

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



**BEACON FALLS BOARD OF FINANCE**  
**VIRTUAL Regular Monthly Meeting**  
**November 10, 2020**  
**MINUTES**  
**(Subject to Revision)**

**1. Call to Order / Pledge of Allegiance**

Chairman T. Pratt called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM and led the assembled in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Members Present:** L. Hutvagner, T. Pratt, S. Leeper, K. Brennan, J. Carroll, D. Fennell

**Members Absent:** None

**Others Present:** First Selectman G. Smith, Selectman M. Krenesky, Finance Manager N. Nau, Resident Trooper H. Henriques

*Note: No members of the public attending the meeting via Zoom.*

**2. Approval of Minutes from Previous Meetings:** T. Pratt asked the members for approval on the August 2020 and October 2020 Meeting minutes. SL/JC **All ayes.**

**3. Comments from the Public:** No comments were received via email before or after the meeting.

**4. Conversation with Trooper Humberto Henriques:** Trooper Henriques thanked the Board for allowing him to speak at the meeting, as he is new to administering the Police budget.

- The Part Time Overtime line is trended at 50% at this point of the year and that line will go overbudget for the year, so he will be looking to transfer funds into that line. He is currently short staffed and is looking to bring on 3-4 new officers before the end of the year. He is looking at cost savings in the on-boarding process of the new hires, with background and uniform issuance and vests, and recycling equipment. He hopes to outfit each new officer for approximately \$2,000 each. He is a proponent of Part Time officers, who are less expensive than the Full-Time officers. The Part timers should be able to fill open shifts and cut down on full time overtime. Part timers are less expensive and when they work private duty there is a greater profit margin for the Town. Trooper Henriques is hoping to hire officers who are vested in the community and the area, who will stay long term.
- There have been numerous traffic complaints on Burton Road. Trooper Henriques is planning to use the State resources in the Traffic Services Unit to do traffic enforcement on Burton Road. D. Fennell asked about the timing of the enforcement and Trooper Henriques advised that the enforcement will move quickly. G. Smith asked Trooper Henriques to speak to the tabulation of the speeds on Burton Road and in monitoring Burton Road for several days, and they captured speeds of 1 in 6 vehicles were over 40mph on the 25mph road. G. Smith noted that he hopes the State officer enforcement will expand to other roads in town.

- There is a new Police vehicle as a Capital project in this budget and he wants to use what is proven, so the vehicle will be a 2020 Ford Explorer being purchased through the State Contract with MHQ. The vehicle will be outfitted with a light bar and nice safety package for under the \$50,000 budget. The new vehicle will have ballistic doors.
- T. Pratt asked about the FT Overtime budget line and asked about possible lines for transfers. He is hoping that FT Overtime will be reduced and with 3-4 new hires there will not be the need for a lot of overtime. N. Nau and L. Hutvagner noted that the Police Lt. line is available for transfer. L. Hutvagner asked about the funding for uniforms. Trooper Henriques hopes to use the Police Lt. line for outfitting and overtime gaps. T. Pratt explained the budget transfer process.
- L. Hutvagner asked about thru trucks going up and down Rimmon Hill and West Road, dump trucks from the industrial park. Can this be something that the DOT traffic services unit investigates? Trooper Henriques noted that he has had conversations with businesses in the industrial park and the Oxford side needs to be on board. He will revisit this issue and diplomatically address it locally. G. Smith concurred and noted it is difficult to enforce the No-thru truck signage.
- D. Fennell thanked Trooper Henriques asked about ballistic glass panes in new cruiser, as he believes this is a worthwhile investment to protect the officers. Trooper Henriques advised that the panes are not cost effective, but the door panels on the new vehicle are ballistic rated. Local police departments have not yet gone the route of ballistic glass, and he appreciates that he is trying to keep us safe. D. Fennel is curious about the price and Trooper Henriques will investigate the costs. With the new vehicle MHQ supplies a consistent fully outfitted police package. There is vehicle currently available that we hope to reserve. It is replacing the 2013 vehicle which was recently totaled. N. Nau noted that prior to the accident, the new vehicle was supposed to be an addition, not a replacement, so the department is still down a car. The purchase will move forward soon.
- T. Pratt thanked Trooper Henriques for attending the meeting and reaching out to the Board. Trooper Henriques left the meeting at 7:35 PM.

