

**TOWN OF ATKINSON
BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING
Tuesday, December 12, 2017**

Members Present:

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

Others Present:

Alan Phair, Town Administrator
Diane Heer, Library Director
Jim Cobb, Library Trustee Chair

Chair Smith called the meeting to order at 7:30 pm. Chair Smith informed the Committee that the Town still did not have a solid waste contract. He has a new draft spreadsheet with an estimate of the solid waste contract amount of \$550,000. This would make a 7.75% increase for the FY18 budget. One or more additional meetings may need to be scheduled before the end of the year. Agenda:

Minutes: November 28, 2017, December 5, 2017

November 28, 2017

Chair Smith made a motion to accept the minutes of the November 28, 2017 meeting of the Atkinson Budget Committee as amended. Member Worden seconded the motion. Vote: 4/0/1 with Member Carroll abstaining and Member Torosian not present.

December 5, 2017

Member Carroll made a motion to accept the minutes of the December 5, 2017 meeting as amended. Vice Chair Barker seconded the motion. Vote: 4/0/1 with Chair Smith abstaining and Member Torosian not present.

Member Malo presented a list of concerns and opportunities for the FY18 budget. One concern is the Town Administrator working more and more hours. Member Malo expressed that there is an opportunity to use technology to reduce the workload. Most of the budget process runs off the spread sheet. Member Malo suggested a relational database for the budget. The relational database can generate the spreadsheet. Also, there are more efficient ways to store data than having a server and hiring a contractor to maintain it. Another option would be to lease software rather than purchasing software. Also, if the Budget Committee needs information, they have to go to the Town Administrator for copies. Member Malo would also like a replacement for microfilm and storing documents on line. Getting information from the Planning Board is also difficult.

Member Malo believes that the Town is operating on an outdated business model. The Budget Committee is trying to reduce costs and using automation would help. A relational database and the cloud would allow the Town to share and use information more effectively. Credit cards would also reduce labor costs. Deals with credit card companies can be negotiated. Direct deposit to an account number would also save paper and time.

Member Carroll stated that she prefers to mail a check to the Town Clerk.

Member Malo suggested that one or two work stations be installed in the Planning Board which would eliminate a lot of paperwork. Another suggestion would be allowing employees to work at home.

Member Malo suggested that the Town research getting a cloud service. Member Torosian suggested that Member Malo work with the technology committee and the Board of Selectmen.

Chair Smith read his email to the Committee for the audience. It explains that the Committee is behind schedule because it has not received all the figures. He has inserted \$550,000 as the total of solid waste. Chair Smith has also worked on the salary lines. One issue is the 53rd week. Chair Smith also went through the salary lines with the 53rd week inserted and moved the sums to new lines. There are now 4 new lines for the 53rd week: Salary, FICA, Medicare and Retirement. Chair Smith agreed that the 53rd week should be in the budget, but in order to make it clear that it is a onetime only expense. For the elected officials, the 53rd week will not be counted in the lines. Chair Smith has highlighted the lines that have been changed in gray.

For example, Planning Assistant – Line Number 41304.110.00, adding the 53rd week adds 1.92% to the line. The additional 3.61% increase reflects the 2% COLA, and one other increase.

After the adjustments there is a proposed increase for the Town budget is 7.73%. The increase in the solid waste is about 3.3%. If solid waste were not going up, the increase would only be 4.43%. Mr. Phair stated that \$550,000 is probably a low number.

Member Torosian asked about recycling. Mr. Phair informed the Committee that recycling is volatile because China has imposed recycling and a lot of recycling is not going to China. The Town will still pay less for recycling than for trash. Mr. Phair stated it would be more expensive to treat all waste as trash. Two trucks would still be needed.

Town Administrator – Account Number 41304: deferred.

Tax Collector – Account Number 41504:

Education and Conferences – Line Number 41504.850.00: This line went from \$550 to \$1400. Chair Smith made a note to defer this line until the question was answered on this line.

Chair Smith suggested that the Committee move to the Buildings section of the FY 18 budget.

Buildings:

Mr. Phair has given the Committee a new spreadsheet on building and maintenance expenses.

