

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



**BEACON FALLS BOARD OF SELECTMEN
Monthly Meeting
November 10, 2014
REVISED MINUTES
(Subject to Revision)**

1. Call to Order/Pledge to the Flag

First Selectman Chris Bielik called the meeting to order at 7:30 P.M.

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

Others present: Sue Dowdell, Director of the Library; Joe Rodorigo, Board of Finance; Mike Krenesky, Town Treasurer; Chief Jim Trzaski and Asst. Chief Brian DeGeorge from the Fire Department; Rich Minnick from Land Use Committee, and Luke Marshall, Citizens News.

2. Comments from the Public

Sue Dowdell, 32 Wolfe Avenue, asked if there was an update regarding the addition of a crosswalk from Wolfe Avenue going across Burton Road. C. Bielik indicated that he has not looked into this as of yet since the crosswalk is currently being place downtown.

Rich Minnick, 147 Cedar Lane, asked about getting a notice to the people regarding putting leaves in the gutters, especially towards Cedar Lane area. C. Bielik echoed his concern about Oak Drive due to the amount of oak trees. The next item that R. Minnick would like to have noted is that information found regarding Oak Drive. C. Bielik indicated that the Board cannot discuss nor make any comments regarding Oak Drive due to the pending litigation. R. Minnick indicated that he found older information downstairs, going back some years. There was a special meeting with regards to three driveways coming directly off Route 42. For the three houses, it was shown as a private road and was approved by Inland Wetlands and by Planning & Zoning in 1999. At that time, there were negotiations regarding another lot and access to Oak Drive.

An application by Dave and June Chadderton, as well as Jimmy Wisneski, was made to Planning & Zoning and to Inland Wetlands, submitting a map that was approved. The map was also reviewed by the Zoning Board of Appeals. He feels that going through 4 attorneys regarding this matter is what's taking so long since it keeps changing hands. The map that is filed downstairs in town hall, as well as in the minutes, shows that the applicant is one of the people whose suing the town now was the realtor and developer at that time. The map states private road, and access to sewer and water. When Mr. Chadderton applied, he knew that Oak Drive was a private road. The case should be dismissed based on this information. The town should not be going for any type of settlement. If we go for a settlement, it will be showing some sort of precedents for other private roads having problems. There have been estimates starting at \$500,000 and upwards, major bonding issues.

C. Bielik wanted to make note for the record that all the documents that R. Minnick provided tonight and discussed have been provided to the town attorney, Atty. Fred Stanek, for their review.

C. Bielik asked three times if there were any comments from the public and there were none.

3. Read and Approve Minutes from Previous Meetings

The three members reviewed the minutes from the regular monthly meeting on October 6, 2014 and special meeting on October 22, 2014. The minutes from the special meeting on October 30, 2014 have not been submitted as of today.

Motion to accept the minutes from the regular monthly meeting on October 6, 2014 and special meeting on October 22, 2014: Sorrentino/Betkoski; no discussion; all ayes.

4. Resident Trooper/Police Report

C. Bielik mentioned that Trooper Burelli has requested to transfer back to Troop I to get on regular patrol duty and that request is working its way through the channel. A replacement should be assigned within the near future.

There was no report submitted by the Resident Trooper for tonight's meeting.

5. Wastewater Treatment Plant Report

There was no report from Walter Opuszynski regarding the Wastewater Treatment Plant submitted for tonight's meeting due to a health incident.

6. Report of Public Works

C. Bielik noted that the town has received a full load of 500 tons winter road salt. Also noted is that the new truck has been received and Johnson Street repair work on the entrance will hopefully begin either Friday or early next week, weather permitting. The crosswalk is nearly done, cold weather holding off the painting.

Motion to accept the report submitted by the Public Works for tonight's meeting:
Betkoski/Sorrentino; no discussion; all ayes.

7. Report of the Fire Marshal

Motion to accept the report submitted by the Fire Marshall for tonight's meeting:
Sorrentino/Betkoski; no discussion; all ayes.

8. Report of the Finance Manager

There was no report submitted by the Finance Manager for tonight's meeting. The data has not compiled as of yet but will be for the Board of Finance's meeting to be held on Tuesday, November 18, 2014.

