

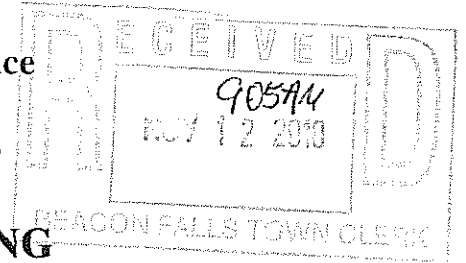
TOWN of BEACON FALLS  
*Connecticut*

Board of Finance

**TOWN OF BEACON FALLS  
BOARD OF FINANCE  
REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING  
MINUTES**

**(draft copy-subject to revision)**

**Tuesday November 9, 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 L. Krepinevich

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

W. Hopkinson opening the meeting noting that the agenda was going to be changed a bit due to time constraints for her at this meeting. The Bond Package Discussion will be the first item.

Bond Package Discussion: W. Hopkinson noted that the Board of Finance's charge was to recommend to the Board of Selectmen how they think the Bond Package should go to the public, i.e., what items are included, etc. W. Hopkinson noted that the BOS does not have to follow their recommendation, how the Bond Package ultimately gets presented is totally up to the Board of Selectmen. The Board of Finance should decide if they are bundling the package or are they going to itemized the items to be voted on.

W. Hopkinson noted that her recommendation is to break out each item so they can be voted on separately. Her reasoning for this is that there are some items in the bond package that are critical and the town cannot afford to have them fail the vote. If the items are voted upon separately, the public can pick and choose the items they are willing to support.

W. Hopkinson also noted that she has an issue with supporting a couple of the items on the proposed bond package list, one being Matthies Park. She noted that some of the things on this list are "nice to have's" and noted that we did hear from the public during the budget process and the taxpayers are not looking for "nice to have" right now. The taxpayers are purely looking for necessities with the way the economy is right now. She noted that we do not have a complete run down of exactly what we would need for Matthies and noted that we do have an overview but some outstanding questions. She noted that a very small group of people voted at a meeting to not open up the park to residents outside of Beacon Falls and pointed out that by not opening up the park to outside residents we thereby forfeit possible grants that can only be applied for if the park is open to the general public. She would like a bit more clarification on this issue. She noted that a very small population of Beacon Falls spoke to the entire town and she would like to re-visit this before Matthies Park is brought in with the bond package.

W. Hopkinson also asked for clarification on the road work (noting that she does support the road project). She asked that if they would net the sewer assessment piece against the amount before going for the bond. M. Gomes answered no and noted that is why we have 1.9 million on the books for sewer assessments. He noted you pay for the road and pay for the sewer upgrades and assess them later - it is a two step process and not a netting of the two.

C. Bielik responded by saying that he thought W. Hopkinson's approach is a good approach to take. This is based on his own observations from this last budget cycle. He noted that he saw a significant level of acrimony over things as small as a \$5,000 line item for fireworks so he's concerned about bundling the package and having the entire package be shot down due to people not supporting "nice to have's". He believes that if it is bundled, it will not pass. He noted that the people who are paying for the bond package should be able to pick what they want to support. He also noted that he is in agreement with W. Hopkinson's take on Matthies Park noting that due to the undefined nature of exactly what is needed for this park. He suggested that the amount for Matthies park also be broken down because part of the amount they are asking for includes some critical issues (have to be done) and nice to have's. He believes that there are some things that are absolutely necessary and some things that are not therefore it might be wise to break down the numbers for the park and have a better explanation what is absolutely critical to the park.

W. Hopkinson noted that she finds it very hard to choose whether or not we get a new ambulance or ladder truck because she does not want to be the one who never let it come to the public especially if they are ever needed. C. Bielik responded that this should be up to the public as to what they want to put in the bond package and what they are willing to live with for the next three to five years and then be prepared to deal with the consequences.

B. Ploss agrees but noted that there are some things that cannot be messed with such as the air packs. He suggest that maybe there should even be a 3rd list in order of priority as there are things that are absolutely critical and no one wants these things hanging over

their heads. He also noted that we don't want the DEP fining us. He suggests that the BOF in conjunction with the BOS recommend that we really need some things especially as they relate to resident and fire fighter safety noting that tank removal is critical as well due to the cost of removal or the cost of fines for not removing them. B. Ploss noted that if after that, the public chooses to spend more on things like Matthies Park then that is up to them.

