



**TOWN OF BEACON FALLS
JOINT BOARD OF FINANCE
BOARD OF SELECTMAN MEETING MINUTES
Wednesday June 2, 2010**

CALL TO ORDER

S. Cable called the joint meeting to order at 8:30 P.M.

Present: BOF Chairman W. Hopkinson, Vice Chairman G. Smith, Board of Finance members L. Krepinevich, B. Ploss and R. Doiron, First Selectman S. Cable and Selectmen D. Sorrentino and M. Krenesky

The 2010/2011 municipal budget did not pass. There were a total of 552 votes (15% of the voters in town) with 245 for the budget and 307 against.

W. Hopkinson asked to add M. Pratt/Fire Chief to the agenda regarding bills that needed to be paid. S. Cable told M. Pratt that he needs to discuss these issues with M. Gomes and take it from there.

S. Cable noted that they are still in negotiations with the employee benefits union however at this point, they were able to negotiate a \$70,245 savings thus far. She noted that to date, that the employees union Rep has not come back with any employee concessions.

W. Hopkinson asked about cancelling the trash pick-up contract. S. Cable noted that we could do that however we would have to pay the town attorney and we would not know the answer until after it had been argued in a court of law.

Also discussed was monthly bulky waste and that the monthly schedule should be cancelled and removed from the budget.

R. Doiron asked if there is anything happening with the employee concessions.

S. Cable said that they could make the cuts. She suggests that we close the Town Hall, Parks, Library and everything on Fridays. The savings would be substantial. M. Gomes will have to figure out the exact savings.

M. Krenesky questioned whether Thursdays would be cut short, i.e., close at 4:30 and S. Cable said yes (but it was later determined that they would only cut the employee hours from 35 per week to 30 per week). M. Krenesky asked if the employees are entitled to unemployment. S. Cable said that it's a very minimal amount that they would get. She said this was according to M. Gomes. M. Krenesky noted that in his conversation with M. Gomes, he was under the impression that they are entitled to unemployment and this subject needs to be clarified. This will be referred to M. Gomes to advise as to exactly what the employees are entitled to.

A rough draft of potential cuts was reviewed.

* Dropping employee hours from 35 per week to 30 per week would be an approximate \$109,936 in savings.

* Closing all town buildings (Senior Center, Town Hall, Town Garage) for 1 day per week would be an approximate \$9,000 in savings as related to electricity, etc.

* Cancelling the Parks and Recs summer programs and activities, including Family Day, Sports Subsidies, Independence Day \$10,000 from Mathies Park would be a savings of \$62,300 - the summer concerts and what has already been paid for a deposit towards them needs to be researched

*Cancelling the mid-night shift for the Police Department and overtime for town events that the town pays for would be a savings of \$62,000. The amount of money that is spent on Police Overtime for town events will have to be reviewed by M. Gomes as that number is not readily available.

*Chip sealing has already been cut but there is still \$30,000 in that budget. G. Smith noted that he does not think that we should cut anything that maintains the infrastructure of the town in that by cutting something now will cost much more later to fix.

S. Cable asked W. Hopkinson to calculate how much has to be cut from the budget to appreciate a 2% increase. W. Hopkinson noted that they would have to cut \$282,952 to maintain a 2% increase.

S. Cable noted that by a 0% increase, the people really want \$600,000 cut from the budget. M. Krenesky noted that he is not hearing that they want a 0% increase but that they don't like this particular budget.

R. Doiron interjected with his question of why there is not a laptop at these meetings so that when a number has to be changed, it can be done real-time and we could have the end result answer at the time of the change with every change. He suggests that we have one at these meetings. If M. Gomes cannot be here then someone else should have one. He suggested that maybe the clerk or the Chairperson have a laptop at these meetings

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with all this information on a spreadsheet. S. Cable noted that we could look to that for the future.

M. Krenesky suggested that if we are going to effect the town employees and close on Fridays then he believes that all the town officials should cut their salary as well. He suggested it should be as much as 50%. S. Cable responded by saying that is not fair. She noted that the officials do not get any of the medical benefits that the employees get and that they have not received an increase in many years. She noted that his statement may sound great for political a statement but would be totally unfair. M. Krenesky noted that it was not a political comment until S. Cable made it one.

D. Sorrentino suggested that we take last year's budget and add 2% to every line item. However, it was noted that couldn't be done as it relates to waste water treatment. D. Sorrentino noted that we have a fund for that. The fund was discussed and some felt it was better to leave the fund alone for now.

S. Cable wanted everyone to realize that the employees are still getting their raises because they have not made any concessions which is approximately 3%.

G. Smith asked why we are not strongly pursuing a sewer use fee. It was noted that an ordinance is needed for that and it is a good idea and should be done but it can't be done before the budget passes.

M. Krenesky noted that it was an interesting comment that the Town Employees have not give up anything. He noted that the BOS can control the medical insurance. He noted that the employee contributions can be doubled. They can inform the employees that they could go to HSA and either accept this or get their own insurance. He noted that he believes that this is a possibility. He also noted that if the employees are not discuss any kind of concessions whether it's medical insurance and/or salaries, then they should be prepared to announce layoffs. S. Cable noted that M. Krenesky has made some good points but the details have to be checked. S. Cable noted that she doesn't know the legality of sticking with the budget and just adding the 2% as it relates to contractual union wage increases. S. Cable noted that this would not have an impact on the community. She explained that until we start to take away programs and substantial items, they will not understand the benefits of what they get for their tax dollars. She noted her disappointment in the 15% turnout for the vote and her concern that people think there is "fat" in this budget when there is not any "fat". S. Cable noted that she heard from a couple of people in the crowd at the Public Hearing they were looking for a 2 or 3% increase. B. Ploss noted that what he heard was that they were looking for a 0% increase.

