

**TOWN OF ATKINSON, NH**  
**Municipal Budget Committee**  
**Meeting Procedures and Budget Process**

The purpose of these procedures is to allow for the orderly conduct of Town business that is fair for the public, Budget Committee members, volunteers, and Town Employees and provide for open, transparent, and effective local governance.

**ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

- 1) The purpose of the Atkinson Municipal Budget Committee is to assist voters in the prudent appropriation of public funds by preparing a fiscally responsible budget. RSA 32:1. RSA 32:16 enumerates the four essential functions of the Budget Committee.
  - a. Atkinson NH is known as an SB2 town. RSA 40:13, Senate Bill 2, also known as SB2, (Official Ballot Referenda) is a form of town meeting that has two sessions. The first session (deliberative session) is for explanation, discussion, debate, and amendments to the proposed operating budget and warrant articles. The second session (voting session) allows voters to cast an official ballot to pass/fail proposed articles.
  - b. In conjunction with Budget Committee's responsibility to prepare the budget, the committee also has the authority to review current expenditures by acquiring a "comparative statement of all appropriations and all expenditures by them made in such detail as the Budget Committee may require." RSA 32:22. In fact, RSA 32:22 says that the Budget Committee "shall meet periodically to review such statements."
  - c. The Budget Committee has not only the authority but also the obligation to "confer with the governing body or bodies and with other officers, department heads and other officials, relative to estimated costs, revenues anticipated, and services performed to the extent deemed necessary by the Budget Committee." The statute goes on to say that it is "the duty of all such officers and other persons to furnish such pertinent information to the Budget Committee."
  
- 2) The Budget Committee is made up of six (6) members. These members are elected at the annual Town meeting for staggered three (3) year terms. If an opening occurs mid-term, it is the responsibility of the Budget Committee to recruit a qualified individual and fill the position for the remainder of the year. The remainder of that term will be filled by Town warrant at the next Town meeting.
  - a. Every year an organizational meeting is scheduled after Town meeting, at which time the Chairman and Vice Chairman are selected by vote of the committee members present.
  - b. At the organizational meeting, department liaisons are assigned by the Chairman and mutual consensus of the committee.
  - c. At the organizational meeting, the Chairman will present the new meeting schedule for the upcoming budget year.
  - d. A budget clerk will be assigned by the Town Administrator. The Clerk is responsible for preparing all meeting agenda minutes and correspondence as assigned.
  - e. The Board of Selectmen appoints one of its members to serve as a liaison. The purpose of this liaison is to represent the BoS to the Budget Committee. The Town Administrator can also serve as a representative for the BoS. They have a responsibility to communicate budget information between the BoS and the Budget Committee. This liaison votes based on the Board of Selectmen

position, NOT on the liaison's personal preference. This liaison and/or the Town Administrator attends all meetings and has a designated alternate to serve in their stead.

## **PROCESS**

- 1) The budget process starts in late summer/early fall with the various Department Heads meeting with the Town Administrator to review their expenditures. Each budget is then presented by the Department Head to the Board of Selectmen for approval or revision.
- 2) Once the Selectmen review expenditures, the Department Head present their request to the Budget Committee. The Budget Committee may ask questions about any line item and may request additional information to be presented at a later meeting. The Budget Committee will consider each budget at least three (3) times. If more consideration is needed the Department Head and/or Town Administrator will be notified of any questions to be answered and/or information to provide, and by when. The Budget Committee will accept (take under consideration) when first presented, then review it later at a budget review meeting and approve or request further consideration during the review meeting.
- 3) Once the budget review process is completed, the Town Administrator will work with the Budget Committee Chairperson to prepare a completed budget worksheet.
- 4) The Town Administrator prepares a draft warrant, Selectmen and Budget Committee review and recommend.
- 5) The Budget Committee will hold a public hearing to present and finalize the budget.
- 6) The Town will hold a Deliberative Session, attended by the Budget Committee, the Board of Selectmen, and the public to perform a final presentation of the budget and warrants for potential adjustments.
- 7) The Budget Committee may hold one final meeting AFTER Deliberative Session to reconsider votes on budget and warrants. The results will go to the ballot
- 8) The Budget Committee Chairman or an appointee, in collaboration with the Town Administrator, must complete an MS-737 form to be posted with the final Warrant within 20 days after Deliberative Session. The form must be signed by a quorum of the members of the Budget Committee.
- 9) The Town has town meeting where the public will vote to pass/fail the budget and warrants.