A discussion took place regarding the condition of the roads and all agreed that the roads should be on the priority list due to their condition and the liability that goes along with their condition.

L. Krepinevich agrees with all of the above statements and that we should be giving the public the final say. He believes that the air packs and tank removals should be priority as well for the reasons already stated. He believes that Matthies Park should be the least priority.

All agreed that the wastewater treatment should be on the "A", priority list as we are going to get fined if we don't do what we need to do. B. P loss noted that he's not sure that the wastewater will be approved.

M. Krenesky noted that his understanding is the state has not yet formalized what they are requesting so we are not sure yet what we have to meet for numbers. S. Cable noted that we do know what we have to meet for numbers and also noted that we will get fined. *She noted the number that we have been discussing does not include phosphorous, we have only been dealing with nitrogen.* A discussion continued regarding variable numbers and what will be needed in the future. G. Smith noted that he spoke with B. Fitzpatrick and he does not know what the end number will be because he cannot foresee what the state may be asking for in 6 - 8 months.

S. Cable noted that we cannot predict what comes before us as far as what the state requirements can be. G. Smith noted that there are some things that we definitely know such as the new school in region 16 and work to be done on Laurel Ledge, etc. A discussion continued regarding the time frames of the items we know but there are also many unknowns, i.e., Wolfe Ave., phase II of Matthies Park etc.

G. Smith noted that he disagrees with putting the bond package out in an A, B and C type of list for the same reason that we don't want to bundle it together. He noted that there are some things that they may see as definite needs and the public may not so he believes that everything needs to be separated individually. He noted that he was pleasantly surprised how everyone seemed to be supportive at the Informational Meeting and thinks that people know that there are some things that have to be done. He thinks that when people go to vote they will use their heads and that's why he thinks they should be kept individually. G. Smith also noted that if the referendum is set up so they vote on individual items they will know without a shadow of a doubt what the public supports and what they do not. G. Smith noted that he does not support Matthies Park, the ladder truck and noted he is still on the fence with the ambulance.

A lengthy discussion took place regarding the ambulance, i.e., a replacement van or a bigger vehicle. A question came up as to the number that J. Rodrigo gave of 11 times this year they needed mutual aid - does that mean they used the ladder truck 11 times or does that mean they needed someone on standby 11 times?

W. Hopkinson asked for some motions as to how they want to present this to the Board of Selectmen.

**G. Smith motioned that we put each item on the ticket individually. C. Bielik 2nd the motion. All voted aye.**

**G. Smith motioned that the Board of Finance recommend that the air packs, tank removal and wastewater treatment upgrade be included in the bond package. B. Ploss 2nd the motion. All voted aye.**

**G. Smith motioned to not included Matthies Park in the bond package. B. Ploss 2nd the motion.**

Discussion: C. Bielik suggested that we include some of Matthies Park - he is specifically referring to the environmental slues ways. A lengthy discussion took place regarding this subject, i.e., what will it cost to maintain, etc. W. Hopkinson noted that she is struggling to support any part of Matthies Park because she thinks it would benefit from grants if it were allowed to be open to outside residents. M. Krenesky pointed out that the vote that was taken was not a binding vote. The discussion continued regarding costs, unknowns, annual maintenance costs and making and not maintaining an investment would be fiscally irresponsible, etc. After a lengthy discussion

**All voted aye and the motion on the floor passed.**

**G. Smith motioned to include the roads as presented in the bond package. C. Bielik 2nd the motion.**

Discussion: It was noted that we have received \$400,000 in STEAP money so the amount of money that will go to the bond package will be 4.7 million. The cost of sewer assessment was discussed and S. Cable noted that the number has been \$4,000 but it is up to the Sewer Commission. After a lengthy discussion:

**All voted aye and the motion on the floor passed.**

**C. Bielik motioned to recommend that the ladder truck not be included in the bond package. G. Smith 2nd the motion.**

Discussion: C. Bielik noted that he would love to have a ladder truck however he noted that we only needed a ladder truck on call basically once per month and that the amount of usage does not justifies buying the truck at this time. He noted that there are alternate

assets out there that have not had any significant impact - they were available when we needed them - he noted that it is almost a million dollars and this is his thought process on the ladder truck (B. Ploss noted that without a letter of intent, the cost will be more than a million for the truck). After discussion:

**G. Smith, L. Krepinevich, C. Bielik and B. Ploss all voted in favor of the motion on the floor. W. Hopkinson voted against the motion. The motion on the floor passed.**

Pumper Truck - A discussion took place regarding the pumper truck and the cost of it and its projected life span. It was noted that one of the reasons the pumper truck is being requested in this bond package is because the Fire Department is going to need a pumper truck in the next 3 - 5 years and with the bond rates so low right now, it made sense to purchase one now.

