

**TOWN OF BEACON FALLS  
BOARD OF FINANCE  
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES  
Tuesday April 20, 2010  
Review of Public Hearing**

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman W. Hopkinson called the Special Board of Finance meeting to order at 7:37 P.M.

Present: Chairman W. Hopkinson, Vice Chairman G. Smith, Board of Finance members L. Krepinevich, B. Ploss and R. Doiron

Also present were Board of Selectmen S. Cable and M. Krenesky and Finance Manager M. Gomes

It was noted that the police hours were miscalculated and it should be a 30 hour week (not 40) therefore on Page 11 the amount budgeted should be \$46,800. M. Gomes will make the change.

W. Hopkinson wanted to look closer at the re-val number noting that it should come closer to \$100,000 in total - she noted that we could do \$40,000 this year and \$40,000 next year. This is on page 16 under Special Projects. Since a payment was made this year, it reduced the number and the remainder should be made over the next two years. M. Gomes will reduce the re-val by \$20,000.

Waste Water Treatment - regarding D. Rybinsky's comment, W. Hopkinson reviewed the number. After discussion, it was noted that the numbers in the current budget were only updated through March therefore the requested amount budgeted for is correct. This line item will remain at \$95,000 as the math works out to be exactly that once the rest of this year's payments are calculated.

Heating Fuel - was looked into as a result of the Public Hearing. This year's budget shows only \$2,400 being spent this year (line item 1122 on page 12) and the requested

amount is \$7,500. The only explanation for this was that this was what E. Bea requested. The Board of Finance reduced this number from \$7,500 to \$5,000. M. Gomes will make the change.

The error that J. Rodrigo pointed out on page 14 will be corrected to \$1,400 from \$2,800. M. Gomes will make the change.

W. Hopkinson requested a few minutes be spent with J. Rodrigo regarding Parks and Rec. He was asked what his priority would be as they will try and make this be a "give and take". His first priority would be an Activities Director. If they were not going to hire an Activities Director then he noted that there is a ton of maintenance issues. After that, it would be Mathies Park. G. Smith pointed out that due to the tightness of this budget, he believes we should continue to go in the direction of reducing the budget rather than increasing it as it relates to Parks and Recreation at this time. S. Cable pointed out that she is aware that there will be a Public Hearing on Mathies Park and is hopeful that this avenue will open us up to more grants for things like this. S. Cable noted that as much as she would like to see a Parks and Recreation Activities Director, at this point and time she has applied for a grant for a part-time Economic Development position in order to bring in more tax dollars to the town. S. Cable also noted that she does not think we should increase this budget at this time. She believes we should stay where we are. W. Hopkinson also noted that the Activities Director was in the budget for 2 years and went unfilled.

W. Hopkinson discussed the Summer Program. She noted that the fees for the summer program are going into the special activities fund at this time. She would like to see the revenue from the summer program go back into the revenue side of the budget. M. Gomes will make the changes. J. Rodrigo clarified that the way the summer program was originally set up was that the admission fee would go into that account and then be used for special trips such as Roller Magic, etc. He noted that the only thing that should be coming out of the tax payer dollars is the wages for the staff to run the program. He also noted after some research they found some grant money in this account. He noted that there needs to be better record keeping and some research done on this account. M. Gomes will work on this. M. Gomes will also add a revenue line item.

G. Smith mentioned that he had some ideas of some areas that could possibly be cut but as a result of the positive response (and no opposition) from the Public Hearing, he wondered if we should. R. Doiron suggested that we go forward with what was presented, again, based on the positive response, and then if the budget does not pass, we will have something to cut. It was noted that based on the cuts made this evening, we have reduced the budget by \$46,000.

M. Krenesky pointed out that he believes that if they have a list of changes that would reduce this budget which would help the tax payers of Beacon Falls and they are not made unless the budget does not pass, it is not the responsible thing to do. He thinks that if there are other items that can be identified and be taken a look at then we should have that discussion tonight. He noted that as of right now, he is not comfortable knowing that

there is a list (he noted similar to the Board of Education a hidden list), he understands the concern about hurting the Town's services further but at the same time he thinks we are sending a wrong message here with the public listening that there are additional changes we could make but we are going to wait to see if the budget passes as to whether or not we make the changes. He noted that he thinks that is the wrong approach. He noted that he does not want to see the budget hurt any more than it already is but he thinks we are sending a bad message.