**5. Correspondence:** None.

**6. Reports**

- a. Tax Collector Report – L. Hutvagner suggested that the Tax Collector add columns for year to date dollar and percentage collected to her reporting. T. Pratt wanted to bring the suggestion to the Board, and it was well received. The Tax Collector will add this to her reporting, with thanks to L. Hutvagner for the insight.  
Tax Collections are strong and moving in a positive direction.
- b. Town Clerk Report – No questions.
- c. Treasurers Report- No questions. Interest rates are low.
- d. Region 16 – Report is posted on Region 16 website but was not available at the meeting. Regarding COVID, the school districts did not get any FEMA approvals. They have other funding sources for COVID, but per N. Nau it is an unknown how much the COVID costs for the Region will be passed onto the town.
- e. Ambulance Report – Not yet available. T. Pratt noted that he is getting numbers on write-offs and there have not been many write-offs on the part of Beacon Hose.

**7. Finance Manager Report:**

- N. Nau noted there are no changes to the Finance Manual this month. We have a company looking at energy audits for the town and the solar panel ROI. They will be providing some cost estimates to the Town.

- Caleb Shea is interning for the Fall and working on projects remotely for the Finance office.
- We hope to have the Senior Center appointed as a VITA site this tax season, where free tax preparation services will be offered.
- IT Services – Emails have been converted and there is a budget transfer tonight to support additional costs. Our Wi-Fi system is being upgraded to a beehive, which is something that we just discovered and will aid the library as well. IT issues keep arising with the way things were previously set up. The next project is a server conversion and T. Pratt noted that we are seeing higher expenditures, but the investment is necessary and will have long term results. D. Fennel noted that IT is hugely important and worth spending monies on. He asked about the Wi-Fi network, as a separate network to the Town. N. Nau noted that the Town is on the Nutmeg Network which is hard wired.
- Accounting Software: N. Nau added that we are finding success in adding modules through the current software provider: AssetTrax for capital assets, Accounts Receivable for Police Dept and Fire Dept. are 2 of the modules which will be added and users will be added so our departments can view their budget status, and we are hoping to implement on January 1<sup>st</sup>. L. Hutvagner asked if the Police Department will have access to the module for Private Duty billing and N. Nau responded that they will.
- Cybersecurity Insurance – The Town is looking to expand out cybersecurity coverage, by adding an additional policy. The application process is moving forward and based on the premium, a budget transfer may be required. The town currently has a credit with CIRMA for vehicles which have been disposed of.
- RFP Status: There is a town-wide service which will be competitively advertised later this month. The road salt contract has been executed and CRPC is another consortium that we use to bid. There are several bids open and we have submitted our quantities for Gas/Diesel, chip sealing, etc. The Bonfire RFP system now has a pricing sheet which tabulates responses automatically, an improvement to the system.
- Budget Transfer & EE&A – There is one transfer tonight, which the BOS missed last night. Finance has highlighted yellow lines that are cause for concern.
- \$6M BAN/Bond Issuance- We met with S&P Rating agency for our current Bond rating and this meeting went well. The rating is expected this week. The Official Statement for the issuance is ready and has been updated.
- Audit – The audit will be completed remotely and all online at the end of this month.
- 5 Year CIP – This is a changeable document which has been posted on the website.
- Capital Projects: The FY2021 Capital Projects now have the green light to move forward and all departments should be working on their capital projects at this time.
- Police Private Duty: The external billing rate for Police Private Duty was set at the BOS meeting last night, increasing the billing rates to contractors. L. Hutvagner noted that he believes the hourly rate is low in comparison with the vehicle rate versus the FEMA rate, workers comp costs, administrative time, etc. and the decision should be made in May for July 1<sup>st</sup>. N. Nau will evaluate for FY2022 and make sure the rates are comparable with other towns at S. Leeper's suggestion. D. Fennell was concerned that adding these additional costs may dissuade people from using the police for roadwork. Increasing the costs would then be a disadvantage to the contractors. L. Hutvagner noted that if the costs are not included in the rate, the taxpayers end up paying. N. Nau noted that Police Private Duty has been a profitable fund. L. Hutvagner feels the town is undercharging for the use of our

police services. T. Pratt has also spoken with Trooper Henriques about PT Officer wages, which are low in comparison with other towns.

