



**TOWN OF BEACON FALLS
BOARD OF FINANCE
Joint Budget Workshop
Board of Finance/Board of Selectmen
Meeting Minutes
Tuesday May 11, 2010**

CALL TO ORDER

First Selectman S. Cable called the Joint Workshop to order at 7:59 P.M.

Present: Finance Board Members, W. Hopkinson, B. Ploss, A. Choi, R. Doiron, L. Krepinevich and G. Smith. Board of Selectmen members S. Cable, D. Sorrentino and M. Krenesky

Also present were Joe Rodrigo, Jeremy Rodrigo, M. Pratt, E. Bea, Trooper Cipriano, Library representatives and several town residents.

The purpose of the meeting was to review the budget and make some recommendations for some budget cuts. S. Cable noted that the Board of Selectmen asked that all Department Heads attend this meeting because their budgets were all going to have to be cut. She noted that the Board of Selectmen had met earlier in the day to discuss where they might go with the budget. She explained that at the Town Vote, the residents did not give any recommendations as to where they wanted to cut the budget just that don't they want their taxes raised. She questioned whether they should cut a million dollars which would be very drastic or if the people would just like the \$366,000. She mentioned that last year the town went down .5 mil on the operating budget and this year they are going up .5 mil with the \$366,000 cut. She noted that the Board of Selectmen had decided that they should begin by looking at the \$366,000. S. Cable noted that all departments will have to give something back.

S. Cable noted that she looked into the trash pick-up. We would have to have our attorney send a letter to their attorney that we want to break the contract and back and forth. We signed the contract in that they gave us a very good price - the contract expires June 30, 2011. The Board of Selectmen made the decision to leave the trash pick-up alone. She mentioned that she also had our attorney contact the union leader (of all

unions) and told them that in lieu of furlough days or layoffs, what could the union give back. She also reminded them that they are currently in negotiations over medical and the meeting is set for next week. Those are the steps they took. S. Cable noted that they plan to have a public hearing to let the people know what cuts they made. S. Cable tentatively scheduled the Public Hearing for Tuesday May 19, 2010. She is hoping to get to the referendum sooner than later.

S. Cable summarized that one of our options would be to drastically cut the budget which would involve attorneys and contracts which would cover about \$800,000 and W. Hopkinson and S. Cable came up with another \$200,000 but by doing this, she noted that they might as well close the town.

S. Cable also mentioned that she would like something clarified. She noted that Selectmen Krenesky presented the Chair with \$100,000 worth of budget cuts but when asked why these cuts were not brought up at the public hearing, S. Cable noted that M. Krenesky's response was that they had made an agreement not to talk at the Public Hearing.

S. Cable continued with some cuts that she would like to recommend, the first being for Chip Sealing, cutting the full \$60,000. The second cut would be the new proposed phone system that would be voice mail capable for \$12,500. She noted that Marsha from the library recommended that they give back \$100 from the clerk on page 13 and under Program Development they could give back \$300.

S. Cable noted that the Land Use Chairman agreed that they could reduce Professional Fees Town Council to \$70,000 (reduced by \$10,000) and Engineering and Consultants could be brought down to \$65,000 reducing it by \$10,000.

Waste Water Treatment

A lengthy discussion took place regarding the \$114,000 for waste water treatment. S. Cable explained that M. Gomes said that the repair of \$114,000 could come out of the waste water treatment money for this year (special fund), he recommended that this is what the money is supposed to be for and it's time it should be used. S. Cable explained that this money survives by the fact that people put in developments and have sewer assessments and since we have not had that much development, the fund is not increasing. She noted that the town will have to look at sewer fees down the road. D. Sorrentino asked B. Fitzpatrick if he feels comfortable doing that. B. Fitzpatrick noted that this budget was cut \$75,000 last year and that the \$114,000 is an increase from last year. The concern of "what if something happens" at the sewer plant was raised. It will have to be fixed immediately. B. Fitzpatrick noted that the 3 clarifiers run 24/7 and are all on their last leg. For the last 18 years they have had maintenance only. His plan was to replace one per year. B. Fitzpatrick also noted that he would like the nitrogen taken care of as well. It was noted that our waste water treatment plant has gotten good grades and received awards, however, the state of CT challenged our permit due to having no phosphorous. There is currently \$583,000 in the Special Fund and it was noted that we

