

Beacon Falls Board of Selectmen  
10 Maple Avenue  
Beacon Falls, CT 06403



BEACON FALLS BOARD OF SELECTMEN  
Special Meeting  
May 29, 2014  
Minutes  
(Subject to Revision)

1. Call to Order/Pledge of Allegiance

First Selectman Chris Bielik called the meeting to order at 7:05 P.M.

Members Present: First Selectman Chris Bielik, Selectman Peter Betkoski, and Selectman Dominick Sorrentino

Others Present: Jay Sheehan and Dave Prickett from Woodard & Curran; Walter Opuszynski, Jeff Smith, and David Finn from Town of Beacon Falls WPCA; Atty. Fred Stanek from Welch, Teodosio, Stanek & Blake LLC; John Smith from Inland Wetlands & Watercourses Commission; Joe Rodorigo from Board of Finance; Rich Minnick; Joe Fitzpatrick; Fred Smith; and Lou Krokosky.

2. Appointments

C. Bielik welcomed and thanked everyone for attending tonight's meeting.

The first order of business was the appointment of the replacement of Noralie Damico's position on the Conservation Commission. Diane Betkoski forwarded a letter from Sophie Zyla who is interested in the position and has the unqualified recommendation from the Chair of the Conservation Commission and feels S. Zyla would be a positive addition to the Commission.

Motion to appoint Sophie Zyla to the Conservation Commission to fill the remainder of Noralie Damico's unexpired term: **Betkoski/Sorrentino; no discussion; all eyes.**

### 3. Budget Transfers

C. Bielik thought there was going to be more than one but, after doing some research with the Board of Finance, we are fine with where we are at right now. There is something that needs to be brought to the attention of the Boards that use the services of the Town Engineer and will be addressed now since there are some of the Boards and Commission present at tonight's meeting. We have grossly expended, over expended, our ability to pay the Town Engineer within the budget guidelines for this year. As of tonight, a moratorium is being placed on any further use by any member by any board or commission on the use of the Town Engineer. Only for emergency purposes and every potential use of the Town Engineer must go through the office of the First Selectman from now until further notice.

C. Bielik indicated that a little more research is needed to see how the floodgates opened and how we can bring things back to normal usage. Right now, we are looking at about \$10,000 in overages and that is way more than what was expected. An investigation will be done to see where the charges are coming from and reported at the next Board of Selectmen's meeting in June. There will be an official memo that will be sent in regards to this.

Rich Minnick was introduced to discuss Toby's Pond Fund. R. Minnick noted that Toby's Pond Fund was dedicated, and with the agreement of O & G and the Town of Beacon Falls, the approximate amount of \$42,000 that was transferred to the town for the maintenance of Toby's Pond. This is clearly stated in the agreement. A fund was set up and, because of transition and some people not aware of the agreement, monies were taken out of that fund last year. The amount of \$12,000 was used for soil sampling at the town garage, which was in the process of putting in storage tanks for the fuel. That money needs to be restored back to that dedicated account based on the agreement. C. Bielik indicated that the exact figures are needed to be confirmed. R. Minnick corrected himself, indicating that the amount is \$1,200 and C. Bielik indicated that the line item needs to be found to move it from and back into Toby's Pond Fund. It will be handled no later than the end of fiscal year.

### 4. Update – Wastewater Treatment Plant Upgrades

C. Bielik asked for a motion to table the Update on the Wastewater Treatment Plant until after the appointment of the Town Attorney and the appointment of IT Support.

Motion to table the Update – Wastewater Treatment Plant Upgrades until after the Appointment of Town Attorney and Appointment of IT Support for Town of Beacon Falls: **Betkoski/Sorrentino; no discussion; all ayes.**

## 5. Appointment of Town Attorney

C. Bielik believes that, after a period of review and interview and consultation, it is in the best interest of the town to make a move from the current attorney that we have to his recommendation of the firm of Welch, Teodosio, Stanek & Blake, LLC. This firm has offices in Oxford and in Shelton.

