

**TOWN OF ATKINSON
BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING
Tuesday, September 26, 2017**

Members Present:

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

Others Present:

Alan Phair, Town Administrator
Ted Stewart, Road Agent
Rose Cavalear, Town Clerk
Jean LoPiso, Elder Services

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

The Town Administrator stated that they went through the Fire House and there is significant damage. Mr. Phair stated that he talked to Jamie Dowe, DRA and she advised him to combine the bills and then send them in.

Agenda: Town Clerk, Highway, Street Lights, Recycling, Solid Waste Disposal, Care of Grounds

Elections and Registration:

Town Clerk - Account Number 41401: Rose Cavalear came before the Budget Committee to present the Town Clerk budget.

Town Clerks Assistant – Line Number 41401.110.00: It was \$52,806 and she brought it up to \$55,841, which is what The Town Clerks Assistant is getting paid now. Ms. Cavalear adjusted salaries to current pay and added \$2,000 for vacations, 3 elections, deliberative sessions and sick time.

Town Clerk - Line Number 41401.130.00: adjusted to current salary of \$52,393 the default was \$51,321 The increase includes a 1.21% longevity increase for 5 weeks of the year.

Health Insurance - Line Number 41401.210.00: \$26,631 – down because the Town Clerk now pays 20% of health insurance

FICA - Line Number 41401.220.00: \$6,711 - up due to salary adjustment.

Medicare – Line Number 41401.225.00: \$1,569 - up a little.

Retirement – Line Number 41401.230.00: \$10,377 – down

Telephone – Line Number 41401.341.00: the same at \$1,279

Microfilm – Line Number 41401.355.00: up \$25.00 because the fee was raised in the middle of last year

Other Professional Services – Line Number 41401.390.00: no change

Office Supplies – Line Number – 41401.620.00: down by \$49 for file folders

Postage – Line Number 41401.625.00: same

Education and conferences – Line Number 41401.850.00: up by \$6

Total: \$166,066, a 1% increase

Revenue – is up \$88,722.05 from January 1, 2017. The total revenue is 1, 232,718.41

Elder Services – Account Number 42151: Jean LoPiso came before the Budget Committee to present the Elder Services budget.

Elder Services received two new vehicles including a new van. The donation balance as of the beginning of September is \$21,000 for the Assistance fund and \$19,000 for the Transportation fund. The department received a significant private donation and purchased a used Toyota Venza with 9,000 miles. The money left over will be used to purchase another vehicle in FY18. The Department has 3 vehicles, one has 93,000, one has 121,000 and one has 86,000 miles. The Crown Vic failed inspection, and the 2010 Subaru is falling apart but the Toyota Camry is in good condition. Elder Services looked at a used cruiser but it was in too bad shape. The Town sold it.

The Department averages about 200 rides per month and there are 225 hours per month. Ms. LoPiso does not feel that any line items need to be changed. The numbers she has are through August. Because of the WEX program with the Town, her numbers are a month behind. \$5,000 of the gas budget has been used. There is \$1,800 left in the maintenance budget. About \$600 dollars will be used for routine maintenance.

Professional Services - Line Number 42151.390.00: covers fund raising and lettering the vehicles

Office Supplies – Line Number 42151.620.00: This line is mostly for paper and there is no change.

Postage – Line Number 42151.625.00: has not been used, the final mailing is done in the 4th quarter.

Discussion: Mr. Malo asked the number of clients being serviced. Ms. LoPiso stated the Department has the information, but she does not have it with her.

Ms. LoPiso explained that rides are occasionally doubled up for local trips. Also, the number of clients differs from the number of rides, because one client could use the service several times in a month.

The medical equipment is not included. Ms. LoPiso estimated that about 280 residents are using medical equipment. It is in a trailer at the Community Center. Money for equipment comes from the Assistance Fund and also, a lot of equipment is donated.

E.S. Payroll – Line Number 42151.110.01: There is a small increase for the salaries. The Director's salary is \$100 more for the year and the drivers' salary line increased about \$2,000. Chair Smith stated that a Director's salary line should be added to the budget spreadsheet.

The Committee discussed used medical equipment. Elder Services takes donations and also gives excess equipment to other service organizations. Ordinarily, Elder Services does not take donations of disposable items unless it is in a sealed container.