## **MEETING SCHEDULES**

- 1) Regular meetings of the Budget Committee shall be held every Tuesday during budget season (September through January) at the Atkinson Town Hall and will convene at 7:00 PM. unless rescheduled by the Chairman due to unforeseen circumstances. Off season workshop meetings may be held on the last Tuesday of the month from March to August. The Budget Committee Chairman will determine a schedule of meeting dates at their yearly organizational meeting.
  - a. The Chairman of the Budget Committee shall determine if insufficient business or other non-urgent matter warrants postponement or cancellation of a scheduled Budget Committee meeting.
  - b. The Chairman of the Budget Committee shall determine if inclement weather or other emergency warrants postponement or cancellation of a scheduled meeting.
  - c. The Chairman of the Budget Committee shall be responsible for notifying the Town Administrator of notice of a cancelled meeting.
  - d. Written notice of all meetings shall be properly posted as required by RSA 91A:2 II. In emergencies, every effort will be made to post a written notice of the emergency meeting with as much notice as possible.



## **AGENDA SETTING**

The Chairman shall review items to be included in the agenda and organize it so that the Municipal Budget business may be accomplished in a timely and efficient manner, and to allow the Committee to make informed decisions and to prevent unnecessary disruptions of Budget Committee meetings. Consideration will be given to continuing the tradition of providing opportunities for residents to address the Committee, therefore the following procedures have been adopted:

- 1) Requests to meet with the Budget Committee and/or to be included on the agenda shall be in writing, stating the purpose, and including all associated documents or information to permit Chairman and Town Administrator to review in advance of the meeting. Please use the attached "Budget Committee Meeting Agenda Request" form and attach all additional information. Requests may not be approved to be added to the agenda if inadequate or lacking information is or is not submitted. This requirement applies to Town Department Heads, employees, Boards, Committees, Commissions, and members of the public. Requests must be received by the Budget Committee Chair by noon the Thursday prior to the meeting on the following Tuesday in order to be considered for inclusion on the agenda.
  - a. The deadline may be waived in the event of an emergency or for items that require the Committee's immediate attention and for which prior notice is not possible.
  - b. The Chairman reserves the right to postpone requested agenda items to a subsequent meeting and/or to request further information on the Committee's behalf, so that the Committee will have enough time to give the matter the attention it may deserve and enough information to be able to make an informed decision.
  - c. The Budget Committee reserve the right to table any agenda item, if, in its opinion, more time or information is required in order to take responsible action.
- 2) The Town Administrator is available to assist with drafting the written request to ensure that it is presented to the Committee in a correct and complete form.
- 3) Each agenda may or may not have a Public Comment session to allow individuals to address any Budget related issues.
- 4) Final-set agendas for regularly scheduled meetings are to be finished, posted publicly in accordance with RSA 91A:2 II, and sent onto all Board members with the associated materials no later than the close of business on the Monday prior to the Committee's scheduled meeting. Items not listed on the final-set agenda, and that are not declared emergency additions, shall not be discussed at the scheduled meeting associated with said agenda.


## **CONDUCT OF MEETINGS**


All participants have a responsibility to adhere to the highest ideals of civility and decorum while participating in all meetings conducted on behalf of the community.


- 1) Role of Presiding officer – The Chairman of the Committee shall be responsible for ensuring that all meetings are conducted in accordance with the requirements of these procedures by ensuring the orderly conduct of Municipal Budget business that comes before the Committee. The presiding Chairman shall have the cooperation and support of the Committee in maintaining order and civility throughout Committee meetings.
- 2) Orderly Conduct of Meetings – The Committee, members of the general public, the Town Administrator, and Town employees shall confine their remarks to the merits of pending questions and shall not engage in personal attacks, or accusations not related to official duties.

- 3) During the public comment portion of the meeting, individuals previously granted time on the agenda will be limited to a five-minute presentation, unless permission to speak for a longer period is requested and granted by majority vote of the Committee. Anyone speaking is required to state his/her name and address. The Chairman may extend the opportunity to speak to non-residents.
- 5) In cases where a member of the public wishes to speak on a matter during the regular course of the meeting, the Chairman may recognize said party, but is under no obligation to do so, and request that he/she rise, be recognized, state their name, place of residence and purpose for addressing the Committee.
- 6) The Chairman will limit or prohibit speakers who are determined to be disruptive or whose remarks are rude, personal, or slanderous. If the person does not withdraw, the Chairman may order a recess of the meeting or may order a police officer or other appropriate authority to remove and/or confine the person in some convenient place until the meeting is adjourned.


Last Update	Action Taken	By Whom
Original	09/06/2022 - Adopted & approved by Budget Committee members Wendy Barker, Peter Torosian, William Smith, Robert Malo, Mark Sakakeeny, Sam Butler	BudCom

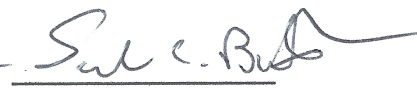
  
 Wendy Barker

  
 Peter Torosian

  
 William Smith

  
 Robert Malo

  
 Mark Sakakeeny  
 9/6/22

  
 Sam Butler