

**TOWN OF ATKINSON
BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING
Tuesday, December 15, 2015**

Members Present:

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

Others Present:

Bill Innes, Town Administrator
Raymond Fournier, Chair, Conflict of Interest Committee
Leon Artis

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

Agenda: Review minutes, review budget

General Discussion:

Conflict of Interest Committee, Account Number 41305: Mr. Raymond Fournier came before the Committee to talk about the new line in their budget. Mr. Fournier explained that the line marked as new was intended as a legal line. The Town denied them the use of the legal line, stating they don't have one.

The Conflict Of Interest Committee filed suit against the Town and it cost \$80.00. Mr. Fournier would like to have the line available. Mr. Innes informed the Committee that the Selectmen disapproved the line. The Selectmen got legal counsel and it was determined that the Conflict of Interest Committee has no standing to sue. Mr. Innes informed the Committee that the \$100 needs to be taken out of the New line in the budget and the line needs to be removed. The Selectmen voted to remove the line and the funds are in the line by mistake.

Member Torosian asked about how conflicts are resolved. Mr. Fournier explained that the Conflict of Interest Committee investigates every complaint, and, if warranted, has a hearing and if there is a conflict, it is brought before the Selectmen. Mr. Innes explained that the Conflict of Interest Committee is an advisory committee. Mr. Fournier explained that according to the ordinance, any individual can pursue a conflict in court. Mr. Innes agreed but explained that Town money cannot be used to sue the Town.

Mr. Torosian asked about the \$80.00 fee. Mr. Fournier stated that the Conflicts of Interest Committee attempted to file a suit against one of the Selectmen. He further explained that at the moment, there is nothing before the Committee. Last year there were 4 petitions, two of them were against one Selectmen, but the Selectmen did nothing. Mr. Innes responded that last year, the Selectmen hired outside counsel when a Selectman was being investigated.

Mr. Williams informed the Committee that there was a seminar with counsel from NHMA on Conflicts of Interest in June of 2015 at the Community Center.

Mr. Innes reiterated that when a complaint was brought against one of the Selectmen, outside counsel was hired and stated that the complaint had no merit.

Vice Chair Barker stated that the question on the floor is whether or not the Conflict of Interest has the right to have a legal line. The Committee continued to discuss the complaint against the Selectman. The complaint was investigated shortly after the Town elections in 2015. The results of the discussion and the legal opinion were shared with the Conflict of Interest Committee. Member Carroll stated that the response from the Selectmen to the Conflict of Interest Committee should be in writing with the findings and the reference from the attorney they spoke to. The response is in the minutes for the meeting.

The Committee requested more information about the conflict and its resolution as well as the ordinances and statutes regarding Conflict of Interest Committees.

Member Torosian informed the Committee that there were a few items for the 2016 budget that should be revisited as follows:

Fire Department, Account Number 42201: Member Torosian stated that the electric expense increase in the Fire budget was 30% while the correct increase should be 21.1%. The projected usage for 2015 is \$10,666 and 21.1% would be \$12,966 or rounded to \$13,000. The Budget Committee agreed to leave the recommended amount for Fire Department Electricity Line Number 42201.410 at \$13,000. There was no vote.

Engineering - Other Professional Services, Line Number 43112.390 in the Highway Department: \$10,000 was added to pay for the new EPA study on storm water runoff. This is in addition to \$5,500 normally budgeted for engineering expenses. Member Torosian recommended taking the \$10,000 out. The money may not be needed in 2016. The Committee discussed the storm water management mandate. Member Galloway stated \$5,000 has already been taken out. Mr. Innes agreed that the money may not be needed for 2016 but recommended that some money be left in for the study.

\$15,500 was proposed for Engineering - Other Professional Services, Line Number 43112.390. The Board of Selectmen recommended \$15,500. Member Torosian made a motion for the Budget Committee to change their recommendation from \$10,000 to \$6,500 for Engineering - Other Professional Services, Line Number 43112.390 in the Highway Department. Member Carroll seconded the motion. Three members of the Budget Committee voted in favor and two were opposed. Vote: 3/2/0. Motion passed.

Next, Member Torosian recommended taking money out of the fuel lines for all departments with fuel lines. The Committee looked at the gas line in Elder Services, which has already been reduced. No further recommendations were made.

Line Number 42202.635.00, Gas and Oil in the Fire Department Budget: The amount expended in 2015 is \$2,500 and \$4,500 was budgeted for 2016. No further recommendations were made.

Highway Department Gas and Oil Line Number 43122.635: \$6,355 was expended in 2015. \$12,600 was proposed and the Selectmen recommended \$12,600.

