

**Beacon Falls Board of Finance
10 Maple Avenue
Beacon Falls, CT 06403**



**BEACON FALLS BOARD OF FINANCE
Special Meeting
April 7, 2016**

MINUTES

(Subject to Revision)

1. Call to Order / Pledge of Alliance

Board Members Present: Joe Rodorigo, Joe Dowdell, Tom Pratt, Marc Bronn, and Jim Huk

Not Present: Brian Ploss

Others Present: Tom Broesler, Finance Manager; First Selectman Chris Bielik; Selectman Mike Krenesky; Helen Mis, Registrar, and Sue Dowdell, Library Director

Chairman J. Rodorigo called the meeting to order at 7:03 PM.

2. Approval of Minutes

3. J. Huk provided a hard copy of a correction to the February 9, 2016 meeting minutes under Agenda Item 2. Region 16 Superintendent Michael Yamin & Board of Education Members – Discussion. The Board reviewed the correction of the minutes and J. Rodorigo asked for a motion to be made.

Motion to have a correction made to the February 9, 2016 meeting minutes where the following is added to Agenda Item 2, Page 2.

C. Bielik asked M. Yamin what factors led to the Board of Education's acceptance of the offer of \$873,000. M. Yamin stated that, though he could not discuss the matter in detail due to the discussion having occurred in Executive Session, the factors that went into the decision to accept the offer included the 3 appraisals, the current condition of the property, and the position that they did not want to hold onto the property for an extended period of time. M. Yamin also stated that a factor was an itemized list of repairs that needed to be done in order for it to be useable.

J. Huk asked if M. Yamin could agree that, since the appraisals had been verified to have included the condition of the property, that further reducing the asking price for the property because of a list of repairs constituted an effective “double-discounting” of the property to Prospect, with Beacon Falls effectively paying for those repairs out of its expected proceeds from the sale. No counter explanation of J Huk’s statement was offered.

M. Yamin stated that, informed by his prior experience in real estate, he felt that the price of \$873,000 is fair for everyone involved, largely on the grounds that no one could predict what the final market price would turn out to be.

Dowdell/Huk; no discussion; all ayes.

4. Budget Workshop with Department Heads – Discussion

a. Registrar of Voters

Helen Mis was present at tonight’s meeting to discuss the Registrar of Voter’s budget submission. The Registrars are looking for a salary increase, an increase to the Deputy Registrars’ wages (if there is a greater need for their services), an increase to the computer phone line and election supplies, and an increase to office expense due to the increase in emails. There is also a request for a new budget line for certification, workshops, and deputies, as well as a new budget line item replacing the paper voter check. The Registrars would like to attend more workshops and conferences for training. There was also a request for an increase in the primary expense if a primary is due as well as an increase in mandated canvas on a yearly basis to verify voters move-out, change of address within, move-ins plus dual stamped envelopes and payment to vendor for supplying the pertinent information.

b. Library

Sue Dowdell, Library Director was present at tonight’s meeting to present the Capital Plan Request for 2016-2017. S. Dowdell indicated that the Capital Plan is in 2 pieces with a third piece for computers that are needed. A request of \$39,000 for schematic drawings for a new library/community center was in the Library’s budget. The Library has \$11,000 in reserve, making the total \$50,000. There is a request of \$41,000 for Haz-Mat removal for the demolition of the Lewis House on Wolfe Avenue.

S. Dowdell indicated that Beacon Falls Library is the smallest main library in the state of CT. The library does not meet the Essential Level based on space. The

Library also does not meet ADA regulations. A new circulation desk would be more than \$5,000. The removal of 750 picture books minimum, 350 adult non-fiction books, 150 young adult books, and 150 paper books would give the space to become ADA regulations.

The library is running out of room for library material. Also, there is no room for programs and the use of the Assembly Room is needed. Sometimes, the firehouse is used. There is no room for STEM material and programs as well as no room for maker spaces. Also, adult learners are looking for space to do their on-line studies and tutors are in need of space for their sessions with students.

S. Dowdell indicated that there are grants that she could apply for but need to have the Capital Plan in place in order to apply for those grants. S. Dowdell noted that the library needs about 10,000 square feet and thinking that it would be about 5,000 square feet for community space. S. Dowdell also noted that a new resident in town who was consultant for FEMA indicated that there are grants available if the town library is used as an emergency place in addition to having the Senior Center as one.