Town Hall – Account Number 41941:

Maintenance Supervisor – Line Number 41941.110.00: Vice Chair Barker stated there is an 18.21% increase in pay even after taking out the 53rd week. Mr. Phair explained that it was budgeted incorrectly in FY 17. It was budgeted at 23 hours per week instead of 25 hours per week. Mr. Phair explained that without the 53rd week, the amount would be \$23,198.

Telephone – Line Number 41941.341.00: Vice Chair Barker has requested for the land line expense and cell phone expense be split for many years. The expense has gone up from \$471 budgeted for FY17 to \$550 proposed for FY18. Mr. Phair explained that the maintenance supervisor has a cell phone. Chair Barker asked if the contract went up and what the discrepancies were.

Other Professional Services – Line Number 41941.390.00:

General Maintenance – Line Number 41941.430.00: The Committee asked about the bathroom expense and the sprinkler system. Mr. Phair informed the Committee that the sprinkler system will not be on a warrant for FY18, he is waiting for a decision on a water line running through Atkinson to

Plaistow. Mr. Phair also informed the Committee that the bathrooms would not be remodeled for FY18; the expense is for general maintenance.

Member Carroll suggested that mileage could be cut. The Committee agreed that the budget was in the ball park.

Chair Smith made a motion for the Budget Committee to propose the same for Town Hall, Account Number 49141 as the Select Board.

Discussion: Member Carroll asked about the telephone line.

Vice Chair Barker seconded the motion. All members of the Atkinson Budget Committee voted in favor. Vote: 6/0/0.

Town Garage – Account Number 41942: Member Carroll pointed out that there were discrepancies between the main budget spread sheet and the spread sheet given to the Committee by Mr. Phair for the present meeting. Vice Chair Barker asked about the waterproof lights, gutters and generator switch. Chair Smith explained that those expenses will not be included in the FY18 budget. These expenses would have been in the Other Professional Services and the General Maintenance lines in the breakout.

Chair Smith made a motion for the Budget Committee to propose \$13,790, the same as the Select Board for Town Garage, Account Number 41942. Member Torosian seconded the motion. All members of the Atkinson Budget Committee voted in favor. Vote: 6/0/0.

Police Station – Account Number 41943:

Chair Smith compared the spreadsheets. Vice Chair Barker is concerned that there will be enough in the budget for all repairs. Repointing the walls was taken out of the FY17 budget. Mr. Phair explained that some of the work was done in FY 17, but not all. The total for FY18 is the same as FY17.

Member Carroll made a motion for the Atkinson Budget Committee to propose \$12,675 for the Police Station building, the same as the Select Board. Vice Chair Barker seconded the motion. All members of the Atkinson Budget Committee voted in favor. Vote: 6/0/0.

Fire Station – Account Number 41944:

Vice Chair Barker asked why \$3,500 is proposed for general maintenance and there is almost \$6,000 of preventive maintenance that needs to be done. Mr. Phair informed the committee that the biggest expense is for the garage door.

Member Torosian made a motion for the Atkinson Budget Committee to propose \$13,240, the same as the Select Board for the Fire Station building, Account Number 41944. Member Carroll seconded the motion. All members of the Atkinson Budget Committee voted in favor. Vote: 6/0/0.

Discussion: Vice Chair Barker asked Mr. Phair about the repairs to the Fire Station. Mr. Phair stated that there was discussion about repairing two sides in FY18 and FY19 if, in fact, it is not a safety issue and it can be done in a manner that will not cost the Town more money. Member Torosian stated that areas where water is coming in should be the first thing that should be fixed. Mr. Phair replied that all the

venting issues need to be dealt with, too, because the water is coming in through there. Another issue is keeping the undesignated fund balance at 5%. Money that was not spent is turned back to the Town.

Library – Account Number 41945: Chair Smith stated that differences in maintenance expenses balance out. Mr. Phair remarked that one of the things that could be taken out is replacing the worn carpet. Vice Chair Barker informed the Committee that she went to the Library to look at the worn carpet and the lip is coming up which makes it a safety hazard. One solution would be putting something down to save it. There is a rug but it is not an industrial rug. That area will be covered to protect that area and will last a little longer.