**G. Smith motioned that the pumper truck not be included in the bond package. L. Krepinevich 2nd the motion.**

Discussion: C. Bielik noted that this truck sounds like a good buy and it is a good time to get this particular truck. He noted that he is kind of on the fence when you look at the big picture. A discussion continued about the current pumper truck has an open cab which is not up to code yet still grandfathered. W. Hopkinson's opinion is that with so many people being financially strapped right now and the truck being in good running condition, now might not be the time to purchase the truck. The scenario she used was that if someone was financially strapped and their car was running fine, one would not go out and buy a new car. B. Ploss noted that it is a hard choice to choose between the pumper truck and the ambulance. After discussion:

**L. Krepinevich, G. Smith, B. Ploss and W. Hopkinson voted in favor of the motion on the floor. C. Bielik voted against the motion. The motion on the floor passed.**

Further discussion continued on the ambulance and the pumper truck. It was noted that the cycle of the ambulance is up but the ambulance is running fine. It was suggested that after they purchase new equipment with everything being made better, the cycle should then be extended to maybe a 15 year cycle rather than 10 years.

Pay loader - G. Smith noted that he recently saw the pay loader and it really looks old. B. Ploss noted that he thought it looked old as well. It was noted they could probably get a couple more years out of it but it does look old. A discussion continued regarding the use of the pay loader and it was noted that they use this loader to load sand into the trucks during storms but it was also pointed out that the back hoe is back-up for this machine so there is a plan B. The discussion continued regarding replacement parts, etc. and that the machine is not always working at 100% which could be a safety issue. W. Hopkinson noted that the BOF seems to be voting extremely frugal at this meeting however noted that this is probably based on the response from the residents during the last budget vote.

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**G. Smith motioned that the pay loader not be included in the bond package. C. Bielik 2nd the motion for discussion purposes.**

Discussion: W. Hopkinson asked what condition the back hoe is in? S. Cable noted that the amount of money that they are talking about right now (\$150,000), and they are feeling as strongly as they are about some of the other items then she would say that you don't go to a bond for a back hoe, you would find another way. G. Smith agrees noting that the pay loader will probably work for another couple of years and if there comes a time where it will cost \$75,000 to get it fixed, then we should buy a new one. It was noted that they will hope that the economy will be in better shape and also hopefully we can get some grant money. It was noted as a point, that the BOF just voted to **not** include the fire truck and pumper truck. After discussion:

**W. Hopkinson, G. Smith, B. Ploss and L. Krepinevich voted in favor of the motion on the floor. C. Bielik opposed the motion. The motion on the floor passed.**

Ambulance: W. Hopkinson asked about the options of ambulances. M. Krenesky noted that based on his conversation with J. Rodrigo, an ambulance van is supposed to last 3 - 5 years while a "big box" of an ambulance is supposed to last 10 years. A discussion continued regarding AMR ambulances and the Town's Ambulance and that the bigger ambulance is 4 wheel drive while the smaller van is not. The van would have more difficult getting to some locations in inclement weather. The discussion included the condition the ambulances are in and how much maintenance has been put into the ambulances. *It was also noted that the newer ambulance is a 2006.* The cycle of replacement was discussed as well as putting a 10 year item into a 20 year bond. Replacement and rotation plans for ambulances and roads were also discussed, i.e., having a plan to replace 6 roads per year, etc. In the past, we were able to do a road per year as a result of STEAP money but STEAP money only comes in bits and pieces now. It was again pointed out how difficult this past budget was to get passed.

