

TOWN OF ATKINSON
BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING
Tuesday, October 18, 2016

Members Present:

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

Others Present:

Alan Phair, Town Administrator
⌘, Russell Wolfe, **Technology Comm.**

Chair Smith called the meeting to order at 7:30 pm.

Agenda: Town Administrator and ⌘ **Technology Committee**

General Government: Mr. Alan Phair, Town Administrator came before the Budget Committee to present the General Government budget. Mr. Phair reviewed significant changes.

Board of Selectmen – Account Number 41301:

Selectmen Salaries – Line Number 41301.301.00: 2% increase voted by Selectmen. FICA and Medicare increase accordingly. The Budget Committee discussed employee wages. Mr. Phair informed her no decision had been made. Mr. Phair believes the Selectmen will give employees a COLA raise.

Miscellaneous – Line Number 41301.690.00: existing run rate previous years expended were higher. Chair Smith asked what items were in the miscellaneous line. Mr. Phair stated that he did not have the information with him.

Public Notices – Line Number 41301.860.00: \$500 increase because of E911 changes.

Town Administrator – Account Number 41302:

Telephone – Line Number 41302.341.00: based on existing rate – rates have gone up so the telephone line is up \$1100. It is combination of cell phones and land lines. The Committee discussed cell phone rates. Mr. Phair explained that there are several types of cell phones and plans. Some have data and some do not. Verizon is the carrier for the Town cell phones and the Town has a government rate. Chair Smith asked how many cell phones there were. Mr. Phair replied that the Selectmen, the Road Agent, and Maintenance all have cell phones. Member Torosian asked why Selectmen have cell phones. The Committee requested more information on the cell phone plans and asked if data plans are needed. Member **Torosian suggested reimbursing employees with cell phones for using their personal cell phones for Town business.** Vice Chair Barker suggested renegotiating the cell phone contract and also voice over IP.

Dues and Subscriptions – Line Number 41302.560.00: The biggest cost is for the New Hampshire Municipal Association dues of \$6,220 and several other items are included such as the RSA Books for \$477. It is a \$500 increase.

Postage – Line Number – 41302.625.00: needs further review. The Accountant just made a payment not reflected in expended.

Clerical – Account Number 41304: Is for the planning assistants and the hours worked

Conflict of Interest – Account Number 41305: Mr. Phair spoke to the Chairman but has not gotten any numbers. The Selectmen requested \$1 to hold the line.

Financial Administration

Accounting and Financial – Account Number 41501:

Bookkeeper – Line Number 41501.110.00: There was a mistake when budgeted last year. The proposed number is her current rate of \$23.41 times 40 times 52 weeks which comes to \$48,693.00.

Assistant Bookkeeper – Line Number 41501.120.00: 50 hours for \$913. Sue Cappetta Coppeta was assigned but was unable to do it. The Town just hired an Assistant Bookkeeper to serve when the regular bookkeeper is on vacation.

Assessing – Account Number 41503: Mr. Phair does not have the number. The Selectmen just signed off on the MS1.

Tax Collecting – Account Number 41504: Mr. Phair presented the Tax Collecting Budget at a previous meeting.

Treasury – Account Number 41505: The total is unchanged. Bank services went up and the mileage went down.

Budget Committee – Account Number 41509: Mr. Phair used the number given to him by Chair Smith. The Committee discussed the rate for the Selectmen Recorder. The Town was paying her through a staffing agency. She is now in a similar situation. Mr. Phair explained that the rate for the Selectmen Recorder and the Budget Committee Recorder is the same.

Legal Services:

Legal Operations and Defense Proceedings Account Numbers 41531 and 41532: The other professional services line has increase in both defense and legal operations. Mr. Phair is anticipating a larger case load because there is a new code enforcement officer. Some outstanding cases may be resolved and the Town may take some legal action. One case in particular may cost the Town but should have a positive aspect. Mr. Phair explained that the new code enforcement officer is also code enforcement officer for another Town and is a former Salem police officer.

