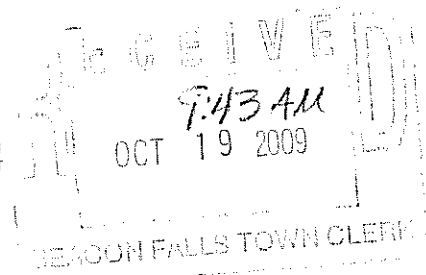


Town of BEACON FALLS
Connecticut

Board of Finance

**TOWN OF BEACON FALLS
BOARD OF FINANCE
REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING
MINUTES
Tuesday, October 13, 2009**



CALL TO ORDER

Chairman M. Bronn called the Regular Monthly Meeting of the Beacon Falls Board of Finance to order at 7:35 P.M.

Present: Chairman M. Bronn, Vice Chairman W. Hopkinson, Board Members G. Smith and A. Choi.

Also Present: Selectman S. Cable, M. Krenesky, D. Sorrentino and Finance Manger M. Gomes.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

W. Hopkinson motioned to table the approval of July 2009 Regular BOF Meeting Minutes until the next Board of Finance Regular Meeting scheduled for November, 2009. G. Smith 2nd the motion. All voted aye.

COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

L. Classey asked if there was a reason that the Town Taxes could not be paid quarterly rather than bi-yearly. The answer was that it was a state statute to pay them bi-yearly.

TREASURERS REPORT

W. Hopkinson motioned to accept the Treasurers Report of August 5, 2009. G. Smith 2nd the motion. All voted aye.

M. Bronn noted that he thought there was more money in the bank than this. M. Gomes explained that he will never see the actual fund balance as money is always coming in and always going out. They also determined that this report was from August 5th and taxes were due August 1st so there may be some payments that need to be caught up to the ledger.

TAX COLLECTORS REPORT

The Board of Finance reviewed the tax collectors reports. M. Gomes noted that the new software is working very well.

W. Hopkinson motioned to accept the Tax Collectors Report for July, August and September. A. Choi 2nd the motion. All voted aye.

Clerks Invoice

G. Smith motioned to accept K. Wilson's Clerk Invoice for \$80.00. W. Hopkinson 2nd the motion. All voted aye.

TOWN CLERKS REPORT

The Town Clerk's report was presented as being incomplete. The Town Clerks report was immediately not accepted.

G. Smith motioned to not accept the Town Clerks Report as it was not complete. W. Hopkinson 2nd the motion.

Discussion: W. Hopkinson asked if any progress has been made on receiving any information from the Town Clerk; information the Board of Finance has been requesting from the Town Clerk. It was pointed out that there was a stack of papers on the conference table which the Town Clerk made available for the Board of Finance in order for them to read about their responsibilities. A board member asked if this was what they were supposed to read to find out that it is "not" their responsibility to request information from the Town Clerk regarding Town monies/collections. W. Hopkinson pointed out that the Board of Finance is responsible for monitoring any town asset. S. Cable noted that it is absolutely the Board of Finances responsibility to request and receive information regarding clerk fees.

S. Cable also noted that the town is going to incur another expense in that the ballots were mailed by the Clerks office with errors in them. There were typos and names spelled wrong. The town is now going to be late in getting the ballots out and they will incur an expense in re-sending them.

BOARD OF SELECTMEN BUDGET TRANSFERS

The transfers that were reviewed by the Board of Finance were ending June 30, 2009. These were the fiscal year ending transfers. According the M. Gomes, going forward should be much more manageable. He wanted to get all the transfers out of the way for the old fiscal year so that this fiscal year will run on a cleaner slate. The budget should run more like it was planned to run.