**G. Smith motioned that the ambulance not be included in the bond package. C. Bielik 2nd the motion for discussion purposes.**

Discussion: G. Smith noted that he thinks we should start putting the ambulance on a 15 year rotation. C. Bielik noted that he thinks the 15 year rotation should begin going forward in that the ambulances are now made better than they were 10 years ago. G. Smith pointed out that there is nothing wrong with the ambulance we have now. After discussion:

**G. Smith, L. Krepinevich, B. Ploss and C. Bielik voted in favor of the motion on the floor. W. Hopkinson opposed the motion. The motion on the floor passed.**

B. Ploss wanted to note that he thinks that the way the BOF had to vote on these items stinks. He noted that he personally would put back in the package the ambulance and the pumper truck but it's a shame that due to the response from getting the last budget passed that the BOF has to vote against some of these things. He noted that the town voted

down the fireworks. S. Cable noted that by giving the public the choice is a good thing, they can pick and choose but she noted that most people come out during budget votes.

S. Cable read a letter from Beacon Hose requesting that they replaced their stretchers and would now like to make one payment out of the EMS account. A lengthy discussion continued as to which portion of the EMS account, how much of a portion, which account did they come out of (it was noted that they took the money out of their line item but would now like to replenish their line item). G. Smith noted that he thinks they should take the money for the stretchers out of the Fire Departments portion of the EMS money. W. Hopkinson noted that we have already budgeted for the EMS money. It was clarified that the BOS will notify the Fire Department that they support the them taking the money for the stretcher out of their portion of the EMS money. It was noted that this is not the first time issues like this have come up.

B. Ploss suggested that the Fire Department keep all of the revenue from the EMS and then they purchase their own trucks and not come to the town. A lengthy discussion continued and it was noted that other towns operate that way however it will have to be subsidized as it will not be enough money for what they need. B. Ploss would like to discuss this as a Board of Finance at some point in the future. It was noted that this is a legitimate suggestion.

S. Cable discussed an issue with one of the police vehicles. She noted that the police car that we just put \$7,286 in to now needs a new engine. The police department is down one car. *The car is the blue 2005 Chevy Impala. They can either spend \$4,000 to fix the car not knowing what it will need next or they can spend \$22,000 on a new vehicle.* It was noted that to replace the car they will have to go to a town vote.

8:55 P.M. W. Hopkinson had to leave the meeting and Vice Chairman G. Smith took over the meeting.

The discussion regarding the police car continued. L. Krepinevich and C. Bielick thought they should spend the \$4,000 and fix the car rather than \$22,000 for a new car.

C. Bielick noted for the record that he personally thinks we should get the new car but he's looking at this as a consistency issue with the way the board has been voting all night.

G. Smith disagreed in that the car is off the road right now and this is now an emergency situation. He also noted that the car has run its course. The police cars are driven by many different people and are driven hard therefore the unknown is that the \$4,000 only replaces the engine, it does not cover the rest of the parts the car will need other than just the block - it was also noted that they do not know exactly what is wrong with the car.

After listening to G. Smith's argument, L. Krepinevich and C. Bielick agreed with purchasing a new car. It was suggested that the first payment be taken out of contingency then finance the car over the next 3 or 4 years. The purchase of the police car will have to go before a town vote before it is purchased.

**C. Bielik motioned to have the Board of Finance recommend to the Board of Selectmen that they purchase a new police vehicle with the first payment coming out of contingency. B. Ploss 2nd the motion. All voted aye.**

A discussion took place regarding the water heater at the Fire House. It was noted that S. Cable did not know about that issue and G. Smith has heard of the issue and thinks it has been down for a couple of months.

**B. Ploss motioned that the Board of Selectmen get further clarification on the EMT's letter. L. Krepinevich 2nd the motion.**

Discussion: C. Bielik asked if this motion that they are proposing to vote on serve the purposes of the BOS with regards to the letter. The answer was yes. It was noted that the BOS's letter will be direct. After discussion:

**All voted aye for the motion on the floor. Motion passed.**

S. Cable noted that after today's meeting, the Board of Selectmen honored the Board of Finance's request not to give Board Clerk and/or police part timers raises until the next budget cycle. They noted that they will follow the policy that they started but not until July. M. Krenesky noted that they same discussion regarding the clerk's will take place with the police part timers because they have not seen a raise in a while and they should.