Vice Chair Barker made a motion for the Budget Committee to propose \$6,940 for the Library buildings budget, Account Number 41945. Member Torosian seconded the motion. All members of the Atkinson Budget Committee voted in favor. Vote: 6/0/0.

Kimball House – Account Number 49146:

General Maintenance – Line Number 49146.430.00: Mr. Phair informed the Budget Committee that the handicap ramp in the rear would not be installed in FY18.

Chair Smith made a motion for the Atkinson Budget Committee to propose \$2,701 for General Maintenance, Line Number 41946.430.00. The Select Board proposed \$7,701. Member Torosian seconded the motion. All members of the Atkinson Budget Committee vote in favor. Vote: 6/0/0.

Chair Smith made a motion for the Atkinson Budget Committee to propose \$7,491 for Kimball House, Account Number 41946. The Select Board proposed \$11,491. Member Torosian seconded the motion. All members of the Atkinson Budget Committee vote in favor. Vote: 6/0/0.

Woodlock Park/Hearse House – Account Number 41947:

Chair Smith added an other professional services line, line number 41947.390.00. \$360 must be moved from general maintenance to the other professional services line. Redoing the bathroom and pressure washing the building will not be done in FY18.

Septic System – Woodlock Park Pavilion – Line Number 41947.413.00: The \$240 should be removed from the septic system line because it is included in other professional services because it is a preventative maintenance issue.

Vice Chair Barker made a motion to remove \$240 from Septic System – Woodlock Park Pavilion, Line Number 41947.413.00. Chair Smith seconded the motion. All members of the Atkinson Budget Committee voted in favor. Vote: 6/0/0.

Chair Smith made a motion to propose \$360 for Other Professional Services, Line Number 41947.390.00 and \$1500 for General Maintenance, Pope House, Line Number 41947.430.00. Vice Chair Barker seconded the motion. All members of the Atkinson Budget Committee voted in favor. Vote: 6/0/0.

The Budget Committee proposed total will be \$2,610.

General Maintenance/Hearse House – Line Number 41947.430.01: no change

Community Center – Account Number 41948:

Vice Chair Barker asked about the split system heating. Mr. Phair stated that it was not included in the FY18 budget. Member Carroll asked about dividing the big room.

Chair Smith made a motion to propose \$16,600 for the Community Center buildings, Account Number 41948, the same as the Select Board. Vice Chair Barker seconded the motion. All members of the Atkinson Budget Committee voted in favor. Vote: 6/0/0.

Discussion: Member Worden agreed that splitting the room would be a cost savings in heat and the proposed expense should be left in the budget.

Family Mediation – Account Number 41949:

Vice Chair Barker made a motion to propose \$3600 for Family Mediation, General Maintenance, Line Number 41949.430.00 the same as the Select Board and to propose \$700 for Family Mediation, Other Professional Services, Line Number 41949.390.00. Chair Smith seconded the motion. All members of the Atkinson Budget Committee voted in favor. Vote: 6/0/0.

Conservation/East Road – Account Number 41950:

General Maintenance – Line Number 41950.430: The line is \$750.00. It was \$300 in the buildings spreadsheet, not \$750. Mr. Phair agreed that it could be reduced to \$300.

Member Torosian made a motion for the Atkinson Budget Committee to propose \$300 for General Maintenance – Line Number 41950.430.00. The Select Board proposed \$750.00. Member Carroll seconded the motion. All members of the Atkinson Budget Committee voted in favor. Vote: 6/0/0.

Cemeteries – Account Number 41951:

Chair Smith noted that the Committee voted on one line at the December 5, 2017 meeting, which was increased from \$17,000 to \$21,000. Mr. Phair stated that the only wages are basic; they are for the caretaker who works 26.5 hours per week totaling \$20,479. Chair Smith stated that Care of Grounds is up. The Committee agreed to the amounts.

Chair Smith made a motion to accept the cemetery budget including increasing the other professional services line to \$21,000. Vice Chair Barker seconded the motion. All members of the Atkinson Budget Committee voted in favor. Vote: 6/0/0.

