

**TOWN OF BEACON FALLS
BOARD OF FINANCE
REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING
MINUTES
(draft copy-subject to revision)
Tuesday October 12, 2010**

CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson of the Board, W. Hopkinson called the meeting to order at 7:30 with the Pledge to the Flag.

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

Also present were First Selectmen S. Cable, Selectmen D. Sorrentino and M. Krenesky,

M. Pratt, E. Groth, Joe Rodrigo, Jeremy Rodrigo, D. Rybinski and E. Groth

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

G. Smith motioned to approve the minutes of August 10th and September 14th. R. Doiron 2nd the motion. All voted aye except 1 abstention (W. Hopkinson was not present for the majority of the September 14th meeting so she abstained). Motion passed..

COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

None.

TREASURERS REPORT

None.

TAX COLLECTORS REPORT

None.

TOWN CLERKS REPORT

G. Smith asked if this was the report they were going to get going forward. There was some confusion as to which reports were the Town Clerks report and which were the Finance Managers Report.

R. Doiron motioned to accept the Town Clerks Report. C. Bielik 2nd the motion.

Discussion: The reports that were received were reviewed to determine what was the report and what was the supporting documentation. All were satisfied.

All voted aye. Motion passed.

FINANCE MANAGERS REPORT

W. Hopkinson tabled this report as M. Gomes may be coming to this meeting.

TRANSFERS

None.

BOARD CLERKS INVOICE

None.

CORRESPONDENCE

1. Minutes from the Board of Selectmen Meeting were received.
2. An invitation for the BOE meeting held on 10/6 was received.
3. A notice for Naugatuck River Greenway project special meeting was received. The meeting will be held on 10/21/2010 at 7:30 P.M. at the Beacon Falls Senior Center.
4. A notice of the BOS meeting cancellation and reschedule to a Special Regular meeting on 10/4 was received.
5. A copy of the letter to C. Bielik appointing him to the BOF was received.
6. A copy of M. E. Fernandes resignation letter was received.

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7. A letter from S. Cable to all Boards and Commission regarding Board Clerk raises was received and read.

A lengthy discussion regarding this letter took place. It was noted that monies cannot be taken from another line item, it must be in the Clerk line item. B. Ploss noted that if money was factored into board budgets and it was not noted, is not right. W. Hopkinson noted that there is now *inequity between boards and that it may be more lucrative for a someone to clerk for one board over another and she thinks the process and decision should be equitable*. G. Smith wanted to know what happens when a someone clerks for several boards, does she get paid more for one than for another. It was questioned whether the BOF is now supposed to budget for an increase for their clerk during the next cycle in that other clerks might be given a raise. It was noted that we had a tight budget and nobody received a raise. W. Hopkinson asked if they could receive a list of those boards that gave raises. S. Cable noted that they are still receiving that list but they are currently having an ongoing battle with the boards regarding this issue.

W. Hopkinson, speaking on behalf of the Board of Finance, respectfully asked that we try and handle Board Clerk raises consistently. She noted that the town is in an extremely tight budget and does not think that this is the year to give pay increases.

S. Cable asked that they Board of Finance respectfully send a letter to the Board of Selectmen noting their concerns regarding the raises.

C. Bielik noted that his problem with this is that it looks like we are trying to correct something after the fact. The correct process should have been to budget for increases up front and noted that not everyone did that. He noted that it should have been done across all the commissions but since that did not take place, there are some commissions that have a little bit of fat because they budgeted ahead. He noted that we are not trying to give them a "get out of jail free card" by sending out this letter saying that if they were smart enough to budget ahead of time you can give raises to your clerks but if you played the game the right way and don't have the money in your line item, you cannot give them a raise. He noted that his process is not equitable or fair across the board and that if you played by the rules, you don't have the monies for a raise but if you did not play by the rules, you did. W. Hopkinson also noted that had the Board of Finance known that there was extra money put in the budget for this purpose, they would not have supported this.

The Board of Finance will send a letter to the Board of Selectmen regarding their concerns.

It was noted that they are now touching on legal issues which may be left to interpretation. The boards should be able to spend their money down to zero.

B. Ploss asked if there was any money left in the clerks line items in last year's budget.

S. Cable noted that the Board of Selectmen set the policy for the clerks years ago. It appears that everyone has now forgotten about that policy. G. Smith noted that this letter that was put out, reverses the policy that was made years ago. It was noted that they did go backwards due to issues that were brought up at the BOS meeting and they are just trying to be fair to everyone.

W. Hopkinson noted that they have a responsibility to the tax payers to keep expenses as low as possible. S. Cable noted that she respectfully asks the BOF to send a letter to the BOS noting their concerns.

G. Smith noted that as long as the line items do not exceed the approved line item, then it is not a Board of Finance issue.