9. Report of the Tax Collector

C. Bielik noted that the town is 5 months into the fiscal year and we are already north of \$300,000 including two tax sales for delinquent properties that was conducted in August 2014. The projected back tax amount was \$400,000. There will be two more sales in December 2014.

Motion to accept the report submitted by the Tax Collector for tonight's meeting and submit it to the Board of Finance for their next meeting: **Betkoski/Sorrentino; no discussion; all ayes.**

10. Report of the Town Treasurer

Mike Krenesky is present at tonight's meeting if the Selectmen have any questions regarding the Town Treasurer Report.

M. Krenesky indicated that a change is that he is identifying all interest-bearing accounts now. He has taken \$10,000 from the Melbourne Trust and invested that amount in a 3-year CD at Ion Bank.

Motion to accept the report submitted by the Town Treasurer for tonight's meeting and submit it to the Board of Finance for their next meeting: Sorrentino/Betkoski; no discussion; all ayes.

11. Report of the Town Clerk

Motions to accept the report submitted by the Town Clerk for tonight's meeting and submit it to the Board of Finance for their next meeting: Betkoski/Sorrentino; no discussion; all ayes.

12. Report of the Library

Sue Dowdell is present at tonight's meeting if the Selectmen have any questions regarding the Library Report.

S. Dowdell noted that she has received over 20 applications for the open position at the Library. C. Bielik also noted that a woman stopped by today to get an application. She acknowledged all the people applying and responded to the ones where the applications were not complete.

Motion to accept the report submitted by the Library for tonight's meeting: Sorrentino/Betkoski; no discussion; all ayes.

13. Report of the Fire Department

Chief Trzaski and Asst. Chief DeGeorge were present at tonight's meeting if the Selectmen have any questions regarding the Fire Department Report.

C. Bielik wanted to applaud Beacon Hose Co. 1 on the Open House ceremony that was done during Fire Prevention Week.

Motion to accept the report submitted by the Fire Department for tonight's meeting: Sorrentino/Betkoski; no discussion; all ayes.

14. Any Other Reports

a. Report of the Custodian

There was no report submitted by the Custodian for tonight's meeting.

b. Report of the Town Nurse

There was no report submitted by the Town Nurse for tonight's meeting since it was not due – it is a quarterly report and not due until December 31, 2014.

15. Reading of Correspondence

1. Two invoices from the Board of Selectmen Clerk were received: one from 10/06/2014's regular meeting in the amount of \$68.75 and one from 10/22/2014's special meeting in the amount of \$72.50.

Motion to pay the Clerk's invoices for October 6, 2014 and for October 22, 2014 as submitted in the total amount of \$141.25: **Betkoski/Sorrentino; no discussion; all ayes.**

2. A letter from Helen Mis was received thanking Rob Pruzinsky and the road crew on the transportation of the election equipment to Woodland High School, as well as Andy Leeper, for setting up and dismantling the election set. Also, she wanted to thank the many election workers for their help at the polls. C. Bielik echoed her thanks to everyone. P. Betkoski wanted to thank C. Bielik for directing traffic at the polls.

3. A letter from Atty. Steve Byrne was received regarding the letters from Steve Posick and his inquires on issues with Planning & Zoning. Copies were distributed to the Board of Selectmen members. Atty. Byrne researched and included a handwritten letter from S. Posick to Joe Fitzpatrick, Chairman of Planning & Zoning Commission. C. Bielik read the letter from Atty. Byrne to the Board. A copy of the letter was forwarded to S. Posick and was returned to town hall as undeliverable. C. Bielik asked if anyone knows how to contact S. Posick to please provide that information.

4. A spreadsheet from the Tax Collector was received regarding tax refunds due to overpayments. C. Bielik read the names, addresses, reasons for refund, and the amount to be refunded to the Board of Selectmen. The total of the combined refunds is \$2,894.05. A motion was requested to have these overpayments be refunded to the appropriate people.

Motion to refund the amounts to the people as reported by the Tax Collector in the spreadsheet submitted: **Betkoski/Sorrentino; no discussion; all ayes.**

5. A letter forwarded by Joe Fitzpatrick, Chairman of Planning & Zoning, regarding the resignation of James Trzaski as a member of the Beacon Falls Planning & Zoning Commission. The resignation is due to his new position of Fire Chief and C. Bielik read the letter of resignation to the Selectmen. C. Bielik indicated that he would entertain a motion to accept the letter of resignation.

