

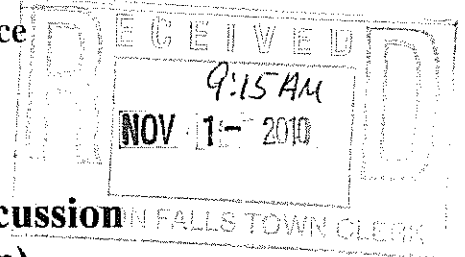
Town of BEACON FALLS
Connecticut

Board of Finance

**TOWN OF BEACON FALLS
BOARD OF FINANCE**

**Public Hearing re: Bond Package Discussion
(Draft Copy - Subject to Revision)**

Tuesday October 26, 2010



CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson of the Board, W. Hopkinson called the meeting of the Public Hearing for discussion to order at 7:30 P.M. with the Pledge of Allegiance. She asked that a group of Boy Scouts lead the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance as they were working on their merit badges.

Present: Vice Chairman G. Smith and Board Members R.Doiron, L. Krepinevich, C. Bielik and B. Ploss

Also present were First Selectman S. Cable and Selectmen M. Krenesky and D. Sorrentino (all in the audience)

Present for Presentation Purposes: M. Pratt, Joe Rodrigo, Jeremy Rodrigo, E. Bea and B. Fitzpatrick

Also present: Approximately 50 town residents

L. Classey read the call.

W. Hopkinson began the meeting by having each person at the head table introduce themselves. She then went on to explain that this meeting was called to give each Town Department an opportunity to explain and share information related to the equipment and project they are requesting. She noted that everyone had handouts regarding the line items in the bond package. She noted that it is a very preliminary list and was formed by multiple department requests that were presented to the Board of Selectmen and then presented to the Board of Finance to bring to a Public Meeting. She noted that the Board of Finance is presenting this list in its entirety regardless of whether or not they support the projects. The intent is to hear all the thoughts and questions from the residents as they pertain to the items listed in the potential bond package. W. Hopkinson also noted that there are other projects that are currently being discussed in town that are not included in this list such as the Wolfe Ave. project and the new school. All questions

will be directly related to the items on this list and that any questions and comments will be limited to 2 minutes per person.

W. Hopkinson also informed everyone that each Department will present their request with as much information as possible. At the end of all presentations, the meeting will be opened up to a question and answer session.

The meeting began with M. Pratt discussing Fuel Tank Replacement

M. Pratt explained that the Fire Department has two fuel tanks underground at the Fire House - 1 is for road fuel and 1 is for heating fuel. DEP has mandated that they both be removed. M. Pratt also noted that Public Works Department has two tanks (1000 gallon for heating fuel and 500 gallon for road fuel) that have to be removed. He explained that this project will remove all underground tanks and have 2 above ground tanks at each facility for heating fuel and an above ground road fuel tank at one facility. He noted that the estimated price from Navies and Young is \$125,000. W. Hopkinson asked what would happen if we did not replace these. M. Pratt explained that as of right now, we can get a \$50,000 fine from DEP but since we have been working with DEP on this issue they have not imposed a fines as of yet.

Jeremy Rodrigo presented on all equipment and EMS equipment requests.

J. Rodrigo first discussed the ladder truck. He noted that the ladder truck that we are looking at is a demonstrator model which is substantially less expensive than if we ordered a new one. He noted that it will come fully loaded with everything we need. He noted that the reason they are asking for the ladder truck is that they had taken their 1969 ladder truck out of service about 7 or 8 years ago (due to failing inspections it had to be taken off the road). He noted that since it's been out of service, we have been relying very heavily on all our neighboring towns when we need this type of support. He noted that several minutes are lost when we have to rely on the neighboring towns. He noted we also rely very heavily on the Naugatuck Fire Department who are a bit quicker but their call load is heavier and the chance of their vehicle not being available is greater. He noted that there are a lot of homes in Beacon Falls where our current ladder does not reach bedrooms. He also noted that ladder trucks are not just for height but also for reach (long driveways, colonials homes, industrial, rescues in around the Naugatuck River, car accidents off of route 8). J. Rodrigo noted that they have presented packages and information in the past to replace this ladder truck but they were unsuccessful in securing the funding for these items.