Motion to have the firm of Welch, Teodosio, Stanek & Blake LLC to take over the duties of Town Attorney: **Betkoski/Sorrentino**; Discussion was opened to the representative of the firm, Mr. Stanek. Mr. Stanek expressed his thanks of the appointment of his firm and indicated that the firm is based in Oxford and in Shelton. Two of the partners are in Shelton and two of the partners are in Oxford, where the office is located across the street from the Oxford Town Hall. P. Betkoski indicated that both D. Sorrentino and himself are familiar with his and the firm's abilities and have studied it, and offered his congratulations. Lou Krokosky asked if he could ask a question and C. Bielik said he would make an exception. L. Krokosky asked why we are doing this now, changing the town lawyer to a bigger firm. C. Bielik responded that we have three separate firms that represent the town for various, different legal aspects based on their area of expertise. Currently, Byrne & Byrne handles all the land use as well as other firm for labor. We have been operating with a one person firm as the Town Attorney, and it is not unusually as new administrations come in for changes in representations; **all ayes.**

## 6. Appointment of IT Support for Town of Beacon Falls

C. Bielik received a letter a week ago from Suzanna Sedenski, who runs Quality Computer Services and has been our IT Support for a number of years right now. She is tendering her resignation as our IT Support as of June 6, 2014. She has been accepted for a position at the State Police Academy. She will be training and becoming a State Officer. C. Bielik offered his congratulations to S. Sedenski. For her replacement, S. Sedenski is recommending Old Gate Consulting, LLC. The owner is Bart Henderson and was used by her as a sub-contractor for work here at the town. He was hands on when the new servers were put in Town Hall. C. Bielik interviewed him and feels comfortable that making that move will be seamless.

Motion to appoint Old Gate Consulting LLC as the new IT Support firm for the town: **Sorrentino/Betkoski**; no discussion; **all ayes.**

## **7. Update – Wastewater Treatment Plant Upgrades (Continued)**

C. Bielik noted that all the administrative business has been completed and we will continue with the Update on the Wastewater Treatment Plant Upgrades that was tabled earlier in tonight's meeting. C. Bielik introduced Dave Prickett from Woodard & Curran.

Dave Prickett introduced Jay Sheehan of Woodard & Curran and indicated that they wanted tonight to be a round-table workshop, to get any questions out there, to identify any issues that remain to be resolved. D. Prickett will start with a 10-15 minute overview of some of the high points of the project and then open up to general dialogue. They went through the wastewater facility plan the last 18 months. The plan is a planning document that has been funded by the state via 55% grant. They look at what's out there now relative to wastewater system, talking about the treatment plant and collection system, and also what's going to happen in the future relative to conditions, development, etc., taking a twenty-year look ahead.

There were four drivers, four reasons, why the plan was undertaken. The first is the age of the plant – it was built in 1970 and has received some modest upgrades over the years. It is generally in the same condition as it was built in 1970. The second is the new phosphorus requirement that is required by the State of Connecticut. Now, you have to remove phosphorus as part of the process. They helped the town install an interim system that was required by May 1, 2014. This will get us through the next few years until the upgrade is complete. The third is the inability to remove nitrogen at that plant. Each year, the town had to write to the State of Connecticut for those nitrogen credits. One of the goals is to try to allow the town to receive a credit each year from removing the nitrogen. The fourth is the wet weather challenges at the plant. When there are high flows, like back in 2011 in the spring after all the snow melting and during the extreme thunderstorms, the process becomes challenged. The ability to retain the solids within the system and meet the permit is limited.

The goals for tonight is to give an overview; talk about the funding and financing opportunities for the project; the implementation strategies that could be chosen by the town; and to ultimately lead towards what needs to be done before approaching the voters about the appropriation for the project.

