

TOWN OF ATKINSON
BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING
Tuesday, October 13, 2020

Members Present

Bill Smith, Chair
Wendy Barker, Vice Chair
Ray Fournier

Bob Malo

Others Present

Bob Worden, Selectmen Liaison
Karen Brown, Library Director
Tom Kelly, Library Trustee Chair

Ted Stewart, Road Agent

Chair Smith called the meeting to order at 7:07 p.m.

Agenda: Reading RTK Checklist, Attendance, Selectmen Liaisons' Report, Library and Highway Departments' Discussions

Chair Smith read the public notice regarding COVID-19.
Attendance was taken.

Selectman Worden reported the following:

- The Selectmen are waiting for a final summary report from the Building Needs Committee.
- Halloween Trick or Treating will be from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. on October 31.

Library – Karen Brown

Director Brown reported the following:

- Due to COVID-19, the Library is returning \$25,000 from the 2020 budget.
- The budget is reduced by one family plan in the health insurance line which covers other increases in the personnel budget as well as costs on the operational side.
- The operational increases are for fixed expenses, COVID-related costs or the materials budget.
- Under the personnel budget, \$5,851 less than in 2020 is requested.
- Lines that are level-funded are Employee Merit, Telephone, Cleaning Service, Electricity, Dues, Postage, Equipment/Maintenance, Custodial Supplies, Computer Hardware, and Water
- Lines that request a decrease are Mileage, Youth Programs, and Education/Conferences
- All other lines request an increase, several due to COVID-19.
- Subtotal for Library Admin is \$470,965; subtotal for Library Misc. is \$36,388; Unit Total is \$507,353.

Chair Kelly asked that the Library staff be supported along with its budget.

Highway, Street Lighting, Recycling – Ted Stewart

Highway

Agent Stewart stated the following:

- There is an approximate increase of \$3,000 in the Administration section.
- The Engineering section is level-funded.
- In Cleaning and Maintenance, the lines that are level funded are Radio Maintenance, Gas & Oil, Loan/Summer, Crack Sealing, Catch Basins, Stone, New Equipment/Summer, Equipment Rental/Summer, Contract Labor/Equipment/Summer, and Tree Removal.
- In Cleaning and Maintenance, the lines that request a decrease are Truck Lease, Gravel/Summer, Patch Material, Culverts, and Equipment Rental/Summer. All remaining lines request an increase.
- In Snow and Ice Control, Minor Equipment/Winter requests an increase and all other lines are level-funded.

Vice Chair Barker was not clear on who is employed with Agent Stewart.

Agent Stewart said he has Matt Baldwin, Dave Whitley and Jack Beecher. The budget includes hiring another full-time laborer.

Vice Chair Barker asked if the full-time position has been advertised.

Agent Stewart said he cannot advertise until after the Town Meeting. Building Maintenance is managed by Town Administrator Cressman who will receive the repair requests and will delegate the repair.

Vice Chair Barker asked what the future plans were after the Lease has been paid off in 2021. Would there be more warrant articles for additional equipment or is anything being sold?

Agent Stewart said this is still under discussion. One proposal was to purchase a town pickup truck which has not been agreed on by the Board of Selectmen but a Warrant Article may be presented within this month. By 2022 and each year through 2025, the equipment will be in replacement mode. When a truck is purchased, there is a reduction in contract labor but an increase in fuel and maintenance.

Highway, Street Lighting, Recycling – Ted Stewart

Street Lighting

Agent Stewart stated the following:

- \$47,000 is proposed which would be an increase.

Chair Smith asked if any street lights have been retired.

Agent Stewart said that the Town Administrator is trying to retire two but does not know if he has been successful.

Chair Smith asked if the electric rates have increased.

Agent Stewart said the rates are the same.

Chair Smith asked if LED lights were being installed.

Agent Stewart said that it has been discussed with Unutil and the Town would bear the cost of the upgrade and there has not been a willingness to take on the cost.

Member Malo expressed his disappointment because there was no follow-through with his street light proposal showing an \$8,000 reduction. It appears that no lights have been removed, yet some lights have been added.

Agent Stewart said the Town Administrator has been making an effort but he is not aware if he has succeeded.

Highway, Street Lighting, Recycling – Ted Stewart

Recycling

Agent Stewart stated the following:

- Lines that are level-funded are Postage, Equipment, Education/Conf, and Signs/Decals.
- All other lines are requesting an increase.

Minutes for 10/6/2020

Chair Smith made a motion to approve the minutes as amended; **Member Fournier** seconded the motion. All members were in favor. **Vote: 4/0/0**

Chair Smith made a motion to adjourn. **Member Fournier** seconded the motion. All members were in favor. **Vote: 4/0/0**

The Atkinson Budget Committee Meeting adjourned at 8:10 p.m.