Discussion: R. Doiron responded by saying that his position on this is that after having gone over this list numerous times and that there are some places we could cut the budget however, he believes we will end up jeopardizing something somewhere along the way and he noted that he is not comfortable doing it that way. He noted that if the Town's people mandate that we make cuts, then have them either tell us where they want the cuts to be made or if they leave it in the Board's hands then we will take a \$100 here or a \$1,000 there. He does not see us taking a mil off of the budget at any time and he does not feel that the town would benefit by that small of a cut right now. S. Cable noted that she does not think it is not responsible as she noted that the Board of Finance heard what the people said and then came back and looked at each line item they talked about and made adjustments where possible. She noted that is being responsible to the people. She noted that if the Board of Finance thought in their heart and soul that something should have been cut in the beginning then that is something different. She noted that this is a very tight budget and we have to keep in mind that this is a growing town and we continue to beat up the budget. She feels that what was taken away tonight was very responsible to the budget and the town. S. Cable also pointed out that they had support for this budget tonight from a cross section of the town. She noted that if they go to a vote and then have to cut out a service, they will not have the same support. G. Smith noted that he was pleasantly surprised with the response from the Public Hearing. B. Ploss noted that what he heard is that some people wanted monies added to the budget. The line items that they would cut would be painful to the budget and the town. S. Cable noted that they presented what they feel is right for the community at this time.

L. Krepinevich noted that this is a double edge sword as on the one hand, he hears what M. Krenesky is saying however there is the general public (other than those that showed up tonight) who do not have a lot of these numbers and don't see what these people want or need may automatically vote the budget down because they may think that the budget could be cut some more. He noted that if we trim it too close to the vest right now and then the budget gets voted down just because they think there is fluff in it, we will really have a tough time. B. Ploss noted that at that point in time we will be looking at cutting services and people will be at our door steps. S. Cable noted that in this particular budget process we had very good communication. It was on the website, there was an article in the paper that discussed the mil rate and the people basically know that their taxes are going up. J. Rodrigo spoke saying that he believes the responsible thing is presenting a budget to the taxpayers that sustains what we want to do. He noted that he agrees with R. Doiron's position on this budget. He agrees with the fiscal restraint that was shown in this budget process and noted that there are many things (Parks and Recreation in particular) that have been underfunded for a long time and does not know how much

longer they can go on like this. He noted that each year the Board of Selectmen asks him for a five year plan which he provides them with. He noted that they never get out of the first six months out of the plans that they are in and noted that the five year plans do not seem to be a thought process for the future but numbers on a table that they never seem to succeed with. J. Rodrigo noted that he truly believes the best interest of the Town of Beacon Falls would be to expand our tax base and the only way to do that would be to hire someone whose job it is to that such as an Economical Development position. W. Hopkinson noted that there is no one in this room who would disagree with him. She noted that her first choice would be to investigate grant money for this position.

G. Smith noted that he is in total agreement that they are bringing a responsible budget to the Town of Beacon Falls. He noted that even after he made it clear that with this budget and the Region 16 budget there will be a 2 mil increase, the sentiment of the crowd did not change.

**R. Doiron motioned to send the present 2010/2011 budget with the updated changes to the Board of Selectmen for a town vote. G. Smith 2nd the motion. All voted aye.**

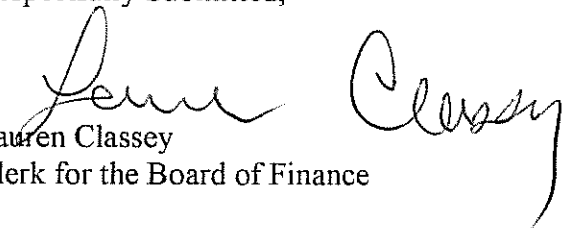
W. Hopkinson noted that she would like to discuss at the next Board of Finance meeting Mr. Groth's comment/suggestion regarding a "rainy day fund". R. Doiron believes that this should be discussed or explored with the auditors first to find out what our options would be.

#### **Adjournment**

**G. Smith motioned to adjourn the meeting. R. Doiron 2nd the motion. All voted aye.**

Meeting was adjourned at 8:30 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

  
Lauren Classey  
Clerk for the Board of Finance