

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



**BEACON FALLS BOARD OF SELECTMEN**  
**Public Hearing**  
**January 3, 2018**  
**MINUTES**  
**(Subject to Revision)**

**1. Call to Order/Pledge to the Flag**

First Selectman Chris Bielik called the Public Hearing to order at 7:02 P.M.

Members Present: First Selectman Chris Bielik, Selectman Peter Betkoski and Selectman Mike Krenesky

Others present: Citizens News and 210 members of the public.

**2. Public Hearing:**

C. Bielik asked the clerk to read the call as posted for tonight's Public Hearing. The clerk read the call as follows:

**PUBLIC HEARING**  
**TOWN OF BEACON FALLS**  
**WEDNESDAY JANUARY 3, 2018**

The Beacon Falls Board of Selectmen will hold a **PUBLIC HEARING** of the electors and citizens of the Town of Beacon Falls, on **Wednesday, January 3, 2018** beginning at **7:00 P.M.** in the **Woodland Regional High School Auditorium, 135 Back Rimmon Rd, Beacon Falls, CT 06403** for the following:

1. Call to Order / Pledge of Alliance
2. Town Clerk Elected Official Status - Discussion on changing this position from elected to hired status

*C. Bielik, This goes back to the 2011 administration. Some research has been done to determine if it was the best interest of the town for the Town Clerk and the Tax Collector to remain as elected officials or to make them direct hire. At the time it was decided not to do*

*it. And now it has come up again and some research has been done about this. The BOF looked at similar towns and to see how much each position gets paid. What we did find out any action the town will take is we will need action from the State Legislation to do that first. Because the election positions of Beacon Falls were established by a special act by the State Legislation in 1949. We need something from the Legislation to unbind us and then we can move forward. In a nonbinding way to hold a public meeting in order to give our Legislature a sense of show if the town wants to do it or not.*

*P.Betkoski: I would like to agree with everything Chris said, for the Town Clerk and Tax Collector to have stability positions would be better and I am in favor of this for Beacon Falls.*

*M.Krenesky: A point the First Selectmen didn't mention when we start talking about hired, is it part time or full time position? Part of the discussion from you folks, how would you support Full time or Part time, are we meaning other benefits? We as a board have not discussed that yet? We want input from you with that. I am supporting the idea of having hired positions.*

*Len Green , Tax collector: Thank you for coming out, and Thank you Chris how the positions works. Beacon Falls is one of 5 or 6 towns that have it as an elected positions. Other towns are hired. I just question the process we are doing and I know you got legal advice on this, but in 2011 they tried to something similar to this, it was done through ordinance changing not an act of the legislature. My discussion with the Secretary of State is all we need to do is go through this ordinance, not through the Legislature. Special Act talked about board of tax review and other positions we don't have. I see former Rep. Jack Betkoski is here and he knows how difficult it is to get something clean through Legislature, I'm hoping we have an easier route to go that way, other than that I'm happy to answer any questions.*

*Bielik: To answer Len's question, this is something we have passed through our municipal Attorney in his opinion, because of the wording the in special act, that an ordinance change would not be sufficient enough. We don't have the authority to do it.*

*M. Krenesky: The Town Clerk said back in 2010 went through this issue, which once a change has been made to the ordinance it basically nullifies the Special Act. That was the same message we received then. I think we need to talk with the town attorney again.*

*MaryAnn Tax Collector: When I was elected as Tax Collector I was told just go in a few hours a day and everything will be fine. You'll have an assistant. That's not the case. In order to do the job, you have to work with special software, work with the DMV, you need to know how the taxes work, and work on back taxes. And I feel the Tax collectors job is a lot of customer service, you have to make the tax payer happy. I really feel that this is the best thing for the town of Beacon Falls to have a hired Tax collector you would have more control with a hired position.*

**COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC:**

*BILL; 51 Pondview Circle; If we decided tonight to pass this as hired position, is it true that the State could not pass it? So we have a 50/50 shot? Do you have a ballpark amount of what the salaries would be? Would there be benefits? Does Beacon Falls cover the salaries or does the state help out?*

*Bielik: That is correct. I would give it greater than 50%. We do have a ball park figure. Town Clerk the average salary for full time about \$58,000.00, Tax Collector, \$54,000.00 a year for full time (35/40) hours per week. No the Town of Beacon Falls pays the salaries. We don't except wither of these positions to be full time, we figure more on the 25 hours per week. And take a 1/3 of it and have a range of numbers, and work with the BOF with this. Not benefits, no medical, and no retirement, maybe some vacation time and personal time.*

*Rodorigo 42 Bonna St, In Lens Position, The Town Clerks, his salaries is offset by the fees the town will receive as revenue. The fee he would normally get. The impact for each position would be about \$12,000 -\$13,000 a year. And I feel this is a smart thing to do for the town.*

*Ed; 13 Laurel Ridge, Will these position be a union position? What the difference between hiring and appointment when you have a 3 member BOS.*