\$12,600 was proposed for Highway Department Gas and Oil, Line Number 43122.635. The Board of Selectmen recommended \$12,600. Member Kay Galloway made a motion for the Budget Committee to recommend \$10,000 for Highway Department Gas and Oil, Line Number 43122.635. Member Peter Torosian seconded the motion. All members of the Atkinson Budget Committee present voted in favor. Vote: 5/0/0.

Police Department Budget, Cruiser Gas, Line Number 42109.635: Expenditures for 2015 are \$20,699 through the end of November 2015.

\$28,000 was proposed for Cruiser Gas, Line Number 42109.635. The Board of Selectmen recommended \$28,000. Member Torosian made a motion for the Budget Committee to recommend \$25,000 for Cruiser Gas, Line Number 42109.635. Vice Chair Barker seconded the motion. All members present voted in favor. Vote: 5/0/0.

Mr. Innes informed the Committee that the following lines should be added and broken out for septic:

Police Department Line Number 41943.413.00 - Septic, Highway Department, Line Number 41942.413 - Septic, Kimball House Line Number 41946.413.00 - Septic, and Family Mediation, Line Number 41945.413.00 - Septic.

There are no dollar amounts in the lines for 2016 but the Town would like to track the expenditures in 2016 in order to forecast a budget for 2017.

Member Galloway moved that Police Department Line Number 41943.413.00 - Septic, Highway Department, Line Number 41942.413 - Septic, Kimball House Line Number 41946.413.00 - Septic, and Family Mediation, Line Number 41945.413.00 - Septic be added to the Town of Atkinson budget. Chair Smith seconded the motion. All members of the Atkinson Budget Committee present voted in present. Vote: 5/0/0.

Mr. Innes informed the Committee that he should have the numbers for the Dispatch Account next week. Chair Smith informed the Committee that the budget is currently at a 2.8% increase, or 4.4 million dollars.

Next, the Committee discussed the legal lines and the insurance lines. Mr. Innes reminded the Committee that professional services do not have to be put out to bid and stated that he would show the Committee the Town policy. Member Torosian stated that it is a good idea to review the contracts.

The Committee discussed Town insurance. Mr. Innes explained that the company that provided insurance for the Town in 2015 went out of business. Town Insurance was put out to bid and Primex was the lowest bid which is why the Selectmen voted to bring Primex back.

Minutes: November 10, 2015, November 12, 2015, November 17, 2015, November 19, 2015 and November 24, 2015

November 10, 2015 Minutes:

Member Kay Galloway made a motion to approve the November 10, 2015 minutes as recorded. Member Peter Torosian seconded the motion. All members present voted in favor. Vote: 5/0/0.

November 12, 2015 Minutes:

– Page 2 - typo - the vote should be five in favor and one opposed, 5/1/0.

Chair Smith made a motion to approve the November 12, 2015 minutes of the Atkinson Budget Committee as amended. Vice Chair Wendy Barker seconded the motion. All members present voted in favor. Vote: 5/0/0.

November 17, 2015 Minutes:

– Unitel should be Unitil throughout.

Chair Smith made a motion to approve the minutes of the November 17, 2015 meeting as corrected. Member Torosian seconded the motion. All members of the Atkinson Budget Committee voted in favor. Vote: 5/0/0.

November 19, 2015 Minutes:

– Jean LoPizzo not Jean LoPizzo, Elder Services Director

– 1st paragraph 4118 miles should be 4118 gallons

– Bottom of page one, should say Ms. Carroll stated that 28 states have filed a lawsuit to block the storm water mandate and perhaps a new governor will join the lawsuit.

– 8th line from bottom - examined can be stricken

– Also Unitel should be Unitil

Chair Smith made a motion to accept the minutes of the November 19, 2015 meeting of the Atkinson Budget Committee as corrected. Member Galloway seconded the motion. All members of the Atkinson Budget Committee present voted in favor. Vote: 5/0/0.

November 24, 2015 Minutes:

– Unitel should be Unitil throughout

Chair Smith made a motion to accept the minutes of the November 24, 2015 minutes of the Atkinson Budget Committee as corrected. Vice Chair Barker seconded the motion. All members of the Atkinson Budget Committee present voted in favor. Vote: 5/0/0.

Member Torosian made a recommendation that the Town start looking for new insurance. Also, he has put the head of the forest department for Unitil in touch with the road agent.

Chair Smith stated that he received a letter from the head of the Rockingham Planning Commission.

Chair Smith made a motion to adjourn the December 15, 2015 meeting of the Atkinson Budget Committee at 8:15 pm. Member Torosian seconded the motion. All members of the Atkinson Budget Committee present voted in favor. Vote: 5/0/0.

The next meeting will be Tuesday, January 5, 2015.