At the end of the project, the town will spend close to \$600,000 of which is half out-of-pocket for the town. We have a collection system that's 25 miles of pipe, 40+ year old treatment plant. They looked at the entire treatment plant, top to bottom, looking at better than half of the collection system. The majority of that look was on the east side of the river where there are clay pipes, the old part of the system. Most of the west of the river is newer plastic pipes. They have had probably 50+ meetings between WPCA, workshops with two First Selectmen, and various meetings at the plant with representatives of the town to make sure everyone has had a chance to participate in this project.

D. Prickett continued that they have presented a draft facility plan for comment by the boards, department staff, and agencies. They still need to get town input with tonight being the first step and relatively want to have a public presentation in the near future to allow the residents to hear what's going on. One of the things that they have done during this project, at no cost to the town, was starting to submit funding applications so when they get to the end of the planning study they can get the costs associated with the upgrade and the opportunities for grants.

The permitted capacity of the plant is .71mgd and our flow is half of that. We have plenty of capacity but the structures at the site are not designed for that .71mgd rating capacity. The infrastructure doesn't match due to the undersized tanks and the ability during the wet weather flows to retain the solids. The systems are very old and the slug handling system is the only 19<sup>th</sup> century in New England that he has seen in his career. We are ultimately looking at a \$16,000,000 Capital Project, the same project talked about last July at the first meeting with the same costs that were projected throughout the project.

Relative to the site, there is a small vacant area where millings were put down from the street operations. This upgrade will closely double the size of the existing plant, so that where there is the open area, there will be new tanks. Joe Fitzpatrick asked what is the new plant capacity going to be. D. Prickett indicated that it would remain the same permitted capacity of .71mgd which would allow the town to accommodate selected development in the future. Roughly half of the town's development is connected to the sewer and probably 2/3 is physically sewered but some of those properties are not connected. This will allow the town to serve all the properties within the plan of conservation and development, which was recently updated by the town.

On the collection system side, they did an I/I study. Prior to this project, the town did not have a collection system map, only pieces. The manholes were GPS located and inspected. They developed a GIS map helping when the town moves forward with technology. Now, there is a comprehensive map to facilitate a more pro-active maintenance of the system. The I/I study showed that Beacon Falls does have some I/I, as does every community, and it is light to moderate. Based on the volume of I/I entering the system and based on the mileage of pipe, it is a very low number, light to moderate. Because the tanks are undersized, the ability to accommodate any additional flow is limited. When you look at I/I, you identify how much, what the sources are (leaky pipes, catch basins, etc.), and then you identify costs – how much would it cost to remove that source. And then, you compare the costs to remove the I/I and the cost to upgrade the plant. Because of the four drivers – nitrogen, phosphorus, old plant, and wet weather – so much of the proposed upgrade at the plant is related to phosphorus, nitrogen, old plant, that the incremental cost associated with either making the plant a little bigger or smaller is far lower than trying to remove the I/I. Based on the composition of flow on an annual basis, the I/I is less than 20% of the system's flow.

J. Sheehan noted that it was more cost effective to do treatment plant upgrade than to chase all the leaks in the pipes in the system. R. Minnick mentioned that he was at the plant when it was raining and saw the chart recorder going right off. Even though it has been awhile since he has done flow calculations, it seems that we have a major infiltration from Beacon Heights. You could the two charts peaking about the same time, the data from the master one down at the plant and the data from the station at Skokorat Road. D. Prickett agreed that the total flow coming into the plant over the past three years is noted being greater during high ground water period. A peaking factor that they have seen is not high. The goal was to see where the I/I coming from and it was seen particularly from two specific areas on the east side of the river. When you look at the actual sources, they are fairly well spread out within the pipe. They could line the pipe or could grout them. When you look at the length of pipe that has to be lined or grouted, you very quickly escalate costs to a point where in order to try to remove enough I/I to not spend the money at the plant and you tip the cart. It feels a lot worse because of the infrastructure that exists today to handle those flows. J. Sheehan indicated that plants are built with a little more capacity for wet weather events but this plant wasn't. J. Fitzpatrick asked what the plant was designed for daily capacity and D. Prickett indicated .36. He also noted that the town fathers had the wisdom in 1970 to get a permit for .71mgd but a decision was made to spend a lesser amount of money the foreseeable flows at that time. It wasn't a bad decision because if we would at a permitted capacity of .36 today and needed to go to .71, the cost would be lot higher than \$16,000,000 and might not be something they could get permitted at the state.