S. Cable announced that the BOS are working on numbers to make their Town Clerk and Tax Collector permanent employees. It was noted that one position comes up in 2011 and one comes up in 2012. It was noted that the BOS was told that if this was in mid cycle, if the ordinance passes, you can keep the elected officials on board as an adjunct to the office and make the hire.

M. Krenesky noted that he thinks the back taxes of motor vehicles should be looked at and/or be purged (sent to motor vehicles so that people cannot register their vehicles without paying their town taxes). It was noted that it only costs \$1500 to link into that system. M. Krenesky noted that the list should be looked at because there are some back taxes from 1994 on the list. He noted that the last purge was done a little over a year ago. A discussion continued regarding registering cars.

#### **TRANSFERS**

None.

#### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**C. Bielik motioned to approve the BOF/BOS/BOE joint meeting that was held at the high school with the time of 7:00 am to 7:00 pm correction noted. B. Ploss 2nd the**



**motion. G. Smith, C. Bielik, B. Ploss voted to approve the minutes. L. Krepinevich abstained as he was not present for the meeting.**

G. Smith asked that the meeting minutes from October 12th, 25th and 26th be resent to all Board members for review and the approval of these minute will be tabled until the December meeting.

B. Ploss noted that he would have liked to have tabled the approval of the BOE meeting minutes until W. Hopkinson was present since she was such a big part of that meeting.

### **COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC**

None.

### **TREASURERS REPORT**

B. Ploss motioned to approved the Treasurers Report. L. Krepinevich 2nd the motion. All voted aye.

Discussion: G. Smith had questions relating to the accounts that are earning interest. After review, it was determined that the report reflects the correct amount in the accounts at about \$325,000.

### **TAX COLLECTORS REPORT**

The Tax Collectors report was reviewed. It was noted that there was a larger deposit made (approx. \$30,000 from back taxes from 2004, 2005, 2006 and more).

**C. Bielik motioned to accept the Tax Collectors Report. B. Ploss 2nd the motion. All voted aye.**

### **TOWN CLERKS REPORT**

M. Gomes noted that he included the Town Clerk's report from September. It was clarified that the report that the BOF will receive will include the report from the Financial Manager, the revenue and the Town Clerk plus a bank statement attached. M. Gomes reconciles the bank statements.

**B. Ploss motioned to accept the Town Clerks Report. L. Krepinevich 2nd the motion. All voted aye.**

Discussion: B. P loss wanted to state for the record that this is a much better report than they have received in the past and wanted to thank M. Gomes and K. Novak for their efforts.

## FINANCE MANAGERS REPORT

G. Smith asked M. Gomes if there was anything in this report that he would like to point out. M. Gomes noted that they made it through October without any transfers. He noted that we may have under budgeted the pension line but does not know for sure yet but will have a pretty good idea by 1 March 2011. All the back service of the employees will have to be amortized including over-time for police, etc. He thinks we will be off by 1% (maybe around \$20,000 and we have \$80,000 in contingency so we should not be in bad shape). M. Gomes noted that there are some areas in the Fire Department that have used a lot of the money in the line items such as departmental supplies. A discussion regarding fuel took place and it was noted that the Fire Department is at about 58% and the highway department is at 19% (M. Gomes pointed out that the highway department line item was over estimated last year as well).

C. Bielik motioned to accept the Finance Managers Report. B. Ploss 2nd the motion. All voted aye.

## BOARD CLERKS INVOICE

The Clerk's invoices for September and October were prepared but not available. The Clerk's invoices for September, October and November will be submitted at the December meeting. L. Classey will email them to M. Gomes and he will include them in the Board of Finance mail box.

## CORRESPONDENCE

G. Smith reviewed a letter from Beacon Hose requesting a letter of intent for the ladder and pumper truck. The BOF was told that the BOS informed the Fire Department that they will not provide them with a letter of intent.

## NEW BUSINESS

B. Ploss asked if the BOF can review what the effect of the Fire School will have on the town revenue wise as he has had some residents ask him the question. Can this be re-visited at next month's meeting? G. Smith noted that he believes this would fall under the BOS. A discussion continued but while it's an issue, it's more of a Board of Selectmen issue.

C. Bielik motioned to adjourn the meeting at 9:37. G. Smith 2nd the motion. All voted aye.

Meeting was adjourned at 9:27 P.M.

**Respectfully Submitted,**

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

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