

## **TOWN OF BEACON FALLS**

### **Board of Finance/Board of Selectmen Joint Budget Workshop**

**Tuesday March 26, 2012**

### **FULL MINUTES**

#### **CALL TO ORDER**

G. Smith called the Joint Budget Workshop to order at 6:35 P.M.

Present: Members of the Board of Finance; M. Bronn, J. Dowdell, R. Doiron, J. Huk, J. Levine and B. Ploss arrived at 7:25 P.M.

Also present, M. Gomes, Selectmen G. Smith, C. Bielik and D. D'Amico, the Town Auditor and approximately 50 members of the public.

G. Smith explained that due to the "auditors report" not being on the agenda, Tuesday's agenda was revised and the auditor will give his report on Tuesday at 6:30 P.M.

M. Zaimaitis handed out 4 documents for all to review (it was noted that all had received these documents via email prior to this meeting). G. Smith asked M. Zaimaitis to come back on Tuesday.

The budget workshop continued at 6:45 P.M.

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G. Smith explained that with everything that was added in capital projects, that the budget resulted in a 17% increase therefore he recommended that several things be removed from the budget.

G. Smith talked about CRRA (it may end up being cheaper if they include bulky waste), Blackberry Hill (underfunded and they have to pay between \$125K and \$160K, Streetscape (was \$85K and is now \$45K – noting he tried to get the state to include the roadway but they said no to keep the town from winding up in litigation). He noted that the Life Packs for the Fire Department had to stay in the budget.

After a lengthy discussion regarding coming up with a budget that was acceptable to the public, J. Levine made the following motion:

**J. Levine motioned that they remove the following items from the budget:**

**BH#7 Ambulances Refurbish \$130,000**

**Kitchen Hood System at Firehouse \$10,000**

**Radio System \$85,000**

**New Financial Software \$39,560**

**Computer Equipment Town Hall \$12,224**

**Replacement of PW Truck \$57,000**

**New Police Vehicle \$40,000**

**WWT Flow Meter Pines Bridge Pump St. \$30,000**

**West Road/Lopus Clean Manholes \$13,800**

**PW Loader \$87,000**

**SWWT Project \$97,660**

**Town Clerk Seats \$3,000**

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**J. Dowdell 2nd the motion for discussion purposes**

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It was noted that there is concern regarding the flow meter for the pump stations.

It was noted that the BOF and BOS would be better served if they came up with an acceptable budget. M. Bronn suggested that they put together a bond package down the road.

R. Doiron noted that he's concerned about the loader and will all this stuff be considered in the bond package.

J. Levine noted that the public should know that these items are being left off the budget.

M. Gomes noted that not only is it a double digit increase but the grand list has gone down.

R. Doiron noted that we are also getting buried by the new school.

M. Bronn noted that money is cheap no and that we should look to a bond package towards the fall.

C. Bielik noted that it should be a reasonable payback period in that the equipment to be purchased will not have a 20 year expectable life.

It was noted that in reality, the people have to pay one way or another.

C. Bielik noted that these items were put in previous budgets only to be voted down.

R. Doiron noted that he would prefer to have the town vote to take these items out.

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A lengthy discussion continued with the BOF and BOS trying to get to a 5% increase.

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**J. Huk, J. Dowdell, M. Bronn and J. Levine voted Aye. R. Doiron opposed the motion. Motion passed.**

**J. Levine motioned to reduce contingency from \$100,000 to \$80,000. J. Huk 2nd the motion for discussion purposes.**

Discussion:

R. Doiron asked if we pull out all of the capital projects, does anyone see the need to put more into contingency.

J. Levine agreed that there are lots of things the town needs.

J. Huk noted that he was under the impression that the ambulance was on its last leg.

J. Levine noted that if everything goes really bad, it will be a health issue and they can call a meeting to take money out of the already low fund balance.

M. Bronn noted that the retirement fund is very big and is there anywhere we can make employee cuts.  
G. Smith noted that he does not believe so.