M. Gomes noted that one of the larger transfer requests is for engineering fees in the amount of \$45,582. M. Bronn asked what is going on with Engineering fees and why are

we spending so much in that area. S. Cable noted that the bottom line is that we received a lot of money from Chatfield Farms which is supposed to cover some of these expenses. That's one of the reasons, she noted. She also mentioned that our fees went up drastically this year. She mentioned that the Board of Selectmen suggested they start a purchase order system and if anyone has any ideas on how to cut back in planning and zoning, inlands & wetlands or know when they are getting close to being over budget it should be looked into. They would like to predict the expenses.

W. Hopkinson suggested that during these poor economic times, we should consider negotiating fees. S. Cable said that we need to have engineers and a lot of it is mandated. She said that people that are sitting on the volunteer commissions are scared to death to make decisions and that's why we have had more lawyers and engineers. W. Hopkinson said she can understand that but maybe they could just sit with the engineers and ask them to reduce their prices in that the Town of Beacon Falls gives them a lot of work and there are firms out there begging for work. It was noted that for the amount of money that was spent on the Engineers, the Town of Beacon Falls could actually have an Engineer on staff. W. Hopkinson noted that this is a major line item for the Board of Finance every year. M. Bronn noted that these fees kill the budget each year. S. Cable noted that yes the professional fees do kill us and yes you could go out to bid for new bid but in reality, our town has a lot of volunteerism so we are paying less than other towns.

M. Bronn asked what the Engineering fees were for. S. Cable said that they are for a variety of things. M. Gomes and D. Sorrentino noted that the engineering invoices are always late. D. Sorrentino mentioned that he had addressed this with the Engineering Firms and the invoices would be current for a couple of months then fall back again.

W. Hopkinson questioned Trooper Over-time. M. Gomes uses the extra duty that we collect and reduces it to get those number out of there (we collected approx. 70K – 80K).

M. Gomes noted that the payroll transfers were for accrued time.

Discussion: W. Hopkinson asked for clarification of the overages for accrued time. It was explained that due to the union contract, all employees are paid for accrued time that they did not use. For example, if an employee does not take two weeks vacation, they are actually getting paid for 54 weeks. It was suggested that they should almost budget for 54 weeks of pay instead of 52. M Gomes suggested that they should probably just put a number in the budget to cover this unused vacation.

M. Krenesky noted that maybe there should be a policy to either use or lose your vacation. The Board of Finance agreed however all agreed that it would have to be taken up at the union level. W. Hopkinson noted that the corporate world just does not work that way; people just don't get paid for unused time anymore. She suggested that those who take two weeks and save two weeks under these stipulations end up with a bonus every June 30th.

M. Gomes noted that he tried to get in all the transfers under fiscal year 2009/2010 so that 2010/2011 could run clean. He pointed out that September is still running well.

Based on the amount of some of the transfers, a Town Meeting is required.

G. Smith motioned to approve all the transfers with the exception of Town Council Retainer \$7,221, Engineering and Consultants \$45,582, and Highway Over Time \$33,057 which he recommends go to the Board of Selectmen to set up public meeting as they exceed the \$20,000 to the specific department. W. Hopkinson 2nd the motion. All voted aye.

A town meeting to approve the transfers was scheduled for October 26, 2009 at 7:00.

It was noted that a check was received from the Fire Department in the amount of \$62,075.82; the town's portion of the fees collected for the ambulance. The next check is expected sometime in January. The Fire Department anticipates that there will be more money next year however, the Fire Department has some big expenses coming up.

The Fire Department found a truck and wanted to purchase it but it was bought by someone else before Beacon Hose could get to it.

Additionally, S. Cable informed the Board of Finance that they may need some money for fencing around the Peter Paul Building.

S. Cable also noted that the Fire House is using some of the locip money and some of their own skills to build an office for personnel.

S. Cable noted another problem is that we were inspected and no one seems to know when the oil tanks were put in the ground but they have to be pulled out and cleaned up. They are now talking about pulling them up and bringing one diesel tank over to Public Works to save money. It will be operated on a key card. The heating oil tank will be kept at the Fire House. S. Cable does not have an exact quote on the cost of this but she did mention that to remove them will be \$4,300. The original quote was for \$21,732 but they are looking for ways to do it less.