Pumper Truck - J. Rodrigo noted that generally a fire engine should only be in service for 20 - 25 years and our current pumper truck is 22 years old. As the vehicles get on in years the ability for it to pass inspection declines and the repair costs of the vehicles goes up substantially. He also explained the ISO rating. The cost of homeowners insurance is affected by what type of fire equipment you have in your town. He also noted that the cab of the vehicle that they currently have is an open cap. The driver and 2 passengers are enclosed but the two firefighters who sit in the jump seat are open. He noted that you

are no longer allowed to have open cab fire trucks any longer-this is a requirement of the National Fire Protection Administration - NFPA. He noted that the NFPA actually does not want us to use the open cab any longer although we still do as the department feels it's ok for now.

SCBA - Self Contained Breathing Apparatus. J. Rodrigo explained what an SCBA is (air packs for the fire fighters). He noted that the reason we need to replace our SCBA's is because the equipment we have on hand is up to 30 years old. He also explained interoperability with other towns. He explained that after 911, FEMA and the Federal Government have pushed really hard to have all equipment inter-changeable with all towns. The surrounding towns in our area use a product called Survive Air. He noted that because our air packs need to be replaced anyway, it must be replaced with universal equipment. He noted that when we have universal equipment, we can borrow replacements from other towns. In summary, the air packs need to be replaced due to their age and also they need to conform to the "interoperability" standard. J. Rodrigo noted that they have been actively seeking grants for their equipment (he noted that they are always grant writing and actively pursuing grant money and over the last 7 or 8 years they have received approximately \$500,000 in grant money), but he noted that they were just granted (through FEMA) \$135,000 for air packs. The new number that they will be asking for is \$95,000. He noted that 22 of the air bottles have to be replaced as they are no longer usable - they will be taken off the shelves.

Ambulance - J. Rodrigo noted that they are looking to replace the 1999 Chevy. He noted that they like to keep the ambulances on the road for 10 years (we are already past the 10 year mark). He noted that they felt they would try and keep this ambulance on the road for one more year to off-set costs but at this point, with it being 11-12 years old, it needs to be replaced.

E. Bea - Road Project. He noted that the Department is requesting \$4,715,000 and along with Navies and Young they came to the conclusion on which roads need the most work and they are broken down by the ones that have bases deteriorating and they need to get totally re-done. Then we have other roads that can take surface treatments such as chip sealing and other roads that will take a milling. He noted that it's broken down for this bond issue by the roads in the hill section, Blackberry, Patricia and Dolly. He noted that Blackberry as everyone knows is in bad shape and the drainage is all in there and we need to re-claim this road, part of it was done, and widen out the corner. He said that once this is done, he would say it will be a good 6 or 7 years before they had to look at it again for any type of touch up maintenance. He noted that Dolly and Patricia have issues with drainage up there. He said it's a terrible road base and that there is no more road base and noted that there is also a sewer issue up there. He also noted that the Dolly and Patricia areas also encumber the sewers that are going in there. He noted that Highland Ave., Maple and Wolfe Ave. - will all get new sidewalks and curbing. He noted that there are issues with the sewers on Maple Ave. and Wolfe Ave. He noted that you can see how the roads are and what they look like and noted that the reason these roads are in such bad shape is because we need a program in place. He noted we can have a program in place with this bond issue. He noted that the other roads we can get some STEAP

money and possibly LOCIP money. He noted that the other roads and areas will need some type of surface treatment especially up on Rimmon Hill.

Pay Loader - E. Bea noted that the pay loader that they have is a 1989 John Deere and it's a 21 year old front line machine and has reached its life expectancy. He noted that it's just not performing with what they want to do with it in Public Works with regards to the transfer station. He noted to recondition the machine, he had to put new tires on it last year and got four tires and there were only 7 left. Parts availability is dwindling. He noted that if they were to try and recondition the machine it would cost around \$100,000. He noted that is a very high number but once you take the machine apart is when they know what's really going on. He noted that we could get a little money for the current machine and there are contractors out there that would pay a bit of money for it. He feels that this would be a good investment. He said we should follow an equipment replacement program and that we are putting more money into it than it's worth.