Personnel Administration – Account Number 41552:

The Town negotiated a new contract and the numbers from Primex are down from last year. The Town chose Primex because they offer unemployment compensation. The other bidder was close but did not offer unemployment compensation.

Health Agencies: Mr. Phair looked at the changes.

Rockingham Community Action – Line Number 44512.350.03: requested \$1,000 more than last year. Mr. Phair stated that the agency serves 83 Atkinson households for a value of \$31,051. The Committee discussed the increase. Vice Chair Barker pointed out that Elder Services costs the Town about \$100,000 per year. Mr. Phair stated that he calls Rockingham Community Action frequently for assistance with fuel and electrical in addition to the assistance that the Town gives. Chair Smith questions the \$31,051 amount. The Budget Committee discussed what type of assistance Rockingham Community Action provides and in what way, if it is direct assistance or in-kind.

Community Health Services – Line Number 44152.350.06: This line went down at the agency request.

Vic Geary Center – Line Number 44156.350.01: This line was previously budgeted at \$5,450 and the Budget Committee changed it to \$2,500. The Selectmen want to go back to \$5,450. Vice Chair Barker stated that it is redundant, too.

Sexual Assault Support Services – Line Number 44156.350.02: This program is now combined with the Safe Place program, Line Number 44156.350.04 and is called Haven. The \$525 previously in the Sexual Assault Support Services line went to the Safe Place line. The Safe Place line went from \$1,250 to \$1,775. Mr. Phair requested that the Budget Committee remove one line and change the other to call it Haven. The Committee agreed. There is no change in the total amount.

There are no other changes.

Other Insurance – Account Number 41961:

This is property and liability insurance. This line is down from last year to \$64,445.

General Assistance – Account Number 44421: The account is up \$1,000 overall. Mr. Phair did some reclassifications and there were some over expenditures in 2016, especially for food. Mr. Phair tries to get people assistance elsewhere where possible. There are about 7-8 families active in various stages. Mr. Phair has gotten some families off the roles but three families came in last week. Member Mealey asked if there is any coordination with different agencies. Mr. Phair contacts Service Link first and goes to several agencies to see if families are going to other agencies and food banks. Member Galloway suggested Mr. Phair work with the pastor for the Congregational Church, too.

Vice Chair Barker would prefer to leave the decision of charitable giving to the taxpayer. The Committee continued to discuss general assistance and different cases.

Chair Smith commented that Atkinson is an affluent Town, however there are always some people who are about to lose their homes because they cannot pay their taxes and other people who are struggling to get by. This is why it is important to keep the tax rate down. Mr. Phair agreed but pointed out that there is a fairly high rate of residents who get tax exemptions based on need.

Vice Chair Barker asked about the miscellaneous line at \$500 and requested it be defined or eliminate it. The Committee discussed the miscellaneous expenditures. Vice Chair Barker suggested making the electricity line a utility line and the miscellaneous line a medical expense line. Mr. Phair stated that not all general assistance is clearly defined.

Mr. Phair left the meeting to find what the miscellaneous expenditure was for. He explained that he believes the \$227 expenditure was for a prescription.

Member Galloway moved that the electricity line name be changed to utility line and the miscellaneous line be changed to the medical expense line. Member Carroll seconded the motion. All members of the Atkinson Budget Committee voted in favor. Vote: 6/0/0.

Long Term Debt Principal – Account Number 42712: This is for the library.

Long Term Debt Interest – Account Number 42711: This is also for the library. It is down to \$40,050.

IT – Account Number 41506: Mr. Russell Wolfe came forward to present the IT budget.

The total proposed IT budget is \$94,018.

Software Maintenance– Line Number 41506.430.00: a decrease of \$500. Interware development was taken out and moved to IT services.

A cemetery lot program was added at \$250. Vice Chair Barker explained that she has an email from Sue Killam requesting assistance in selecting a program with mapping to track the grave sites. Ms. Killam has spoken with other Towns and no others have a cemetery plot tracking program. Vice Chair Barker will

meet with them to help choose a cemetery lot program. Vice Chair Barker also explained that the Cemetery Committee is looking for a laptop and the Technology Committee is assisting them.

