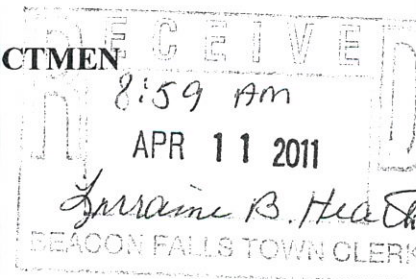


**BEACON FALLS BOARD OF FINANCE/BOARD OF SELECTMEN  
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES  
APRIL 7, 2011**



**SUBJECT TO APPROVAL**

The Special Meeting of the Board of Finance/Board of Selectmen Budget Workshop was called to order at 7:03 PM with the Pledge of Allegiance

**PRESENT:** C. Bielik, L. Krepinevich, J. Dowdell, B. Ploss, R. Doiron, W. Hopkinson, First Selectman S. Cable, Selectman D. Sorrentino, and Selectman M. Krenesky (7:10 PM)

**ABSENT:** None

**PUBLIC PRESENT:** None

S. Cable began by stating that she has received no response from Region 16.

W. Hopkinson presented a spreadsheet which showed the total changes in the proposed budget, comprised of a page of Expense increases and a page of Revenue decreases. Discussion followed on concerns and questions related to the changes.

Beginning with Employee Benefits: Medical Insurance and Pensions; MERF, S. Cable explained the program and who receives the pension plan. Regarding MERMA, Workers' Compensation, S. Cable explained the program.

Under Emergency Service, W. Hopkinson confirmed with the group that the Building Maintenance line item was for the replacement of fire house doors and a hot water heater at the Fire House. Under the Service Award Program line item, W. Hopkinson asked how many employees take part in this program and if anyone is receiving benefits now. S. Cable will provide this answer.

Under Police Wages- Part Time Patrol, W. Hopkinson asked to confirm amount of the wage increase for part-time officers and the numbers of years since their latest wage increase.

The group discussed the town's need to hire part-time officers to cover night shifts, and without them there would be no coverage. C. Bielik asked if there has been an increase in crime in town and if statistics are up, these part-time officers are necessary. The wage increase was to \$23.00 per hour, while surrounding towns are offering up to \$26.00 per hour. It has been several years since their last increase. Discussion continued regarding the coverage that our officers provide for surrounding towns and for private duty. This coverage generates revenue when police vehicles from Beacon Falls are involved.

Regarding Police – Overtime which increased by \$10,000, W. Hopkinson understands that this line item is currently underfunded and a portion of this is attributable to the private duty. This

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increase would have been higher; however private organizations are now responsible for paying for police coverage for their events.

Under Highway Maintenance: Snow Removal Materials - This line item was underfunded this winter and the town expects a tough winter again next year.

Vehicle Maintenance – The town has not replaced vehicles which are at the end of their useful life and therefore, more maintenance is needed for these older vehicles.

Bulky Waste – W. Hopkinson asked if the cost of opening Bulky Waste for a day is \$5,000 when it is open 6 times a year, the total is \$30,000. S. Cable noted that when Bulky Waste was open year-round, the cost was not \$5,000 per day, however when it is closed for half the year, there is much more brought in each day it is open. M. Krenesky noted that the Selectmen have been discussing implementing fees for Bulky Waste. C. Bielik suggested exploring the fees that other towns charge for their Bulky Waste. Discussion continued on this issue.

Under Wastewater Treatment, W. Hopkinson and C. Bielik discussed that the Electricity and Sludge Processing line items do not appear that they will exceed their budgets for the current fiscal year, so they inquired why the increase is being requested. M. Krenesky noted these requests were made by the Superintendent of the Wastewater Treatment Plant and he deemed them necessary. This discussion was tabled.

