

**TOWN OF BEACON FALLS
BOARD OF FINANCE
REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING
MINUTES
(draft copy-subject to revision)
Tuesday August 10, 2010**

CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson of the Board, W. Hopkinson called the regular monthly meeting to order at 7:30 P.M. with the Pledge of Allegiance

Present: Board Members: L. Krepinevich, B. Ploss, M. E. Fernandes and G. Smith.

Also present were Selectmen S. Cable and D. Sorrentino. M. Krenesky arrived at approximately 8:45.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

L. Krepinevich motioned to accept the July Board of Finance minutes. M. E. Fernandez 2nd the motion. All voted aye with the exception of G. Smith who abstained.

COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

W. Hopkinson gave the floor to the Fire Department and Ambulance crew. J. Rodrigo, M. Pratt, J. Dizazzo and S. Cloney were present.

J. Rodrigo began his presentation explaining what the Fire Department and Ambulance is looking for and is in need of as it pertains to equipment, bonds and budget items.

The first item noted was the Arial Truck that the Fire Department is looking for.

- * Fully loaded it would cost approximately \$800,000
- * Average life of an Arial Truck is 25 years
- * It does not have to be new but in order to buy a used apparatus, they would have to have money on hand to put down immediately, i.e., they would have to know their money

allocation before they could go out and find one (these trucks may come refurbished, shelf life would depend on each situation).

* W. Hopkinson asked that if we go to referendum and it gets voted down, could they try and find a used truck. The answer was yes but they would have to have the money on hand (know how much they would have to spend on a used truck) therefore it would have to be voted on at a referendum prior to looking for one otherwise it would be a waste of time.

The next item that the Fire Department/Ambulance crew discussed was their need for a new ambulance and different ways to fund this. They noted that since this was last discussed, the prices has gone up a bit due to ureic acid. Vehicles built now have to be conformed to the ureic acid emissions program which raises the prices approximately \$10,000.

*Equipment from the old ambulance can be used on the new ambulance

*The existing ambulance can be sold for approximately \$10,000 (although there is not a big market of people looking for a 10-12 year old ambulance)

*The ambulance in discussion is about 12 years old (they generally last for about 10 years). It was decided to try and keep this ambulance the extra year and financially it has paid off.

J. Rodrigo noted that they did have to purchase 2 new stretchers.

*They were able to purchase these stretches at a 2% interest rate (the stretchers were \$10,000 each)

*The stretchers needed to be replaced due to maintenance problems (one was 12 years old) which resulted in a patient actually dropping. Mechanics of the stretcher has failed even though they are routinely maintained. While there were no injuries to the crew or patients, it's a very dangerous situation when the stretchers malfunction.

*It was noted that this purchase was not in the 2010/2011 budget but was expected to be part of the bond package. It was noted that these stretchers were purchased approximately 2 weeks ago. The Board of Finance asked if this was approved by the Board of Selectmen. The answer was that this was an emergency situation and it was approved by S. Cable as an emergency situation but also made clear that they Fire Department would have to find money somewhere in their budget to pay for these stretchers. J. Rodrigo noted that they took the \$6,000 that they already have in a line item for equipment and are applying it to the first payment. He noted that at some point, there will have to be a transfer as this situation was not anticipated at budget time. It was also noted that there is no pre-payment penalty so it can still be put in the bond package. J. Rodrigo noted that they have not yet paid for the stretchers as they do have good credit with this company. J. Rodrigo noted that they did drive the ambulance with the

stretchers to this meeting in the event than anyone from the Board of Finance wanted to see their conditions.

*It was noted that the Fire Department uses their 20% (after expenses) of ambulance revenue for scholarships and community outreach, etc. (this is in their contract). G. Smith noted that since it's a very tight budget and the residents basically voted against things like fireworks, etc., that the Fire Department may want to re-think what they put those funds towards especially considering their request for a Fire Truck. J. Rodrigo noted that he is aware that this may be the case.

The next item that was brought up was Air Packs.

*It was noted that currently the Fire Department has 30 air packs and 30 replacement bottles - many of them can no longer be hydro-tested (certifiable). J. Rodrigo made it clear that these are not yet failing left and right and they can still be used but they just cannot be certified. He noted that there is definitely a compatibility problem with these devices and the devices that are use in other towns. This becomes a problem when you might have to replace an air bottle with one from for example Seymour (who uses a different type). J. Rodrigo pointed out that this is a type of situation where it's old equipment, it works for now but "god forbid if it doesn't". He noted in addition to putting a Fireman at risk, Osha can come in with anything from a hefty fine to making us buy all new equipment. 75% of the current air packs are over 10 years old and many of them are over 12 years old. The cost to replace these air packs is \$222,000. It was noted that this is definitely a safety issue.

*The reason they all need to be replaced is because first, they are all old and second, they are not compatible with other departments. We are currently using Survive Air and planning on replacing these air packs with Scott. They will be replaced due to "interoperability". This is the reason that we switched radio frequencies, it's also the reason that we try and maintain the same types of tools on our apparatus as everyone else in the state or surrounding areas. An example was used; If we go into a Fire in Seymour (or visa-versa) and someone runs out of air, we do have a second bottle but when that is exhausted, when we go to replace the air bottle, our equipment is not compatible therefore we may grab the wrong bottle, etc.. Interoperability is what Homeland Security is telling us to do. It was noted that grant money was applied for however we do not know if we are going to get the grant and if we do, the money from the grant can be applied directly to the bond. The grant is going through the Fire Safety Act but we do not know what our competition is for grants. It was noted that Prospect is the only other town in the area that has Survive Air. It was noted that during Fire Fighting, it's confusing for all to know which equipment is compatible with what. It was noted that in 2007, the NFPA guidelines went into place. We have not been in compliance since then. If we now replace all the new safety equipment we will be current with the updated guidelines. It was also noted that these guidelines may never become regulations. The NFPA is not the law just recommendations. The Fire Department is looking to replace 30 air packs and 30 back-up bottles. It was also noted that there is now a waiting list to get

into the Fire Department. They had to put a moratorium on new recruits due to financial limits, turn-out gear, etc.