Motion to accept the letter of resignation of James Trzaski from the Planning & Zoning Commission with regret and understanding: **Betkoski/Sorrentino; no discussion; all ayes.**

6. An email letter from Kevin McDuffie was received indicating his interest in the vacant seat on the Planning & Zoning Commission. This will be address under Appointments on the agenda.

7. A letter from June Chadderton was received regarding a change to the processes that the assessors use in their computer licensing and tech support. There was an increase in the amount of tech support that they need that was overlooked at the time of the budget. Because of the increase in service, the request for a transfer is in the amount of \$716.00. This will be addressed under Budget Transfer on the agenda.

16. Old Business

a. Audible Cross Walk – Main Street

C. Bielik indicated that they are approaching the end of the reconciliation of the 2013-2014 budget. The target for completion is for the Board of Finance meeting on Tuesday, November 18, 2014. Once we know what the bottom line is, then we can reconcile the line items over/under for the year. C. Bielik indicated that his plan is to have a town meeting to approve all the ones that need to be approved and to have the audible crosswalk discussion and vote included.

It is an unbudgeted request and they need to complete the 2013-2014 Budget Transfers. It will remain on the agenda until that time to see what funds are available.

b. Wastewater Treatment Plant Upgrade – Discussion

There have been a number of working groups over the past several months. There are a couple of different schools of thoughts as to how to proceed with the upgrades. Each of the groups will be having a discussion at their next meeting. C. Bielik indicated that there are a number of issues with this. For one, there is the undefinable at this point. There is no degree of certainty of how critical of this project to move forward immediately, and what is the risk to the town if we don't push forward in this fiscal year. C. Bielik believes that one of the significant issues that we are short on is the fact that people are not paying sewer user fees. It would help to offset the operating costs and putting the costs where they belong. A key component to move forward is the implementation of how we are going to do that. Until we have that piece of it, he is hesitating to say that we should vote on going ahead in doing something.

P. Betkoski asked if there is a time limited from the state or the firm doing to the study. C. Bielik indicated that there are two potential sources of funding to help us with this plant upgrade. One is the USRDA, that piece is always available, being an unknown hard number to be given. It could be anywhere from 30%, to 35%, to 40% but should never go lower than 30%. The only limiter on that is that USRDA doesn't like to give more than \$4,000,000 per fiscal year to one municipality. According to Woodard & Curran, we are currently on the short list for direct aid from the state at a 25% of the project level. This is going for the rest of this fiscal year, but is not known for next fiscal year.

P. Betkoski noted his concern that only a handful of the public know about this project. We have been discussing it with the Board of Finance, not with everyone on board with the project, and haven't let the public know. C. Bielik agreed that an informational town meeting needs to be held. There is time between now and June 30, 2015 to have this. Right now, C. Bielik believes that it is premature to do it now. D. Sorrentino and P. Betkoski both echoed that we don't have all the information to give to the public. C. Bielik noted that we need to understand everything better that we do now before bringing it to the town meeting. P. Betkoski asked about the state coming in to explain the mandate in doing this plant upgrade, with potential fees that could be put forth.

C. Bielik indicated that we have been dealing with phosphorus for a long time. We are treating it chemically, which is keeping us in compliance but is costing us in the operating costs. Nitrogen is a bigger issue, being at a level of not mandated as of yet with the ability of buying credits.

C. Bielik asked if there was anything else to add the this topic at this time and there was nothing added to the discussion at this time.

17. New Business

a. Vote on Resolution: Resolved that Christopher J. Bielik, First Selectman of the Town of Beacon Falls is hereby authorized to sign the Agreement entitled "Master Municipal Agreement for Rights of Way Projects"

C. Bielik read the resolution to the Board of Selectmen that will be voted on at tonight's meeting. He indicated that he will entertain a motion to accept this resolution.

