

**Beacon Falls Board of Finance
10 Maple Ave.
Beacon Falls, CT 06403**



**BEACON FALLS BOARD OF FINANCE
Joint Budget Workshop with the
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
May 1, 2013 MINUTES
(Draft Copy-Subject to Revision)**

1. Call to Order/Pledge of Allegiance

Chairman Jim Huk called the meeting to order at 7:32

Members present: Joe Dowdell, Jack Levine, Robert Doiron, Brian Ploss

Member absent: Marc Bronn

Board of Selectmen present: First Selectman Gerard Smith, Dave D'Amico, Chris Bielik

Others present: Town Finance Manager Manny Gomes and approximately 10 members of the public.

Chairman Jim Huk rearranged the agenda to allow the department heads to speak after finance manager.

2. 2012-2013 Forecast from Finance Manager

M. Gomes reported that a \$100,000 surplus is projected for the end of the 2012-2013 fiscal year.

3. Review of new bonding proposal

J. Levine referred to information from Webster Bank on the refinancing of current debt.

Motion to increase Debt Service Interest 10-85 line 1984 to \$10,500 and line 10-85 1985 to \$119,000: Levine/Huk; all aye.

Based on a motion from the April 23, 2013 budget workshop to put money down on the new fire truck and bond the balance, J. Levine suggested adding a budget line under debt service to account for the interest on bonding a new fire truck.

Motion to add a budget line under Debt Service Interest 10-85 of \$43,000 for proposed new fire truck and fire house roof replacement; Engine #1 Replacement line Special Projects 10-90 2014 to remain at \$200,000 and change the fire department request to \$695,000: Levine/Doiron; all aye.

Building Inspector 10-11

Doug Colter, the Building Inspector, sent a letter dated 4/25/13 to the Board of Finance defending his budget request on line 10-11 1020 wages for \$39,112.

Discussion:

J. Huk noted that he had compared the similar position in Seymour and found no increases to account for additional state inspection requirements.

Motion to restore Building Inspector Wages line 10-11 1020 to original request of \$39,112:

Levine/Doiron;

Vote:

Aye: Levine, Doiron, Dowdell, Ploss

Nay: Huk

Discussion:

J. Huk expressed his concern about a 47% wage increase, based upon proposed training and time estimates and not historical figures.

J. Levine commented that the Board of Finance asked for information and received a letter of explanation from the building inspector. He continued that it would be in the town's best interest to have a building inspector available to conduct required inspections in a timely fashion.

J. Huk questioned if this position was covered by fees charged which are projected to be \$40,000 in 2013-2014 however the revenue generated through 2/28/13 has been \$13,385.

Tax collector 10-07 line 1080 office supplies

At the April 23, 2013 budget workshop, the Board of Finance requested First Selectman Smith obtain more accurate numbers for this budget item from the Tax Collector. He explained that this line item included postage, dues, supplies and printing tax bills.

Motion to change Tax Collector line Miscellaneous Expenses 10-07 1220 to \$7,500 and change Office Supplies line 10-07 1080 to zero: **Levine/Doiron**

Discussion:

R. Doiron questioned M. Gomes if a line item can be renamed; yes. R. Doiron suggested renaming line 10-07 1220 from Miscellaneous Expenses to Operating Expenses and create a new line item number under the Tax Collector called Operating Expenses to replace lines 10-07 1080 and 1220.

J. Huk questioned setting it higher than the dept request for the combined line items and asked for evidence to support this increase.

Vote:

Aye: Doiron, Dowdell, Ploss, Levine
Nay: Huk

Conservation Commission 10-24

Chairman Diane Betkoski submitted a revised budget based upon the request from the April 23, 2013 Board of Finance workshop. She stated that based upon recommendations from CACIWC and other local conservation commissions it is important to establish a Land Acquisition Fund. The Conservation Commission revised budget included a Land Acquisition Fund with funding taken from the reduced *operating expenses* line item.

