

BEACON FALLS BOARD OF SELECTMEN
Special Meeting
March 24, 2014
MINUTES
(Draft Copy-Subject to Revision)
(Recorded on Olympus DP-201 filed by date)

First Selectman C. Bielik called the Special BOS Monthly meeting to order at 6:00 P.M. with the pledge to the flag.

Present: First Selectman C. Bielik, Selectmen P. Betkoski and D. Sorrentino

Others Present: S. Dowdell

Mario Trepca

A discussion took place regarding the pipe that is owned by the Town of Beacon Falls which is located on Mario Trepca's property. It was noted that all three bids were now received in writing and the BOS could take a vote on it. C. Bielik spoke on behalf of M. Trepca (who was not presented) and shared his concerns about the fact that Mario will already have a contractor on the job doing other work so he thought it should be considered that the contract on site be awarded the bid to remove the pipe.

The discussion continued in that B. Swan came in with the lowest bid he is bonded and that the job will have to be inspected anyway. The BOS does not see it to be a problem that a different contractor (from the one that will already be on site) be awarded the job.

P. Betkoski motioned to hire Swan Excavating to do the work on Mario Trepca's property (in that this was the lowest bid) and that the town's cost not exceed 50% of \$13,400 or \$6,700. Should there be any additional cost associated, that will be the responsibility of M. Trepca. D. Sorrentino 2nd the motion. All voted aye.

C. Bielik began the 2nd part of the meeting explaining that he thought it was time that the BOS officially review the beginnings of upcoming budget 2014/15. He was going to review with P. Betkoski and D. Sorrentino where we currently stand with each line item noting that this is just a workshop and there will be no vote on anything.

C. Bielik explained that he has asked M. Gomes if he will come in and volunteer a little bit of his time/give a hand in preparing this budget (emails have been sent and messages left but an answer has not yet been given). It was explained though that in the event M. Gomes cannot assist, the Beacon Falls Finance Clerk (Denise), believe that she will be able to help out with a rough construction to at least get a document close to what we are used to seeing.

C. Bielik explained that at this meeting we will be reviewing some of the big changes that will affect the 2014/15 budget proposal. He noted that the Union Contract calls for a 2.5% pay increase noting that due to this Union Contract, he felt it was only right to request/consider a 2.5% pay increase across the board. This 2.5% increase is reflected throughout the workshop budget. He did note that nothing will change with the Selectmen's pay.

C. Bielik noted that his process of preparing this budget was to take the department's input and then work backwards reviewing 3 years of proposals and actuals – he noted that when the final budget proposal is presented to the BOF, all actuals for previous FY's will already have been reviewed.

C. Bielik noted that the Town Clerk and Librarian were able to re-do the copier contract for a savings of \$4200 – this is reflected.

Note: the 2.5% employee increase has been noted throughout the entire budget proposal

Benefits

This is very involved and C. Bielik noted that he is hoping M. Gomes will be available to help us out with the pensions noting that Denise is just a bit up to date on this – he noted that a representative from the Insurance Company was at the Town Hall on 3/21/14.

Workers Comp

C. Bielik noted that we fall in the high risk category due to the last 3 years of Workers Comp incidents. It appears that this line item will increase from \$117,000 to \$150,000 and there is not much we can do about it. C. Bielik explained the 3 incidences that put us on a negative trend 1. A police officer fell and twisted his knee 2. A firefighter fell through a roof and 3. Someone fell on the ice at the Town Hall and something about another fire fighter. It was noted that when a pedestrian makes a claim for something like slipping on the ice, it falls under workers-compensation insurance.

Assessors

No Change

Boards

C. Bielik noted that his is worth exploring noting that each board has a line item for their clerks and he is thinking that if all the clerk's line items fell into one line item, the BOS would have the final say over the amount. It was discussed that there are inconsistencies on what each clerk charges for say, the time it takes to prepare an agenda. C. Bielik noted that he has heard concerns from some people about the inconsistencies and having one line item for all may be a way of having more control over the inconsistencies.

BOF

Audit – the town audit used to be \$19,000 and it went up to \$32,000 with over-runs (actuals are \$35K)

EDC

C. Bielik noted that he received input from Jeremy Rodrigo that he is proposing in FY budget 2014/15 that a new position be funded for \$30,000 – noting that he came up with that number in that it seemed to be a good number. C. Bielik explained that he would need more information regarding this request.

Conservation Commission

It was discussed that there is a small land acquisition fund that started at \$500 with the intent to build up that fund over several years and “fence” it to be available should it be needed.

