



Beacon Falls Board of Finance Budget Workshop Minutes

April 22, 2019
(Subject to Revision)

May 1, 2019

Mr. Leonard Greene
Town Clerk, Town of Beacon Falls
10 Maple Avenue
Beacon Falls, CT 06403

Dear Mr. Greene:

The **Beacon Falls Board of Finance and the Board of Selectman** will hold a joint Budget Workshop on Monday, April 22, 2019 at 7:00 pm at the Beacon Falls Senior Center, located at 57 N Main Street, Beacon Falls.

1. Call to Order / Pledge of Allegiance

Board Members present: Tom Pratt, Marc Bronn, Steve Leeper, Jim Carroll, Kyle Brennan, and Larry Hutvagner

Board of Selectman members present: First Selectman Chris Bielik, Selectman Michael Krenesky and Peter Betkoski

Others Present: Natasha Nau, Erin Schwartz, and Elio Gugliotti from the Citizen News

Chairman Tom Pratt called the meeting to order at 7:05pm, with the Pledge of Allegiance

2. Board of Finance Clerk's Invoices

Motion to approve and pay the clerk's invoice-one dated April 9, 2019, submitted for first meeting in the amount of \$35.00.

L. Hutvagner/M. Bronn, no discussion, all ayes

3. Board of Finance shall conduct a review on information supplied for wage increase for the First Selectman, discussion and a vote on the possible Wage increase for the First Selectman Line 10.90.01.1010.

Chairman Tom Pratt (TP) opened the discussion to review and open to vote for the possible wage increase for the First Selectman line 10.90.01.1010. Trying to find candidates at the current salary, no reflection on current or past Board of Selectman, which is 48,000 with state and federal tax, it drops down quite a bit. Information brought to the Board of Finance from residents, is position should be about 25-30 hours a week, management to oversee the town better, the town is governed by the State Charter, could have a full time job elsewhere, and come here part time, or full time selectman next time, a lot of duties and powers the First Selectman has. Comments that have come up, no negative feedback from past or present Board of Selectman, could the departments be better managed; the Board of Finance does not have control over the Board of

Selectman. I personally think when you get the right people in office; they are for the people, whether the position is full time or a part time Selectman. I'm in favor of more money for the Selectman, to establish a raise when the employees get a raise. We wouldn't be talking about this if this has happened all these years. I now turn over for discussion to the Co-Chair.

M. Bronn (MB): I agree that the First Selectman salary should be increased, every election year, the last election cycle; the big goal was the tax collector and the town clerk. I agree that the First Selectman's salary should be increased, the current salary is hard to live on without a pension, it is a huge risk for 2 years, a candidate pool won't consider that, but if you raise to 60,000, it would open doors to wider pool of candidates, my opinion on the matter, the last few years haven't raised it. I think when we started this back a few years ago; it was 25,000 in the beginning.

C. Bielik (CB): In November 2013, I started, the salary was 34,000, In prior to the 2015 election, the salary was increased to 48,000, along with other town employees, stagnant the last 4 years, and we did put a significant raise for the down ballot positions, for the treasurer, other Selectman, tax collector when it was a stipend position, it was basically established at the time the registrar voters were the highest paid, the positions were all level set to registrar voters. Finance has circulated information; we are the lowest paid compared to other towns. I would put this at a full time job.

M.B.: Asked, how many hours do you put in a week?

C.B: Office and meetings puts this job at 60 hours a week; you are always on, phones ring all hours, civic events outside of office hours but still need to attend. I never advocated for more money for this position, if you know what the job pays, you are willing to do it no matter what. It's about giving back, civic involvement, skills you can bring to the table that you can bring to the advantage to the position.

M.B.: Is 60,000 a year salary unreasonable?

C.B.: Based on the data, you collected, it is not unreasonable, however, to jump from 48,000 to 60,000, we jumped once from 34,000 to 48,000, and that was difficult, might be difficult to buy in for others. Do a bi-annual basis, raise or adjustment. We can't do a raise every year. It might be prohibited by the state statutes.

M.B.: This is a salary adjustment not a salary increase, and would be the year to make this happen. Can't do it next year, but it hasn't happened in five years, it's time to make the adjustment.