Discussion:

J. Levine commented that he initially agreed with the idea of establishing a Land Acquisition Fund but thinks the bottom line will still be high and that the \$1000 may need to be reduced.

C. Bielik pointed out that the Conservation Commission voluntarily reduced their budget by half, which will cut back on their outreach programs and requested establishing a land acquisition fund as part of their own budget.

J. Levine expressed his concern that the public will be against this budget allocation.

Motion to move \$500 from line 10-24 1220 Expenses to new line item for Land Acquisition Fund and reduce line 10-24 1220 to \$2,000: Doiron/Levine;

Vote:

Aye: Levine, Huk, Dowdell, Ploss
Nay: Doiron

Wastewater treatment 10-67

Walter Opuszynski, Treatment Plant Supervisor, explained that with UV starting on May 1 the plant was running at 100% with no redundancy. He projects a \$30,000 increase per year for plant operations. He stated that per state mandate, both banks must be run at 100% from now on, a change from previous years. UV runs May through September and doesn't account for any increases from the electric company. The plant must meet these requirements or risk a DEEP violation.

R. Doiron questioned M. Gomes about being behind a month on electric bills; M. Gomes stated the bills are paid within the proper fiscal year's budget.

Motion to restore Wastewater Treatment Electricity line 10-67 1121 to original department's request of \$85,500: Levine/Doiron;

Vote:

Aye: Levine, Doiron, Ploss, Dowdell
Nay: Huk

Plant Operations line 10-67 1760

Walter Opuszynski acknowledged the future major upgrade to the plant, but while the new plant is being built, the old plant needs to run. He added that the wastewater treatment plant is 43 years old and they are dealing with aging equipment.

Motion to restore Wastewater Treatment Plant Operations line 10-67 1760 to original department's request of \$35,000: **Levine/Doiron;**

Discussion:

J. Levine expressed his concerns with the aging wastewater treatment plant and that future budget transfers would be requested if this line item was underfunded. He felt that if reserves were higher for potential transfers he would agree to a cut.

C. Bielik noted that the \$30,000 in this line item was still \$13,000 more than that department spent last year.

Vote:

Aye: Ploss, Levine

Nay: Dowdell, Doiron, Huk

Discussion:

Wastewater Treatment line 10-67 1765 Equipment Replacement may need to be a capital request, to repair equipment to bring it up to standard.

B. Ploss noted that item would have to have a broad description.

J. Levine commented that there were no other options to get money; it needs to be in the budget and not count on transfers from the contingency fund.

J. Huk noted that through 3 quarters, the department spent 43% of their budget and expects to spend the remaining 57% in the last quarter.

B. Ploss asked if the bills go through the Selectmen's office: yes, so the oversight is in place, he agreed that this line shouldn't be touched.

Motion to reduce line 10-67 1770 Sludge Processing to \$130,000: **Levine/Doiron;**

Vote:

Aye: Huk

Nay: Dowdell, Levine, Ploss, Doiron

Library 10-69 1091

G. Smith noted that the part-time position which he previously cut is would now not be considered a union position. He requested that the part-time librarian position, for safety reasons, be reinstated with \$9,600 for line item 10-69 1019.

Motion to change line 10-69 1019 Library Part-Time Wages to \$9,600: Levine/Huk;

Vote:

Aye: Levine, Huk, Ploss, Doiron

Dowdell abstained

Motion to restore \$23,125 to Library Departmental Supplies line 10-69 1170 previously requested by the department: Levine/Doiron;

J. Levine commented that this line item wasn't completely spent in the previous year because there was a shortfall in the salary line, so the Library Director covered that shortage with funds already approved in the library budget rather than requesting more.

Vote:

Aye: Levine, Doiron, Ploss, Huk

Dowdell abstained

Highway Maintenance 10-59

J. Huk questioned the increase requested for line 10-59 1780 Sewer Maintenance to \$17,000 when last year only \$6,193 was spent. It was explained that the public works department is using cameras to find blockages in drains.

J. Levine agreed with J. Huk and believed the \$17,000 request was too high for this item as it was uncertain if it would be needed.