There were no more questions.

Highway Department: Mr. Ted Stewart presented the highway department budget.

Administration – Account Number 43111:

Overtime – Assistant RA – Line Number 43111.140.00: Last year was the first year the Department budgeted for the assistant road agent. The line was overspent by almost 300%. Mr. Stewart stated he spoke to other Towns and was informed that they budget 21% of the regular salary for overtime. The amount budgeted for FY18 is the amount expended in FY17.

2 new lines were created last year, a labor line and an assistant road agent line. Prior to that, the assistant road agent salary was included in the labor line.

The other pay lines are the same.

Engineering – Account Number 43112:

Professional Services – Line Number 43112.390: A major increase. \$6,500 was budgeted for FY 17 and Mr. Stewart is asking for \$10,000 for FY 18 due to the MS4 permitting process. It is an unfunded Federal mandate for the Town to test all the outfalls of all the culverts. The Town received a grant from Rockingham Planning to apply for the permit and assist with zoning. Zoning has to be changed because under the new permit all property over 4000 square feet will require erosion control. Ms. LaBranche, Rockingham Planning Commission, will assist in drafting the new zoning laws.

\$137,000 as a second block grant was received from the State of New Hampshire. There are stipulations. First, it can't be used to reduce taxes. It has to be used for specific projects to improve infrastructure. Mr. Stewart has a list of projects.

Collins Park Parking Expansion: There are safety issues because people are parking in the street during lacrosse season. Mr. Stewart had a plan ready, but it was not budgeted so when he got the grant he put it out to bid.

Woodlawn Ave Turnaround: It was developed in 1950 before inspections and zoning and the developer never finished it. Mr. Stewart also had a plan ready and has put it out to bid.

Both projects have been put out to bid. Each project will cost around \$24,000.

There is roughly \$87,000 remaining. Other things that need to happen.

One is to pay the engineer to finish developing a plan for Island Pond Road. It has been part of the 10 year plan, but there has been no funding. It will cost \$27,000 for the warrant article to be written for Island Pond Road.

Also a bid spec needs to be written for West Side Drive. On West Side Drive there is a metal culvert that is rotted at the bottom. Someone put a pipe into an old stone structure and the pipe has failed. It is a historical stone structure in a federally protected wetlands. Mr. Stewart has a quote for \$50,000 for the project. Almost half is to get the bid specs ready. The block grant money will pay for the engineer and possibly enough to line the culvert before winter or at least get a contract out for next spring.

The last item Mr. Stewart would like to use the money for is guard rails. There is cable guard rail on Lakeside Drive. It is unrepairable and unsafe. Guardrail is \$20 per linear foot with a minimum bid of 500 linear feet of guard rail. The end sections are \$2,100 for the first 25 feet of guard rail. Mr. Stewart would like to replace that cable guard rail and the wood guard rail on Pope Road.

After paying the K&N \$27,000, Mr. Stewart will have about \$60,000. West Side Drive should cost around \$50,000. If there is money left from the block grant, it will be spent for guard rails.

None of these projects are in the Engineering line. There is a 53% increase, but it does not include these projects, it includes future roads and development.

Member Torosian asked if SP38 money could be used for vehicle maintenance. Mr. Stewart explained that SP38 money cannot be used for things that were previously budgeted.

Cleaning and Maintenance – Account Number 43122:

Labor – Line Number 43122.110.01: Mr. Stewart had requested the Selectmen to increase the hours of one employee from 30 hours to 40 hours. The Selectmen gave him the option of a petition warrant article. The issue is that there is a Federal mandate that employees working more than 30 hours per week, they must be considered full time employees and get benefits.

He stated that he has a difficult time hiring at \$13.00 per hour seasonal help. At present, there are two part time employees. Mr. Stewart is advertising for a third part time employee. Mr. Stewart is concerned about having seasonal employees drive Town equipment and would prefer another full time employee.

There are presently two full time employees, the assistant road agent, and the road agent; and two seasonal employees. Seasonal employees do not qualify for benefits. Mr. Stewart is advertising for one more part time employee. One part time employee worked around 45 hours a week last year. Federal law mandates that anyone over 30 hours must be considered full time and given benefits. So, now Mr. Stewart had to send him home for the rest of the year.