T.P: Agree that this is the year to do this. We need to implement the growth to increase on a basis. We don't want to be in the same position next year.

C.B.: I would be in favor of splitting the difference, increase this year, and in two years, then increase it again, and to be consistent, establish the basis for consistency, managerial positions not unionized, increase along with managerial positions that when the town hall gets a % increase every 2 years, those positions would too.

M.B.: First Selectman, you are the Chief of Police, Chief of Public Works, Park and Rec, etc; the position is the least paid.

S. Leeper (SL): says underpaid 60 hrs. a week, for that salary, put a lot of hours with civic duties not get paid for, in favor for the salary increase, well worth it and anybody coming to the position is well worth it.

K.Brennan (KB): Agree, need to catch up, open to both options, splitting the difference, aligning the position on what it should be. It is less of attracting a better pool of candidates, really just aligning the position to what it should be. Is there a public opinion against increasing the salary now?

C.B: I think there is a perception among everybody in town, even though the economy is getting better, bargaining years you know the percentages, the increasing the salary, public opinion, labor statistics do not put a lot of annual increases in the range to increase the percentage to high.

MB: salary adjustment not a raise

K.B: we can frame it as salary adjustment, we as the Board are going to put this to the town budget, we can put it to the public and we can defend it, explain it

C.B: push it for an adjustment for the rest of the elected officials that are currently working sitting at the same level 4 years ago, this would be the year to start, employees should get a biannually to increase others as well.

TP: agree with this, we have a note to discuss this, and have to adjust them as well.

K.B: in favor of splitting the difference, 5%, result in less push back.

J.Carroll (JC): Increase has to happen, can't do it in the off years, what have we been giving the dept. heads, go back over those 4 years, and add it up over those 4 years, match over that 4 years, so take 48,000 add 2.5% plus each year per 4 years.

C.B: can verify what the dept. of heads get paid varies, 2%-2.5% annually: 8% increase over the last years.

T.P: 56,000-57,000 over 8% - 8.5% salary, compound it up

K.B: split the difference 54,000 to 55,000, 6.2% increase

J.C: might be able to sell that amount, same retroactively to the Dept. heads, what they were given.

C.B: 1.5% the first year, 2% second, 2.5% and 2.5% third and fourth years

L.Hutvagner (LH): In Middlebury is different, the charter has a pay plan, elected, appointed, part time, clerical and even the meeting clerks employees, some of these people yearly get routinely 2 - 3% raise on the pay plan, I agree that you can't have salaries that don't some increase.

C.B: 4,000 increase, beyond that, it would be your purview to go higher, but remember all the elected officials should also get adjusted as well.

LH: I would agree with Chris, the other positions that haven't had a raise in 4 years, elected officials should have increases as well

C.B: five elected officials would need to increase their salaries, excluding the town treasurer, and tax collector goes on the state books this year

T.P: 55,000 leaning towards that, looking at the position, with the amount of hours worked would be reasonable

LH: I would think we need a Board of Finance policy for all these positions should get an increase depending on economy and budget, this year would be a good year because technically region 16 is not increasing as much.

T.P: Reviewing the Finance Manual, my biggest concern, this Board in agreement, 4 years from now, maybe a different Board; need to establish solid procedures
All done for discussion

Motion increase First Selectman's salary to prorate to 55,000 effective after election.

M.B/.

MB: 55,000/52, that is a 1,060 a week for 30 weeks, 31,800.

ES: November is split after the election, 1/3, and 2/3rd's?

NN: I can get the calculation.

Amend motion to increase First Selectman's salary prorated to 55,000, prorated 2 weeks after the election, calculation will be forthcoming.