should keep \$200,000 in that account as the bottom line. B. Fitzpatrick was asked what he thinks he could get by with. A. Choi responded by saying that nothing could be determined until a capital study has been completed which would determine a capital improvement/replacement plan, what is coming into retirement as well as a 5 year plan which is very different from an operating budget. Real numbers will be needed to determine what can be done here. A. Choi suggested that this capital study should be expanded to all the city departments.

W. Hopkinson asked if there was any insurance on any of this equipment. It was noted that there were warranties but they have been expired and there is no way to insure this equipment.

W. Hopkinson asked B. Fitzpatrick if he had to cut, where would he cut. He noted that his budget is currently down to bare bones. He noted that his electricity couldn't be paid until October because this budget was so underfunded. It was determined that the \$114,000 should stay in the budget at this point.

Public Works

The budget workshop moved on to E. Bea and Public Works. E. Bea was asked how he would feel if the chip sealing was cut. He responded by saying that he doesn't know how he is going to pay for asphalt just to patch roads. S. Cable told him he was going to get \$38,000 in town aid. He said there won't be any chip sealing done with that; he will probably just do some crack sealing. He was asked what he would do with half of the money (\$30,000). He answered that he would have to live with it. He said that he would chip seal one road and crack seal another and take some patch money out of the \$30,000. E. Bea was asked if he had any roads in mind for that money. He answered that he did show Jim Galligan a couple of roads that he wanted to do but since the budget got shot down, probably Rimmon Hill and West Road. He noted that he knows people don't like chip sealing but chip sealing is another way to hold the road together for another couple of years. He noted that there is no other method he could put on the roads to hold them together. E. Bea was asked if there are any identified roads in the \$60,000 he requested or is that for all the roads. E. Bea answered by saying that there are two different treatments that he would like to try. The \$60,000 would be earmarked for the roads he discussed with Jim Galligan. He said that he has a printout that shows the costs of this. He noted that he could take out certain sections of the road. He noted that if he gets less money, he will just do less of that type of work. A. Choi was wondering if \$30,000 of this was for future work. The answer was no. R. Doiron asked what the long term effect of the chip sealing would be. E. Bea noted that he's looking at 5 years but it all depends on what condition the road is in at the time he is doing the job but he could get 5 years out of the chip sealing. R. Doiron wanted to know what happens at the end of the 5 years, i.e., do they now have to replace the road? E. Bea noted that he could maybe put another chip seal on it. He was asked about Rimmon Hill and he noted that he would not put another chip sealing on that. He again noted that he knows people don't like the chip sealing but it's a good way to put a good band aid on the road.

E. Bea noted that there needs to be a program where he does that type of maintenance on the road or a bigger rebuild or maybe adding drainage. G. Smith asked what the cost difference is between chip sealing and reclaiming the entire road. E. Bea said that the prices fluctuate on the asphalt but he said that maybe \$70,000 to do 1/2 mile of road. Chip sealing would cost about \$25,000. He said that after 6 years he would go back and do crack sealing. G. Smith summarized that \$25,000 (chip sealing) would get us 5 years and \$70,000 (reclaim) gets us 6 years. E. Bea said a straight mill job would probably get you 7 years.

R. Doiron pointed out that in his opinion, there should be some mathematical formula that every year we need to pave so many miles of road, chip seal so many miles of road and crack seal so many miles of road, a maintenance schedule so we don't end up with needing all 30 miles of road repaired/replaced all in the same year.