G. Smith questioned E. Bea regarding the sewers on Dolly Drive and Patricia Terrace. G. Smith asked for a clarification from E. Bea noting that E. Bea stated there is a sewer problem on these two roads but G. Smith noted that there are not any sewers on the road. E. Bea agreed that there are no sewers on the road. G. Smith's question was "how could you have a sewer problem if there are no sewers up there?". E. Bea answered that he just heard people with septic systems and everything and this would go along with sewerage the whole section of town there. G. Smith asked if this meant we would be sewerage the entire town. E. Bea answered no but that section already has sewers up there and he heard that people have called him and asked him if they have any plans to put in sewers in that section of the town. G. Smith asked for clarification that there is not a "sewer" problem on that road it's just that they will be opening the road and since the road will be open we will be extending sewers up those two roads. E. Bea answered that he does not have any steady data that there is any problems it's just that the taxpayers are saying there's a problem up there but it would be wise to do that if we are going to open up the road and do all that work you wouldn't want to go back 3 years later and open up the road again if there is a sewer problem.

B. Fitzpatrick - Waste Water Treatment Plant - Explained that we are currently in the state of trying to upgrade the plant - it is a 24/7 operation. He noted that a few years back they had to prioritize what needed to be done at the plant. They had to have the pumping station on Railroad Ave. refurbished and upgraded. He noted that we were mandated by the state to discontinue chlorinating our water before it left the plant and had to put in ultra violet disinfection - these two were priorities. He noted that what he has now is a mandate from the state to upgrade the plant to remove nitrogen. The plant was never designed to remove nitrogen. He noted that we are paying approximately \$50,000 this year alone for nitrogen credits. He noted that this is the same situation for a lot of towns. He noted this will take a lot of work and noted that some of the things that we do want replaced like clarifiers were done in the early 90's and it's just getting tired; it all ties in with the nitrogen. He noted that he's not an expert on the funding aspect of this but did note that DEP runs its grant system differently than most. He noted that they run their grants on how desperate your situation is and we are currently not on the list. He

noted that what we are asking for right now is mandated and it will end up costing us a lot more if we don't do anything about it.

Joe Rodrigo - Matthies Park - J. Rodrigo began by giving a history of the park. He noted that Parks and Rec after reviewing the park over a number of years has come to the conclusion that after deferring maintenance for a number of years, determined that Matthies Park is beyond what we should have been doing for the last forty years. It's at the point where the pond can be affected. The settlement ponds are collapsing, the front dam wall is leaking water, there's a variety of issues going on there. He noted that the Parks and Rec made a recommendation to the Board of Selectmen for additional funding for Matthies park. For the first time they added a line item to the budget for Matthies Park and also recommended that they hold a public hearing to get input from the public of how they want to fund the things necessary to upkeep and maintain the park. The meeting was held on August 16th and a number of people from the public recommended that they go to bond for the maintenance instead of going to state and Federal because they did not want to open the park to people outside of the town (the gentlemen that donated this property to the town requested that it be kept for Beacon Falls only). Keeping that in mind, they began looking into bonding and also hired a company named TPA to put together a park plan of what we want the park to be (the biggest complaint of the park is that there is no public restroom - the TPA plan is on the Park & Recs website if anyone would like to view it). J. Rodrigo presented posters and diagrams of the park and noted that approximately \$1,000,000 would bring the park up to accessibility. The other number would be related to maintenance issues - all the maintenance for the water ways, (it's not a natural pond) front dam is breaking (approx. 175,000), a mile a slues (canal) ways (approx. \$500,000 to put them back together). The two numbers he presented was TPA to bring the park up to what it was in 1972 and the other number is for maintaining the park.

At this point the meeting was open for questions and answer. W. Hopkinson reviewed that public comments will be kept to 2 minutes each and that all should state their name and address for the record.

Fred Smith, 4 Patricia Terrace - noted that they have been on Patricia Terrace since 1973 and they have never had a real road there. He noted that the septic systems are approximately 37 years old and are having problems. He noted that he pumps his system out every year to prolong substantial problems. He noted that they definitely have a problem on their street regarding the septic systems. He noted that he spoke to everyone on his street and had a petition signed and brought to a meeting requesting that sewers be put in on Patricia Terrace. He noted that when they put in the sewers on Coventry Lane, he does not know why they didn't continue to Patricia Terrace as that would have been the time to put in the sewers. He noted that the septic tanks on that road have already come above the ground and at times it smells (he noted that his is definitely a health hazard). He noted that to put a road in and then to cut it up later to put sewers in would be a waste of time and money. He noted that they waited a long time for a road and sewers and he really appreciates if all would consider this.