B. Ploss asked if a representative from each department could be present at the Public Hearing to speak for the increases requested by their departments. Members of the board and M. Krenesky agreed that each of the departments should have a representative at the public hearing. **B. Ploss made a motion requesting that the Board of Selectmen ask department heads to be present at the Public Hearing on Tuesday, April 12<sup>th</sup>. R. Doiron seconded the motion. All ayes.**

Parks & Recreation – The Independence Day celebration is in the budget for \$5,000. M. Krenesky asked when this money was intended to be spent; for the 2011 fireworks or for the 2012 fireworks. M. Krenesky noted that when the 2010-2011 budget was passed, the Independence Day celebration was cut from this budget. Discussion continued on this item. W. Hopkinson phoned Parks & Recreation Commission, Joe Rodorigo, and inquired when the \$5,000 was to be spent. Joe Rodorigo explained that Park Pals has privately raised \$3,750 for the down payment of the fireworks. J. Rodorigo confirmed that Park Pals is willing to raise the remaining funds for the balance of the fireworks for the 2011 Independence Day celebration. The town would still fund the buses for the fireworks out of the Parks & Recreation Activities line item. Discussion continued on this issue. J. Rodorigo confirmed that Park Pals does not have the ability or the manpower to continue raising these funds every year and therefore, the \$5,000 in the budget would be for the down payment for the 2012 Independence Day celebration.

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Minibus Operations – W. Hopkinson noted that at a prior meeting, a town employee stood up and stated that this line item was overfunded. She asked the Boards their thoughts on reducing this line item. M. Krenesky stated that the Selectmen plan to have a discussion as to how the bus is used. Discussion continued on priorities for the use of the bus. The Boards concluded that this line item is under review at this time.

Special Projects – This section of the budget implements a Vehicle Replacement program for the Fire Department and Public Works. The Boards also discussed the new Police Car Lease.

S. Cable stated that she truly believes that revenue decreases need to be highlighted to the public and should be a front page item. The revenue decreases are the driving force behind this budget. That is why large cuts, like Trash Removal, are being considered. S. Cable also raised the issue of the pay raises for clerks and the Board of Finance can address this issue.

Questions about Revenue Decreases: Under Manufacturers' Machinery & Equipment, which was been decreased by \$77,000, M. Krenesky and S. Cable explained that this line item has been cut by the Governor. State budget cuts have a great effect on this budget and discussion continued on this issue as it relates to Beacon Falls and other towns, like Prospect.

The Board of Selectmen will also look into the Senior Center phone bill, which appears quite high. It appears that the rate may be for bundled services such as cable, internet, etc. and inquired what service they are running. This will be clarified.

C. Bielik asked about other decreased Revenue items which need clarification, and the Boards noted that under Ambulance Corps. Reimbursement, it should be clear that the Fire Department hired a new employee which reduces the town's reimbursement. The reasons for this hiring can be explained by a member of the Fire Department. Members of the Boards also discussed the mandates/OSHA mandates required of the Fire Department. The Fire Department had a Maintenance Schedule and a Vehicle Replacement Schedule which was hurt by town budget cuts in past years.

In response to the Board of Finance motion, D. Sorrentino asked S. Cable to formally invite the department heads to the Public Hearing next Tuesday, April 12<sup>th</sup> to answer specific questions on their budgets. S. Cable stated that this has been a painful budget process and the town leadership is looking for suggestions and creativity from members of the public, for solutions regarding the budget.

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B. Ploss stated that timing is critical. After the Public Hearing, the Board of Finance and Board of Selectmen will convene a joint meeting to make changes to the budget and proceed from there.

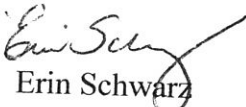
**R. Doiron made a motion to proceed to a Public Hearing with the Proposed Budget dated April 6, 2011. J. Dowdell seconded the motion. All ayes.**

**M. Krenesky made a motion to take the Proposed Budget dated April 6, 2011 to a Public Hearing on April 12th. D. Sorrentino seconded the motion. All ayes.**

Whether the budget will be voted on via Referendum or Town Meeting was discussed and S. Cable concluded that this decision will be made after the Public Hearing on Tuesday, April 12<sup>th</sup>.

**S. Cable made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:37 PM. L. Krepinevich seconded the motion. All ayes.**

Respectfully submitted,

  
Erin Schwarz