S. Cable thinks we should cut programs as much as we can to get down to the 2%.

*Cancelling Bulky Waste would be a savings of \$29,000

*Removing the "added" 5 hours to the library would be a savings of \$16,000

R. Doiron noted that if the information of these types of cuts had gotten out before the vote, he believes more people would have turned out to vote and the budget would have passed. He noted that all those who have children who participate in all the recreation programs and didn't want to see them be cut, would have come out to vote. He also noted that he anticipates that the budget may not pass the next time because people will want things put back in.

It was suggested that the \$44,000 on page 16 relating to the Public Works new snow plow truck be cut. It was determined that this \$44,000 was for a truck that was purchased last year. It was noted that this was for the Public Works "new big red truck with the computer in it".

It was clarified that by closing the Town Hall on Fridays, the town buildings would be closed for 3 straight days (no Saturday hours). It was noted that this includes no Saturday Library hours during the school year.

*Public Works Clothing allowance will be cut \$1,000

*The break-down of the Police hours is \$30,000 cut for the midnight shift and \$20,000 for wages over-time

*Senior Citizens mini-bus - It was noted that all Friday trips with the exception of emergencies should be cancelled. The mini-bus should be limited to strictly medical and personal needs and that there should be no field trips. It was noted that Friday is a free day and will be cancelled - in that the town will be closed on Fridays, the bus will be used for emergencies only. It was noted that some of the grant money may be used for field trips but the town does give the Senior Center \$1,000. M. Krenesky noted that he has a problem with how the Senior Center is planning to use that \$1,000. He noted that they are planning a dinner at Villa Bianca and restricting people from attending. He noted that unless you are a 100% member of the Senior Center, they are not letting you attend this town funded event. The \$1,000 will be cut out of this upcoming budget. W. Hopkinson noted that the town had budgeted \$12,000 for the driver in fiscal year 2009/2010 but has already spent \$20,000 out of this line item. S. Cable noted they are using 2 drivers. The \$13,000 will be kept in the budget and they definitely cannot go over budget and emergency only on Fridays and the \$1,000 subsidy will be taken away.

It was noted that some of the numbers above are estimated and that M. Gomes has to go over them all and give us accurate numbers.

*Street Sweeping - \$11,700 will be removed from the budget. It was noted when the magic salt is used, the streets should not need sweeping.

*Guard rail and line painting - \$17,000 will be removed from this budget line item. A discussion took place regarding this line item and what this amount included, i.e., is it to paint them or replace them? S. Cable noted that it's for both. S. Cable noted that this

amount was not put in ever before so they found a way to do it in the past and they will go back to doing it that way. G. Smith asked if this was for replacing old creosote poles with galvanized guard rails or putting in new guard rails. M. Krenesky noted that it is probably however you want to define it. S. Cable noted that it's a combination of both and it should be cut. It was also noted that if we are not getting any new roads then we do not need any new guard rails.

*Contingency - will be cut \$10,000

*Legal Fees and Town Council - cut \$10,000

Elected Officials were discussed - After a lengthy discussion, it was determined that this will not be cut. One point made was that the officials were elected into the existing salaries and the amount should not be changed until a new election.

*First Selectman expenses was cut \$1,500

It was suggested that M. Gomes should go through these numbers and the amount that is needed to bring the budget to a 0% increase should be taken from contingency as both BOS and BOF are working toward a 0% increase. It was also suggested that it shouldn't be taken out of contingency.

It was noted that the next referendum had to be scheduled within 14 calendar days of this date.

It was noted that these changes should be explained to the people prior to the vote.

It was noted that the Board of Selectmen will hold a Town Meeting on Wednesday June 16, 2010 at 7:30 P.M. at Woodland High School (first choice), Laurel Ledge School (2nd choice) or Fire House (3rd choice) for a paper ballot vote on the budget.

A joint BOS/BOF meeting was scheduled for June 8th at 7:00 (preceding the Regular Monthly BOF meeting) to discuss the final changes to the 2010/2011 budget prior to going to a town vote.

M. Krenesky motioned that the Board of Selectmen agree to review the cuts that were made to be finalized at the joint meeting on June 8, 2010. D. Sorrentino 2nd the motion. All voted aye.

R. Doiron motioned that the Board of Finance agree to review the cuts that were made to be finalized at the joint meeting on June 8, 2010. G. Smith 2nd the motion. All voted aye.

It was noted that all of these numbers have to be reviewed by M. Gomes for accuracy as a lot of the cuts were estimated numbers.

M. Krenesky motioned to take the results of the final budget which will be determined at the June 8th meeting, to a town meeting on June 16, 2010 at 7:30 P.M. for a town vote by paper ballot to be held at Woodland High School (1st choice), Laurel Ledge School (2nd choice) or the Fire House (3rd choice). D. Sorrentino 2nd the motion. All voted aye.

M. Krenesky suggested that prior to the next (2011/2012 budget process), a joint meeting be held with the Board of Finance, Board of Selectmen and full Board of Education regarding the Prospect/Beacon Falls student shift. It was agreed that this would be a good idea.

R. Doiron motioned to adjourn the meeting. M. Krenesky 2nd the motion. All voted aye.

Meeting was adjourned at 10:00 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lauren Classey
Clerk for the Board of Finance