G. Smith asked how much it costs to chip seal. E. Bea answered about \$1.50 per square yard. G. Smith was looking for a number and E. Bea answered that it all depends on what type of topping he puts on it. He noted that there are a lot of different applications he could use.

W. Hopkinson asked if he was left \$30,000, what would he do with that. E. Bea answered that he would do some crack sealing and he would look at maybe chip sealing West Road. He noted that the \$30,000 would not do Rimmon Hill.

M. Pratt pointed out that the City of Westport stopped chip sealing last year. They have a method where an 18 wheeler goes over the road roughing them up and then they heat it a bit and roll it. S. Cable said that is something we could look into.

It was decided that \$30,000 will be left for chip sealing.

B. Ploss and D. Sorrentino went on record saying that they are not comfortable with taking out the \$114,000 needed for waste water treatment.

S. Cable said that the Board of Selectmen felt comfortable going to the Public Hearing with approximately \$80,000 worth of cuts. R. Doiron asked if the people would realize what the impact of all these cuts would be. It was determined that this is not known because they were not told at the Public Hearing. S. Cable noted that there was a lot of miscommunication and rebel rousing, confusion, upset about the school budget and not clear on the bonding package but no direction was given by the people as to where they would like to cut the budget. R. Doiron noted that if you take \$100,000 worth of cuts in the over-all budget and apply it all over the budget you are looking at very minor cuts, i.e., \$500 out of this budget, \$1000 out of this budget is infinitesimal unlike if we were to for instance cut something big like large equipment. He noted that by cutting the budget the way we are, the town is giving up things like having our roads maintained properly where at some point we will be faced with doing some major reconstruction. R. Doiron noted that he was very upset at the vote last week. He said that there's a lot of cuts that are trying to be finagled here and he is not comfortable with it. It was pointed out again

that the budget has to be cut as a result of the town vote. A. Choi suggested we go to the town with the cuts we just made and see what they have to say. He said at this point it will be the towns decision as to whether or not they want to cut the chip sealing. It is bare bones right now and anything cut more will be very painful to the town.

The Boards asked each department to give back some money.

Fire Department

J. Rodrigo began by taking out the money for the service award. On page 10, line item 1500, he will cut \$5,000. He noted that he will carefully negotiate with the vendor.

Line item 1553, Department Supplies - the increase to this year's budget was \$2,500. They will give that back.

Line item 1485, turn out gear will be scaled back \$2,500. W. Hopkinson asked if that will leave him enough for all the new recruits. He noted that it will not but they will continue to all use old turnout gear.

The Fire Department gave back \$10,000

S. Cable noted that the Departments are going beyond bare minimum and thanked them very much.

Parks and Recreation

A lengthy discussion regarding fireworks and sports took place. Joe Rodrigo explained that they have already paid an installment of \$5,000 for the fireworks for 2010. The \$5,000 in the budget is for the second installment. They could cut the fireworks for 2011 however, he noted that it is the largest attended town event each year. It was asked if admission could be charged but it was noted that while there are a lot of people at the actual fireworks, many residents watch the fireworks from their home. The possibility of trying to get the fireworks sponsored was discussed as well.

E. Groth, a town resident was present and suggested that the town not cut the small stuff like fireworks and sports subsidies as he believed that there would be resentment from the residents.

It was suggested that maybe they cut the stocking of the fish in half. Joe Rodrigo explained that there is no "half".