J. Fitzpatrick asked if part of the problem is the material that is used, the crushed stone. His understanding is that using the crushed stone acts as a curtain drain, allowing the water to go down, and over time, it works its way into the system. J. Smith indicated that most of the pipes, which are SDR35, is recommended to be used with stone to keep its form and does act as a curtain drain. D. Prickett noted that the town standards require that between every set of manholes, a trench dam is and every 300', instead of putting stone around the pipe, you put 5' worth of clay around the pipe. J. Fitzpatrick then asked if there is a way to seal up the manholes where the pipe may deflect when it is backfilled, etc. J. Smith indicated that there is a grout, and once it hits the water then it reacts. J. Sheehan noted that the installation of the pipe is critical and for concrete pipe you want a rigid bed, hard packed. For plastic pipe, it is different.

J. Fitzpatrick asked how many people are connected to the plant, how many homes. D. Prickett responded that he cannot answer definitely but it is about 1,300 single family homes, plus or minus 10%. There are about 2,700 homes roughly he believes so about half are connected. R. Minnick asked about the GPS mapping done and wanted to know where it is kept. If it's with their firm, can it be shipped to the COG.? D. Prickett indicated that it is on their server and will send it through C. Bielik and channel it to the necessary people.

R. Minnick then asked if they upgraded the proposed sewer map that was included in the Planning, Conservation, and Development; has that been changed. D. Prickett indicated that he brought two maps to tonight's meeting and will be giving one to him to look at and provide any comments that he may have. D. Prickett indicated that they scanned all the record plans at the treatment plant and a CD was provided.

D. Prickett indicated that the draft facilities plan is loaded to their site and if you would like an electronic link, please email either him or Jay. The project is \$16,000,000 and the critical questions are how can it be implemented and how might it be approved by the voters. They have been talking with the state, the clean water fund from DEP. The town has a commitment from the state, with being top of the list ranked maybe 16 out of 250 projects, to provide money if we choose to use it for the next two-year period. They will provide a 30% grant for all upgrade related to nitrogen and phosphorus, and a 20% grant for anything else related to the plant. It would have to be implemented in a single phase within the two years. They also spoke with Rural Development and they cannot fund a \$16,000,000 in one piece. Typically, they will fund up to \$4,000,000 per year per community. They said that on a preliminary basis that they could fund \$2,000,000 now at a 45% grant. That's the maximum grant that they could offer.

J. Sheehan explained the graph showing \$0 to \$1,600,000 annual debt charges and construction would happen in 2017, going to 2055 (a period of 30 years). Then there are three different scenarios – single phase, three phase, and no action. The single phase is represented with current funding scenario and with conventional bank loan. They are recommending the single phase with current funding scenario. One of few advantages that the town has with financing waste water through taxation right now is the ability to leverage debt over 40 years with Rural Development, like a mortgage on a home. It lowers the annual cost ending up paying more total dollars between interest and principal. With the state, you pay back within 20 years and the loan percentage with the state is 20 years and 2%. With RD, you can fund up to 40 years and the current rate right now is approximately 3 ½% and 4%. One of the things that gets considered is “can we phase it” and the answer is yes, harder to phase a treatment plant upgrade because it's not like a pipe where you can build it up to one intersection and continue it through the next intersection the following year. When you look at the annual impact of how the debt hits you, you save in the first 2-3 years if it's the three phases by staggering the debt and you save on the last 3 years by staggering the debt, but the majority of those years in the middle it doesn't change the total annual debt.