The next item that was brought up by the Fire Department is their Radio System.

*Hi-band/narrow band radios are part of the interoperability plan. It was noted that we currently have a great system and are in compliant however we have a few "dead" spots in town. That means we cannot get the repeater. The south end of town is one of the dense areas as well as the high school. We have a very hard time getting any radio transmission out of the school because of the walls. It was asked how the high school was built, if this was considered when the building was built. B. Ploss asked if this cost could be part of Prospects cost as well since we do share the school.

*It was noted that when there is a fire, communications needs to be made with people who are outside of their trucks. The Fire Department is looking for bay stations that repeat the signal. A propagation study has already been done which determines where the best radio coverage will be based on where you put the bay station. The ultimate system will be that all the coverage's overlap. It was noted that the radio system works very well right now but they do need two repeaters and pagers. The total cost of pagers and repeaters would be approximately \$40,000 combined. The Fire Department is looking for 20 pagers because without a pager, there is no way of letting the Fire Fighters know that there is a call. M. E. Fernandez asked why we do not use Plextrons. It was noted that one they die, we cannot get parts for them so they are gone. The Fire Departments current pagers are old pagers. It was noted that we need to have a way of notifying everyone that there is a call. W. Hopkinson asked how Seymour handles the dead zones. It was explained that Seymour has a much more complicated system. They have several repeaters and overlap everywhere.

G. Smith asked for a priority list.

In order it would be 1. Air packs, 2. Ambulance, 3. Pagers and 4. Aerial Truck (the stretchers have already been purchased).

Oil Tanks

It was noted that we are currently missing 125 gallons of fuel therefore they have stopped using the oil tanks there. When you are missing fuel and it is not from theft, there is a problem. It is currently \$89.00 per ton to remove dirty dirt. It may not even be leaking, it could be that the pump is off but they have not yet been able to determine the exact cause. It was also noted that there is no paperwork on the tanks, i.e., when they were built, etc. M. Pratt noted that they do have a 10,000 gallon tank sitting in railroad avenue. It has been inspected and the tank can be used for all the road fuel for the Public Works Department as well as the Fire Department. The heating fuel tank at the Fire House does need to be removed and be put above ground. Without doing this, it could result in \$30,000 of fines.

Discussion: It was noted that we just went through a really difficult budget time and these are a lot of requests. It was also noted that this meeting was for the purpose of making the Board of Finance aware of what their needs are and what kind of options there may be especially as they pertain to a bond package, grants, etc.

Treasurers Report

G. Smith motioned to accept the Treasurers Report. M. E. Fernandez 2nd the motion. All voted aye..

Tax Collectors Report

There was no Tax Collectors Report presented.

Town Clerks Report

It was noted that the Town Clerks report that was submitted was done by the Town Clerk. In keeping consistent with the Board of Finances request for the Beacon Falls Finance Manager to produce the Town Clerk's Report, the following motion was made.

G. Smith motioned to not accept the Town Clerks Report. L. Krepinevich 2nd the motion. All voted aye.

Discussion: It was noted that we need to find out why the Finance Manager is not yet publishing the Town Clerk's Report. W. Hopkinson said that she will email M. Gomes and find out why he has not yet produced the report.

Transfers

There is an apparent problem with the expense report and line items as they appear in the transfer requests and the July expense report. It may be just that an entry was off which off-set the entire report. It was noted that these are the transfers that are meant to close out the fiscal year ending on June 30, 2010.

G. Smith motioned to not accept the Transfers until the problem is fixed with the line items in the transfer request and expense report and if need be, an emergency meeting could be called to approve the transfers once this is clear. B. Ploss 2nd the motion. All voted aye.

Board Clerks Invoice

B. Ploss motioned to accept K. Wilsons Clerk's Invoice. L. Krepinevich 2nd the motion. All voted aye.

Discussion: A lengthy discussion continued regarding the Fire Departments request. S. Cable brought up that she is very depressed about all the Fire Departments Financial requests. She noted that the bonds were meant to be for upkeep of the town roads, etc. She noted that she is certainly concerned about safety but these are huge requests. The oil tank scenario must be taken

care of right away. Grants have been applied for but we do not know whether we will get any. Also noted, with the Fire School coming in, the town can only receive 45% of the taxes.

Also discussed was the 55 and older complexes in town. Both are in bankruptcy or foreclosure. A lengthy discussion continued regarding the issues as to why these complexes are in trouble.

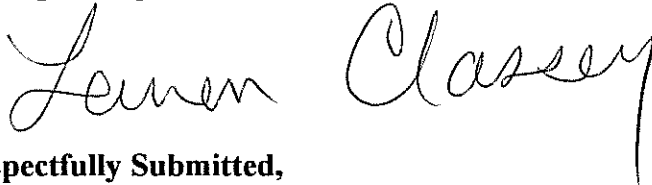
Correspondence

W. Hopkinson reviewed the correspondence (all filed with this document).

Adjournment

G. Smith motioned to adjourn the meeting at 9:00 P.M. B. Ploss 2nd the motion. All voted aye.

Meeting was adjourned at 9:00 P.M.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lauren Classey". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the typed name and title.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lauren Classey
Clerk for the Board of Finance