G. Smith suggested that all the sports subsidies be zeroed out and make all the town recreation leagues be "pay to play". It was noted that people (who do not have children playing the sports) do not like to pay for other kids to play. W. Hopkinson and Joe Rodrigo explained that some of the money in these accounts is for families that cannot afford to pay for their child to play. Joe Rodrigo explained that this town does not have an assistance department (for people who need assistance). He noted that the town is

required to provide assistance to residents and that if they were to hire someone to monitor who should get school lunch assistance or sports assistance, the cost would far outweigh the budget cuts that are trying to be made. Joe Rodrigo noted that there are 120 kids on the baseball teams not including travel, 90 girls in the softball league not including travel, there's 170 on the basketball league which covers children from 7 years old to a sophomore in high school. He noted that \$1,500 in the account is probably what goes towards assistance. The other \$1,500 is for gear and offsetting some of the registration cost. G. Smith said that his only reason for suggesting cutting these line items is to take the onus off the general population and put it on the people who actually have kids who play. G. Smith asked that given the economy, should the amount of people requiring assistance for sports rise from 10% to 60% are we going to continue to subsidize the assistance? Joe Rodrigo answered "absolutely". He noted that any kid in this town that wants to play sports should be allowed to play and it shouldn't be based on income. Joe Rodrigo said that if we can't afford that as a community then we should "pack up and go home". W. Hopkinson noted that the key word was "community" and she said that what she heard at the public vote, not necessarily publically but in small circles of people talking, that people don't want to pay for other people's services anymore. G. Smith said that is what he is hearing as well. Joe Rodrigo noted that it may not be a community in the Boards job but it should be a community. S. Cable noted that she is aware he is speaking from the heart however if we don't get a budget passed, there are things that have to be cut. G. Smith suggested we move on to the Police Department as he noted that it seems no one wants to take away from the kids however, if the budget doesn't pass again, these are areas that will have to be cut.

S. Cable noted again that no one on any of these Boards like cutting these items but they are trying to be fair and were told by the people that they budget has to be cut.

Police Department

Trooper Cipriano was asked what he could give back in his budget. He noted that he can give back the \$6,900 that was allotted for a new police vehicle. He noted that he did some maintenance on the Tahoe and it's running very well, it is now reliable so he can make do.

B. Ploss asked if there would be any benefit to cut back some day shift hours to cover more of the night shift hours. Trooper Cipriano noted that there is already a gap and when economic times get worse, crime goes up. He was asked if overtime could be more controlled. S. Cable noted that on events, overtime could be controlled but she noted that it is another issue. She noted that there was a lot of police coverage/overtime this past weekend at the River Festival and maybe they should look into cutting back the coverage at such events including the carnival. W. Hopkinson asked what the regulations are for events and are police required. The response was that the police are there for a safety issue. S. Cable noted several town ordinances that say if you need a Fire Guard or a Police Officer for an event, the organization (Lions Club, Lioness, Firemen, etc.) is supposed to pay for them however, the Selectmen look at how these organizations help

the community so they usually waive the ordinance and cover the cost of the police. S. Cable noted that it may be something that has to be looked at. A lengthy discussion continued regarding the cost of police coverage. S. Cable also pointed out that the town is supposed to get \$25 per every vendor at events like the carnival (it is also an ordinance) but again they do not collect that. M. Pratt responded by saying that the town should absolutely collect a fee from each vendor at the carnival.

W. Hopkinson asked Trooper Cipriano if there was anything that could be done with building maintenance. He responded by saying that he has already cut some from that line item and the only other thing they could do would be to get another locip grant for windows. S. Cable noted that the Board of Selectmen are working on going green and trying to get energy grants however she noted that for the first time, they are being denied grants because there are so many people going for grants. She also noted that she is not sure what is going to happen to worker's compensation.

J. Dowdell suggested that the town look into building fees for permits and such. He noted that he recently spoke with an electrician who paid only \$9.50 for a permit and most towns charge a minimum of \$25.00. S. Cable noted that the town just went up on their Planning and Zoning fees and the rest of the boards are looking at this. They are determining whether they enforce them.

Parks and Recreation

Joe Rodrigo recommended that line item 1019 be cut back \$1,000. Additionally he recommended that Commission Operating expenses be cut \$1,000. He also suggested \$1,000 be cut from spray clay fertilizer.