MB/JC, all ayes

4: Other Selectman discussion to wage adjustment: 10.90.01.1011 and 10.90.01.1012

TP: two other selectman wage salary is presently at 12,000 each, both positions deserve an increase

LH: same percentage as the First Selectman

M.Krenesky (MK): Do not have the same level of responsibilities as the First Selectman,

M.B. increase to 1,000 more, a little over 6%, to 13,000 a year

TP: more responsibility as well

Motion to increase both Selectmen to 13,500, increased by 1,500.00

LH/KB, all ayes

5: Board of Selectman and the Board of Finance shall vote separately as individual Boards on each of the following sections of the Town Budget; Boards may choose to vote on 1 complete section and/or combine sections during the voting. FIRST SELECTMAN, TOWN HALL, TOWN CLERK, TAX COLLECTOR, TREASURER, BUILDING INSPECTOR, EMPLOYEE BENEFITS, BOARD

OF ASSESSORS, **BOARD OF ASSESSMENT APPEALS**, ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS, **BOARD OF FINANCE**, FINANCE DEPARTMENT, **Economic Development Commission, Conservation Commission** , INLANDS WETLANDS COMMISSION-, WATER POLLUTION CONTROL AUTHORITY, **REGISTERS OF VOTERS-**, PROFESSIONAL FEES- **INSURANCE**, AGENCY MEMBERSHIP- **MISC. BOARDS & COMMISSIONS-**, FIRE AND EMS SERVICES- , **FIRE MARSHAL**, EMERGENCY MANGEMENT/HOMELAND SECURITY, **SAFETY COMMITTEE AND WATER HYDRANTS.**

Need to vote on each section on these line increases

First Selectman adjusted to 55,000, prorated 2 weeks after election

Both Selectman up to 13,500, prorated 2 weeks after election

Board of Finance: no other changes, all agree, no ayes

Town Hall: no change, no discussion, all ayes

Town Clerk: no changes? Discussion

MK: town clerk during the last time when the other employers received raises, did not receive a raise, he receives fees.

MB: increase in fees over the next two years

TP: do we know what he receives in fees? At the end of the year end cycle?

CB: varies month to month

TP: Mr. Krenesky what were you thinking should he have an increase?

CB: is on record, that all the employees should get an additional increase similar to the First Selectman, and other elected employees

Motion to increase to 6,000 a year, increased 1,200.00, prorated

MB/SL, all ayes

N.Nau (NN) asked if there are cost savings, do we implement them into the line?

TP: Yes

Tax Collector

TP: Mr. Selectman, please explain how this works after November?

CB: Mary Ann gets two different payments: monthly stipend and additional salary line for up to 25 hours a week, when we establish the position after the November election, the position will be salary 36,400/12; gets a monthly salary, assuming she works her 25 hours a week.

TP: there is an increase to \$50,000 in line budget for tax collector, is that an increase?

E.Schwartz (ES): this would be prorated

CB: research for this position was conducted; an average between 36,400 and 50,000, the request is to increase from 36,400 to 50,000.

TP: Average the towns, the high number was 44,000, similar towns to Beacon Falls, then 41,500.

CB: 41,500 is a little light for the position, up to 45,000 or make allowances for median, looking, between 43,000 and 48,000, 45,000 is right in between Wilmington and Lebanon

MB: A 14,000 increase, you aren't even getting that, the average would be \$41,500 for this position based on the research, this is a first year position

LH: not a first year position, need state certification as a tax collector, state and municipal experience for the position, not going to have someone come in here making less than what they are making now, there is annually training for the tax collector and mandated training for the assessor, changed the position from elected to appointed, want someone that has 5 years' experience,

MB: who pays for the training?

MK: town pays for training.

LH: we paid for the class A training for the cdl, we need to pay for annual training for this position.

KB: do we know how many hours does she put in now? New salary position shows 25 hours, does she put that in now?

TP: yes she puts in over 30 hours now to get to where it was today

LH: when she started back taxes were up there

TP: split 44,000 make a decision

SL: position that the town people voted on was 36,400, now going to go to 45,000, I didn't vote on that

KB: What has necessitated that the position to increase? This will be the question we will be asked

TP: underpaid for too long, hasn't been increased in a while, bringing it up to what it should be

SL: 25 hours a week, going from 36,400 to increase is fair

TP: There is an assistant tax collector, full time with benefits at 35 hours.

Motion to adjust the tax collector to 44,000 a year, increased by 7,600.00, prorated.

