

TOWN OF ATKINSON
BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING
Tuesday, October 30, 2018

Members Present

Bill Smith, Chair
Wendy Barker, Vice Chair
Bob Malo
Peter Torosian
Bob Worden

Others Present

Timothy Crowley, Police Chief
Nicolas Fiset, Lieutenant
Ted Houlihan, Elder Services Director
Alan Phair, Town Administrator

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

Agenda: Police Department, Elder Services

Police Department Minutes:

Police Chief Timothy Crowley expressed concern for the lack of full-time police officer positions (Line 42101.110.03). He feels that the Atkinson Police Department should have 14 full time officers to function properly and safely but, at this time, with the possibility of one new hire, the Department only has 7 full-time officers and 9 part-time officers.

Chief Crowley's other concern is the Police Department should have a more active role in the schools; not just Atkinson Academy but the Middle and High schools also. The Department teaches LEAD (Law Enforcement Against Drugs) in the 3rd and 5th grades. Chief Crowley believes their involvement should not stop there but continue as the children move on to higher grades. An officer's presence in the higher grades would not just be for safety but because of problems such as opioid addictions, etc., it would be beneficial if the Department maintained a relationship with the Atkinson students.

Chair Smith asked if the other towns do this.

Chief Crowley said that Plaistow has a presence in the high school.

Chief Crowley feels, in order to afford adding one more officer, the Department has offset it in many areas:

Line 42101.110.02	Decreasing part-time officer	\$18,000
Line 42101.110.07	Decreasing clerical hours	\$ 4,000
Line 43104.390.00	Decreasing Training Instructor's pay	\$ 200
Line 42105.740.00	Decreasing New Equipment	\$ 6,400

Chief Crowley also suggests that Line 42105.390.00 should be changed from Physicals to Employee Screening. He said that line pays for polygraph screenings, psychological screenings and medical examinations, not physicals.

Chair Smith agreed that line should be changed.

Chair Smith asked about the difference between full-time and part-time officers.

Lt. Fiset explained that there is more health insurance for a full-timer; although, there are four officers that do not require insurance. The pay for a part-timer is actually higher than the starting rate for a full-timer because the full-timer is hired on a probationary scale.

Chair Smith asked what other factors should be financially considered.

Lt. Fiset said beside the pay rate and health insurance, the third factor would be retirement.

Vice Chair Barker asked about the hours for a part-timer.

Lt. Fiset said that part-timers are certified for 1300 hours a year which keeps them at 24 hours a week as opposed to a full-timer at 40 hours a week.

Member Worden asked if a full-time officer is added, what percentage per thousand that would bring Atkinson to in comparison to other nearby towns.

Chief Crowley replied just under 1.15%; Epping is 2.1%, Plaistow is 2.3%, Chester is 1.6%.

Member Worden asked how much time the resource officer would spend in the schools while preventing any intrusions.

Chief Crowley explained that the officer would not get into a routine; it should never be the same time, same day, etc. There is no set number of hours; it would depend on circumstances and the officer's availability.

Member Torosian asked if it would be more beneficial to hire two part-timers rather than one full-timer.

Chief Crowley stated that for a full-timer, it's their vocation, so they are dedicated to the job. For part-timers, they have other jobs and would rather not be working holidays and other special days. There is more control with a full-time officer.

Member Torosian asked about the resource officer's contact with the schools.

Chief Crowley said that right now the only contact the Police Department has is teaching LEAD at the Academy. He feels that the Department has an obligation to the Atkinson students to follow through with them into the Middle and High schools.

Vice Chair Barker was concerned about the time the resource officer spends in the schools in Plaistow and was wondering if Plaistow would reimburse Atkinson for time spent, especially if the resource officer is not able to back up an Atkinson officer, if needed.

Chief Crowley explained the officer would have to judge the manpower so as to not shortchange the Atkinson residents. But if an officer wanted to follow up on a student in the Middle or High school and is able to do it without jeopardizing his duties, he should be allowed to do so.

Chair Smith asked if an Atkinson officer was called to aid a Plaistow officer, is Atkinson reimbursed.

Chief Crowley said there is a mutual aid agreement.

Chief Crowley reiterated that the Department is not looking to put a full-time officer in the resource position. He just wants to add a position because the Department needs more manpower and by adding a position, they would be able to add a program at the Academy in order to spend more time with the students.

Vice Chair Barker asked if the Police Department was planning on writing any more articles this year. Chief Crowley said yes, to replace two cruisers. He is still researching several possibilities and where to purchase or lease.

Member Malo asked why don't we have a fund where we allocate so much money every year so that best price shows up you've got that you can tap right away and not end up paying more because you're waiting for the new budget to be improved.

Chief Crowley said it was a good question and doesn't have an answer.

Member Worden asked when the vehicle is retired does money come back .

Chief Crowley said that typically money does come back to the line item.

Elder Services Minutes

Ted Houlihan, Elder Services Director, stated that he'd like to thank the residents for their donations to the Elder Services department. Also the transportation fund that continues to allow them to be able to purchase new vehicles is appreciated. Unfortunately, Elder Services cannot accept handoff vehicles from the Police Department because most of the senior citizens are not 6' 11" and cannot climb into SUVs.

When Elder Services is able to purchase newer (used) vehicles, the account for vehicle maintenance is significantly reduced (Line 42151.660.00).