Building Inspector

It was noted that in the 2013/14 budget, the recently hired Building Inspector (no longer the inspector), requested that his line item be substantially increased due to as he stated, fees were increasing. The BOF did not approve the entire amount but they did approve a smaller amount. After looking at the trend, the cost did not increase so C. Bielik is suggesting that this line item go back to a projection of \$28,800.

Professional Fees

C. Bielik noted that the past 3 years have been consistent and have not gone over \$60,000 so he suggests that this line item be reduced by \$5,000 to \$60,000.

Property & Casualty

C. Bielik noted that he was advised to use the same numbers

Agencies

C. Bielik suggests that we keep the same relationship with agencies in that they do offer good things – maintain memberships

Land Use

It was noted that this should be cut in half.

Emergency Services

C. Bielik noted that a lot of departments have been using the maintenance line for things that should be capital projects. He noted it is his intent to carve this out and have the line item reflect what it is actually being used for.

Vehicle Fuel

C. Bielik noted that the town's fuel has been consolidated through consortium so he is going to try and get good numbers that reflect the savings.

New Turn Out Gear

It was noted that anything the Fire House needs for new turn out gear should reflect new fireman only (they fulfilled what they needed last year) – He believes this should reflect a \$7,000 savings from last year.

Water Hydrants

It was noted that the town leases the fire hydrants and while the hydrants in the Cotton Hollow area are only going up a little bit (they are from a different company), the rest in town are increasing substantially. It looks to be going up by \$5,000.

Resident Trooper

This line item will go from \$99,000 to \$123,000. C. Bielik noted that the officer that just retired was the highest paid so while there will be financial benefits from someone coming in at a lower pay, a 9th part time patrol was just hired but they are still 4 to 5 officers short. C. Bielik was told that it is difficult to bring in officers at the pay rate the Beacon Falls offers (\$21.00 per hour) so his is proposing to increase the pay to \$23.00 per hour to make it more appealing to be a part time officer in town.

Gas, oil and Maintenance

C. Bielik said he is going to try and get some savings here

State Mandated Training

Didn't turn out to be what they budgeted for – this line item will be reduced back down to \$12,000

Administrative

C. Bielik noted that lots of lines in this budget area have been mis-labeled noting that he is going to have the line items labeled properly for this budget.

Public Safety

This should be one consolidated number.

Highway Maintenance

It was noted that the town is currently paying for 6 employees noting that the previous administration chose to not fill a vacancy (they save \$50,000 plus benefits by doing that) – this resulted in 6 snow plows being used instead of 7 and a lot of overtime for the staff of 6 to get the job done (instead of 7) from this winter (the savings failed to materialize). C. Bielik would like to put the 7th employee back on the maintenance crew noting that he believes this to be a battle worth fighting for. He noted that they expect a lot from the crew in the summer as well and in the past they were able to hire \$10.00 per hour part time help however, since they cut the 7th employee, it is against union rules to hire part time summer help.

Town Garage

Needs woks – estimates to do some fixes will be in capital projects

C. Bielik noted that the amount of propane that is used to heat the town garage is cost prohibitive noting that the heating system was actually installed 10 feet off the ground so most of the propane heat is going up rather than heating the working area. C. Bielik noted that the Director of Public Works has a list of things needing a fix.

Refuse

It was noted that we are still waiting to hear from them.

Waste Water Treatment Plant

C. Bielik noted that Woodard and Curran have suggest that the town hire a 4th employee for the Waste Water Treatment plant however C. Bielik noted that he is not convinced they need to add an employee and is less inclined to fight for this position.

Sewer Treatment

Amounts can be saved here.

Library

Status Quo

Parks and Rec

C. Bielik noted that the responsibility of this budget will go under the Public Works Director where it had originally been.

Telephone

It was noted that his has been adjusted at the senior center

C. Bielik noted that there is a grant available for a mini bus for the senior center – it's an 80/20 split – noting that our bus is big and aging. There are several advantages to having something newer and smaller. C. Bielik noted that we have a good chance of getting the grant and that K. Wilson and F. Doiron have been working on it.

Contingency

\$100,000 is recommended

Debt Service

It was noted that the bond and bonds were reconstructed last week and this will result in an approximate \$275,000 savings over time noting that \$38,000 savings will be realized in this FY and the fourth year out the savings will be significant.

C. Bielik noted that more information will follow.

D. Sorrentino motioned (at 7:35 P.M.) to continue the Board of Selectmen budget workshop portion of this meeting on March 26, 2014 at 7:30 P.M. in the First Selectman's Conference room. P. Betkoski 2nd the motion. All voted aye.

Respectfully submitted,

Lauren Classey
Clerk for the Board of Selectmen