

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



BEACON FALLS BOARD OF FINANCE
Regular Monthly Meeting
August 13, 2013
MINUTES
(Draft Copy-Subject to Revision)

1. Call to Order/Pledge of Allegiance

Chairman Jim Huk called the meeting to order at 7:32

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

Others present: First Selectman Gerard Smith, Selectmen Chris Bielick, Dave D'Amico, Town Treasurer Mike Krenesky, Town Clerk Len Greene and about 6 members of the public

J. Huk moved item #6 Town Clerk's Report to #4 after Public Comment.

2. Approval of Minutes – June 11 and 25, 2013

Motion to accept the June 11, 2013 regular monthly meeting minutes: Levine/Ploss; no discussion; all aye.

Motion to accept the June 25, 2013 special meeting minutes: Levine/Dowdell; no discussion; all aye.

3. Comments from the Public - none

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

Reports were distributed to members for review.

L. Greene shared the background of the compensation model for the Beacon Falls Town Clerk which was on a percentage basis and explained that new legislation from the state has changed the fee structure; not many towns compensate their town clerk this way.

L. Greene noted that the contract with ACS, the vendor for land records, was renegotiated with no price increase for the next 5 years. The new contract will include new computers, two (2) public viewer stations, new server and replacement of the Title equipment. He also noted Town will be receiving a check in amount of \$22,480 as the Town had overpaid. This refund will go into general fund.

L. Greene noted that the fee increase mandated by the State will affect only one mortgage company (Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems - Mers).

L. Greene suggested looking at other ways of compensating the Town Clerk, which is an elected 4-year term position.

J. Levine questioned the legality of changing the salary of an elected official during their term.

There was no budget line item to pay the town clerk to accurately reflect his compensation.

J. Levine suggested checking with the town attorney and review the town ordinance about paying the town clerk. He suggested bringing it to a town meeting before the November elections if a change is needed to the ordinance.

J. Huk noted the immediate issue of compensation to the Town Clerk as this change went into effect on July 15, 2013, after the town's 2013-2014 budget was approved.

G. Smith suggested reviewing the ordinance and any proposed changes would need to go to a town meeting to set the Town Clerk salary; all fees generated by the Town Clerk would then go directly to the town.

J. Huk asked what the Town Clerk's compensation had been over the last 5 years and does the town need to bridge the compensation gap until next year's budget.

J. Levine suggested setting any Town Clerk salary to be effective July 1, 2014 and keep the current compensation until then. He noted that any changes to the ordinance would need to be approved at a town meeting but to request a budget transfer from the general fund to supplement the Town Clerk's compensation in the current budget year.

J. Huk suggested getting a legal opinion of the options for Town Clerk compensation given the new State statute and review the data of past compensation.

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

J. Dowdell requested the status of the IRS issue regarding fines and late fees.

M. Krenesky noted that this matter was settled and that all the funds were refunded to the town. He noted that the IRS representative commented that Beacon Falls had a history of reports being late or missing over the last 10 years.

J. Huk requested that M. Krenesky forward the letter from the IRS resolving this issue to the Board of Finance when he receives it.

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

J. Huk asked what the final collection rate for taxes for 2012-2013 was; he will contact M. Gomes and email the information to the other members.

J. Levine requested that the finance manager attend all Board of Finance meetings and budget workshop sessions to be available for questions.

7. Finance Manager's Report – from Manny Gomes

J. Levine requested that a monthly report be presented by the town finance manager on where we stand on the town audit, the status of the new financial software system implementation, where the town stands with major budget items and provide projections to the end of the year. He suggested this report be given at the Board of Selectmen meeting as well. He would defer to M. Gomes for the format he preferred and suggested using whatever was required by other towns.

- a. Board Clerk's Invoice: Motion to accept clerk's invoice requesting payment for the June 11 & 25 meetings and associated administrative work and pay the bill as submitted: Levine/Doiron; all aye.

8. First Selectman's Report

- a. Transfers: Tabled until the Board of Finance holds a special meeting and the Finance Manager is available for questions.

Discussion of concerns:

- *overage on the Town Counsel budget line*
- *town pension plan was underfunded*
- *Police Lt overage was related to severe weather storms requiring more police coverage*
- *Micro film records overage of \$4,132; L. Green did not believe this was correct*
- *Telephone: if the contract is up, G. Smith noted it was time to go out for a new bid*
- *employees benefits was over budget; due to adjustments made to clean up the line items*

J. Levine expressed his concerns to get books closed on the 2012-2013 budget so the audit can begin.

The Board of Finance will hold a special meeting on Tuesday, August 20, 2013 at 7 PM in the Town Hall Assembly Room.