The Police Department's request for raises for their part-timers was also briefly discussed. It was noted that the request for raises for part-timers should have been brought up at budget time. It was also noted that the part-timers have not been receiving raises like the union officers.

BOARD OF SELECTMEN BOND PACKAGE

The Bond package was reviewed by the Board of Finance.

It was noted that the bond package as it is currently presented includes a full list of projects.

Noted: fuel tank removal is mandated, the cost for the money to repair the roads has been reduced due to STEAP money, sewer plant upgrade is mandated.

The roads were discussed and it was asked if this was a complete list of roads. It was noted that this is a priority list.

R. Doiron asked about the ladder truck and the time line noting that the longer we wait, the more the price will go up. D. Rybinski noted that the town could issue a Non-Binding letter of intent which will hold the 1st right of refusal for 60 days and the town would not be liable to purchase the truck. R. Doiron noted that if this is the case, he would make a recommendation to do that.

A Public Hearing would have to be held first; a referendum does not have to be held.

R. Doiron noted that he does not remember anything being presented to them regarding the house on Mathis Park. He noted that he cannot see spending any money on the project if the house is not going to be taken care of. J. Rodrigo responded and a lengthy discussion took place. The TPA plan was told to leave the house out of the plan. It was noted that the house will take care of itself if nothing is done to it. It will age the way it will age. There are a lot of issues with the Island and the house. It was noted that peripheral stuff could be done but it does not include the house. Someone can get hurt on the house, etc. R. Doiron believes this project should be all or nothing. J. Rodrigo noted that he could seal up the house so that no one has access to it for a very small amount of money. J. Rodrigo noted that he does not believe addressing the property would be a good million dollars spent. He noted that they did have a public meeting to discuss Mathies and the overwhelming majority did not want to see the park be made available to the public. It was noted that making the park available to the public might be the only way to support this project. E. Groth noted that Mathies is not a very high attended park. He has been there on a few occasions and noted that very few people have ever been there when he is there so he is questioning whether this amount of money should even be spent on something that very few people use. E. Groth also noted that he was originally against opening up Mathies to people from out of town but now feels differently about it as he believes that is the only way they could get it up and running. He noted that there was a reason this property was donated to the town because it was a money pit.

G. Smith voiced his opinion on the entire bond package: He noted that he has put a lot of thought into the entire bond package and going through each line item he notes that 1. Fuel Tanks are

mandated, they must be replaced, 2. Mathies Park (he noted that we don't know how far 2 million dollars will get us on the project)- too many unknowns, he does not support Mathies Park, 3. Ladder truck - he believes we still have too many issues with where we are financially and getting budgets passed, 4. The pumper truck we can still get another 3 years out of, 5. SCBA is mandated, 6. He believes we can still rotate the ambulances and still be safe - he noted this is based on being fiscally responsible, 7. Roads - he does not believe we have a complete comprehensive plan (he noted that he had asked for his at the last meeting), S. Cable noted that they have a 5 year plan and that this is a list of the major roads that have to be done. S. Cable noted that they took the original list that was created by Rinky and they updated the list. She noted that she will have the engineers go through the rest of the roads and provide documentation. G. Smith noted that he had asked for this list and without the list he will not vote for the roads. 8. Pay Loader - G. Smith noted that he had asked the guys in the town if they needed the pay loader, 2 said yes, 2 said no therefore he believes we could get along without a new pay loader - he does not support the loader. In summary, the only items G. Smith is supporting is the Fuel Tanks, Sewer Plant and the SBCA's. He noted that when he sees updated recent documentation by a qualified professional, he will support the roads. He needs to know all the information regarding roads, i.e., what's underneath them, water, etc. He also noted that he would like the same information for Mathies before they go forward.

J. Rodrigo noted that it is a huge financial number to do everything that needs to be done at Mathies Park. He noted that we deferred the maintenance on this park since we took it over. G. Smith noted that he is under the impression based on the last meeting that, pond is filling in with silt, the walls are falling down, if the walls fall down the island falls down, the house falls down, now you have asbestos in the pond. There are things that have to be done so what will it cost to do them and what will it cost to maintain the park annually. J. Rodrigo noted that the house will not fall into the pond nor will the silt over-run the pond in the next 5 years. He noted that we have to begin maintaining the park or things will get progressively worse. He noted that it will take 1 full time and 1 part time personnel to maintain Mathies Park .

B. Ploss noted that at some point, the house on the pond will need to be addressed especially as they relate to environmental concerns. J. Rodrigo noted that it will have to do with what kind of laws will be changed in the next 30 years. He noted he will have more trouble taking the house down then he would encapsulating the house.