Vince Mornow, 3 Laurel Ridge -Ladder Truck - He noted it would be helpful if they knew how many times the town had to rely on other towns for assistance. J. Rodrigo noted that this year along they requested mutual aid 11 times.

Road Projects - He noted that they are looking for the largest amount of money in the package (\$4,715,000) and felt that was the skimpiest presentation he's heard. He noted that it would be helpful if the public knew 1. what needs to be done, 2. why it needs to be done and 3. where it needs to be done. He noted that would be very helpful in the public making their decision as to whether or not they will vote for it. He noted that he does not need that information right now but if the boards could put it together and present it, it would be helpful.

Matthies Park - He noted it would be helpful to know how many people from Beacon Falls actually utilize the park. This will be helpful for those of us who are interested in supporting this bond.

E. Bea noted that on the \$5,115,000 will include Blackberry, Dolly, Maple, Highland, Patricia and Wolfe will be reclaimed, rip the whole road out and put in a new surface in there, sidewalks going up in the hill section, sewer lines and he's not exactly sure if the poles will need to be moved or kept there. V. Mornow noted that what he would like to know is why all this needs to be done. E. Bea noted that the road is deteriorating, this is in his opinion and the town engineers opinion. The base is coming apart and there is no base left there and the sewer lines needs to be replaced or repaired but until we open it up we will know better what we need. We need to put in all new sidewalks in the school area and he believes that goes along with beautifying the downtown area. That type of work needs to be done up there. Other areas would include reclaiming and some drainage work, other areas would take surface treatment.

W. Hopkinson asked what would happen if we didn't do this work. And S. Cable asked E. Bea to give examples of what they have had to do in the past to take care of this. E. Bea said that every time they have to lift the road up for a water main break or anything, they just patch over the road, there is no base left - all they are doing now is patching and he noted it's like shoveling smoke with a pitchfork. W. Hopkinson noted that a sink hole appeared out of nowhere in front of Laurel Ledge and she said these are the types of things that we would like to take care of and keep us from possibly being liable for damage. She asked Mr. Mornow if this was helping to answer his question and he said yes and that he was just pointing out that it is a lot of money and wanted a better appreciation of this.

L. Damico, 57 Maple Ave., He asked E. Bea about reconstructing various roads, are sewer lines included - E. Bea answered yes. L. Damico noted that he has lived on that road for 47 years and the road has never been paved in all 47 years. He noted that there is only 1 storm drain on the entire street and the sidewalks are also in terrible condition. He also noted that there are children that do not walk on the sidewalks when they go from the nursery school to Laurel Ledge. He noted that he can only speak for the area that he

has lived for many years and the roads definitely need work and therefore he would support a bond package for the roads.

M. Krenesky, Maple Ave. - A Selectman for the town of Beacon Falls and also the Town Historian - noted that this area in Beacon Falls is the oldest sewer area in Beacon Falls. He noted that it was done in approximately 1910 and the water company does not even have tax cards nor do they know anything about the water lines on these streets. He noted that there are a number of issues here. He noted that when his neighbors house had a leak, the water company found some led piping.

Kurt Hummel, Patricia Terrace noted that he was in support of Fred Smith's comments. He noted that all the houses on this road are having problems with their septic systems. He noted that within the next year, his septic system will either have to be replaced or he will have to pay for the sewer system but it has to be one or the other, he cannot afford to do both. He also noted that the systems are so old that sometimes they definitely smell.

Matthies Park - K. Hummel also commented on the fact that he uses Matthies Park and camps out there once per year with the boy scouts. He noted that it's a beautiful park and he would like to be able to keep it just for the Town of Beacon Falls. He noted that a little maintenance goes a long way.

Jerry Komerowski, 15 2nd Street, asked Jeremy Rodrigo about the zoning change that allows for 6 story buildings. J. Rodrigo answered that they can get to the top floor of Beacon Mill Village. They can reach 75 feet.