M. Bronn noted that he believes the budget needs to go flat. It was noted that to go flat, they would need to take out \$371K.

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**J. Huk, M. Bronn and J. Levine voted aye. J. Dowdell and R. Doiron opposed the motion. Motion passed.**

Police – a lengthy discussion regarding police took place.

*J. Levine asked if we have any opportunities to refinance any bonds.*

It was noted that they would need to cut \$80K more to get the budget to 5% increase. G. Smith noted that he doesn't see \$80K coming out.

J. Levine noted that they should then start cutting services and hear what the town has to say.

M. Bronn noted that they would either have to cut services or personnel.

A lengthy discussion took place regarding trash.

A lengthy discussion continued.

J. Levine noted that there clearly is not a unanimous vote on the BOF and that they should all agree and get on the same page. R. Doiron noted that they should not all agree just to agree. A lengthy discussion continued.

It was noted that G. Smith will ask the financial advisor the best way to go about bonding. A lengthy discussion continued. It was discussed if the existing bonds should be rolled into the suggested new bond package. A lengthy discussion continued.

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M. Bronn suggested that they look at cutting services such as the Town Nurse and trash services.

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J. Levine asked if they could cut police and go to part time patrol. G. Smith explained that there are already holes.

C. Bielik noted that they can't cut the turnout gear.

A lengthy discussion took place regarding the sewer study. J. Dowdell noted that the sewer should have been taken care of 5 years ago.

J. Levine noted that he had a change of heart and they should bond paving and a sewer study.

C. Bielik noted that if you put them together, you will lose both.

It was noted that if the budget gets defeated, further cuts will have to be made.

J. Levine motioned to reduce chip sealing from \$90,000 to \$35,000. R. Doiron 2nd the motion for discussion purposes.

J. Huk asked if we ever received a good number on the roads. It was noted that the roads are in really bad condition. It was noted that the chip sealing amount in the budget covers 2 ½ miles of road.

J. Huk asked which roads will be done. A lengthy discussion continued regarding chip sealing.

M. Bronn, B. Ploss, J. Huk and J. Levine voted aye. R. Doiron and J. Dowdell opposed the motion. Motion passed.

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After a lengthy discussion, \$5k was cut from EDC.

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**R. Doiron motioned to reduce EDC from \$5,000 to 0. J. Levine 2nd the motion. All voted aye.**

G. Smith noted that EDC has shown some signs of new life.

R. Doiron noted that they are already so far behind the 8 ball that we are never coming back.

**C. Bielik motioned to recess the budget workshop for 5 minutes at 8:05. J. Huk 2nd the motion. All voted aye.**

8:10 P.M. meeting was back in order.

M. Gomes noted that real estate has gone down 14%.

J. Huk noted that he would take a percentage (5%) across the board.

M. Gomes noted that the fund balance is getting dangerously low.

A lengthy discussion continued. R. Doiron noted that some of cuts are irresponsible financial decisions.

B. Ploss asked if there was clarification on the phones. A lengthy discussion continued.

B. Ploss asked if anything can be cut out of "computer" line items noting that he believes \$20K can easily be stripped out.

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J. Levine suggested a modified freeze on department fund balances.

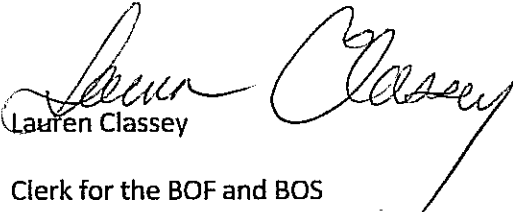
M. Gomes noted that they tried that 2 times last year and it didn't work. It was noted that there is a huge cash flow problem.

M. Krenesky began a lengthy discussion on the cash flow problem.

**R. Doiron motioned to adjourn the meeting at 8:32. J. Huk 2nd the motion. All voted aye.**

Meeting was adjourned at 8:32.

Respectfully submitted,

  
Lauren Classey  
Clerk for the BOF and BOS

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