

**TOWN OF BEACON FALLS  
BOARD OF FINANCE  
Public Hearing re: 2010/2011 Proposed Municipal Budget**

**Tuesday April 20, 2010**

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chairperson of the Board, W. Hopkinson called the meeting of the Public Hearing to order at 7:00 P.M. with the Pledge of Allegiance.

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

Also present were Selectmen S. Cable and M. Krenesky and Beacon Falls Finance Manager M. Gomes as well as approximately 30 Beacon Falls Residents.

L. Classey the Board of Finance Clerk, read the call.

**S. Cable motioned to accept the call. G. Smith 2nd the motion. All voted aye.**

W. Hopkinson welcomed all to the meeting and then introduced herself as the Chairman and turned the rest of the Board Member introductions over to the individual Board Members to introduce themselves, which they did.

W. Hopkinson thanked the Board of Finance and the Board of Selectmen for all the hours of work they put into reviewing the budget and preparing it for presentation.

W. Hopkinson noted that the budget that is being presented is a budget that encompasses keeping the services that are currently in place. She noted that we would like to keep the current services in place and this budget reflects that. She asked all to note that this is the Town's Municipal Budget and does not include the Region 16 budget. She noted that the Board of Finance understands that these are difficult times and that there are some economical challenges being faced and that there may be some additional cuts that may be requested after tonight's meeting. W. Hopkinson informed all that we are here tonight to present the budget and to listen to any thoughts, concerns or any ideas that the people of Beacon Falls may have. She noted that there are certain things that cannot be cut such as union wages and there are also some mandated increases that also cannot be cut. She

noted that there were some requests for some big ticket items such as an ambulance, fire truck and needed road work but she explained that the Board of Selectmen is currently looking into some type of bonding for these items.

W. Hopkinson asked all to look at the hand out so it could be reviewed together. She noted that the handout (attached) is a synopsis of the larger ticket items however she let all know that they are certainly welcome to comment on any item of the entire budget when such departments are covered.

W. Hopkinson began with the Employee Benefits increase. She noted that the medical insurance increased by \$61,000 and that this is a line item that cannot be cut or changed at this point in time. She noted that in Emergency Services electricity and fuel as well as building maintenance and repairs has increased and this is due to an increase in cost of those services. Also increasing this number are the costs associated with a building that we rent for \$1 per year (down by the railroad) which is used to house the brush truck; housing the brush truck helps keep us from having any of the equipment outside thus sparing it from some wear and tear. Also noted was mandated physicals and inoculations for the Fire Department and EMTs. This budget includes new turn out gear for the Fire Department. She noted that the good news is that the Beacon Falls Fire Department as 25 new recruits however, this now requires turn out gear. She noted an increase for the telephone costs as it relates to the new building which is currently under-budgeted.

W. Hopkinson reviewed the Police Department budget noting that there is an increase for a Police Lieutenant/Fire Marshal. She noted that the Fire Marshal position has been combined with the Police Lieutenant position that was created. The Lieutenant is responsible for coordinating the afternoon to mid-night shift and is back-up for Trooper Cipriano. She explained that we have an increase in police wages full time and part-time noting that the full-time increase is due to current under funding in this year's budget and that we are also underfunded in the current budget for part time however in addition to this, we added three midnight shifts plus a DUI check to the 2010/2011 budget.

The increase in Highway Maintenance relates to an increase in wages/overtime. We also added new line items for tree work, guard rail and line painting, catch basin cleaning and chip sealing. Catch basin cleaning is a requirement and something that cannot be cut. W. Hopkinson explained that the tree work was previously paid out of a different line item which resulted in the Town Aid Road line item becoming depleted. As a result, when it came time to do roads, there was no money left, thus these new line items were created.

Waste Water Treatment - W. Hopkinson noted that is one of the largest increases; \$114,000 for equipment replacement and \$20,000 for sludge processing.

Another increase as it relates to the Library is due to an increase in hours for the Library Staff. Special projects increase is due to the revaluation which cannot be cut. W. Hopkinson explained that there is an increase for a new phone system for the Town Hall

in that the current phone system (or lack thereof) is outdated. The Town Hall is planning for a voice mail system.

There is an increase for \$6,800 for a police car to replace a 2003 car in which the repairs for the car exceed the current value of the car.

W. Hopkinson explained that there are other increases but the increases mentioned above are the increases the Board of Finance thought should be highlighted. She noted that the difference in the amount on the cover sheet as compared to that on page 2 is a result of the increase in the grand list which resulted in new tax dollars for the town.

W. Hopkinson opened the meeting to Public Comments and asked that the comments be kept to 3 minutes or less.

David Rybinsky, Quail Hollow - Commented that he thinks they did a pretty good job with the budget that is presented however he thinks there could have been a better job done with a line item that included heating fuel. D, Rybinsky's point was that they have a lot of money left in this current line item but he noted that they are asking for even more money for next year. He asked that it be looked in to. He also was wondering about the \$10,000 increase in electricity in the sewage plant. He noted that he didn't think that the rate had gone down but also didn't think that the usage had increased to \$850 per month more. He noted that the payment now is less than what they are allocating for 2010/2011. He further discussed the position of Police Lieutenant/Fire Marshal pointing out that he is concerned about the combination of these two positions noting that in years past they had a Fire Marshal and two assistant thereby he believes this is leaving the Fire Marshal position a bit light. He's concerned about when inspections can be done in that most commercial businesses are only open during the day. He re-iterated that splitting these duties may not be too effective especially since they used to have 1 Fire Marshal with 2 assistants. He noted that he is in support of the budget the way it stands but would like the few items he mentioned to be looked at.

