



TOWN OF BEACON FALLS
Board of Finance/Board of Selectmen Joint Budget Workshop
Tuesday March 13, 2012

CALL TO ORDER

G. Smith called the Joint Budget Workshop to order at 8:00 P.M.

Present: Members of the Board of Finance; M. Bronn, J. Dowdell, R. Doiron, B. Ploss, J. Huk and J. Levine arrived at 8:10. Selectmen C. Bielik and D. D'Amico. Also present approximately 10 town residents.

It was decided that the session would work page to page starting with page 5.

1st Selectman – no change

Town Hall – Problem with telephone - A lengthy discussion continued regarding the problem with the phones noting that it is way over budget. M. Krenesky noted that he will look into this because they are apparently being charged more than we were contracted for.

A lengthy discussion continued with M. Krenesky noting that the new phone system was to cut the bill 40% and according to M. Gomes, they will end up being \$8,000 - \$9,000 over budget.

M. Gomes noted that he will get the breakdown.

R. Doiron suggested we have a representative present at the next meeting. M. Krenesky noted he will make a call to Harry Roscoe.

The discussion continued with all noting this has to be addressed.

Town Clerk – G. Smith noted that the Town Clerk's office needs to put everything on Microfilm. B. Ploss asked if we were up to date on this and wanted to know if by spending this money, we are caught up with the requirements. He noted that at one point, we weren't getting all that we needed with the money we were spending.

M. Bronn asked if we needed all that staff in the Town Clerk's office. G. Smith noted that we do need coverage if someone is out.

J. Huk asked why the Town Clerk's office needed overtime. G. Smith noted that the \$2,500 budgeted for overtime will be removed.

A discussion took place regarding the tax collector position swap. G. Smith noted that we need to add in to the line items the contracted raises.

Tax Collector – ok

Treasurer – ok

Building Inspector – It was noted that due to upgrades in codes, the building inspector had to buy books.

Benefits – G. Smith explained that the town's medical insurance guy's father passed away so we did not yet get the information we need. M. Gomes noted that he did put a conservative number in for medical benefits (15%)

G. Smith noted that they are currently in contract negotiations noting that its union language and they get what they get.

J. Levine noted that they have to bid the insurance out to someone else. G. Smith noted that A. Mulligan is going to do that.

M. Bronn said that they can raise employee deductibles and that will change the number.

J. Levine began a lengthy discussion regarding Kirma and Mirma explaining that with Kirma, our workers comp insurance can be cut – noting the employee, if released by a Dr. can go back to work on light duty and this lowers the premiums substantially.

M. Gomes noted that workers comp is based on payroll and it is high this year due to all the overtime from the snow last year.

A lengthy discussion continued.

J. Levine asked if we have looked into state workers comp. M. Gomes noted that we are still paying Myrma (even though we are not in it any more). M. Gomes noted that it's Kirma who offers the programs J. Levine is referring to and we are not part of Kirma.

A lengthy discussion continued.

M. Gomes noted that we used to pay a minimum amount for ambulance calls. He noted that there were 643 ambulance calls and we were hit hard by them.

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J. Levine asked about payment in lieu of health insurance and is this in the contract. The answer was yes.

J. Levine noted that when you are in a pool, it gets more expensive and suggested that during negotiations, the pool should be addressed.

J. Levine suggested that if it's possible to get out of MURPH then we should get out of it and set up our own funds.

M. Bronn referred to how high the pension number was several times.

J. Levine noted that this is what the Selectmen negotiated.

A lengthy discussion continued.

It was noted that amortization is what costs so much money.

It was noted that the original contract cost the town 4.1 million over 20 years.

M. Gomes noted that this took place a long time ago.

It was noted that there is a \$72,000 increase in benefits.

A lengthy discussion continued with G. Smith noting that they are just beginning negotiations and that this is new to him. He noted that if they don't come to terms and they start knocking heads, it could take years to settle and the current contract holds flat while this happens.

Board of Assessors – flat except for wages due to furlough days.

J. Levine asked if the number for the audit was an appropriate amount.

A lengthy discussion continued.

BOF – ok

EDC – G. Smith noted that he was torn – but decided to keep it flat.

It was noted that inlands/wetlands is down.

It was noted that they are expecting a primary this year.

Professional Fees – It was noted that the expenditures for 2011/12 are not up to date.

A lengthy discussion continued with questions such as what line item does Virtual Town Hall get paid from.

Should legal fees be increased?

Should all monies be held in contingency so that departments don't spend money if it is left over.

It was decided that they will leave \$2,500 in Web Consultant and move \$7,500 adding it to labor negotiations.

