

**TOWN OF ATKINSON
BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING
Tuesday, November 14, 2017**

Members Present:

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

Others Present:

Alan Phair, Town Administrator

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

Agenda: 1st Pass Through

Vice Chair Barker requested to discuss the buildings maintenance budget presented at the November 7, 2017 meeting. She felt that it was confusing because the spreadsheet did not show when capital projects were to be started and or finished. The spreadsheet included costs that might be spent for FY18 or in the next five years and also expenses from FY17.

Vice Chair Barker gave the Committee a draft spreadsheet for presenting the buildings maintenance budget. First, she would like to see preventative maintenance, then absolutely necessary expenses, and finally, capital improvements. Only costs for the next fiscal year should be presented.

The biggest source of confusion was capital improvements. Only proposals for next fiscal year should be included in the proposed budget for the next fiscal year.

All costs listed on the presentation should be included on the appropriate line in the master budget.

Chair Smith requested that the draft spreadsheet presented by Vice Chair Barker be emailed to Mr. Weymouth so that he can copy and paste the headers into his spreadsheet.

Mr. Phair informed the Committee that the Select Board decided that the expenses for the 53rd pay period in FY18 should be included in the budget.

The Budget Committee discussed accounting for wages. Mr. Phair explained that the salary lines include the 2% COLA recommended by the Select Board. The 2% COLA raise is also in a separate line.

Vice Chair Barker recommended that the separate merit line, line number 41301.110.04, be taken out since the 2% COLA is incorporated in the salary lines.

Chair Smith stated that there is \$10,000 merit number as a default but it is not included in the Select Board figures. The Select Board decided to give all employees with more than one year service a 2% COLA raise for FY2018.

Chair Smith stated that any salary lines with greater than a 2% increase should be looked at.

Chair Smith would like to discuss areas the Committee members would like to see adjusted. Chair Smith explained the steps to preparing the Town budget. The Budget Committee will review the budget several times, requesting input from Department Heads and the Town Administrator and making adjustments. The final budget will be presented at Town Meeting.

There are also contracts and warrants that need to be reviewed.

Chair Smith also informed the Committee that there are only 5 more meetings scheduled.

Member Torosian asked Mr. Phair the percentage change from FY2017. Mr. Phair informed Member Torosian that there are a few items that are not filled in, such as the Budget Committee and the Conflict of Interest Committee.

The Committee discussed whether \$100 should be budgeted for the Conflict of Interest Committee. Mr. Phair agreed to add \$100 to the Conflict of Interest Committee line.

At present, the draft spreadsheet is down 22% but not all contracts and expenses have been added.

Mr. Phair has the draft copy and Chair Smith has the master copy of the budget. Chair Smith pastes changes from Mr. Phair's draft into the master copy.

Chair Smith explained that there are four total columns for FY18 in the spreadsheet, the column proposed by the Department, the Select Board Column and the Budget Committee column, and finally the amount column. The amount column shows the Budget Committee amount. The grand total in the amount column is the official budget amount.

Propane bidding was opened Monday. There will be an increase of 20% or \$3,500.

The Committee discussed issues arising if the Town has more than 50 full time employees. Currently, there are 48 full time positions in the Town. The proposed full-time positions in the Fire Department, the Police Department and the Highway Department would increase the number of full time employees in the Town to over 50. One issue is insurance, if there are more than 50 full time employees the Town must offer health insurance to all of them.

The Select Board has not approved the additional full-time employee for the Highway Department. The Road Agent may go to warrant for another full-time employee.

Another issue with the Fire Department are volunteers who never show up for a call. The Fire Chief may go to warrant with the request for full time employees. The Committee discussed whether the Fire Department will become union if it goes full-time. Mr. Phair believes that there still will be a Fire Association.

The Committee still does not know the full financial impact of having more than 50 full-time employees. The Committee would prefer that the number of full-time employees be kept below 50.

Mr. Malo suggested some ideas that the Budget Committee talk about. One idea would be priority of need. Another solution Mr. Malo suggested is subcontracting. Until recently, the Highway Department did much more subcontracting. Another solution he suggested could be automating to increase productivity. For example, having police go to Woodlock Park to open and close. Another area where increased automation could help is the Town Clerk's office.

Executive:

Board of Selectmen – Account Number 41301:

Chair Smith asked if the merit line should be zeroed out. Vice Chair Barker stated that the line should be eliminated and merit increases should go in the salary lines. The Committee discussed if merit increases be awarded or if a COLA increase should be awarded to all employees.

Mr. Phair stated that for a small town, COLA increases make more sense, especially since the total salary increase for the Town is 2%.

Chair Smith explained that raises should have 3 components, a COLA increase, a longevity increase and merit increases. Mr. Phair explained that some towns have several steps, Atkinson gives a longevity increase every 5 years.