S. Dowdell mentioned that the Library Board of Trustees did a survey last year and received 312 responses. The survey showed some important items for the people were study groups, reading areas, and community meeting room space.

M. Bronn asked how many visitors per year and S. Dowdell was not sure of the number. She did note that approximately 30,000 items go out each year. J. Huk asked what percentage of activities are geared towards kids versus adults. S. Dowdell indicated that A. Enquist has been working on adult programs more so this year and will be working more on children programs next year. S. Dowdell is looking to have a Staff Day on May 4th in order to look at where they are and where they should be. J. Rodorigo asked how many programs are done outside of the library and S. Dowdell was not sure but probably a couple per month.

J. Rodorigo asked if there were any questions or comments and there were none at this time. J. Rodorigo indicated that the Board of Finance and Board of Selectmen will be going through the proposed budget and some of the discussions will be done in Executive Session.

M. Bronn asked to start with Page 2 noted that the budget went up approximately \$200,000 and C. Bielik indicated that everything new was added into the proposed copy. T. Broesler also noted that the Capital Non-Recurring were previously not included and now is included. M. Bronn also asked if this copy was the Selectmen's approved budget and C. Bielik indicated that it is not, different from last year. The copy is a working copy for the Board to go through together and work on it together.

The first section reviewed was the First Selectmen. The Boards reviewed and no changes were made.

Next, the Boards reviewed the Town Hall section. There was a brief discussion on the Computer – Tech Support line item and no change was made to that line item. There was a brief discussion on the Telephone line item. T. Broesler noted that there were some lines that were worthless and were pulled. T. Broesler also noted that some cell phones were eliminated. There were no changes made.

Next, the Boards reviewed the Town Clerk section. There was a discussion on the stipend amount that the Town Clerk receives. C. Bielik noted that the income for the Town Clerk has been going down due to less going through his office. The Town Clerk is now working part time as a Town Clerk for another town. There was a question as to when a raise for elected officials could be done. It was determined that it does not have to be done during the election year. The Board discussed the amount that the stipend line item should be and finalized it to be \$4,800.

Motion to change the budget line item for Wages – Town Clerk from \$3,687 to \$4,800:
Pratt/Rodorigo; no discussion; 4 ayes and 1 nay by M. Bronn.

Next, the Boards reviewed the Tax Collector section. There were no changes made.

Next, the Boards reviewed the Treasurer section. There were no changes made.

Next, the Boards reviewed the Building Inspector section. There were no changes made.

Next, the Boards reviewed the Employee Benefits section. J. Rodorigo noted that the medical insurance amount will not be finalized until May 1st. They are still waiting for the quote on the Fire Life Insurance as well. The amount for the Workers Compensation was already given for the budget.

Next, the Boards reviewed the Board of Assessors section. There were no changes made.

Next, the Boards reviewed the Board of Assessment Appeals section. There were no changes made.

Next, the Boards reviewed the Zoning Board of Appeals section. There were no changes made.

Next, the Boards reviewed the Board of Finance section. There were no changes made.

Next, the Boards reviewed the Finance Department section. There was a discussion on the wages for the Administrative Assistant. T. Broesler noted that the amount is not all for that position. In that number, there is \$4,000 towards a temporary clerk. J. Rodorigo noted that further discussion on the wages will be done under Executive Session.

Next, the Boards reviewed the Economic Development Comm. section. J. Rodorigo noted that he cut the requested amount from \$15,000 to \$10,000. He requested a plan from the Commission and one was not received so the amount will remain the same at \$10,000.

Next, the Boards reviewed the Inland Wetlands Commission section. There were no changes made.

Next, the Boards reviewed the Conservation Commission section. It was noted that the Open Space Preservation Fund is a separate fund and is a locked amount. There were no changes made.

Next, the Boards reviewed the Planning & Zoning Commission section. There were no changes made.

Next, the Boards reviewed the Water Pollution Control Authority section. There were no changes made.

Next, the Board reviewed the Registrars of Voters section. It was noted that Certification & Workshops budget line item and the Canvas Expenses budget line item are mandated. After a brief discussion, it was noted that the Primary Expenses budget line item will be taken off the department request.

Next, the Boards reviewed the Professional Fees section. J. Dowdell questioned the requested amount of \$60,000 when they only used \$11,000. C. Bielik noted that the services that have been provided lately have been allocated towards the projects. After a brief discussion, the amount on the Engineering & Consultants budget line item will be changed from \$60,000 to \$50,000.

