



TOWN OF BEACON FALLS
BEACON FALLS, CONNECTICUT
BOARD OF FINANCE

JOINT BOARD OF FINANCE AND BOARD OF SELECTMEN
2010/2011 BUDGET WORKSHOP

MINUTES

March 30, 2010

PRESENT

Selectmen S. Cable, D. Sorrentino and M. Krenesky, BOF Chairman W. Hopkinson, Vice Chairman G. Smith and BOF Members B. Ploss, L. Krepinevich and R. Doiron.

S. Cable called the meeting to order at 7:37 p.m.

S. Cable began the meeting by announcing that A. Choi will be leaving the Board of Finance but will stay until a Democrat or Unaffiliated replacement is found.

S. Cable also commented based on their last two meetings, she's aware that everyone has their own strong views on things but she feels that the Board of Finance and Board of Selectmen are not working together and she would like to begin tonight working together for the goal of the taxpayers. She noted that if there are other issues such as management, they should be

discussed in a different forum as this is a budget workshop and we should try and get the best bang for the dollars for the people of Beacon Falls. She does not want to be like the Democrats and Republicans she saw in Hartford last week or even nationwide who are not doing anything but pulverizing themselves. She noted that she has always been proud that the Board of Finance has always worked well together and she hopes that we could continue to do that. She also noted that there are many needs of the town and many things that she would like the town to have. She noted that when she first took office she began the procedure of meeting and reviewing proposed budget together with the Board of Finance as she feels that more minds working together are more effective. S. Cable also noted that they do know what the community needs are management wise because they are in office every day and are listening to all the departments. That being said, she continued to discuss the budget changes.

S. Cable noted that M. Gomes took out all the vehicles and all capital projects out of the budget as they would like to go to bond for them. She also would like to put in the road projects into bonds. There is a whole list of roads.

S. Cable congratulated W. Hopkinson because the arbitration was won and W. Hopkinson's contributions made a big difference.

S. Cable provided a list of grants that are current and also in progress. She noted that these are a lot of things they are doing to help subsidize the budget.

S. Cable noted that M. Gomes said that the town is in a very good position for bonding because we haven't had to use the bonding money that has been allocated. She asked how everyone felt about taking the vehicles out of the budget and bonding them.

R. Doiron asked if they took out all cruisers, will it be better to bond the police vehicles? The vehicle is supposed to last 10 years and the bonding would be for 20 years. He also noted that in the proposed budget, they have estimated that collections will be at 100% however he noted that they are never at 100%. W. Hopkinson noted that all taxes that are collected from prior years are not included in the budget so it leaves us in an O.K. position.

M. Krenesky noted that as far bonds or bands are concerned, we do have options. We could get shorter bonding periods and bands.

It was re-iterated that we are replacing 1 police cruiser and purchasing another. The new purchase is supposed to be a multi-use, police car, Fire Marshal and also private duty.

The ambulance was discussed. It was noted that an ambulance was needed in last year budget but they held off as the budget was tight. They would like to order the ambulance now so she we put it in the budget now or wait for bonding?

R. Doiron asked what the expense would be if we waited for bonding? We know that at one point the Fire Department was requesting an aerial truck for over a million dollars. They have now found one that is a demo and not built yet but can be purchased for \$733,000.

D. Sorrentino noted that M. Gomes has asked the Fire Department for the numbers needed for bonding requests regarding the large purchase items.

W. Hopkinson pointed out that we should be taking the ambulance related revenue and apply it to ambulance activities just like private duty wages should be applied to a police car. We should be matching revenue to expense. M. Krenesky noted that there is nothing stopping us from doing it that way it's just a matter of the way it is being booked.

S. Cable noted that she thinks the ambulance should be part of the bonding package. M. Krenesky agrees. It should be kept in mind that by not putting it in the budget we are taking a risk that it will possibly be voted against in a referendum. S. Cable noted that they are going to bring a fair budget to the people and then give them a list of things that will need to be voted on such as roads, ambulance and aerial truck. It was noted that the Fire Department needs to campaign for these items if they believe in them and also they all need to vote at referendums.

D. Sorrentino brought up a hypothetical question. He noted that a resident may say that the \$60,000 for an ambulance can be paid off in three years. Why bond it?

W. Hopkinson asked if we are getting any locip money. The answer was that we do not know yet.

W. Hopkinson asked if there is any word on ECS. M. Krenesky said that the Governor said that ECS will be funded as long as we have stimulus and the stimulus funds will be gone in 2012.

Both Boards went through the budget one category at a time.

First Selectmen Secretary Wages - Increase of \$1,250 due to a union increase

First Selectmen Expense - S. Cable noted that this is used for flowers and fruit baskets as needed.

Town Hall - Miscellaneous Repairs - R. Doiron asked if there are some projects planned for miscellaneous repairs. The town hall has had problems with the bathrooms and furnace as well as tile issues (general repairs).

Town Clerk - The increase for film and records will be removed

Tax Collector - Increase due to union increase and printing went up.

Treasurer - remains the same

Building Inspector - went down due to new hire. M. Krenesky requested that we get a desktop for the Building Inspector rather than him working at home. S. Cable noted that we can take that money out of this year's budget.

Employee Benefits - They are currently in negotiations and hopefully we will see a change for the better. The contracts may be changed as they relate to clothing allowances (they are tightening up the wording). Additionally, they are working on insurance buy backs.