Motion to accept the resolution as read by C. Bielik: Sorrentino/Betkoski; no discussion; all ayes.

b. Town Hall Server

C. Bielik indicated that there have been a number of recent crashes to the town hall server. The server itself is approximately 10 years old and was built by Seth Reger back in the day. We have been averaging about 10 days in between crashes. There are six hard drives that work in series on this server and work in parallel pairs. One of the backups/pairs has failed, leaving us with five. This one backup gets noted as down and the system is unable to start itself. C. Bielik inquired Seth Reger and Old Gate if it was possible to replace that one hard drive with a new one and was told that Old Gate would not do it. The explanation was that the hard drives were all done at the same time, and if this one went then they all will be going soon after.

The proposal that was received to rebuild the server is \$4,500.00. D. Sorrentino asked if that was for a new or rebuilt one and C. Bielik indicated that it is for a new one. The proposal includes the labor and installation, and seven new servers. His recommendation is to accept this proposal.

Motion to approve the proposal for \$4,500.00: **Betkoski/Sorrentino; no discussion; all ayes.**

c. Employee Pension Issues (MERS)

There was a package including spreadsheets handed out regarding this issue. C. Bielik gave the history background on this. Back before the town had union contracts, the town had a retirement pension plan through Mass Mutual. When the town converted to unionized workers, there was a switch to Municipal Employees Retirement Fund – MERF. This is a state-run program. On Page 16, under Section 14.2, workers must work one year or 1,000 hours, whichever comes first, to be eligible to participate. It turns out that this section is not legal per MERF. As soon as an employee is hired, that person is automatically enrolled in MERF with no mention of the one year gap. If a municipality applies for an exemption, they may be allowed to institute a three-month probation period. Beacon Falls has never applied for this exemption. It was found in January or February 2013, and brought to MERF, as well as notifying the First Selectman at that time. There was no action by the town to do a corrective action.

This was revisited since there is an employee getting ready to consider retirement. Now, the pension information is incorrect and needs to have participation shares by the employee, town shares, interest payments that will need to be recalculated and fixed. This will have to be done for all employees that have been hired since the transition. The labor attorney has been contacted to work on the right formula to bring us back where we need to be with those employees. It is going to cost money to get this right but don't know that cost at this moment.

d. FOI (Freedom of Information) Training – at Town Hall, November 18, 2014

C. Bielik indicated that in response to a Freedom of Information Act complaint that was received a couple of months ago and withdrawn since there was no merit, a mandatory employee training will be held at Beacon Falls Town Hall Assembly Room at 10:00 A.M. All boards have been sent an invitation to attend this training.

e. EDC Consultant Discussion (Economic Development Discussion)

During the budget discussion, the EDC planted some money, initially \$10,000, in the line item for a part time consultant. The EDC spent a couple of months writing the description as to what they want, and this was advertised for 10 days in the newspaper. Two applications were received and now a decision needs to be made if we should interview those two applicants or to advertise again for the position. C. Bielik indicated that he will like to have the thoughts of the other members of the Board. D. Sorrentino noted that he may be tempted to withdraw the position until next budget process due to the money. C. Bielik added that we went through the same thing with the Finance Manager position where we receive six applicants for that position. When the position was advertised a second time, we received double the applications. P. Betkoski asked why can't we interview the applicants that we have now and see who we have. C. Bielik indicated that was the recommendation from the Chairman of the EDC.

After agreement among the Board, it was decided that the interviews will be held on Thursday, November 20, 2014 at 6:00 P.M.

18. Appointments

a. Planning & Zoning Commission

An application from Kevin McDuffie was received for the open position on the Planning & Zoning Commission. D. Sorrentino asked how many member of the Commission have been to the workshops and C. Bielik indicated that he doesn't know. There are nine members and at least three of them have been appointed within the past two years.

Motion to accept the application from Kevin McDuffie for the open position on the Planning & Zoning Commission: **Betkoski/Sorrentino; no discussion; all ayes.**

b. Conservation – (Tentative)

This is still in discussion and will not be voted on at tonight's meeting.

19. Budget Transfer Requests

The budget transfer request is from the Assessor's Office for \$716.00 to be transferred from Line Item 10-90-83-1170, Contingency, to Line Item 10-90-15-1060, Assessor.

Motion to accept the budget transfer request of \$716.00 from the Assessor and pass it along to the Board of Finance: Sorrentino/Betkoski; no discussion; all ayes.

