

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



**BEACON FALLS BOARD OF FINANCE**  
**Regular Monthly Meeting**  
**June 11, 2013**  
**MINUTES**  
**(Draft Copy-Subject to Revision)**

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

Chairman Jim Huk called the meeting to order at 7:31

Members present: Joe Dowdell, Brian Ploss, Robert Doiron, Marc Bronn, Jack Levine

Others present: First Selectman Gerard Smith, Selectman Chris Bielik, Town Treasurer Mike Krenesky, Town Finance Manager Manny Gomes, and about 8 members of the public

Chairman J. Huk noted a change to the agenda, moving item 4. Comments from the Public up to the second item on the agenda.

**2. Comments from the Public**

Sue Dowdell, 32 Wolfe Ave: encouraged the Board of Finance to keep the \$11,000 in the budget for the library study. She shared that the state has grant money, \$5 million is available for non-distressed communities, for which Beacon Falls is eligible. These are building grants which haven't been available the past few years. She explained that there would be a good chance for the BFPL to get a grant; an application can be submitted in September to get up to \$1 million for eligible costs.

Joe Rodorigo, 42 Bonna St: questioned the math used at the Board of Selectmen meeting regarding the tax credit for seniors at \$500 per applicant. He noted that the town shouldn't change the rules in the middle of a budget and honor what the legislative body of Beacon Falls has already agreed to. He doesn't want to pit Park & Rec against the Library. He noted the POCD 5 year plan exists, the Wolfe Ave property was bought for municipal use and questioned that if the \$11,000 is for a library study, it can only be used for library rather than for other groups to use this property as well. He commented that the public voted to purchase the Wolfe Ave property for municipal use, not just a library. He agreed that the town needs more library space but that the Wolfe Ave property should be used for more than a library. He requested removing the library study from the budget.

Sue Dowdell, 32 Wolfe Ave: added that in the POCD, the library was only mentioned once in the report and it does not mention the Wolfe Avenue property.

### 3. Act on Town Budget Referendum: Set mill rate or discuss budget adjustments

Changes based on new information:

The state budget was adopted on June 5, 2013: the Connecticut Conference of Municipalities sent Beacon Falls an estimate of impact on non-tax revenue, some funds are eliminated, but would go up 2% based this on estimate and included these changes:

- education grant up \$11,000 or 0.3% to \$4,120,120
- Pequot-Mohegan grant increased by 3% to \$11,341
- State-owned property tax increased by 2.8% to \$45,713
- manufacturing transition grant was eliminated
- MRSA Bonded Distribution is a new grant for \$41,202 (creates a new budget line item)
- Town road aid was doubled, an increase to \$187,095

Based on the previously BOF approved budget with these changes, the impact to the town operating budget would change the mill rate to 31.1 with a 4.2% increase in non-tax revenue.

J. Levine commented that LoCIP money is zero; Beacon Falls hasn't requested any so it is not in the budget. With the town road aid increase, the BOF will need to increase one of the line items on the budget side to use it, perhaps use it in the Public Works department for chip sealant, tree cutting, guard rails, etc.

Motion to adopt these numbers given in the FY2013-2014 state budget adopted and signed by the governor: education grant \$4,120,120; Pequot-Mohegan grant \$11,341; State-owned property tax \$45,713; MRSA Bonded Distribution \$41,202 and create a new budget line item; and, Town Road Aid \$187,095: **Levine/Dowdell**; all aye.

J. Huk suggested removing all references to the fire truck in the proposed budget for a separate vote for the town.

Motion to remove all references to the fire truck from the proposed budget and have a town can vote separately on a fire truck purchase: **Levine/Bronn**; all aye.