The overtime line is for the assistant road agent. The line that would be affected is retirement. Mr. Stewart requested \$5,000 for retirement.

Member Torosian is concerned that the Town will soon have more than 50 employees which will put them in another bracket for health and benefits. The Town currently has 47 full time employees.

The Town used 11 contractors to plow last year plus 2 Town trucks and a backhoe. Mr. Stewart explains that he also uses his truck to plow and pays \$20.00 per hour for someone to drive it.

Member Carroll asked if some of the money for another full time employee could come from tree removal, Mr. Stewart agreed that he could have the money allocated from tree removal for a year in order to hire a full time employee.

Member Carroll also expressed concern about the 50 person threshold. Mr. Phair informed the Committee that he would get the numbers for the costs associated with having more than 50 employees.

Mr. Stewart explained that 180 units costing an average of \$440,000 have been built and he would like to see the figures for additional revenue. The roads will all be private.

Mr. Stewart explained that institutional knowledge and job knowledge are important. Also, another full time employee could assist with the Recycling Center. Another advantage is, this person has driven a truck for a long time and has his own equipment.

Vice Chair Barker asked about the grant money. Mr. Stewart stated that the cost of the five items will total the \$137,000 grant. Any money left over will be carried over to the next fiscal year. Mr. Stewart also stated that all the projects will go out to bid. Once the bids are awarded, everyone will know the cost. If the work cannot be done in FY2017, it can be carried over to FY2018. There was a public hearing and the Selectmen voted to accept the grant and chose Keach Nordstrom for the engineering.

Equipment Repair – Line Number 43122.430.00: This line was over expended for FY17 at \$13,500. \$4,000 was budgeted and it was over expended by about \$9,000. This year it will be \$3,000.

Truck Lease Line Number – 43122.660.00: This line went up dramatically because the first year lease was paid out of the warrant and the remaining 4 years will be paid from the budget.

Mr. Stewart explained that it will be at least a month until the new truck can be painted. The Town sold the old truck for \$15,000. Equipment repair will only be \$3,000, down from \$13,500 spent for FY17.

Other Materials – Line Number 43122.680.06: Cut to the \$3,000 level, no increase

Equipment Rental – Line Number 43122.740.01: down by \$500 from \$4,000 to \$3,500

Mileage – Line Number 43122.820.00: down from \$500 to \$300 because there are 2 vehicles.

It is a 14% increase, for the proposed budget and a 9.55% increase after the Selectmen cut it by \$100,000. The biggest increase is the lease.

Winter Maintenance: The Selectmen cut it by \$10,000.

Recycling - Account Number 43234: Only two lines were adjusted. The total is \$33,218

Signs and Decals - Line Number 43234.875.00: This line went from \$250 to \$200.

Education and Conferences – Line Number 43234.850.00: This line was adjusted up from \$125 to \$300 because everyone who works in the recycling center has to be certified annually.

Solid Waste – Account Number 43241: It is the end of a 3 year contract and bids have not been received yet.

Street Lights - Account Number 43163: same as FY2017

Care of Grounds – Account Number 45202: Mr. Stewart is responsible for Care of Grounds although it is in the recreation department budget. Everything is out to bid. FY 2018 is the last year of the mowing contract. The fertilizing bids should be here in 3 weeks. The due date for all the contracts is October 12, 2017.

Mr. Phair informed that the Town should save \$7,000 for the electrical contract with the new bid.

Warrant Articles – Mr. Stewart is waiting for bid specs. The Road Agent and the Selectmen would like to hold \$330,000 for warrant articles. It is for road maintenance. Mr. Stewart will come to the Budget Committee once he has a plan and has gone to the Selectmen with a warrant. The budget figures will not change.

Mr. Stewart will come back to the Budget Committee with the complete cost of hiring another full time person and they will discuss it again.

Minutes: September 19, 2017 - deferred

Member Torosian made a motion to adjourn the September 26, 2017 meeting of the Atkinson Budget Committee. Member Carroll seconded the motion. All members of the Atkinson Budget Committee voted in favor. Vote: 6/0/0.