MB/KB, all ayes

Assistant Tax Collector: presently making 46,519, union position will increase according to contract

Treasurer: elected official, bring in line with the other positions

Motion to increase treasurer to 13,500 to align with the others

KB/SL, all ayes

Building Inspector: Increase from 16 hours to 18 hours, 29,852 to 34,428, 15.3% increase
No discussion, All ayes,

Employee Benefits: no say on, driven by union contracts, increase by 8%
NN: Health insurance numbers are not in yet. 8% increase verbal

CB: Medical, part of Connecticut state partnership, difficult to get competitive rates, because we do not have more than 50 employees, supposed to have your published rates, but we are not over 50 employees, that is why it is difficult to get competitive market

Board of Assessors: part of the union

TP: Town Clerk going to full pay rate was on probation, contractually, will go to full time rate

ES: Town Clerk covers Tax collector and the Assessor positions for vacation coverage

Board of Assessment Appeals: no change

Board of Finance: no change

LH: is the price of the Board of Finance Audit fixed?

ES: 3 years fixed, with a single state audit, the price is set

Finance Department; no changes, all ayes

TP: Erin is union, Finance Manager is a non-union position, coming from probation to full time
Currently on probation, will increase to 62,400 when it is at the full time rate.

MB: are you a subcontractor?

NN: is non-union position, salary based on probation to full time rate,

Economic Development Coordinator-

NN: spoke to Sadie will have report next meeting, suspend to move to 4/29 to get Sadie's report

Inlands Wetlands Commission- all ayes,

Conservation Commission:

NN: email from commission chair that the commission would like to submit the report on 4/29
open space bill didn't go through

TP suspend to the 4/29 meeting

Water Pollution Control Authority-all ayes

Planning and Zoning: increase 2.5% all ayes

TP: Before we get to far, what line item does town meeting clerk position. The amount of hours they work, do not get paid enough.

CB: Central Clerk in the town hall, Board of Selectmen controls the rates the clerks recieve; pay scale graduates up, based on the more years that the pay increases accordingly. Not necessary to increase this year.

ES: 10.90.03.1070 is where they get paid

MK: the hours are far more with different boards, Town Clerk line item

TP: up to the Board of Selectman, but my recommendation is to evaluate the boards, but should be reviewed

CB: already above the minimum wage,

PB: do they put more of their hours in billed

CB: flat rate for the meetings, then the recording of the minutes, is hourly at \$15.00

TP: Seems like the same amount for the invoice, ok move on, they bill for the amount of hours they put in

Registrar Voters: no changes,

CB: they are on a Presidential cycle

KB: does that mean we can increase the town clerk position?

TP: we can cross reference that?

Professional Fees:

LH: problem is it seems very low legal fees/town counsel, seems we pay more in the last two years.

CB: a lot of legal stuff last year, the sale of the computers, Oak Dr, etc.

MB: says Oak Dr., extraordinary issues,

CB: look at 2 years ago, it was less; want to entertain increase to compare to the two years ago. Last years' number for the future wouldn't compare

MB: do we have anything new or major that is known?

TP: no further discussion,

Insurance-numbers are correct?

NN: yes, a report is due by 5/3

Agency Membership-slight increase

CB: state has subsidized in the past, but they pulled back, and the town has to take on it, it is prorated within our region of 19 towns,

Fire and EMS: TP: put in 15,000, felt that it should be at previous meeting 4/9/19, discussion Fire Chief: stipend should stay at 12, Assistant Fire Chief, no stipend at this time, no further discussion,

Motion to reduce the increases and no stipend at the time for Assistant Fire Chief

SL/MB, all ayes

Misc.Boards & Commissions:-1,000 a year for sesquicentennial, two years from now

KB: what is that for, it's good to have a startup

CB: not a bad idea to have the startup, go to 1,000 to 2,000

ES: procedurally, goes to special activity fund, for the following year

LH: do you need to spend the money now because it is this year's budget

MK: but next year, would like to have 2,000 every year, may need a deposit if we do something in advance, but no known ideas yet

MB: is there a committee? Two years from July

MK and PB: yes we will be setting up a committee

Motion to increase from 1,000 to 2,000 for the centennial

KB/LH, all ayes

MK: suggest putting in 250.00 in the Town Historian's budget, as a former Historian, I put money upfront if I went somewhere for that.

Motion to increase to 250 for the Town Historian's budget

MB/KB, all ayes

Board of Finance: All ayes with the changes

Fire Marshall - leave salary at 16552, salary based, Deputy Marshall-reducing 13,000 to 9,000, clarify that this is part time position, \$25 an hour.