Board of Assessors - Re-eval went to Special Projects. GIS maps are mandated.

Board of Assessment Appeals - same (they meet monthly to review things)

Board of Finance - Update: S. Cable noted that M. Gomes says he can make the current software package work he just hasn't had the time to tweak it. While this is a discussion for the future, the Board of Finance would like the vendor of the software to be held accountable for the software working properly.

Economic Development Commission - The budget remains the same. It was noted that the EDC is thinking about putting out a monthly calendar regarding their events.

Inlands Wetlands Commission - The budget remains the same

Conservation Commission - same

Planning & Zoning Commission - Enforcement went up \$852 and W. Hopkinson asked if that increase was union as well. It was noted that his salary did not go up due to union so that the increase of \$852 will be removed.

Water Pollution Control - same

Registrars of Voters - M. Krenesky noted that the Registrars of Voters brought to his attention that when then went to salaried position, they were no longer able to be reimbursed for their lunches during referendums. S. Cable noted that the money is still in the budget for them to be reimbursed for their lunch.

Professional Fees - The library wanted \$19,000 for a person to manage their website and they were told that the current Web Consultant can handle this so the increase in line item 1290 relates to this.

Welfare - same

R. Doiron asked about the Engineering Consultant - S. Cable noted that we should keep the \$75,000 and she will address this position at a later time.

Insurance - The increases in this category are realistic numbers based on Judy Kernan from the Southerland Company

M. Krenseky asked where the flags for the Veterans graves will come out of. It should come out of line item 1400.

Agency Membership - These are beneficial to have for applying for grants

Misc. Boards and Commissions - Money has not really been used from this budget as there have not been any blight hearings. W. Hopkinson asked if it would be better to make the number \$250 but because of the unknown, it will be left at \$500.

Emergency Services - Line item 1553 needs to be increased from \$15,000 to \$25,000 for ambulance training and the Fire Marshal was moved to the Police Department

Fire Marshal - Why are they asking for an increase if they have not used any money this year and only \$211 in 08/09? It will be dropped back down to \$500

S. Cable noted that she did not get an answer on the fire hydrant pipes yet but will continue to work on it.

Private Duty was moved back to revenue for its ease in understanding.

It was noted that we have two different water companies and Aquarium is much higher.

Police Department - B. Ploss pointed out that the uniforms was supposed to be cut back to \$4,000. The wages clerk is up 6.27% as a result of negotiations.

The clerk received a raise but will no longer get buy backs. Vehicle repairs will be cut back to \$10,000.

Vehicle Maintenance should be titled Vehicle Maintenance/Gas Oil to differentiate it from Vehicle Repairs.

Animal Control - Same

Public Safety - Status quo

Highway Department - R. Doiron asked why there is another \$9,000 increase in wages overtime. S. Cable said that it is supposed to be \$30,000 so the \$39,000 might be a typographical error.

Sewer maintenance was also cut from last week's budget. It was also noted that they still have a lot of sand left.

S. Cable noted that the answer she received regarding the street sweeping is that the streets are swept once a year due to lots of debris on the roads but she will continue to look into it.

Snow removal materials went up \$9,500 because salt is more expensive. S. Cable said they will stay with the original \$50,500 that was given to them.

L. Krepinevich asked if everyone was OK with adding \$500 to street sweeping. Line item 1670 will go back to \$11,700.

W. Hopkinson questioned why vehicle maintenance has gone up especially since they have not used that much money this year. They will decrease it to \$25,000.

G. Smith asked why maintenance is not split into maintenance and repairs.

It was noted that tree work and catch basin cleaning should be spelled out.

Line item 1710 can be cut by \$5,000 as they did not use it all this year.

L. Krepinevich asked if chip sealing would stay in the budget if we go to a bond. M. Krenesky said that he thinks we will still need chip sealing. It will be kept at \$60,000.

B. Ploss asked S. Cable to get clarification on what highway materials consists of as there is no explanation in the back-up. Line painting and guard rails used to come out of highway maintenance.

Town Garage - Miscellaneous office supplies noted as "new" will be removed.

It was noted that there should be some auditing done on how all phones, land lines as well as cell phones are being used. The increase of \$1,304 was also questioned.

Building maintenance will go back to \$10,000.

Community Welfare - We have to pay for probate court now and did not have to before.

Refuse - Sewer fees were discussed.

R. Doiron asked about the Bulky & Hazardous waste. It is 0 because the number is in over-time.

Wastewater Treatment Plant - Sewer fees would mean that every household with a sewer would have to pay fees. Wastewater treatment will stay as it is.

Library - they have 2 full time employees and 1 part time employee. It was noted that the library circulation has increased 10% and the library is a positive in Beacon Falls. The library is requesting an additional \$35,000 and if we can't get the budget passed then we will have to look into volunteers.

Park & Recreation - Part time activities director will be discussed next week.

Girls softball league was discussed and the question of whether or not we can ask the league for accountability of their books was raised

S. Cable will pull the sports bills so we have a better idea of how this money is spent.

G. Smith motioned to adjourn the meeting at 9:26 p.m. B. Ploss 2nd the motion. All voted aye.

Meeting was adjourned at 9:26 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lauren Classey

Clerk for the Board of Finance