*Discussion:*

*R. Doiron asked if there was a potential grant for a fire truck. He expressed his concern in waiting on the fire house roof replacement; that it cannot be deferred, it needs to be repaired sooner rather than later as it will cost the town more the longer it is put off.*

*J. Levine suggested that the fire house roof replacement be separated from the proposed budget and perhaps consider using some proceeds from the sale of the cell tower to pay for the roof.*

*First Selectman G. Smith noted that the fire house roof replacement has gone out to bid and the minimum bid received was for \$66,000, the BOS added an additional 20% to cover unexpected problems.*

*J. Levine suggested taking money to replace the fire house roof directly from the reserves (cell tower sale proceeds) and not include this cost in operating budget.*

*B. Ploss suggested the BOF approve this payment plan for the fire house roof and send it to the Board of Selectmen for approval; to keep it on the forefront and get it done now.*

*R. Doiron expressed his concern of tying the roof repair to the budget which can be defeated and possibly delay the fire house roof repair.*

*J. Levine suggested bringing the proposed budget, with the lowest increase possible, to a town meeting and explain that the fire house roof could be paid for from reserves.*

Motion for the Board of Finance to recommend that the Board of Selectmen set a town meeting date to vote on using up to \$80,000 from general fund reserves for the purpose of repairing the fire house roof at the earliest possible time: Levine/Ploss;

J. Levine withdrew this motion and would like to revisit funding the roof after budget discussions are concluded.

*Discussion:*

*R. Doiron noted that by removing the \$72,000 from the debt service in the budget for a fire truck and with additional money from the state, he would like to see the overall tax increase lowered to 1.8%.*

*J. Huk noted that the actual tax collection rate was greater than 97.5% according to the Finance Manager's report.*

Motion to calculate the budget using a 98% tax collection rate: **Huk/Bronn**; all aye.

J. Levine questioned M. Gomes about back taxes. M. Gomes explained that the prior year taxes has a separate line item at \$318,000. M. Gomes noted that 99% of taxes were collected.

Motion for non tax revenue to change budgeted miscellaneous grant from \$59,978 to \$20,000: **Huk/Bronn**; all aye.

Motion to decrease Interest on Investments line item from \$20,000 to \$11,000: **Levine/Doiron**; all aye.

Motion for the senior tax credit estimate which was previously set at a rate of \$144,000 be decreased to \$64,000 per the current town ordinance: **Huk/Bronn**; all aye.

G. Smith asked what would happen if the town ordinance for the senior tax credit was changed and the actual amount reverts back to \$144,000.

J. Levine responded that the mill rate would be adjusted, if necessary and suggested that fact be announced at the town meeting when the senior tax credit ordinance is discussed and put to a vote, to make it clear that if approved, the mill rate would increase.

Motion to put the fire house roof repair to a town vote: Levine/Ploss;

*Discussion:*

*J. Levine asked M. Gomes what the anticipated surplus is for the FY 2012-2013 budget.*

*J. Dowdell noted that the town has the proceeds from the sale of the cell tower and that for a one-time expense of over \$20,000 it must go to a vote at a town meeting.*

*M. Bronn noted that the building inspection fees should cover the building inspector wages, and that any decrease in wages should be offset by decreasing the revenues generated.*

*R. Doiron noted that Beacon Falls current building permit fees are comparable to those in surrounding towns, but that it doesn't cover the cost of building inspectors wages. He cautioned against raising the fees too high compared to other towns.*

*J. Levine noted that the Board of Finance doesn't set the building inspection fees.*

*G. Smith noted there are new building projects in the works at Chatfield Farms and Pond Springs which will require more building inspections.*

*M. Bronn commented that these new building projects would also incur sewer hookup fees.*

*J. Huk commented that the BOF doesn't have all the information necessary regarding potential building projects and that the building inspector will be affected by updates in building codes which is an unfunded state mandate.*

*J. Levine agreed that the building inspector's increase was legitimate for his wages, even though the townspeople have questioned it.*

Motion to decrease building inspector wages line item 10-11 1020 to \$33,000 and decrease the building permits revenue fees to \$35,000: **Huk/Ploss**; all aye

Motion to increase the Town Clerk Conveyance fees to \$60,000: **Levine/Ploss**; all aye.

Based on the above changes, the mill rate goes down .3. Town operating expenses increase by 1.7% and town department expenses decrease by 1.81%.

Motion for the Board of Finance to adopt a proposed 2013-2014 municipal budget of \$6,126,576: **Levine/Huk**; all aye.