Advertising Regional - Account Number 41974:

Member Carroll handed out information at the 12/5/17 meeting. That is how she feels, but everyone in Town uses it. She does not think the Town needs half the reports the Rockingham Planning Commission does. If the Town did the reports, it would cost more. Mr. Phair stated that the Rockingham Planning Commission has assisted the Town. Regarding MS4, Mr. Phair went through all the reports for mapping the outlets and the Town did not pay for anything. They will also help reduce rates in some of the contracts by getting group rates.

Vice Chair Barker made a motion for the Budget Committee to propose \$ 1,089,331, the same as the Select Board. Chair Smith seconded the motion. The Atkinson Budget Committee voted three in favor, two against and one abstaining. Vote: 3/2/1.

Discussion: Member Worden stated that the Rockingham Planning Commission is a service that the Town uses. The Select Board has met with other Towns regarding group purchasing and the Rockingham Planning Commission can help because they have the mechanisms and connections.

Police Department:

Police Department Admin – Account Number 42101: Chair Smith stated that he took out the 53rd week and the salary lines are still up 6-9%. The lines that were changed are colored in gray.

Discussion: Member Carroll had a comment on Dispatch and people on cell phones trying to get through to dispatch. Apparently, there was an incident at Market Basket. An 85 year old woman got mugged and robbed. Three people called 911 and the calls were never received and the police never responded. Mr. Phair explained that 911 calls from a cell phone go to the nearest tower, not to the nearest police station. In Massachusetts, the State Police get 911 calls from cell phones. Member Worden suggested that the number for the police station be put into cell phones.

Chair Smith made a motion for the Atkinson Budget Committee to propose the same as the Select Board for the police department administration except the three lines with the 53rd week. Vice Chair Barker seconded the motion. All members of the Atkinson Budget Committee voted in favor. Vote: 6/0/0.

Special Details – Account Number 42106:

Chair Smith made a motion for the Atkinson Budget Committee to propose \$6,272, the same as the Select Board. Vice Chair Barker seconded the motion. All members of the Atkinson Budget Committee voted in favor. Vote: 6/0/0.

Cruiser Maintenance – Account Number 42109: The Committee deferred voting because of cruiser gas expense

Cruiser Gas – Line Number 42109.635.00: Gas prices are volatile, but they have gone down.

Member Torosian made a motion for the Atkinson Budget Committee to propose \$20,000 for Cruiser Gas, Line Number 42109.635.00. The Select Board proposed \$23,000. Vice Chair Barker seconded the motion. All members of the Atkinson Budget Committee voted in favor. Vote: 6/0/0.

Discussion: Mr. Phair will bring it to the Police Chief and bring it back if there is an issue.

Cruiser Maintenance – Line Number 42109.660.00: Mr. Phair will check on it. \$8,700 was expended in FY17 and \$13,400 was proposed for FY18.

This account will be reviewed on the second pass. Chair Smith requested a vote for Cruiser Maintenance, Account Number 42109.

Chair Smith made a motion to propose the same as the Select Board for all lines in the Cruiser Maintenance Budget, Account Number 42109, except Cruiser Gas, Line Number 42109.635.00. Member Torosian seconded the motion. All members of the Atkinson Budget Committee voted in favor. Vote: 6/0/0.

Elder Services – Account Number 42151:

This account is up 4%. Chair Smith took out the 53rd week. 2% is the COLA. Gas is one issue. Mr. Phair explained that there was a separate merit line for FY17.

Member Torosian made a motion for the Budget Committee to propose \$7,500 for Vehicle Gas, Line Number 42151.635.00. The Select Board proposed \$8,500. Member Carroll seconded the motion. All members present voted in favor. Vote: 6/0/0.

Vice Chair Barker stated that the drivers got a 4.5% increase in wages, while the Director got a 2.2% increase. The Director wages are in line, but the driver wages are not.

The Committee discussed property tax revenue for the new condominium developments. Mr. Phair informed the Committee that Atkinson passed \$1 billion in valuation for the first time.

