to get up to speed. The Assistant Bookkeeper hours were cut by \$600. Sue Capeta is the Assistant Bookkeeper. She will do payroll when the Bookkeeper can takes a vacation.

Assessing - Line Numbers 41503.110 - 41503.230: need to come out. The Assessing Clerk position has been eliminated.

Tax Collector:

Other Professional Services Line Number 41504.390: The increase is for deed research. It is under spent by 60% for 2015. Mr. Innes will ask.

Postage: This is for an increase in postage costs.

Treasury - Account Number 41505: The difference in Treasury is for bank services. This includes checks and other services.

Computers - Software Maintenance - Line Number 41506.430: Vice Chair Barker explained that there will be more licenses for the servers. The contract is going out to bid, but probably will not change.

Personnel Admin - Account Number 41552: The current carrier, Property Liability Trust, went out of business and will be a 50% increase or a 25% increase for half a year. There are bids with three other companies. The Town is working with Davis Toll, Hub and Primex. The due date has been extended to December 4, 2015.

Mr. Innes recommended that Line Number 41552.290 - Sick Leave Bank be taken out. It has never been used. Employees are allowed to bank up to 30 hours of sick leave, but no one does.

\$500 was proposed for Line Number 41552.290 , Sick Leave Bank, and the Selectmen recommended \$500. Member Torosian made a motion for the Atkinson Budget Committee to recommend \$0 for Line Number 41522.290, Sick Leave Bank. Member Galloway seconded the motion. All members of the Atkinson Budget Committee present voted in favor. Vote: 6/0/0.

Planning and Zoning - Account Numbers 41911 and 41913: They are flat year over year. Mr. Innes explained that a lot of meetings were canceled last year, but 2016 should be more active. Sawmill estates is being built and 5 new houses are being built. Also, there are a number of applications for new additions.

Cemeteries - Wages -Line Number 41951.110: Currently there is one employee who works about 30 hours a week from April to October, and they would like to hire one other person for 10 hours a week over the same time period for a total of \$21,600.

Advertising Regional - Account Number 41974: This account is for dues for the Rockingham Planning Commission ("RPC"). Mr. Innes showed the Committee the Master Plan which was done by the Rockingham Planning Commission. The next step is a Capital Improvement Plan. A Capital Improvement Committee will be appointed and the Rockingham Planning Commission will assist the Town in assessing its needs. One example is the Emergency Operations Plan. FEMA requires an emergency operations plan in order to get grants. The Rockingham Planning Commission also produces maps like the storm water map. It shows all the Town waterways. The RPC works closely with the Planning Board and are present at all meetings. They did the traffic study at Westside Drive and Island Pond Road to see if any of the stop signs need to be taken out. Chair Smith asked if the Selectmen would have made another decision if the traffic study had not been done and if the detailed data would be used.

Ms. Carroll stated that the Federal Government takes money from Towns, then gives it back in grants and tyrannizes them with unfunded mandates.

Mr. Innes stated that the Town gets about \$20,000 of professional services for \$6,000. RPC assists with the zoning book and assists with writing warrant articles. Mr. Innes requested that the Budget Committee recommend the money for Rockingham Planning Commission.

Ms. Galloway moved that the Rockingham Planning Commission be reinstated. Vice Chair Barker seconded the motion.

Discussion: Ms. Galloway stated that the townspeople elected the Selectmen do be the leaders. The Selectmen believe that the Rockingham Planning Commission is worthwhile. The Rockingham Planning Commission saves the Town a lot of money, it is a worthwhile investment, the Town is protected by the New Hampshire RSA that states the Town can accept or reject its recommendation. Mr. Torosian asked what the anticipated expenditures that RPC would assist with in 2016. Mr. Innes explained that RPC will assist with the Capital Improvement Plan. They have the strong support of the Road Agent, the Planning Board and the Selectmen. Mr. Innes explained what the Capital Improvement Plan would do for the Town.

Member Carroll suggested that the vote be tabled until after the Committee reviewed the plans. The Committee tabled the motion. There was no vote.

The Board discussed how many more meetings are needed and decided on two more, November 19, 2015 at 6:00 PM and November 24, 2015.

Minutes: September 29, 2015, October 27, 2015 and November 3, 2015

September 29, 2015

- Change to Mr. Patuto
- -page 5 on the top - clarify asked if donated land could be used for the cemetery instead of Conservation
- delete Mrs. Friel from the first page

Chair Smith made a motion to approve the minutes of the September 29, 2015 as corrected. Member Torosian seconded the motion. All members of the Atkinson Budget Committee present voted in favor. Vote: 6/0/0.

October 27, 2015

- page 1, 2nd line "that line is to pay..." add "to the family".

Mr. Mealey questioned what the Atkinson definition of perpetual care is and stated that buying flowers is not perpetual care. Ms. Barker stated that she would ask the Cemetery Trustees.

Member Galloway made a motion to approve the October 27, 2015 minutes of the Atkinson Budget Committee as amended. Member Carroll seconded the motion. All members of the Atkinson Budget Committee present voted in favor. Vote: 6/0/0.

November 3, 2015

- end of page 6 not a complete sentence, it should say a single plot is \$800, a double is \$1,600 not \$600 at Maplewood. A quadruple plot is \$3,200 at Maplewood.

Member Galloway made a motion to accept the minutes of the November 3, 2015 meeting of the Atkinson Budget Committee as amended. Member Carroll seconded the motion. All members of the Atkinson Budget Committee present voted in favor. Vote: 6/0/0.

Member Torosian made a motion to adjourn the November 17, 2015 meeting of the Atkinson Budget Committee at 9:30 PM. Member Mealey seconded the motion. All members of the Atkinson Budget Committee present voted in favor. Vote: 6/0/0.

The next meeting will be Thursday, November 19, 2015 at 6:00 PM.