Relative to Rural Development, the program has been around forever and will likely be for a long time unless things change dramatically relative to home income. The town should maintain eligibility in the future for the next 10 years til the next census. With the state, there wasn't 30% grant available for phosphorus two years ago. But now, there is a big push.

There is no guarantee in two years from now with the next priority list coming out that grants will be available for phosphorus. J. Sheehan added that between fiscal year 2015-2016 for this program for the state, there is a high amount of funds, doubled what it's ever been. This is not federal funds, which is less than 12%. It can change.

D. Prickett continued with the clarification of the three alternatives. There are also sub-alternatives, implementation alternatives. The town could choose to do it all in a single phase. The town could choose to do nothing, with the residents voting no. The town could choose to phase it, with the benefit of trying to phase it would be maximizing RD's participation. If you could get RD on the hook at a 45% grant for even half of the project instead of \$2,000,000 and leverage the debt over 40 years instead of 20 years, you can now take it from 1 to 2 times the budget to back down to 1 ½. Before going to the residents, there is a lot of work to be done and get a plan that works for the boards and comfortable with telling the residents and it's in the best interest of the town.

W. Opuszynski asked about stalling the time in doing the work and spreading it over years, would the prices go up. D. Prickett responded that the contractors are starting to come out of things; they're busier than they were three years ago. It would have been better to have bet it three years. Typical escalation is 5% to 10% per year driven by steel and fuel costs. By going in phases, the engineering costs and construction costs are increased. The maximum window in his opinion is a phasing over three to five years.

The town needs to try to have an appropriation in place by the fall for whatever the first steps are going to be. This is what they heard from the funding agency. When the state's priority listing becomes final in the next week or two, the first fiscal year would have past. We would be in the second piece but after talking with DEEP, we would have to do something by the fall. RD echoed the same thing that we have to get them something within the next three to six months so we can commit the money to you. We have hit the first milestone with the interim system on-line May 1<sup>st</sup>. It has made a big impact on water quality and phosphorus removal. The down side is that slug production is doubled, going from 3 to 5 loads per week to 6 to 10 now. That is negative impact by making the water cleaner because you're taking more solids out. J. Smith indicated that the slug tanks need repairs. D. Prickett noted that if the town appropriates the money in the fall, design in 2015 and construction in 2016-2017. When we started the process 1 ½ ago, we projected that project would be done by the spring 2016. As long as we are making a good-faith effort to keep things moving, the DEP will work with us.

R. Minnick asked how do they plan on making the transition from what we have today, to keep things flowing, and have they looked at alternatives not on a cost basis but on a construction sequence. D. Prickett indicated that they have but may not have explored every detail. One of the main things that they identified, with the staff being very busy dealing with the collection systems, the pump stations, and at the plant, they have moved forward with the proposed pump station upgrades.



This will allow the operators to deflect some of the time they spend out at the pump stations monitoring remotely, focusing efforts at the plant. Those efforts during construction will allow the operators to move the water around more efficiently for the contractors. Instead of the contractor needing a week of downtime to take water out of tank A so they can work on tank B, the time could be cut from a week to three days.

C. Bielik asked if there were any other questions and there were none. C. Bielik thanked everyone for coming and their interest in this project and then thanked Woodard & Curran. He noted that the challenge is to find the best way forward for the town and what we ultimately decide to do meets the needs but also passing with the voters. The next step is to get the broad public as a whole, and the challenge is the summertime. We will have to coordinate schedules, look at what makes sense, and pick a date which will hopefully be in the latter part of June. This would be for a general presentation and not a vote.

#### 8. **Adjournment**

C. Bielik asked if there was anything else and there was not. C. Bielik then asked for a motion to adjourn tonight's meeting.

Motion to adjourn tonight's Board of Selectmen Special Meeting at 8:05 P.M.:  
**Sorrentino/Betkoski; no discussion; all ayes.**

Respectfully submitted,

Marla Scirpo  
Clerk, Board of Selectmen