Chair Smith made a motion for the Budget Committee to accept the amounts proposed by the Select Board for the payroll, FICA and Medicare lines as adjusted to remove the 53rd week, and accept the Amounts proposed by the Select Board for the next three lines and the bottom three and excepting the Cruiser Gas line. . Member Torosian seconded the motion if the Budget Committee reviews the lines at 4.3% on the second pass.

Discussion: Vice Chair Barker stated that there might be extra hours or extra drivers. Mr. Phair stated that the Director was not included in FY17 merit increase. Member Carroll will meet with the Elder Services Director regarding wages.

All members of the Atkinson Budget Committee voted in favor. Vote: 6/0/0.

Highway Department – Account Number 43111: There is a formula error in spreadsheet. Chair Smith will correct it.

Engineering – Account Number 43112:

Other Professional Services-Engineering – Line Number 43112.390.00: The additional cost is for EPA – MS4.

Chair Smith motion for the Atkinson Budget Committee to propose \$17,800 for Engineering, Account Number 43112. Vice Chair Barker seconded the motion. All members of the Atkinson Budget Committee voted in favor. Vote: 6/0/0.

Recycling – Account Number 43234: There are people who staff the recycling center. The 1.92% is the extra paycheck. They get a COLA. Vice Chair Barker asked about Education/Conferences. It was explained that they need to do some training.

Contract Labor/Equipment – Line Number 43234.890.00: \$3,750 was spent in FY17 and \$8,000 was proposed. Vice Chair Barker asked if it was Atkinson’s turn to host. It is not.

Member Torosian made a motion to propose \$6,000 for contract labor, line number 43234.890.00. The Select Board proposed \$8,000. Member Carroll seconded the motion. All members of the Atkinson Budget Committee voted in favor. Vote: 6/0/0.

Chair Smith made a motion for the Budget Committee to propose the same amounts as amended as the Select Board for Recycling, Account Number 43234. Vice Chair Barker seconded the motion. All members of the Atkinson Budget Committee voted in favor. Vote: 6/0/0.

Solid Waste Disposal – Account Number 43241: The Town has not accepted a contract for Solid Waste Disposal.

Health Administration – Account Number 44111: There was no 53rd week in the health inspector wages. The wages are up, but fees are up.

Chair Smith motion for the Atkinson Budget Committee to propose \$9,249, the same as the Select Board. Member Torosian seconded the motion. All members of the Atkinson Budget Committee voted in favor. Vote: 6/0/0.

Recreation – Account Number 45201: The salary lines are seasonal so there is no 53rd week. This department has been voted on.

Library – Account Number 45501:

Ms. Heer informed the Committee that the Select Board approved as proposed. Ms. Heer also informed the Committee that the 53rd week was removed from the individual salary lines. Insurance went up because her spouse is going on her insurance. Ms. Heer adjusted FICA, Medicare and retirement, too.

Member Torosian had a question on the heat line. \$10,070 was expended in FY16. Ms. Heer informed Member Torosian that she there will be two more fuel deliveries but there was a possibility it could be less. Ms. Heer reduced the electric line by \$3,000 because of LED lighting. Ms. Heer explained that the increase in other professional services went up because of the IT Contract.

Chair Smith made a motion for the Atkinson Budget Committee to propose the same as the Select Board for the Library, Account Number 45501, except the six salary lines where the 53rd week was removed. Vice Chair Barker seconded the motion. All members of the Atkinson Budget Committee voted in favor. Vote: 6/0/0.

The Committee returned to a discussion on the Solid Waste contract. Mr. Phair informed them that \$550,000 was low and Vice Chair Barker recommended leaving the line alone. Member Worden commented that 51 minutes were spent before the Committee talked about the budget. The minutes should be reviewed before the meeting. The Committee agreed to an extra meeting of Thursday, December 21, 2017 at 7:30 PM.

Member Carroll made a motion to adjourn the December 12, 2017 meeting of the Atkinson Budget Committee. Vice Chair Barker seconded the motion. All members voted in favor. Vote 6/0/0.

The Tuesday, December 12, 2017 meeting of the Atkinson Budget Committee adjourned at 9:52 PM.