W. Hopkinson was concerned about how this will be presented to the town. S. Cable noted that she thinks this should all be presented to the town and let them decide which projects they would like to support. It was noted that all department heads will be at this meeting to be able to explain their needs and answer questions from the town. It was noted that the bundle of the bond package will be presented to the public but people can vote on each item individually. S. Cable noted that after the informational meeting, they can re-do the package depending on what the public wanted and then go from there

W. Hopkinson asked that back-up documentation be ready for the public meeting. S. Cable noted that they will have the Department heads attend and that this will be the time for the public to voice their opinions.

B. Ploss asked that J. Rodrigo get the information of how much it will cost to deal with the house at Mathies. J. Rodrigo will try and get some numbers. He noted that it is tough to get environmental people.

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R. Doiron motioned that the Board of Finance hold a public hearing to bring the Bond Package before the town for public discussion. C. Bielik 2nd the motion.

Discussion: J. Blesse noted that since we are going to the Town for discussion regarding the bond package, are we sure that what the bond package includes is a complete list? Is there any other wish lists? He noted that there are a lot more roads that need to be repaired than what is being presented.

W. Hopkinson noted that this does not complete the wish list but it is what we are going forward with now.

J. Blesse noted that we know there is a school coming, we know we own 35 Wolfe Ave., and that discussions are nice but does this list include all that we need. He asked when will the ladder truck be needed, when will the study of the roads be done. J. Blesse continued with examples of the point he was making in that is this a complete wish list of discussion points. Will we need another 4 million dollar bond package for next year, 3 million for the year after, etc. What is the real number for the next 10 years?

Vote taken on the motion resulted in C. Bielik, W. Hopkinson and R. Doiron voting aye for the motion to pass and G. Smith and B. Ploss in opposition of the motion. The motion passed.

M. Krenesky presented documentation on the first steps of a new phone system for the town hall. His documentation was reviewed and it was noted that there are 16 circuits that make up the 36 phones. M. Pratt noted that there should be one or two lines that should support all these phones. M. Krenesky noted that they are making progress with this and have found items that we are paying for that didn't exist. It was noted that the town was paying for a line to Patricia Terrace (S. Cable's old house) that was supposed to be removed when Mihachick took office.

FINANCE MANAGERS REPORT

R. Doiron noted that some of the items on the Finance Managers report wage columns were in excess of 35% and they shouldn't be over 25% at this point. He noted that the mini bus driver is 52% expended. It was explained that this account gets reimbursed when trips are taken.

It was also noted that the Fire Department expense report is creeping up to 56% spent. M. Pratt explained that they took care of their big ticket items in the beginning of the fiscal year so that at the end of the year they are not rushing around to try and get things paid for. He noted that he has a \$200 bill that was supposed to be paid out of last year's budget and now has to be paid out of this year's budget.

G. Smith motioned to accept the Finance Manger's Report. B. Ploss 2nd the motion. All voted aye.

NEW BUSINESS

B. Ploss mentioned Chatfield Farms. S. Cable noted that she spoke with the lawyers that are working with the company that foreclosed and they are trying to work things out. She noted in the interim if they have granted anyone work in the development noting that they are taking dirt out. The response was that no one has been given any permission to take anything out and they don't even want anyone on the property. She asked why we have not been notified because we

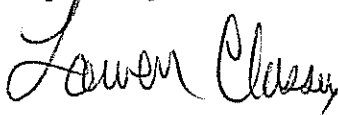
would have notified the police department that no one is supposed to be up there. S. Cable noted that the Beacon Falls Police Department has just today been instructed to deal with this situation. G. Smith noted that Chatfield Farms still owns the property. A discussion continued regarding who owns the property and whether they have foreclosed yet or not. G. Smith noted that before police are dispatched to private property, we should be sure of the situation. S. Cable asked G. Smith that if he knows a better contact to share it with her as she is having difficulty getting in touch with the correct person. G. Smith noted that he is only going by the land records and noted that until possession of your property is taken, the owners is still responsible for the real estate, he thinks that the towns attorney should be contacted before police are dispatched to private property and telling the people to not take things off the property. B. Ploss noted that he has been watching truck after truck, day after day taking loads of dirt. Several discussions continued. R. Doiron asked how this is a Board of Finance issue. B. Ploss noted that if they are hauling dirt off that property and making money off it then it is a Board of Finance issue. G. Smith noted that if B. Ploss is speaking as a member of the public then he should reclude himself as a member of the Board of Finance.

W. Hopkinson noted that her question as a Board of Finance member would be related to what is going to happen with the property of Chatfield Farms as well as Pond Springs as they relate to whether or not they will remain 55 and older housing. M. Krenesky noted that those conversations have not yet taken place. W. Hopkinson noted that it will not be good for the BOE population swing if all the homes open up to school age children. It was noted that as of right now, there is no indication of that happening.

C. Bielik motioned to adjourn the meeting at 8:55 P.M. R. Doiron 2nd the motion. All voted aye.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:55 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,



**Lauren Classey
Clerk for the Board of Finance**