S. Cable noted that the Fire House desperately needs a new roof. S. Cable said that what has to be done is look to restore it. Basically, years ago when it was designed, the roof shouldn't have been so high. The pitch is wrong and is causing mold. The Board of Finance asked if they could fix the roof and keep the pitch or does the whole roof have to be broken down. The Board of Finance also asked that "shouldn't there be a 15 – 20 year warranty on roofs?" W. Hopkinson asked if we could get a second opinion on the new roof, pitch and engineers of the roof.

OLD BUSINESS

W. Hopkinson would like to re-visit the Town Clerk issue and asked if we are at a stale mate. G. Smith summarized this issue saying that when the Board of Finance was asking for a bank statement reconciliation of fees collected from the tax payers, they were basically told by the Town Clerks office that it was none of the Board of Finances business. Then, the Board of Finance was given pages and pages of Board of Finance responsibilities that supposedly say also "none of the Board of Finance business" according to the Town Clerk. The Board of Finance has been told that it "is" their business and the Board of Finance believes it "is" their business and that the Board of Finance should stand their ground.

M. Gomes suggested that the Board of Finance allow the new Town Auditor to take care of this. The Board of Finance totally agrees with having the Auditor take care of this. The Board of Finance questioned whether they should make a motion to do such but M. Gomes said it was not necessary and the Auditor would take care of this. Board members wanted to know how soon it could be done, i.e., in the next couple of weeks? According to M. Gomes, probably not that quick but this particular auditor has dealt with times like this and has been given some information regarding this town's issues so this area will definitely be audited.

S. Cable noted that she went to a meeting regarding "organization of town clerk officer". She said that she asked them what other towns do and basically they told her that they could not believe that we still did fees. They said that the 3 other towns that work on a fee base have all the monies collected by the town given directly to the Finance Manager and then the Town Clerk receives a check. A member of the Board of Finance said that absolutely makes sense. S. Cable said that is an administrative change that has to take place immediately in the Town of Beacon Falls. G. Smith said that this is the perfect time to make the change in that it is an election year. He noted that this subject has been talked about for the last four years and it's too bad we have not taken more action by now. G. Smith asked for clarification that the administrative change in order to have all fees collected go to the Finance Manager falls under the Board of Selectmen's responsibility to make happen. It would not be an ordinance change just an administrative change. S. Cable said she would have to look into it.

S. Cable also found out from this workshop that anyone who forecloses on their house, they have to pay a \$100 fee to the town. The Beacon Falls Town Clerk would receive this fee.

G. Smith asked for a motion to have the Town Clerk audited. M. Gomes informed him that we are starting out with a new auditor and because this situation is so unique, the auditor would definitely look into this. The auditor will definitely look into this. The Board of Finance would like the time-line of this process escalated.

NEW BUSINESS

S. Cable noted that no one has sent in a Beacon Falls representative for Region 16 negotiations. W. Hopkinson noted that when she did go, she did not have any input or impact one way or another. M. Krenesky mentioned that he does not believe representatives from the Town of Beacon Falls would be a waste of time. He believes it is very important to have a Town representative. After negotiations, the town will have 30 days to go to referendum and without representatives from our town during negotiations we will not be as strong with any disagreements. S. Cable noted that they have gentleman who will go to the negotiations and represent us. W. Hopkinson was willing to go again but the Board of Finance let her know that the gentleman they have in mind would be fine and that with all the Boards and Committees that W. Hopkinson is currently on is already a lot.

CORRESPONDENCE

None.

G. Smith motioned that on behalf of the Board of Finance, he supports the comments made by B. Ploss. M. Bronn 2nd the motion. All voted aye.

Adjournment

M. Bronn adjourned the meeting at 8:37 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lauren Classey
Clerk for the Board of Finance