Next, the Boards reviewed the Insurance section. It was noted that the Property & Casualty amount will not be finalized until the beginning of May.

Next, the Boards reviewed the Agency Membership section. There were no changes made.

Next, the Boards reviewed the Misc. Boards & Commissions section. There were no changes made.

Next, the Boards reviewed the Fire and EMS Services section. It was noted that the amount in the Software & IT budget line item is soft. There were no changes made.

Next, the Boards reviewed the Fire Marshall section. There were no changes made.

Next, the Boards reviewed the Emerg. Mgmt./Homeland Security section. There were no changes made.

Next, the Boards reviewed the Safety Committee section. It was noted that there is additional OSHA training needed with the Fuel Cell plant. There were no changes made.

Next, the Boards reviewed the Water Hydrants section. There were no changes made.

Next, the Boards reviewed the Police section. There will be a discussion under Executive Session.

Next, the Boards reviewed the Animal Control section. There were no changes made.

Next, the Boards reviewed the Public Safety Other Expenses section. There were no changes made.

Next, the Boards reviewed the Highway Maintenance section. J. Rodorigo noted that the 7th person's wage is included in the Wages – Highway Maintenance budget line item. J. Rodorigo also noted that there will be a discussion under Executive Session.

Next, the Boards reviewed the Town Garage section. There were no changes made.

Next, the Boards reviewed the Community Welfare section. There were no changes made.

Next, the Boards reviewed the Refuse section. There was a discussion on the amount in the Bulky Waste Transfer budget line item. After the discussion, the amount in this line item will be changed from \$33,000 to \$38,000.

Next, the Boards reviewed the Wastewater Treatment section. There were no changes made.

Next, the Boards reviewed the Library section. There were no changes made.

Next, the Boards reviewed the Parks & Recreation section. There was a discussion on the Court Maintenance budget line item. The basketball court will be repaired and sealed one year and the tennis courts will be done the following year. There were no changes made.

Next, the Boards reviewed the Community Media Center section. There were no changes made.

Next, the Boards reviewed the Commission for Elderly section. There were no changes made.

Next, the Boards reviewed the Minibus Operations section. There was a question on the telephone line item amount of \$500.00. After a brief discussion, there were no changes made.

Next, the Boards reviewed the Senior Citizens Center section. There were no changes made.

Next, the Boards reviewed the Contingency section. There were no changes made.

Next, the Boards reviewed the Debt Service – Interest section. There were no changes made.

Next, the Boards reviewed the Debt Service – Principal section. There were no changes made.

Next, the Boards reviewed the Special Projects section. It was noted that this section is items that they are already committed to and in the process of paying.

Next, the Boards reviewed the 2016 Non-Recurring Projects. It was noted that the money has already been approved.

Next, the Boards reviewed the Additional Special Projects section. There was a question in the calculation of the Special Projects on Page 2. T. Broesler indicated that the amount was arrived by adding \$90,250, which is the Total – Special Projects from Page 16, to \$256,700, which is the Grand Total – Additional Special Projects from Page 16a (2nd one), and to \$3,500, which is the requested amount for Record Archiving on Page 16a (1st one).

T. Broesler noted that the budget is going up by \$700,000 of which \$350,000 represents Non-Recurring Projects, not operations but one-time expenses. J. Rodorigo mentioned that the operation budget is not going up \$600,000 and C. Bielik also mentioned the road bond debt. T. Broesler noted that the auditors indicated that the road aid must be included in the budget. The road aid amount is \$200,000 under expenses and there is a matching revenue. T. Broesler also noted that the rest of the money is the extra duty wages in the Police budget. There is a \$100,000 expense and a matching revenue in the amount of \$160,000.

The Boards reviewed the \$28,500 request from the fire house for upgrades to the bathrooms. After a brief discussion, the decision to keep the request in the amount of \$28,500 for the upgrades to the bathroom was by a vote of 4 ayes and 1 nay by M. Bronn.

The Boards agreed to the request of \$5,200 for 4 ice rescue suits; the request of \$12,000 for Station 2 rehabilitation; and the request of \$12,500 for Engine 3 Safety upgrade.

In regards to the request of \$80,000 for a fire engine, C. Bielik indicated that there is a statutory requirement that if there is a Capital purchase for a certain amount that there needs to be a specific Public Hearing that identifies and authorizes that amount.