Motion to make change Sewer Maintenance line 10-59 1780 to \$10,000: Levine/Doiron;
all aye.

4. Review of capital requests

Motion to approve these Special Projects 10-90:

- Line 2012 SCBA airpack lease for \$13,297
- Line 2012 Police car lease for \$10,089
- Line 2014 Public works plow for \$10,000
- Line 2014 Pine Bridge pump station roof for \$7,000
- Line 2014 Hose replacement program fire department for \$12,875
- Line 2014 4 gas meters fire department for \$5,000
- Line 2014 Engine #1 replacement for \$200,000
- Line 2014 Thermal imaging camera for \$12,990
- Line 2014 Police department radios for \$22,000

- Line 2014 Fire department meeting room floor for \$5,000
- Line 2014 Fire house roof for \$100,000: Levine/Doiron;

Vote:

Aye: Levine, Doiron, Ploss, Huk

Nay: Dowdell

Discussion:

R. Doiron requested that \$65,000 for a public works truck & sander #3 replacement be added back in, but would prefer to bring it to a public hearing for further discussion.

Motion to add \$65,000 for a public works truck & sander #3 replacement to the Special Projects line 10-90 2014: Doiron/Levine; all aye.

Motion to put New Library Study back in Special Projects line 10-90 2014 and decrease to \$11,000: Levine/Ploss;

Discussion:

J. Levine requested information about this line item from library staff.

Assistant Librarian Sue Dowdell explained this money is needed for preliminary building plans required for any grant applications.

J. Levine suggested bringing this line item to the public hearing, to show the importance of the library.

Vote:

Aye: Levine, Ploss, Doiron, Huk

Dowdell abstained

Employee Benefits 10-13

J. Levine questioned the amount of \$334,703 for line 10-13 1245 Medical Insurance.

G. Smith noted that \$334,703 was a good estimate, it would go down with one less employee and a new number would be available next week. He noted that health benefits are up 12%.

J. Levine suggested keeping line 10-13 1245 Medical Insurance as is.

Motion to bond the fire truck and fire house roof replacement thus removing from Special Projects 10-90 2014 the \$200,000 for Engine #1 Replacement and \$100,000 for the Fire House Roof and increase the proposed new line in Debt Service Interest to \$72,000 for this bond: Levine/Huk; all aye.

J. Huk commented that he would like to base the tax collection rate based on a more realistic number.

Motion to change the calculations for the budget based on a tax collection rate of 98%:
Huk/Levine; all aye.

J. Levine suggested removing the \$65,000 from Special Projects in the operating budget for a Public Works Truck & Sander #3 Replacement, and discussing the need for a new truck at a public hearing as he wants the townspeople to weigh in.

Motion to remove \$65,000 for a Public Works Truck & Sander #3 Replacement from the special projects line 10-90 2014 and change effective tax rate to 97.5%: **Levine/Ploss;** all aye.

5. **Review of non tax revenue**

6. **Discussion**

7. **Vote**

Motion to bring proposed Town budget of \$6,283,608. to a public hearing: **Huk/Levine;** all aye.

8. **Set date for Public Hearing**

Motion to bring proposed Town budget of \$6,283,608. to a public hearing on Wednesday May 22, 2013 at 7 PM at the Beacon Hose fire house to be followed by a special Board of Finance meeting with an invitation extended to the Board of Selectmen for discussion:
Levine/Huk; all aye.

M. Gomes will provide the necessary information to K. Wilson for a notice to go in the newspaper.

9. **Adjournment**

The next Board of Finance regular monthly meeting will be held on Tuesday, May 14, 2013 at 7:30 p.m.

Motion to adjourn the joint Board of Finance/Board of Selectmen budget workshop at 10:22 PM: **Doiron/Huk;** all aye.

Motion to adjourn the joint Board of Finance/Board of Selectmen budget workshop at 10:22 PM: **Bielik/Smith;** all aye.

Respectfully submitted,

Martha Melville
Clerk for the Board of Finance