*Bielik: They will not be a union position.*

*Jim, 47 Therese Rd.; Folks you are all here because you want to pay less taxes? You want professionalism hire a professional; you want political tactics make it political. Please vote for this, Thank you.*

*Gary: 15 2<sup>nd</sup> St. I've been to numerous BOS & BOF meeting, I've heard MaryAnn how she done an excellent job in back taxes, which has been sourly missed with last administration. Len has done an excellent job as Town Clerk, however I stand behind the making these job hired positions instead of elected positions.*

*Bill, 73 October Ln; Will we know if it's full time or part time, benefits, qualifications?*

*Bielik: Yes to make a change the Town of Beacon Falls will be adding it to the budget and then you will be able to vote on it.*

*Bill; 274 Bethany Rd; is there any unintended consequence of taking this to the state, is there anything that will come back to us?*

*Bielik: This is being working on with the municipal attorney, and in order for us to go forward the attorney recommends we follow this path. We can set any kind of parameters we want moving forward if this gets passed. And because both positions were just elected there would be a phasing in process for this.*

*Carl; 8 Timber Way; In regard to tax collections and real estate taxes, to what extended do they hire outside tax collection agency? And how long have we been using these two methods?*

*Bielik: We hire different Marshalls, MaryAnn can you answer this.*

*MaryAnn; Tax Collector, We hire 2 Marshalls and a collection agency, and for both of these no cost to the town, the fees are paid by the person who owes the back taxes. The Marshall we have used them forever and the collection agency for the last year.*

*Bob; 2 Chatfield Dr.; How do we know if that person is qualified?*

*Bielik: The process we use for hiring any candidates in a municipal position is advertised, we take the resume that come in, the BOS reviews all of the applicants and based on the qualification that come in we try to narrow it down to 3 or 4 candidates. We have a HR firm participates in the interview process and then when we take a vote on who we wish to make the offer to. We have always had a unanimous vote; we always pick the best qualified person for the town.*

*Jim; 47 Terese Rd; People who are elected sometime leave there positions, if that person was to resign today, how would she get back in, appointed by you? So it is open to cronyism.*

*Bielik: Yes, it is open to cronyism.*

## **2. Tax Collector Elected Official Status - Discussion on changing this position from elected to hired status**

Comments from the Public:

## **3. Board of Finance - Discussion on Revising Procedure for filling Mid-term Vacancies**

*Bielik: This is another portion of the special act of 1949, sets us apart from other towns. The BOF are elected by the people of the town, there is a requirement from that act of 1949, on the 6 people on the BOF no more than three can be from any one political party. So there is no stacking of the deck. One is nominated from the Republican, One from the Democrat, each political party nominates one person, and every two years two of those positions come open. Under those statues once the person is elected to the BOF, if they are requested to resign for any reason the statue allows the BOF to pick the success to fill the sixth position. With this Act of 1949 this has been delegated to the BOS to fill that vacancy on the BOF. And right now that if someone resigns from the BOF, the BOS will go to that party of that vacancy and ask for a candidate for that party. With talking with the town attorney we can make a modification to the existing ordinance.*

*Kernesky: I think we should just bite the bullet and go back to state stature that say the BOF is filled by the BOF.*

*Betkowski: I would like to hear from the public and their opinion.*

*Jim; 47 Terese Ln. If you want to keep political out of this position please don't vote for this. Take a look at any of the minutes for the BOF they all agree. It's no different than congress, it's meant to control the purse strings, if you give the control to the BOS to put on who they want on the BOF, that's how you get politics in it.*

*Joe; 42 Bonna St. If you want to keep politics off the BOF, get the politics out of it. We fill it with one mission with people who are qualified to be there and have the best interest of Beacon Falls, based on qualifications not political.*

*Kathy; 45 Cedar Ln; How the BOF is chosen now, the Democrat put up 3 people and the Republican put up 3 people, if someone was appointed by the Demarcated committee should have a say with the person who is replacing that board to begin with and with the change your recommend wouldn't insure that, and I understand most of your parts are unanimous and if you go to the BOS most of their votes are unanimous. So one is political as the other.*

*Ed; 13 Cedar Ridge; How the BOF picks its replacement is it a unanimous vote? If we do this it should be a unanimous vote.*

*Bielik: No it's a majority vote.*

*Ned; 45 Cedar Ln; Comments have been made who's a politician and somehow they are not a good person, we are all politicians and it's good to see such a great turn out.*

*Jim; 47 Terese Rd. Would like to make a clarification I was nominated twice, and the reasonable process that was explained to me didn't happen in either case, there is no formal process by the BOS, both times it didn't happen that way.*

*Bill; 274 Bethany Rd; I guess I'm hearing both sides of the coin, would like to see a compromise with the BOF and the BOS.*

**Motion to adjourn the Town Public Meeting; Joe R. /Sheryl F; no discussion: all Ayes.**

4. Adjournment

C. Bielik asked three times if there were any further questions and there were none at this time.

3. **Adjournment**

With no further business to discuss at tonight's Public Hearing, C. Bielik indicated that the Public Hearing was closed at 8:11 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Joann Overby  
Clerk, Board of Selectmen

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