

**BEACON FALLS BOARD OF FINANCE  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
FEBRUARY 14, 2012  
(Subject to Approval)**

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chairperson M. Bronn called the meeting to order at 7:35 PM with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Members Present: Chairman M. Bronn, R. Doiron, J. Dowdell, J. Huk, J. Levine

Members Absent: B. Ploss

Others Present: First Selectman G. Smith, Selectman D. D'Amico, Selectman C. Bielik, Town Treasurer M. Krenesky, Finance Manager M. Gomes, and approximately 2 members of the public.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

J. Dowdell recommended that the minutes be tabled until next month due to a clerical error where the minutes from 2 separate months were blended into one document.

J. Levine asked for copies of minutes from the past several months and Ed Groth noted that the minutes from 2011 and 2012 should be available online.

**J. Dowdell made a motion to postpone the approval of minutes until next month. B. Doiron seconded the motion. All ayes.**

Chairman M. Bronn welcomed J. Levine back to the Board of Finance.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

Gary Komarowsky of 15 Second Street noted that in November, 2002 the Economic Development Commission put forth a document, which was approved by town vote, for building up the economic structure of the Town of Beacon Falls. Mr. Komarowsky has attended a number of town meetings and the first line item which seems to be taken out of the budget is a \$5,000 allotment for land acquisition. There is no way for the EDC plan to come to fruition and have downtown Beacon Falls become economically viable without money in the budget. He asked that the Board of Finance consider leaving monies in the budget on this matter. For clarification, Mike Krenesky noted that the document from the EDC did not go to town vote, but was accepted by the Board of Selectmen only.

Ed Groth noted that the Fire Department received their new Jaws of Life and asked about the status of the old equipment. M. Bronn noted the Board of Finance has not received a letter from the Fire Department, however he understands the old Jaws of Life are still in the town's possession. When asked if the equipment would be donated, M. Bronn believes there is a market for this type of equipment in small towns. Ed Groth concurred there is a secondary market and the equipment is repairable. The Board of Finance recommends that the Fire Department sell this equipment, if possible.

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**TREASURER'S REPORT**

The report dated February 11, 2012 was provided by the Town Treasurer. M. Krenesky stated that he is making deposits for the general fund, the town clerk's office, and special funds. The tax department is making their own deposits.

M. Bronn noted that the unexpended budget balance for the rest of the year is \$9.2M. M. Gomez noted that ECS monies are still due to come in quarterly.

M. Krenesky explained that last week due to a bank error the Town of Beacon Falls had to close their General Fund checking account and create a new account. The bank, when reporting a deposit in excess of \$10,000 to the Federal government, faxed the Town's information to the wrong fax number. This resulted in the need to close out the old account and change over to a new account number. The bank is reimbursing the town for the costs of the changeover and providing fraud protection for the town and the Tax Collector for one year. G. Smith noted that the bank has investigated where the fax went in error. The bank is also tracking all outstanding checks to the closed account. M. Krenesky will be running debit/credit reports to insure all is accurate.

M. Bronn noted that if this type of error happens again he would suggest closing all accounts with this banking institution. **J. Dowdell made a motion to accept the Treasurer's Report. B. Doiron seconded the motion. All ayes.**

**TAX COLLECTOR'S REPORT**

No report was received at this time. The report will be provided as soon as possible.

**TOWN CLERK'S REPORT**

M. Gomez provided copies of the most current Town Clerk's Report with all of the supporting documentation. B. Doiron asked if there were any discrepancies and M. Gomez noted this report was balanced. The report is not in a format which can be emailed.

**B. Doiron made a motion to accept the Town Clerk's Report. J. Dowdell seconded the motion. All ayes.**

**FINANCE MANAGER'S REPORT**

M. Gomez commented that the revenues and the percentage collected are more in line than they have been in past years. The budgeted numbers reflect what actually happens more closely.

J. Levine asked if the state provides an opportunity for direct deposit and if the town can take advantage of that. M. Gomez said he believes direct deposit is available, but the town does not have a STIF account. The current STIF rate is listed on the Treasurer's Report. J. Levine recommends setting up this account to accept direct deposits from the state. M. Krenesky will look into this.

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M. Krenesky noted that concerning ECS, Region 16 is scheduled for an increase, under the Governor's current plan.

M. Bronn asked about the Benefits line item which is trending over budget. M. Gomez stated that since moving into the State run MERS plan, the town makes a large payment into the pension plan in July to amortize the payments. The town budgeted the correct amounts that were advised by MERS. Overtime can skew this line item and it is frontloaded for the July payment.

M. Bronn asked about the Trooper line item and M. Gomez explained the town is billed once a year for the Trooper's salary. Extra Duty wages shows as a negative line item, but this is offset by corresponding revenues.

J. Huk asked about the staffing in the Police Department. G. Smith explained there are 3 full time officers, a lieutenant, and 6 or 7 part time officers, plus overtime wages. J. Huk was seeking clarification to the steady increase in the Police Department budget and what is the value the town is getting from the addition police force. G. Smith stated that cost increases are mainly for coverage issues and back up coverage is an ongoing need. He compared Beacon Falls to towns such as Portland and Oxford, which have many more officers on staff. J. Huk wanted to be clear that the increases are not in reaction to the position of other towns, but based on need. A large chunk of the budget is for part-time officers, who are paid hourly, as needed.