*Discussion:*

*G. Smith commented that the fire house roof repair should be included in the town's operating budget using the reserves as revenue to offset the expense of the roof, for clarification.*

*J. Levine commented that if it made more sense to include the fire house roof repair in the budget then leave it in. The BOF is trying to get the roof work done and the budget passed, and certainly not trying to mislead anyone.*

*J. Huk commented that the Board of Finance lowered taxes.*

*G. Smith noted that the public will see no budget cuts, but the cost of the fire truck and fire house roof costs would be separate and come at a later time.*

*J. Huk commented that separating the fire truck and fire house roof from the operating budget would give the townspeople a chance to choose what to vote for.*

*J. Levine suggested taking \$80,000 for the fire house roof repair out of the anticipated budget surplus for FY 2012-2013.*

*M. Bronn suggested taking \$66,000 for the fire house roof repair from the FY 2012-2013 budget contingency and add a new budget line item in the FY 2013-2014 budget for possible roof contingency for an additional 20% to cover unexpected problems.*

Motion for the Board of Finance to recommend that the Board of Selectmen call a town meeting vote to take \$66,000 from the FY 2012-2013 contingency account to pay for roof repair at fire house: Levine/Doiron; all aye.

The Board of Selectmen will set a date for a special town meeting to approve the \$66,000 allocation for the fire house roof repair and a budget vote.

**4. Approval of Minutes – May 14, 2013, May 22, 2013 (2x) and May 28, 2013**

Motion to accept the May 14, 2013 regular monthly meeting minutes; the May 22, 2013 Public Hearing minutes, the May 22, 2013 joint budget workshop minutes, and May 28, 2013 special meeting minutes: Doiron/Bronn; all aye.

*B. Ploss abstained from approving the May 14 minutes as he was not at the May 14, 2013 meeting.*

**5. Treasurer's Report – from Mike Krenesky**  
Reports were distributed to members for review.

**6. Tax Collector's Report – from Ursula Henry**  
Reports were distributed to members for review.

**7. Town Clerk's Report** – from Len Greene, Sr.  
Reports were distributed to members for review.

**8. Finance Manager's Report** – from Manny Gomes  
Reports were distributed to members for review.

J. Levine asked if new town auditor had contacted M. Gomes: no, not yet.

J. Levine asked about the plan for the new financial software.

In a Board of Selectmen memo dated May 28, 2013, they approved awarding the bid for financial system software to Harris Computers. The process will be implemented at the end of August and will cover the entire FY 2013-2014.

M. Gomes expressed his concern about first implementing the payroll piece to print W-2s from the new system, then the budget payable side will be implemented and all the data will roll over.

- a. Board Clerk's Invoice: Motion to accept clerk's invoice requesting payment for the April 9, April 23, May 1, May 22 (x2) and May 28 meetings and budget workshops and associated administrative work and pay the bill as submitted: Doiron/Dowdell; all aye.
- b. Board Relief Clerk's Invoice: Motion to accept relief clerk's invoice requesting payment for the May 14, 2013 meeting and associated administrative work and pay the bill as submitted: Doiron/Dowdell; all aye.

**9. First Selectman Report** - First Selectman Gerard Smith

- a. Transfers – to be done at July BOF meeting

**10. Unfinished Business**

B. Ploss asked the status of the April 9, 2013 Board of Finance request for detailed explanations of cost overruns for the Depot Street Bridge, Streetscape and Blackberry Hill.

G. Smith stated that this information hasn't been received yet; the cost overruns were caused by engineering issues. G. Smith will request this information again. J. Levine concurred that the Board of Finance needs this explanation.

**11. New Business** - none

**12. Correspondence**

Board of Selectmen memo dated May 28, 2013 awarding the bid for financial system software to Harris Computers.

**13. Comments from the Public**

Joe Roderigo, 42 Bonna St: commented that the Board of Finance didn't cut anything from the budget, but lowered the town's expenses through anticipated state aid.

J. Huk commented that based on new information from the state, 11 months of actual tax collection and removing the fire truck purchase from the budget, the Board of Finance was able to lower taxes.

**14. Adjournment**

The next regular monthly meeting will be Tuesday, July 9, 2013 at 7:30 PM.

Motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:06 PM: Doiron/Ploss; all aye.

Respectfully submitted,  
Martha Melville  
Clerk for the Board of Finance