M. Gomes will be available at the August 20 special meeting.

ACTION: Chairman J. Huk requested that Board of Finance members send their budget transfer questions to M. Gomes in advance of this meeting so that he can be prepared to respond.

J. Levine suggested that M. Gomes bring a sample of the report of budget projections in the format he uses for other towns.

R. Doiron noted that the amount of transfers requested equals a mill, about \$240,000, and that this amount of money was found in the 2012-2013 budget to cover these items.

G. Smith commented that every expenditure now requires a PO; no checks will be cut until approved by the First Selectman. He explained that this was the only way to control spending. The process will slow down right now, creating a bottleneck until the checks are caught up.

9. Appropriation and bond and note authorization

9a. Depot Street Bridge Rehabilitation Project Increase

To consider and act upon a resolution recommending a \$420,000 increase in the appropriation and bond and note authorization for the 2006 Depot Street Bridge Rehabilitation Project.

Vote on resolution tabled until the Board of Finance special meeting on August 20, 2013.

Discussion:

G. Smith noted that Navis & Young representative(s) would be available at the public hearing for questions on the engineering overruns totaling \$375,000.

The final payment of \$44,000 was due and is 100% reimbursable through grants.

G. Smith explained that the Board of Finance needs to authorize this expenditure to have the money which would be offset by a \$149,000 grant and a payment of \$44,000 going to Terry Contracting. The net to borrow to finish bridge project is \$220,000 but the full amount of \$420,000 needed to be authorized.

B. Ploss commented that the Board of Finance was still waiting for an explanation of the bridge engineering project overruns which was requested several months ago.

J. Levine emphasized the importance of getting the answers about these overruns before this resolution goes to a public hearing.

G. Smith will invite Mr. Galligan to the Board of Finance special meeting on August 20 So he can explain to the Board and provide documentation about these engineering overruns.

9b. Various Sanitary Sewer System Projects

To consider and act upon a resolution recommending a \$700,000 appropriation and borrowing authorization for costs in connection with various sanitary sewer system projects.

Vote on resolution tabled until the Board of Finance special meeting on August 20, 2013.

9c. Beacon Hose Company No. 1 Volunteer Fire Department Fire Truck Acquisition

To consider and act upon a resolution recommending a \$700,000 appropriation and borrowing authorization for costs in connection with acquisition of a 75 foot quintuple combination pumper (“quint”) fire truck and related equipment for use by Beacon Hose Company No. 1 Volunteer Fire Department.

Vote on resolution tabled until the Board of Finance special meeting on August 20, 2013.

Discussion:

G. Smith noted a FEMA grant should be available in the next 30-60 days for the town to apply for which is based on town population and need. Any grant money would not be available until next year.

G. Smith noted that Dave Rybinski had been applying for grants in the past and all were rejected.

J. Huk noted which towns got grants for new fire trucks and that perhaps with a good grant writer a grant could be secured for a fire truck for Beacon Falls. He commented that the minimum grant is for 80% but the town can get up to a 95% grant for a new fire truck.

The Board of Finance consensus was to support the acquisition of a new fire truck, but to take it to a town meeting to vote.

G. Smith noted that these 3 resolutions are 3 separate votes; the Board of Selectmen can call a town meeting 10 days after the legal notice is in the newspaper.

Discussion continued about when to replace the existing fire truck; take a chance at getting a FEMA grant or go for the bond to buy a new truck now.

J. Levine recommended keeping the original 3 resolutions and add a 4th resolution allowing the town to pursue getting a fire truck and authorizing the town to apply for FEMA grant knowing there would be the possibility of not getting the grant.

B. Ploss suggested to get a town vote to authorize applying for a grant, then bond the fire truck if the grant falls through. G. Smith reiterated that if the fire truck is bonded separately, it would be subject to more processing fees and a different interest rate than the other two bonds.

10. Unfinished Business - none

11. New Business

J. Levine requested that a monthly report be presented by the town finance manager on where we stand on the town audit and the status of the new financial software system implementation.

12. Correspondence

Chairman J. Huk noted that there was no correspondence directed to the board.

13. Comments from the Public

Sue Dowdell, 32 Wolfe Avenue, commented on the wording in the bond resolutions; it was clarified that the Board of Finance can make suggestions to Board of Selectmen who actually stipulate what is in the bond resolutions.

14. Adjournment

The next regular monthly meeting will be Tuesday, September 10, 2013 at 7:30 PM.

Motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:41 PM: Doiron/Levine; all aye.

Respectfully submitted,
Martha Melville
Clerk for the Board of Finance