

**Beacon Falls Board of Finance**  
**10 Maple Ave.**  
**Beacon Falls, CT 06403**



**BEACON FALLS BOARD OF FINANCE**  
**Special Monthly Meeting**  
**January 15, 2013**  
**MINUTES**  
**(Draft Copy-Subject to Revision)**

**1. Call to Order/Pledge of Allegiance**

Chairman Marc Bronn called the meeting to order at 7:31

Members present: Jim Huk, Joe Dowdell, Jack Levine, Robert Doiron

Members absent: Brian Ploss

Others present: First Selectman Gerard Smith, Selectman Dave D'Amico, Selectman Chris Bielik, Assistant Librarian Susan Dowdell, Registrar Kathy Grace, Ed Groth, Susan Cable

**2. Approval of Minutes – December 11, 2012**

Motion to accept the December 11, 2012 Regular Monthly meeting minutes:

**Dowdell/Levine;** all aye. *R. Doiron abstained as he was not at the December 11, 2012 meeting.*

**3. Comments from the Public - none**

**4. Treasurer's Report – from Mike Krenesky**

Reports were distributed to members for review.  
No discussion

**5. Tax Collector's Report – from Ursula Henry**

Reports were distributed to members for review.

J. Levine asked if we are on track with the tax collection. Per First Selectman Gerard Smith yes – currently the town is at a 93% collection rate. He added that the Tax Collector will be notifying those with larger outstanding taxes due.

**6. Town Clerk's Report – from Len Greene, Sr.**

Reports were distributed to members for review.  
No discussion

**7. Finance Manager's Report – from Manny Gomes**

Reports were distributed to members for review.

J. Levine asked about the status of the RFP for a town auditor. First Selectman Gerard Smith replied the he didn't know the status.

J. Levine respectfully requested that it go out to bid in the next few weeks. He offered to share a sample RFP that he has from the Amity school system and will forward it to First Selectman Gerard Smith. He went on to explain that he wants the Board of Finance to interview the auditor applicants.

M. Bronn asked First Selectman Gerard Smith if there are any major budget items to be concerned with. G. Smith replied that the town is right on target, and the town has already saved money with the lighting change implemented a few months ago and will be saving more money now that the town has its own fuel tanks for town equipment.

- a. Board Clerk's Invoice: Motion to accept clerk's invoice requesting payment for the December 11, 2012 meeting and associated administrative work and pay the bill as submitted: Doiron/Dowdell; all aye.
- b. Update on addressing any town audit concerns
- c. RFP for a town auditor – to go out in January or February 2013

## 8. First Selectman Report

First Selectman Gerard Smith brought up the direction of the 35 Wolfe Avenue property. He has met with a group comprised of Assistant Librarian Sue Dowdell, Chairman of the Library Board of Trustees Ken Priestley, grant writer Lisa Low, project manager Adam Kinkel, historical society member Ben Cantazaro, and preservation architect Steven Lazarus.

They have looked at old studies, including the Bailey study. He has gotten as much information for free as possible, anymore work on this project will have to be paid for. The options at this time are to raze the house, add to it, or sell it (noting that no market analysis had been done).

This group is at standstill now. G. Smith asked the Board of Finance if they are opposed to funding either \$11,000 for an architectural study during this budget year and then adding \$25,000 on the next budget for the fundraising (grants) effort.

G. Smith went on to explain that \$11,000 will get preliminary architectural plans with a cost estimate for the library project to use for fundraising for a 6,000 sq ft addition to the existing building which has a 1,500 sq ft footprint.

The project would increase library space and would open up more community meeting space in both the town hall and the library.

\$25,000 would be needed for a feasibility study, which could use 150 potential sources of fundraising. G. Smith is looking at getting donations and avoiding state grants to save money by not having to pay prevailing wage and use volunteer labor.

J. Levine suggested having a town meeting to get ideas and opinions from town residents.

J. Huk commented that any town meeting would have to be structured and not be held as an open forum but have an organized presentation of potential options for the property.

Selectman C. Bielik commented that this town meeting should be designated as either an informational meeting or a vote by the town. He went on to suggest having an informational town meeting first then a vote at a second town meeting.

R. Doiron asked what the cost estimate would be.

Selectman C. Bielik stated that the building at 35 Wolfe Avenue isn't structurally sound to support a library.

Selectman D. D'Amico said he would like to hear from an engineer about the current structure of the house.