Ned Grace, Cedar Lane, noted that it would be helpful to know how many people utilize Matthies Park but did note that it would be very difficult to get that number because most of the time no one knows when someone comes in or leaves. He noted that whenever he is there, he sees a lot of people on bikes, etc.

L. Damico noted that it would be very helpful to taxpayers if they could present this bond package and how it would affect the mil rate, i.e., if your house is assessed at \$200,000, this bond package would increase your taxes by for example \$35.00 per year. Mr. Damico also addressed the ladder truck sharing a story of a very tragic fire that happened years ago when children were lost in a fire because they could not get to them because they had an older aerial truck.

John Smith, Bethany Road - Tank Removal - asked M. Pratt if the prices that he submitted include the replacement of the tanks or just the removal. M. Pratt responded by saying that it includes the removal and replacements. J. Smith noted that it seems like it's a high number for this and was wondering if it was because of the ground was "hot".

Pay Loader - J. Smith noted to E. Bea that the \$150,000 for the pay loader are budget numbers so he asked E. Bea if he had a quote on the pay loader. E. Bea responded by saying that it's \$150,000 for the loader but could probably get it for a little bit cheaper. J. Smith noted that if they worked really hard and tried to make a deal they could get it

cheaper. J. Smith also asked that if the numbers do come in lower, what happens to the money that was bonded. S. Cable answered that they only use or take out the money they need from the Bond for whatever specific project. The money will be available (authorized) but they only take the money need for a specific project. Hopefully grant money continues to come in and less will be needed but the bond is about how much we are authorized for each project.

M. Pratt noted to E. Bea that he had looked at the spec sheet for the pay loader and wanted to make sure that the Department is getting all the proper attachments they need with this pay loader. He noted that as a resident, if they are going to spend the money on the machine that they get every tool they need for the machine so that a year down the road they are not asking for another \$20,000 to \$30,000 put in their budget to get the couple of extra items. He noted that when he looked at the spec sheet he noted that there were two items listed that aren't included and feels that they should be part of it. E. Bea noted that maybe that information did not get put in it but this machine when he originally started looking at it, that's why they need to go for this machine because it has detachable buckets, forks and it will also have grappling to pick up all the brush because what we are doing every time we load the brush we are loading a lot of dirt. E. Bea said these items are right in this already. S. Cable noted that they have been researching state bids for the pay loader because it will be the cheaper way to do it.

Tom Kings, 12 Fieldstone Lane, noted that he thinks the proposed bond package is great but his biggest question is that on number 3 of the notes, states that future interest rates will likely be higher. He noted that this makes him very concerned because he thinks that the interest rates in the future are going to go up dramatically and he does not think this is being taken into account.

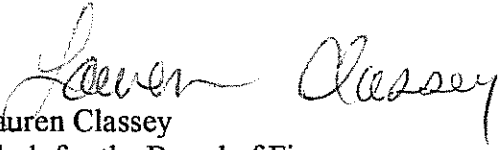
Dave Rybinski - past Fire Chief and current Captain - he noted that of all the things that the Fire Department is looking for, not one is more important than the other. He pointed out that they have given money back in the past due to grant money. He noted that the equipment they are looking for are from state bids. He noted that he worked with Chief Pratt and Chief Clooney on these items and these costs are specific. The numbers in this package are for specific unit and if these items are not acted on in a certain amount of time, the numbers are going to go up substantially. He noted that it does look like a lot of money and we are all tax payers, but the items that we looked at are the best items for our town. He talked about the capabilities of this particular truck in that it can get up to 100 feet and also go down to the river. He also noted that we have \$12,500 for turnout gear and to gear up one person it costs roughly \$2,000 to suit up. He noted that most of the gear that is hanging in the fire house now is no good (he noted that we are going to get grant money for 22 sets this year). He noted that the Fire Departments current budget to the town is now \$200,000 less net than it was 10 years ago.

W. Hopkinson asked if there were any other public comments. When there were no further comments. W. Hopkinson thanked all the presenters for their efforts and that it is very appreciated.

NOV 1 - 2010

R. Doiron motioned to adjourn the meeting. C. Bielik 2nd the motion. All voted aye. Meeting was adjourned at 8:25

Respectfully Submitted,


Lauren Classey
Clerk for the Board of Finance

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