Welfare – flat

It was decided that \$3,500 will be put in for CCM

A discussion on training took place noting that if you don't go to the training, it's a complete waste of money however if you use it, it's well worth it. G. Smith thinks the \$3,500 should stay.

J. Levine suggested they lump line items together. G. Smith noted that he does not like that idea due to history of a line item.

Emergency Services is up 22.95%

A lengthy discussion continued regarding the consortium. It was asked if they are really going to save money. It was noted that they are 1 year contracts and another local town that is in the consortium is paying \$3.05 a gallon for gas and \$3.15 a gallon for diesel.

A lengthy discussion continued regarding fuel and diesel.

G. Smith decided to leave the gas line item as it is presented.

It was noted that vehicle repairs are up.

M. Pratt noted that he needs 15 sets of turnout gear. It was also noted that this was for active firemen.

J. Levine asked if there was any money left in the budget this year to buy some of these items now. It was noted that it was too soon to tell but pretty unlikely that there would be any extra money. It was noted that if there was, they would put it towards some of the items they are requesting for 2012/13.

A lengthy discussion continued regarding changing line items in the fire department. M. Gomes noted that if need be, he will re-work the line items to however they would like them.

EMS Training – M. Gomes will make the changes.

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Several lengthy discussions continued.

Cell phones were discussed with G. Smith noting that he wants to know who and why everyone has cell phones noting that he will probably make everyone turn them in.

J. Levine suggested that they eliminate all lines that are for cell phones and then let the Selectman decide who should get one.

A lengthy discussion continued.

Code Red- Flat

It was decided after a lengthy discussion that they will leave the police line item at \$108,761.

Police and their hours were discussed at length.

J. Levine suggested that the Selectman meet with the police so that he's comfortable with their schedule noting that he is not comfortable with using an arbitrary number.

G. Smith will confirm a possible \$23,000 cut from police.

A lengthy discussion continued.

Animal Patrol – Flat

Chip Sealing – a lengthy discussion continued.

It was noted that we need to begin maintaining the roads that are in pretty good shape right away.

Vehicle Maintenance – It was asked if they need to keep the maintenance numbers so high with the new purchases.

Highway Maintenance is up.

Sweeping – It was noted that Seymour will help us out with sweeping – they will loan us the equipment and we will save money. M. Bronn noted that the roads don't need to be swept in that we did not have any snow.

Town Garage – OK

CRRA Contract – G. Smith noted that he is getting other prices but will probably stay with CRRA.

A lengthy discussion regarding Bulky Waste took place. They decided to put in for 8 bulky waste days at \$5,000 per day - \$40,000.

D. D'Amico noted that he needs to figure out how to control the bulky waste. It was noted that this is a management issue.

Wastewater Treatment – It was decided to leave this line item alone.

Library Study - \$10,000 –

A lengthy discussion continued on what this \$10,000 would be for – Bailey Study, Professional Services – M. Krenesky noted that the backup documents explain the reason for the requests.

After a lengthy discussion and M. Krenesky reading the backup data, it was decided to leave the library alone.

It was decided that they will remove the \$20,000 for the Park and Rec Director.

Matthies Park was discussed and it was noted that the work that needs to be done to Matthies Park should be done through a bond.

It was noted during a lengthy discussion that they have to figure out what to do with the Wolfe Ave. property.

It was decided that contingency should be raised to \$100,000 noting that they put in for \$20,000 last year to bring it up to \$100,000 and it got cut. They decided to definitely go to \$100,000 and if it gets cut, they will still have \$80,000.

J. Levine asked if we have refinanced our bonds.

It was decided to reduce the “seats” in the town clerk’s office (seats being a computer station) from \$6,000 to \$3,000.

It was suggested that we may want to bond \$660,000 for the wastewater study. A lengthy discussion continued on whether or not you can bond a study. M. Gomes will ask.

D. D'Amico explained how if they rent a machine for \$4500 per month, that money will go towards the purchase of the machine. D. D'Amico noted that he did some homework and was able to get a substantial savings on the town truck and also the loader. A lengthy discussion continued.

It was suggested that when the budget is presented to the town, that only the town budget numbers be presented (no include region 16). J. Levine noted that the town budget is their only responsibility and it is not their responsibility to include the school budget in their presentation.

After a lengthy discussion, it was decided that the next budget workshop would be held on 3/26 at 6:30 (with the hopes that all the information needed will be available by then) and then another workshop was scheduled for 3/27 at 7:00.

April 10th will be the Public Hearing regarding the budget with the BOF meeting following.

R. Doiron motioned to adjourn the meeting at 10:20 P.M. B. Ploss 2nd the motion. All voted aye.

Meeting was adjourned at 10:20 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

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

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