G. Smith concurred with the idea of a public hearing about the 35 Wolfe Avenue house and will talk to the Board of Selectmen to schedule a public hearing.

a. Transfers –

At a Special Meeting of the Beacon Falls Board of Selectmen held on December 20, 2012, the Board of Selectmen voted to approve a request for a budget transfer of \$5,000 from the Contingency Fund to the Library Budget Line 10-69-1019 to fund a part-time Library Assistant through the end of June 2013.

This part-time worker will fill in when only one librarian is on duty.

Motion to transfer \$5,000 from the Contingency Fund to the Library Budget Line to fund a part-time Library Assistant through the end of June 2013:

**Levine/Bronn**; all aye.

The Public Works Department requested a transfer of \$15,000 from line 10-59-1665 Town Road Aid to line item 10-59-1703 Vehicle Maintenance.

These funds were to cover the refurbishment of a town truck.

J. Levine asked if this transfer was approved by the Board of Selectmen. First Selectman Gerard Smith stated that yes it was.

R. Doiron asked if the \$15,000 could be split between two budget line items.

J. Levine agreed with Board of Selectmen's decision on this transfer.

Motion to transfer \$15,000 from Public Works Department Town Road Aid to Public Works Department Vehicle Maintenance: Levine/Huk; all aye.

**9. Old Business**

a. Report from Joe Dowdell on Region 16 budget process –

Negotiations are over; the 3-year agreement is awaiting signatures. He commented that it was a fair agreement for everyone.

J. Levine expressed his thanks to J. Dowdell for volunteering his time for this effort.

b. Budget preparation process and calendar

Thursday January 31 will be the first budget workshop. The Boards of Finance and Selectmen will meet with Region 16 superintendent, Tim James.

First Selectman Gerard Smith noted that all department budgets are due to the selectman's office on or before February 4, 2013.

The regular monthly Board of Finance meeting on February 12 will be another budget workshop.

J. Huk attended a CCM budget workshop for sharing of best practices between towns on fiscal management on January 12 in Southington. He described it as eye opening. It was led by the Town of Bristol comptroller, other towns were involved.

It supported his feelings that there are additional things that Beacon Falls can implement in terms of controls and metrics that other towns are doing, but with having only a part-time finance manager there may not be sufficient time.

J. Huk talked to town Finance Manager M. Gomes about getting thresholds on reports, and when to be concerned. J. Huk explained that he and probably others don't have time to read financial reports in depth.

J. Levine advised not to get "into the weeds" of the finance reporting but this brought up an excellent point about increasing the hours for the finance manager. J. Levine commented that by law, the Board of Finance is responsible for the books of an institution.

J. Dowdell asked what J. Huk planned to do.

J. Huk requested better information on trending, thresholds, and alerts rather than have the Board of Finance members guessing. He suggested using better tools to prepare reports, such as an Excel analysis, and put the data in a more understandable format. He added that this would potentially save more time if a different reporting tool were used.

J. Levine commented that he doesn't see any problem with a board member making recommendation on process improvements; reports are for the benefit of the Board of Finance. He added that J. Huk's suggestions are helpful, but wants them to go through the First Selectman and review his ideas with the Board of Finance for input.

First Selectman Gerard Smith added that this was a great idea, but M. Gomes is part-time, as is the tax collector, treasurer and others providing reports to the Board of Finance.

It was agreed that J. Huk would develop some initial reports based on data he already has and deliver to the boards as an example of what he is proposing.

## **10. New Business**

### a. Election of Officers (Chairman & Vice Chairman)

- Chairman Marc Bronn called for nominations from the floor for the Chairman position. Motion to nominate Jim Huk for Chairman; Doiron/Levine; all aye.
- Motion to nominate Joe Dowdell as Vice Chairman; Levine/Bronn; all aye.
- Motion to nominate Jack Levine as Secretary; Huk/Doiron; all aye.

## **11. Correspondence –**

Letter request from Regional Mental Health Board, passed on to the Board of Selectmen.

J. Levine expressed his gratitude to Marc Bronn for being Chairman.

R. Doiron apologized for missing the last 2 meetings.

## **12. Comments from the Public -**

Assistant Librarian & Friend, Sue Dowdell, invited the Board of Finance to form a team for the Scrabble Tournament on March 21. The Board of Selectmen will have a team. First Selectman Gerard Smith clarified that it would be a BOS and spouses team.

## **13. Adjournment**

The next special monthly meeting will be Thursday, January 31, 2013 at 7:30 PM.

Motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:26 PM; Doiron/Levine; all aye.

Respectfully submitted,

Martha Melville  
Clerk for the Board of Finance