Mr. Wolfe explained that the Town Clerk needs a PCI for the credit card reader and security matrix at \$125.00 yearly.

The Recreation Department is requesting a RecDesk software program. The cost is \$3,480. The price for this type of software has dropped because it is now cloud based.

Hardware Maintenance – Line Number 41506.440.00: increase of \$200. Mr. Wolfe is requesting \$200 to repurpose one of the laptops and replace the hard drive.

Software Purchases – Line Number 41506.730.00: This line is down \$2,500. The Police department is requesting to purchase six licenses for Easy Street v.6 for the police station computers \$1,320.00. The Committee requested more information on the difference between Easy Street v.3 and Easy Street v.6. The rest is for Microsoft Office.

Hardware Purchases – Line Number 41506.740.00:

The Police Department is requesting \$10,000 to purchase 4 laptops for the cruisers. The Police Department has a 50/50 grant to purchase laptops and tablets. The Committee reviewed the request. \$4,000 is the cost for each tablet which will be paid by the grant. Mr. Wolfe explained that if the Department does not get the tablets, they will only get laptops. The laptops cost approximately \$2,500 each. \$1,900 is the base cost of the tablet. The rest is extras. Vice Chair Barker asked if the police laptops are going out to bid and stated that \$2,500 is too much to pay for a rugged laptop. Member Carroll stated the original figure was \$25,000 and now is \$19,000. Vice Chair Barker suggested that the \$10,000 grant be used to purchase laptops and save the taxpayer money. Mr. Phair pointed out that it would depend on how the grant is written. Mr. Wolfe explained that it is a Homeland Security grant and does not know if it specifies tablets.

Vice Chair Barker also asked how the old Police Department laptops would be disposed of and if one could be used for the cemetery. The other option would be for them to go to government auction. One issue is security. The Committee discussed how to dispose of the Police Department laptops.

Other hard ware expenses are for a Town Clerk Credit Card Reader at \$120 under the swap out program. There is a \$3,000 miscellaneous in case one of the computers dies. Also, there is a request for a New Town Hall Printer/copier. The RFP is \$6,000. Mr. Wolfe checked on a lease option. One he received was \$170 per month for 5 years.

New projects – Line Number 41506.800.00: This is for the redesign /upgrade website. Mr. Wolfe wrote it in for 33 hours at 30 dollars an hour. Vice Chair Barker has been redesigning the website. She has been doing it for free and is willing to continue. Mr. Wolfe has been taking over while Ms. Barker was sick. Member Galloway suggested putting links on the websites to other organizations. Ms. Barker explained that links to other websites is permissible as long as they are Town affiliated. Ms. Barker explained that she cannot be paid as a Town employee because she is an elected official.

Town Webmaster Stipend - \$1,800 – Ms. Barker has also worked as Town Webmaster and has not charged the Town because she is an elected official. She would be willing to cut the stipend.

IT/Professional Services – Line Number 41506.890.00: The contract with Block 5 increased to \$36,000. The Town is paying \$2,800 per month.

Chair Smith asked if anyone has tested to see if the file restore programs worked.

Mr. Phair stated that he has had circumstances where he has deleted files and been able to retrieve them from offsite storage. Vice Chair Barker suggested that it be tested every six months.

Town Clerk – This was moved from the Town Clerk Budget. There is an \$89.75 increase for a 2% support fee for the QA Auto/Redbook registration.

Selectmen took out the video streaming. All other numbers have been approved by the Selectmen. Mr. Phair will insert the numbers.

Minutes: deferred.

Next week: General Government Buildings and 250th Anniversary.

Member Galloway made a motion to adjourn the October 18, 2016 meeting of the Atkinson Budget Committee at 9:04 PM. Member Torosian seconded the motion. All members of the Atkinson Budget Committee voted in favor. Vote: 6/0/0.