J. Huk asked about an increase in the crime rate and G. Smith responded that the state of the economy has affected the crime rate. B. Doiron stated that Beacon Falls also deals with issues at Woodland High.

M. Krenesky recommended that the Board of Finance have the Police Lieutenant walk them through the upcoming budget. J. Levine suggested that the Board of Selectmen look at the police budget first and then bring it before the Board of Finance. J. Huk is simply looking at the numbers and wants to know what the increased costs are responding to.

The Emergency Service/Fuel line item will be over budget. J. Levine asked about a fuel consortium where towns buy fuel in bulk for savings. G. Smith explained that once the fuel tank is installed, the town will be buying vehicle fuel in bulk through a consortium.

M. Bronn asked about the Debt line items and M. Gomez will look at them, noting the negative numbers are often a function of timing, based on when the payments are due. M. Gomez stated that over the next 5 months, the main issue will be controlling departmental spending.

With regard to the audit report, the auditor will most likely recommend new accounting software because the trial balance is out of balance again this year.

**B. Doiron made a motion to accept the Finance Manager's Report. J. Huk seconded the motion. All ayes.**

**A. BOARD'S CLERK INVOICES**

There were no invoices from the Board Clerk presented at this time.

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**BOARD OF SELECTMEN**

G. Smith explained that once all of the town department budgets are in, they will be put together in a binder for the Board of Finance to review. M. Gomez has requested that each department provide a narrative explaining the content of their budgets. G. Smith and M. Gomez will be working to get the department budgets in as soon as possible. January 31 was the deadline for departments to submit their budgets, and M. Gomez is compiling the information.

J. Levine would like to review budgets from past years, the latest audit reports and management letters. J. Levine asked if the major departments have submitted budgets: Public Works, Fire Department, Police Department and Wastewater Treatment Plant. Once major departments are in and town hall expenses are accounted for, the Board of Selectman/Finance can start the process. M. Gomez has not received health insurance numbers or information from trash pickup yet. G. Smith noted that contract negotiations with the unions are coming up.

J. Levine would like the budget presented to the public before the Region 16 budget and the entire board concurred. *The group set a Special Joint Board of Selectmen/Board of Finance Budget Workshop Meeting for February 28, 2012 at 7:30 PM.* B. Doiron asked if the four department heads from Public Works, Fire, Police and Wastewater Treatment can be present at that meeting to review their department budgets.

J. Levine stated it would be helpful to have a best guess total budget figure in place for this meeting. It is a different conversation if the Board of Finance can see the whole picture. M. Gomez stated that capital expenses are the items which significantly impact the bottom line; roads, bonding, ambulance, vehicles. J. Levine would like capital requests to come in as purchases, rather than leases.

B. Doiron stated that all of the capital purchases that the town has been putting off for years will appear again in this budget. G. Smith explained that the emergency vehicles, such as the ambulance, have mandated replacement periods, but the Fire Department is looking at creative ways to save money. M. Bronn asked about private ambulance services and M. Gomez stated that service is more expensive than the current format.

J. Levine suggested a 5 years capital improvement plan, which would be important for the town to develop. The town requested 5 year projections from the departments this year. B. Doiron noted the town is so far behind because the money has not been spent to keep capital spending intact. J. Huk noted that the town needs a 5 year plan from the Board of Finance level, not from the department level, so that the entire town's assets can be considered.

G. Smith noted that while the Board of Selectman and Board of Finance are in agreement, it is ultimately the public's decision.

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**A. TRANSFERS**

G. Smith stated the Board of Selectmen has one request to transfer \$11,500 from the Tax Collector's Salary line item, which is overfunded, to the Special Projects line item. The transfer is for maintenance at the Wastewater Treatment Plant, on 3 projects: to prevent infiltration by sealing manhole covers on Railroad Avenue, to install a backflow preventer valve and to fix a pipe on West Road.

There is no line item for these repairs in the Wastewater Treatment Plant budget, and they are capital projects, so the suggestion is to move the monies to Special Projects and create a new line item for Sewer Repairs. J. Levine asked if it was possible to create a new account. M. Gomez will check the State law on this matter.

**J. Levine made a motion to transfer \$11,500 from line item 10-07-1010 Tax Collector's Salary to Special Projects under either a new or existing line item, as allowed. B. Doiron seconded the motion. All ayes.**

**NEW BUSINESS**

**Approval of Minutes – Special Meeting 1/25/2012:**

**J. Dowdell made a motion to approve the January 25, 2012 Special Meeting Minutes. J. Huk seconded the motion. M. Bronn, J. Dowdell, and J. Huk voted aye. J. Levine and B. Doiron abstained from the vote.**

J. Dowdell has been appointed by the Board of Selectmen as the Board of Finance's representative to the Fire Department Service Awards Committee.

Notice should go out for the Special Board of Selectmen/Board of Finance Budget Workshop which will take place on February 28, 2012 at 7:30 PM.

**OLD BUSINESS**

None.

**CORRESPONDENCE**

The Board received a letter showing the proposed dates for the Region 16 Budget Workshops, which begin on February 29, 2012. The Region's proposed date for Public Hearing is April 11 and they go to vote on the first Monday in May, May 7.

**M. Bronn made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:40 PM. B. Doiron seconded the motion. All ayes.**

Respectfully submitted,

Erin A. Schwarz