Motion to Deputy Fire Marshall reducing 13,000 to 9,000

SL/JC, all ayes

EMERGENCY MANGEMENT/HOMELAND SECURITY-biggest expense code red

CB: that number could be reduced, we have the code red with all the bells and whistles, but there maybe things that it offers to us that we really do not need.

LH: will bring to the next week

NN: one of the items we submitted for grant reimbursement, but not a guarantee

SAFETY COMMITTEE AND WATER HYDRANTS- no changes, all ayes

Board of Finance vote on what was proposed and changed

First Selectmen 10.90.01.1010...10.90.49.1541 with the exception of Emergency Management/Homeland Security/Conservation Commission, Economic Development Commission, and Employee Benefits. Those four are placed on hold until next week. They will not be part of the vote.

Motion to accept as is and the amended changes.

JC/KB, all ayes

Discussion to move along to the other items:

Police Department:

NN: 774,000, utilizing the estimate 200,000 but the actual was 197,000, correction to one line, discusses the Resident Trooper budget is actually cut in half, sharing with Bethany, turns over to First Selectman.

CB: pilot program only two towns have done this, where they share one resident trooper between the two towns, the oversight it is shared responsibility, with the Town of Bethany, and the Administrative Lieutenant, so we can share between both towns, we are in the process of crafting the agreement with the state and the town of Bethany, to find out how many days we will get this person. Fully supported with this plan being approved, Resident Trooper would be 5 days on, 4 days off. To offset the Resident Trooper, the administrative, increase Police LT to 15 hours a week, and to cover all the shifts, part time officers would fill in, every 2 week shift. Won't change the number of bodies that are on the shifts, administrative support with the Police LT. We looked at the call data compared to Prospect, which has 20 total bodies, but Beacon Falls and Bethany have less than Prospect has combined for call data.

NN: we were off by one hour in the over time shift, part time hours are 8 hour shifts, and the overlap is 9 hours, 40 hours per payperiod, 20 hours per week, 47,000 over time might be too low because we may need to backfill the positions to cover shifts for vacation or sick, fuel with the current provider will reduce by .12 cents, but drive time may increase

CB: the budget compared from 674,784 FY18 to 638,383 FY 19, the part time officers budget was cut too much, because we had not been filling every shift based on the part time officers availability, but we budgeted to actual, but now the size of the force, we are covered by all shifts

JC: fill the positions all year?

KB: full time patrol-we had a full time police officer retire, is the replacement making less than what the senior was?

CB: The new full timer is making as much as the retired police officer, because the probation period was less because the person is full on board, no difference on seniority for the quality of the pay of officers

TP: two concerns; past history, is everyone on the clock for part timers, yes, hourly paid employees, yes, our town police officers are not called, until after the State trooper has been called. We should be able to respond because we are covering our shifts

MB: they call a state trooper at 911, dispatch sends state trooper instead of calling one of our police officers

CB: need to work with Troop I Commander, and get them to realize that our police officers are filling our shifts, it's a culture thing, at Troop I to get the police officers at the beginning of the calls

NN: bullet proof vests partnership program due by 5/18, can go back to a few years-looking into a grant for reimbursement

Animal Control-no changes

Public Safety Other Expenses-no change

TP:LED lights, is there a savings, at what point do we see a savings?

CB: we haven't looked at that,

NN: is that part of the energy audit we are going into

MB: materials to see the savings?

CB: at 2.5 years we should see savings, after we are completely paid off

Public Works: no changes

Look at the camera to inspect the pipes before we have real issues, buy our own,need to be proactive about it,

Town Garage:

TP: Is that building heated by propane? What is the propane for?

NN: water tank and the welding, it was underbudgeted in the past

KB: did we never have internet over ther

ES: an analog line was installed to make the alarm work

NN: seeking the vendor from the police department for cost savings for the alarm

Community Welfare: no discussion

NN: senior section

CB: not exactly senior section

Refuse:

NN: recycling crisis, will be affected,

Table refuse, moving to 4/29

Waste Water Treatment: no changes

TP: what is the plan for the waste water treatment, is there a plan for the Engineer to bring the waste water treatment plant to be more efficient

CB: we had a contractor propose a plan however, we are not going that way, the money is well allocated to we have the final plan to take to the public, we will have 300,000 back from the state, once we push the plan in place,

MB: usage fees, we do not want to put in, can we put this in to play next year

TP: can we enforce that?