Steve Ruhl, Fairfield Place - asked about the Parks and Activities Director and why is it being cut. He noted that the Parks and Recreation Committee cannot do all that is needed to be done by themselves. He noted that they work very hard to keep up with all that is going on in the town. He noted that they really need someone to head up this responsibility. Currently J. Rodrigo will find out what's going on and coordinate it but his position is up July 1st and he's concerned about what's to come. S. Cable noted that due to the economy and various other positions, this budget could not support this position but the Board of Finance is going to discuss these issues after this budget process is complete.

Mike Pratt, Cook Lane - He thanked the Board of Finance for listening to the Fire Department and the time they have spent on it. He noted that he is in support of this budget and will get as many people as he can to help pass this budget.

Ed Groth, Laurel Ridge - Commented that he wondered if the people who are in attendance and are in support of this budget are aware of the increase that is going on in the Region 16 budget. He asked the Board of Finance if something such as a "rainy day fund" or a contingency fund (for years with increases like this). W. Hopkinson noted that we do have a contingency fund however the Board of Finance is only responsible for the Municipal side of the budget; she does understand his concern but the Board can only support one portion of the budget which is always a challenge of being part of a region. E. Groth noted the Region 16 increase masks the severity of the tax increase that is coming. S. Cable noted that the "rainy day fund" was popular years ago but for several reasons it is no longer a popular option. She noted that previous Boards had looked at is paying taxes ahead of time. S. Cable just wanted to explain the history of the rainy day fund. R. Doiron mentioned that he believes that in a contingency such as this, we would only be allowed a certain percentage as it would result in some type of over-taxing but it is something that could be discussed with the auditors. M. Gomes explained that contingencies have certain rules and are basically meant for the unexpected. W. Hopkinson noted that this is something that needs to be discussed as a Board and thanked E. Groth for bringing up the subject.

Beth Bucciferro, Hockanum Glen - Commented that she is in favor of increasing the Library hours to 35. She noted that she has been there many times and it has been extremely busy and the pattern is changing.

Martha Malvo, Burton Road - Commented that she is echoing what Beth Bucciferro said. She noted that the demand on services has increased more than any other department and is in favor of increasing the library funds.

J. Rodrigo, Bonna Street - Commented that he has been involved in the Parks and Recs for a long time. He wanted to further what Mr. Ruhl had said. He believes the Activities Director position has been in the last two budgets and was not utilized. He noted that the Town of Beacon Falls runs more activities than most surrounding towns. He noted we have volunteers that are transporting peoples children and also waiting at schools to make sure each child has been picked up. He noted that he cannot process the amount of requests that he gets for the town's activities such as summer basketball programs, swim programs, senior activities, etc. He explained that there are just not enough volunteers to handle all these activities and noted that we are well past due in filling the position of an Activities Director based on just the number of things we do today and he feels that the position should be reconsidered. He noted that we currently have 5 parks and a 6th in the wings. From the maintenance standpoint, these parks are totally underfunded along with the 7 buildings that are owned. Many things were missed. He noted that we spent \$20,000 on a TPA study and are not doing anything with that. He noted that work on Mathies Park is long over-due. He noted that at some point the Town needs to decide what we want to do and who we want to be and if we don't come up with some funding then maybe we should just put some locks on the gates to the parks and cancel the fireworks, etc. He also pointed out a typographical mistake in the budget. On Page 14, the sports line item should read \$1,300.

J. Rodrigo noted that he believes more than anything, more businesses should be brought into Beacon Falls for more tax dollars and that we need an Economical Coordinator to do this successfully. He noted that Oxford did this and were very successful and we should do the same thing.

G. Smith spoke to the audience to be sure that all understood that this was strictly the Municipal budget and that we are looking at an addition 1.1 mil increase on the school budget. He did not want anyone to be misled noting that the Municipal budget is close to a mil increase on its' own and that the school budget will increase it by an approx. additional 1.1 mil increase.

It was noted that the Region 16 budget vote will be held on May 4th and the Town of Beacon Falls Municipal budget vote will be held on May 5, 2010.

David Rybynsky spoke again regarding the Region 16 budget and explained that he doesn't feel they put everything on the table when presenting it. W. Hopkinson noted that in fairness, with no one present to represent the Region 16 budget that this is not the appropriate time to discuss it.

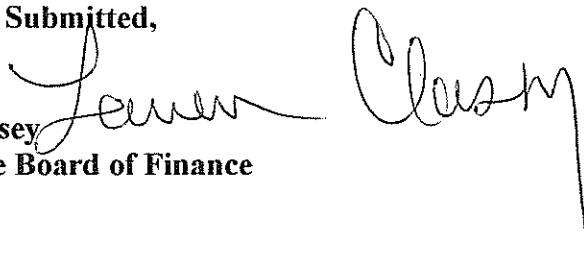
With no further questions or comments, W. Hopkinson thanked everyone for coming to the meeting.

**R. Doiron motioned to adjourn the meeting. L. Krepinevich 2nd the motion. All voted aye.**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:30 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lauren Classey  
Clerk for the Board of Finance

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Lauren Classey", written in black ink over the typed name.

APR 27 2010