Selectmen

First Selectman expenses will be cut by \$500. This is generally used for sending flowers and fruit baskets.

Additionally, on page 8, line item 1040 will be reduced by \$852, there will be no increase for the Zoning Enforcement Officer.

S. Cable asked M. Krenesky if he had anything else to cut. He responded by saying that anything else that he identified would be "\$500 here and \$500 there" and does not recommend they go there at this point.

The Fireworks were discussed again. S. Cable asked that all vote as to whether or not they want to leave the fireworks in. S. Cable and M. Krenesky voted to take out the fireworks while the rest voted to keep them in. The fireworks will stay in the budget at this point.

At this point, the recommended reductions amount to \$84,152. All the cuts were listed prior to a motion being made. It was also suggested that the budget be presented with only numbers and not percentages as it then becomes confusing.

D. Sorrentino voiced concern about this budget getting shot down and how will we know what it is the public wants cut? S. Cable noted that is why we are having a public hearing. W. Hopkinson interjected that we already had a public hearing and the 20 or so people that took the time to come to the meeting voiced that they were happy with the proposed budget but when the actual vote took place, the response was reversed.

The following cuts were reviewed:

Page 5 1001 \$500
Page 8 P&Z wages \$852
Page 9 Professional Fees \$10,000
Page 9 Engineering and Consulting \$10,000
Page 10 1044 \$5,000
Page 10 1553 \$2,500
Page 10 1485 \$2,500
Page 12 Chip Sealing \$30,000
Page 13 Professional Development \$300.00
Page 14 Park and recreation wages \$1,000
Page 14 1170 \$1,000
Page 14 1100 Fertilizer Clay \$1,000
Page 16 New Police Vehicle \$6,900
Page 16 Phone System \$12,500

G. Smith motioned to cut the Town of Beacon Falls fiscal 2010/2011 operating budget by \$84,152.00. L. Krepinevich 2nd the motion. S. Cable and M. Krenesky from the Board of Selectman voted aye. W. Hopkinson, A. Choi and B. Ploss from the Board of Finance voted aye. R. Doiron (BOF) voted against the cuts as did D. Sorrentino (BOS).

Discussion: R. Doiron noted that he knows that there are cuts that need to be made however he believes that the cuts that were made are so insignificant equaling only 1/10 of a mil that it is fiscally irresponsible. He believes that there should either be a drastic cut or no cuts at all. G. Smith noted that we have to cut. R. Doiron said that he understands that he cannot see cutting the budget by 1/10 of a mil as being fiscally responsible. D. Sorrentino said that he supports R. Doiron's statement. R. Doiron continued that as much as he would hate to say let's cut a ladder truck or loader, people are going to want to see a "cut". The topic of whether or not the Board of Finance could go back to the town with the same budget was discussed. W. Hopkinson asked R. Doiron if he were to make larger cuts, where would they be. R. Doiron responded by saying that he honestly does not think it is fiscally responsible to make cuts "period". D. Sorrentino

is supporting R. Doiron's statement. S. Cable asked that this be clear in the recording so R. Doiron repeating his statement that the Board either go back with the same budget or they make a cut that will show "something" to the people.

G. Smith motioned to bring the 2010/2011 Town of Beacon Falls Budget to a Public Hearing at the Fire House on May 18, 2010 at 7:00 P.M. at the Beacon Hose Fire House. L. Krepinevich 2nd the motion. All voted aye.

M. Krenesky motioned to go to a 1/2 day referendum on Thursday May 27, 2010 from 12:00 P.M. until 8:00 P.M. S. Cable 2nd the motion. S. Cable and M. Krenesky voted aye. D. Sorrentino was opposed to this motion.

G. Smith motioned to adjourn the meeting at 9:20 P.M. R. Doiron 2nd the motion. All voted aye.

Meeting was adjourned at 9:20 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

**Lauren Classey
Clerk for the Board of Finance**

MAY 18 2010