20. Comments from the Public

Sue Dowdell, 32 Wolfe Avenue, mentioned the Friends of the Library Book Sale and Vendor Sale/Cupcake Contest at St. Michael's Church on Saturday. She asked about the status of the Nutmeg Network because the CT Education network router is going down fast. C. Bielik spoke with the vendor that was here in September and we are reengaging with this but don't have a target date on when we are starting. Her next question was regarding the town hall server and having money in the budget for town hall computers. C. Bielik indicated that that money was allocated towards laptop and desktop upgrades. If the Board decides that this is a higher priority than the money could be used from that line to support this.

Chief Jim Trzaski wanted to update the Board on the FEMA grant update. This is to replace one of the pumpers. They contacted a grant writer to help in writing the application for the FEMA grant. A proposal of \$2,190 was received and it was all-inclusive. In pursuing the grant writers, a 60% success rate in getting the grant writers is noted in research. Chief Trzaski noted that time is of the essence, with a deadline of December 15, 2014 approximately. An authorization in signing the proposal from the Board of Selectmen is needed in order to go ahead with the grant writer. C. Bielik mentioned that about one year or so, a proposal of approximately \$3,000 was given. C. Bielik indicated that he is in favor of the proposal for the grant writer, as well as D. Sorrentino and P. Betkoski.

Chief Trzaski also indicated that there are microgrants offered by FEMA in the amount of \$25,000 and less. They have been done in the past but not been done in a while. They are more approachable with that one in three departments who haven't received a grant in the past three years will receive a microgrant. He would also like to apply for equipment and hoses, etc. C. Bielik noted that there is \$16,000 approximately budgeted each year for hose replacement and Chief Trzaski indicated that this would be over and above that.

Motion to authorize the acceptance of the proposal in the amount of \$2,190 for the grant writer: Sorrentino/Betkoski; no discussion; all ayes.

Chief Trzaski also gave an update on the roof on the fire house. It is believed to be the glue used as to the reason of the overage. It was changed from screwing down to using the glue as well. He could not find the signed work orders for the change. C. Bielik will ask Jim Galligan regarding this. The roof is complete with having the final bill being at what was budgeted.

Joe Rodorigo, 42 Bonna Street, voiced his concern about receiving one quote on the server. The departments have been held to getting the three quotes for anything that needs to be done. C. Bielik noted that he was thinking that by going back to the original vendor would streamline the cost and it is below \$10,000. The next thing that J. Rodorigo responded to was about having professional services not posted in the newspaper but use alternative method that doesn't cost as much as the newspaper. J. Rodorigo also noted that the \$10,000 was never a realistic number to fill a position with. The intention was never to go down the road this way.

Mike Krenesky, 22 Maple Avenue, noted that the cost of \$4,500 for the server seems low and to be careful as to what is being bought. The next issue that he would like to mention is the vehicle parked on South Main Street and has been there for several weeks. This car is blocking the sidewalk and not sure if it's parked legally. C. Bielik indicated that he will speak with the patrol officer for the area to find out about this.

Brian DeGeorge, 105 North Main Street, questioned the quick process for getting the crosswalk on North Main Street. He asked if there was a traffic committee and C. Bielik responded that the traffic committee is the Board of Selectmen and the traffic manager is the First Selectman. C. Bielik indicated that everything went through the proper process and was not quick, being under discussion for quite a while. B. DeGeorge noted the crosswalk that was removed in front of the post office due to parking reasons. C. Bielik indicated that it was measured out and done in a systematic manner. B. DeGeorge asked if it could go through EDC and C. Bielik replied that they could consider it in the future. S. Dowdell echoed the question of being discussed at a Board of Selectmen meeting. C. Bielik could not remember when it was on the agenda.

M. Krenesky asked about the crosswalk going across Burton Road at Wolfe Avenue. He thought that it needs to be painted and C. Bielik indicated that it's not that simple.

21. Executive Session – If Needed

The Board of Selectmen entered into the Executive Session at 9:15 P.M. and exited the Executive Session at 9:38 P.M. It was noted that no decisions were made during the session.

22. Adjournment

With no further business to discuss, C. Bielik asked for a motion to adjourn tonight's meeting.

Motion to adjourn tonight's Board of Selectmen meeting at 9:38 P.M.:
Sorrentino/Betkoski *no discussion*; all eyes.

Respectfully submitted,

Marla Scirpo
Clerk, Board of Selectmen