Selectmen's Salaries – Line Number 41310.130.00: Mr. Phair explained that the reason for the Select Board 1.9% salary increase in FY 18 is the 53rd week. The Board of Selectmen are paid weekly. Other Town employees are paid monthly, annually or weekly. There is a 53rd week every 5 years. The annual salary is \$3,250 for select members and \$3,900 for the chair. Some employees get an annual stipend. The Committee requested figures and pay periods for employees. Member Carroll pointed that the stipend is annual, not weekly, thus not eligible for the 53rd week. The Committee agreed that the Select Board salary should be a yearly basis, not a weekly basis. Therefore, there should not be a 1.9% increase.

Member Torosian made a motion for the Budget Committee to propose \$16,901 for Line Number 41301.130.00, Selectmen's Salaries with FICA and Medicare adjusted appropriately. Vice Chair Barker seconded the motion. All members of the Atkinson Budget Committee voted in favor. Vote: 6/0/0.

Public Notices – Line Number 41301.860.00: The Committee discussed the increase in the cost and whether notices need to be published in the newspaper. There is a 43% increase due to advertising costs.

Town Administrator – Account Number 41302:

Town Administrator – Line Number 41302.110.01: Once again, there is an increase due to the 53rd week. The Town Administrator is under contract. The contract is 5% and with the 53rd week there is a 7% increase. The dollar increase is \$3,800. The Town Administrator contract expires in November 2018.

Town Administrator Assistant - Line Number 41302.120.01: The line includes a 2% COLA. Last year she received a 1.2% longevity increase for FY17, this year she is receiving a 2% increase. There is also 25 hours of overtime included. Mr. Phair explained how the amount was calculated. It is \$24.37 per hour X 40 hours plus 25 hours yearly overtime x 36.535 per hour.

Health Insurance – Line Number 41312.210.00: Has gone down.

Telephone – Line Number 41302.341.00: Vice Chair Barker would like a breakdown of telephone and cell phone expense by contract. She requested one for FY 18 and is requesting one again. Member Torosian asked which Town employees have cell phones paid for by the Town. Mr. Phair explained that he negotiated a government contract with Verizon. The telephone line is a combination of cell phones and land lines. Verizon has the contract for cell phones. There are two types of costs, cell phones and land lines. The Bayring contract is for land lines. The internet service is part of the landline telephone service.

Service Contracts – Line Number 41302.720.00: The printer will require a service contract next year, it is still under warranty, so the line is being held at \$1.

Postage – Line Number 41302.625.00: \$5,000 is budgeted in the Town Administrator budget every year for the postage machine. This line is reimbursed by various departments using the postage machine. It was just replenished by \$5,000.

Education/Conferences/Dues – Line Number 41302.850.00: Mr. Phair is going to a conference.

Chair Smith requested comments. Mr. Malo asked about the telephone contract and if the Library phones are included in the Town contract. Chair Smith asked for the telephone bills. Mr. Phair explained that he has them and Chair Smith requested a spreadsheet of telephone expense for each department.

Chair Smith made a motion for the Budget Committee to propose the amounts proposed by the Selectmen for the Board of Selectmen Account Number 41301 and the Town Administrator, Account

Number 41302, with the exception of one adjustment. Vice Chair Barker seconded the motion. All members of the Atkinson Budget Committee voted in favor. Vote: 6/0/0.

Clerical – Account Number 41304:

Planning Assistant – Line Number 41304.110.00: There are 5.6% increase. This increase includes COLA and the 53rd week. There are two employees in the Planning Department, Sue Coppetta who works 20 hours a week and Sue Killam who works approximately 70 hours per year. The merit increase is factored into the base salary for FY17 and then COLA was added to the FY18 base salary.

Vice Chair Barker made a motion to accept the Clerical account of the Executive budget as proposed by the Selectmen. Member Worden seconded the motion. All members of the Atkinson Budget Committee voted in favor. Vote: 6/0/0.

Conflict of Interest Committee – Account Number 41305.110.00: add \$100 as a place holder.

Committee Support - Account Number 41306:

Safety Committee – Line Number 41306.740.00: \$1.00 placeholder

Energy Commission – Account Number 41307:

Professional Services –Line Number 41307.390.00: change to a place holder of \$1.

Vice Chair Barker made a motion for the Budget Committee to propose \$1.00 for Professional Services, Line Number 41307.390.00. Member Torosian seconded the motion. All members of the Atkinson Budget Committee voted in favor. Vote: 6/0/0.

Vice Chair Barker made a motion for the Budget Committee to propose \$100 for the Conflict of Interest Committee, and \$1.00 for the Safety Committee and the Energy Commission portions of the Executive budget. Member Torosian seconded the motion. All members of the Atkinson Budget Committee voted in favor. Vote: 6/0/0.

Minutes: November 7, 2017 - deferred

Chair Smith made a motion to adjourn the November 14, 2017 meeting of the Atkinson Budget Committee. Member Carroll seconded the motion. All members voted in favor. Vote 6/0/0.

The Tuesday, November 14, 2017 meeting of the Atkinson Budget Committee adjourned at 9:00 PM.