The Boards discussed the \$13,500 request for a TIGER Boom Mower. T. Broesler mentioned that it should be taken out of the budget. J. Rodorigo also mentioned that not enough money was put in the line item for rentable equipment. J. Rodorigo indicated that if it doesn't pass the bond, we don't have the equipment and we didn't budget the money. C. Bielik suggested an alternative by absorbing the unbudgeted portion of the rental fees out of Contingency. J. Rodorigo indicated that the cost of this piece of equipment is \$117,992 and would be a 5-year payment of \$26,394.52, interest included. After the discussion, the amount was agreed by the Boards to be changed from \$13,500 to \$27,000.

The Boards discussed the request of \$39,000 from the Library for schematic drawings. J. Rodorigo noted the money that the town will be getting from the sale of Community School and that is not reflected in this proposed budget for 2016-2017. After knowing what goes out to bond and the budget is finalized, J. Rodorigo mentioned then we will know how to spend that money. J. Rodorigo also mentioned that as things come available, we then can look at the bigger picture – like roads being fixed.

C. Bielik noted that in order for the town to move forward with seeking funding from outside sources, a document is needed in order to start the process. J. Rodorigo mentioned that we would need a public hearing to have the public vote on the property designated for the new library. M. Krenesky noted that the cost of taking down the house down on the property should be part of the project but we have never had that discussion. J. Rodorigo suggested having an exploratory committee to determine the best use for the property. The committee would come to the Selectmen with their recommendation and the Board of Selectmen would present the plan at a town meeting and the public would vote. The money, no matter what project, should not be allocated first.

After a brief discussion, the decision not to include the library's request of \$39,000 for schematic drawing was by a vote of 3 ayes by J. Rodorigo, J. Huk, and T. Pratt and 2 nays by J. Dowdell and M. Bronn.

The Boards discussed the request of \$5,800 for cameras at Pent Road. M. Bronn suggested to take this request out. He stated that damage will be done to the cameras and we will be spending more money than that. M. Bronn asked if the \$5,800 includes installation and monitoring. J. Rodorigo indicated that it does include both, with the recording going on a DVR.

After a brief discussion, the decision to include the request of \$5,800 for cameras at Pent Road was by a vote of 4 ayes by J. Rodorigo, J. Huk, and T. Pratt and 2 nays by J. Dowdell and M. Bronn.

The Boards discussed the request of \$27,000 for the lease purchase on the Ford Explorer and a second Ford. J. Rodorigo indicated that the number is not right – should be two vehicles at \$64,000. T. Broesler indicated that the number should be more like \$30,000. After a brief discussion, the Boards agreed to change the request for the vehicles from \$27,000 to \$30,000.

The Boards agreed to the request by Town Hall for \$3,500 for town hall rehab painting and \$5,000 for town hall rehab carpeting.

5. Executive Session

The Board of Finance entered into Executive Session at 9:30 P.M. for the purpose of discussing the budget, budgetary line items, and Board of Finance membership concerns. The Board invited First Selectman C. Bielik; Selectman Krenesky; and Tom Broesler, Finance Manager for the Executive Session.

The Board of Finance exited Executive Session at 10:26 P.M. The Board of Finance agreed on the following changes to the proposed budget for the fiscal year 2016-2017.

1. The removal of the 7th person in the Street Department and all the residue funding for benefits, insurance, etc.
2. The Town Clerk wages will increase from \$3,687 to \$4,800
3. The Registrar of Voters wages will increase by \$100.00 per month
4. Erin Schwartz will become a full time employee with all residue costs associated with that position becoming full time.
5. The Finance Director's wages and position will be adjusted and C. Bielik will provide the information to T. Broesler tomorrow.

6. Adjournment

J. Rodorigo indicated that he will not be at the next meeting and the Vice Chair, Marc Bronn, will be running the meeting. There will be a Special Board of Finance meeting on Wednesday, May 4, 2016, at 7:00 P.M. to finalize the budget. Also, there will be a Public Hearing on Thursday, May 12, 2016, for the purpose of voting on the Budget for the Fiscal Year 2016-2017.

With no further discussions for tonight's meeting, J. Rodorigo asked for a motion to adjourn.

Motion to adjourn tonight's meeting at 10:31 P.M.: **Bronn/Pratt;** *no discussion;* all ayes.

Respectfully submitted,

Marla Scirpo
Clerk, Board of Finance