PB: the building is inspected

Library:

Option A:

LH: bring the library up to normal library hours

CB: union decision with Board of Selectman, but not going to be a Board of Finance decision, goes back to the way the union was established, the hours were established and set, what is the significant change that has happened now? Is there a compelling reason that this is changing? I am in favor of keeping 30 hours as a full time person.

MK: 2003 to now, agree with Chris, need to review the state reports

TP: place on hold until next week

Option B as is with the standard rates

Option C: increase the part timer position to 10 hours

Discussion is two options, but there is another option, converts 11,583 transfer to option B, leave full time pay 124,009.

KB: Reallocate

LH: Bibliomation is increasing about 5%

Park and Rec:

TP: financing the walls, spend about 5,000 each year, walls, were they trying to increase these funds?

NN: Masonry in the pond walls, redo them when they dredge the ponds, sizable upgrades, FY20, could be granted if the grant is granted would be an additional 12,000.

KB: fireworks, where did that go, do we still have that?

ES: we put a deposit on it last year of \$4,000, and this year will be \$9,000, they will honor the deposit

A donation may be received by Liberty Bank to sponsor our concert events

CB: Treasurer, Finance, Liberty officials met last week, and we review how we can increase our interest, or cost savings, very proactive that the services they offer or match what other banks are doing to retain our services

Community Media Center: no change

Commission for Elderly: discussion

TP: how many people drive the mini bus?

CB: part time position union position to drive the mini-bus, provide services based on the hourly support we can give, every Tuesday is the grocery shopping, seniors sign up for it, as we can, help transport to medical appts, not a taxi service, but when the calls come in, we bundle them together, to similar places

TP: are the drivers certified?

CB: no they do not have to be certified, no cdl license needed

JC: no public passenger permit needed

LH: depends on the size of the bus

CB: our driver has been the driver for as long as I remember

MK: there is someone else riding the bus to help with the wheel chair accessible, but he rides the bus, and he gets a check every two weeks

MB: look at the payroll table

TP: leave to the Board of Selectman to review this

Senior Citizen Center-no change

Contingency-no change

Debt Service-no change

Education

NN: at a conference, Mr. Raphael at CMT, will know nothing until the state budget is passed, retirement is all on the table

CB: the town share for teacher pension fund, no support from that for the legislature, take it out of the budget, but would have to review it if it cuts

LH: still two billion dollar short, will take it from different lines, but if you take it out of contingency, does it mean we don't pass a budget after July 15th, that would be the governor's proposal

CB: past excellent service is not guarantee for our future service, my recommendation is to not budget it in, because then we are not ok with the state not covering it, we would have to go to the town meeting, if the state did not

Motion to 10.90.88.2002 to decrease the teacher pension contributions 37,930.

JC/SL, all ayes

Refuse: placed on hold

Library: Option B 124,009 moving over 11583 transferring over to computer support

Motion to move Library funds from full time to part time, and transfer from copier lease to computer support

KB/SL, all ayes

Board of Finance vote on what was proposed and changed from 10.90.53.1010 to 10.90.88.2002, except Refuse.

Motion to accept the changes for the following line items 10.90.53.1010 to 10.90.88.2002 except Refuse.

LH/KB, all ayes

6: Jointly both the Board of Selectman and Board of Finance shall continue discussion and may take action on the Budget sections and Line items that have not been voted on

- a. Placed on hold to 4/29 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
- b. Placed on hold to 4/29 CONSERVATION COMMISSION-
- c. Placed on hold Moved to discuss at 4/29 code red EMERGENCY MANGEMENT/HOMELAND SECURITY
- d. Placed on hold Employee Benefits
- e. Refuse

7: Next Joint Budget Workshop with the Board of Selectman and Board of Finance shall be Monday, April 29, 2019 at 7 pm at the Beacon Falls Senior Center, located at 57 N Main Street, Beacon Falls.

Adjournment at 9:30 pm

KB/MB, all ayes

Respectfully submitted,
Angela Moffat
Meeting Clerk