Chair Smith asked how much was received in donations.

Director Houlihan stated at this point they have \$17,000 for the purchase of new vehicles. Some of it is from previous years and some from an earlier purchase.

Member Torosian asked if Elder Services still had a relationship with Subaru who would possibly give a discount.

Director Houlihan said that he has been working with Rockingham Toyota and they have been most receptive and appreciate their name being placed on the side of the vehicles.

Member Torosian asked if ridership was up or down.

Director Houlihan, along with Town Administrator, Allan Phair, pointed out that ridership for 2017 through September was 1,906 and ridership for 2018 through September is 2,284. Since the number of rides is up, the number of hours for drivers is up (Line 42151.110.01).

Vice Chair Barker asked if Elder Services is expanding on where they go on the rides or are they still just offering medical services, necessary services.

Director Houlihan stated that medical services are the first and foremost priority and then food shopping.

Member Torosian asked if the driver stays with client or does the driver drop the client off and come back.

Director Houlihan said that the driver stays with the client because sometimes they can reach an item on a higher shelf and may need assistance in other areas.

Member Torosian asked if the policy is still age 60+ for elderly clients.

Director Houlihan said yes with some exceptions; a lot is temporary but there are some who may have a broken leg or is in a body cast and need help until their health improves.

Member Malo asked about the wheelchair van and its use.

Director Houlihan said that the wheelchair van is probably used at least once a day.

Member Malo asked if the van accommodated more than one wheelchair.

Director Houlihan said that the van has space for two wheelchairs but it's a tight fit.

Member Malo asked about the fueling procedure for the vehicles

Director Houlihan said that each vehicle has its own discount card where the driver types in required information at the pump.

Member Malo noticed that Elder Services does not ask if the client is an American with Disabilities on its form. He states that it's not a grant; you establish the expenses for the disabled client and submit it to Americans with Disabilities foundation. It's federal money for transportation which is reimbursed to you.

Director Houlihan was not familiar with the program.

Member Malo offered to look into it for him.

Vice Chair Barker asked if Elder Services was familiar with Lamprey Healthcare.

Director Houlihan knows the name but is not familiar with what they do.

Vice Chair Barker said that they basically do everything that Elder Services does. Their service is free and it would be another resource for Elder Services if they are backed up.

Member Torosian suggested that this information about Lamprey Healthcare should, along with Elder Services, probably be put up on the Atkinson website and the cable channel.

Member Malo asked if there was a registration process.

Administrator Phair said he had more information and details on them because he deals with them on a regular basis.

Vice Chair Barker asked about a collaboration with the former director of Elder Services and a former budget committee member regarding fee structures for future rides.

Director Houlihan said he knew nothing about it but would find out.

Administrator Phair mentioned that one of the lines (Line 42151.390.00) does not show the percentage change.

Chair Smith said the sheet would be corrected with a Total Change of 3.93% rather than 2.28%.

Chair Smith asked if Director Houlihan would comment on the spreadsheet lines.

Director Houlihan stated the following:

Lines 42151.110.00 – 42151.110.01 - the first two lines are dedicated to the increase in rides and, therefore, an increase in hours.

Line 42151.635.00 – for vehicle gas situation, last year the proposal was at \$8500 but was reduced to \$8000. So it's been increased by \$500 which should come out even by the end of the next two months without additional \$500 but it will be close.

Line 42151.660.00 – due to the newness of the newer vehicles, maintenance has gone down by \$1000 which includes the purchase of tires for one of the vehicles.

Chair Smith asked what are Other Professional Services (Line 42151.390.00)

Director Houlihan said the Expended column shows \$1191 and Elder Services had purchased a 2015 Venza and the lettering on the car for Elder Services plus the people who donated came to \$1100. They are also hoping to purchase one other vehicle out of donated funds next year which is why they are looking at \$1600. They are also had money in there in case there was a course for drivers. The State may offer a senior driving course, since most of the drivers may qualify.

Member Torosian asked if it would be more efficient if we had the dealership put the Elder Services names on the vehicle which would probably be less expensive.

Member Malo explained the development of the fact sheet that would be a useful tool for preparing presentations and sharing with other committees.

Member Worden asked about the large donation to Elder Services.

Administrator Phair explained that, although the donation was \$800,000 which is in a trust, the stipulation was that only the interest on it would be used for elder assistance. While it is in an interest bearing account and is run by the trustees of the trust fund, it will be a while before it will be used since it has not accumulated interest yet. Although much appreciated, this donation does not affect the Town Budget.

Member Malo brought up the discussion of an irrigation project that was previously mentioned. He felt that the Conservation Committee should be involved before the Budget Committee approves it.

Chair Smith requested the Committee look over the Budget Committee Minutes for October 23, 2018, for approval. Several items needed to be corrected, added or amended.

Vice Chair Barker suggested that the spreadsheet be attached to the Minutes moving forward. She has agreed to merge the Minutes and spreadsheet before sending to the Atkinson website.

Member Torosian made a motion to approve the October 23, 2018 Budget Committee Meeting Minutes as amended. Vice Chair Barker seconded the motion. Four members were in favor; one abstained. Vote: 4/0/1

Member Worden made a motion to adjourn the October 30, 2018, Atkinson Budget Committee Meeting. Member Torosian seconded the motion. All members voted in favor. Vote: 5/0/0