- FY2022 Budget: N. Nau put forward a schedule for the FY2022 budget process for review.
- Grants
  - FEMA: We are waiting for Strom Isaias project to be posted in FEMA portal. L. Hutvagner asked about the tornado Management project which remains open and Finance still owes that information to FEMA.
  - LOCIP: The LOCIP grants from the State have already moved forward.
  - AFG: The application for the Fire SBCA Compressor \$83,000 application grant was not awarded. N. Nau received comments that due to the competitive nature of the grant the awards were for equipment, which was broken and no longer functioning, and the optimal range for this replacement is \$70,000. Our call volume is also low in comparison. N. Nau intends to reapply under a rural classification and submit a \$70,000 request. The next round is November and would be awarded in March. T. Pratt added that the old compressor at the Firehouse failed in mid-October due to circuit board failure. It is not repairable and hence the reason the Fire Department has been requesting a replacement. The Fire Chief has made arrangements to fill their SCBA bottles through Naugatuck and Prospect fire departments. If the next grant round is not approved, the Fire Department will need to replace this unit sooner rather than later. The compressor life expectancy is 15-20 years, and the broken compressor is 21 years old. L. Hutvagner asked what the BOS has recommended on the compressor, and the BOS has not yet discussed this issue. Information is being gathered and G. Smith believes the Fire Chief and Finance Manager will vet this out and bring it to the BOS. N. Nau believes that Beacon Falls will have a better chance at receiving the grant this round.
  - FP&S – Comments are forthcoming on this grant, which was also not awarded.
  - COVID Grants – The FEMA application for the period from March – June 30<sup>th</sup> has gone through several phases of eligibility review and is still under review. The CRF submission for COVID expenses has been reviewed and approved for approximately \$16,000.
  - K. Matthies Grant – The \$7100 for park benches and tables have been shipped and will be installed by Public Works.
  - Bulletproof Vest – We are awaiting the reimbursement.
  - STEAP – The STEAP application for Cook Lane drainage improvements was awarded this week and the town received the maximum amount of \$125,205. Beacon Valley Road STEAP Fund has been extended for another year.
  - Connectivity Grant Program – N. Nau has submitted this \$600,000 application for Main Street improvements to curbing, sidewalks, and crosswalk improvements on the opposite side of the road from the streetscape.
  - EMPG Grant for Radio – This report is being finalized by the EMD.
  - Voting Grants – These grants were expended in connection with the election and we will have more information next month.
  - WCAAA – The minibus grant was awarded for \$5300.00 for supplementing minibus rides.
  - Library Connectivity Grant – The library was awarded a \$23,000 State grant which will make modifications to the library to allow for social distancing; furniture, IT and Wi-Fi changes are the primary expenses.

- **FY2022 Budget Process:** N. Nau will be sending budget templates out in late November and she is encouraging tracking performance metrics. She proposed a new timeline, with returns from departments due in January and reaches out to Region 16's on their timeline. T. Pratt appreciates the workshops which involve the department chairs and BOS which adds a lot of value to the budget process. L. Hutvagner and M. Krenesky reminded the group that the Region 16 budget is always voted on the first Monday in May. S. Leeper and G. Smith appreciated the initiative to begin the process early and work as a team. N. Nau noted that as the budget process may be virtual, the town could use polling mechanisms for public input, if desired. N. Nau will compose a set of questions for the next meeting.

#### 8. **First Selectman's Report**

- a. Budget Transfers – There is one transfer for \$4,000 from Contingency to IT -Computer Support. This is the second transfer into IT-Computer Support to complete the email conversion process. D. Fennell asked about the IT server changeover, the age of the server and if there are more IT needs. L. Hutvagner added his normal disagreement that this has not yet approved by the BOS, so he will vote no. G. Smith stated he will move Budget Transfers to the top his agenda so they will not be missed moving forward.
  - o **T. Pratt called for a motion to approve the \$4,000 budget transfer as presented and move the transfer back to the BOS for their review. J. Carroll made the motion.** L. Hutvagner asked if T. Pratt had stated \$44,000 rather than \$4,000. T. Pratt noted that he apologized and stuttered to catch him off guard. L. Hutvagner added that it is inappropriate for the BOF Chairman to rank on an elected Board member, because he indicated that he would be voting no. D. Fennell stated that L. Hutvagner had made some bold statements tonight, calling into public safety questions and saying that he was asking taxpayers to pay for police safety. T. Pratt asked that the board move on.  
**S. Leeper seconded the motion. T. Pratt, S. Leeper, K. Brennan, D. Fennell, J. Carroll voted Aye. L. Hutvagner voted Nay. The motion carried.**
- b. With Lines to Monitor, L. Hutvagner asked about the Police Department PT Overtime and when the BOF can expect a transfer. N. Nau anticipates the Police Department will bring a transfer forward for uniforms and PT Overtime. Hazardous Household Waste is another line of concerns. G. Smith noted that one will be held in town this spring, which is a large expense for the town. The HHW has been double the normal levels and the last events have been very heavy. A transfer will be needed into this line later this year and Finance will research anticipated costs for next month.
- c. Beacon Valley Road – G. Smith noted that LOTCIP is at the final approval phase from the condos through the Naugatuck line. The STEAP monies will fund the other piece of the project. This will be going out to bid, including the Bridge, once we have the MOU from Naugatuck on their piece of the work.
- d. Rimmon Hill – Cocchiola is paving Hillside, Randall, Wilson, and Snyder this month. Ladyslipper and roads across the street will wait until spring, as the weather has delayed progress. Beacon Valley and those roads will be paved in the spring. We are planning a 1-inch overlay on 1000 feet of Rimmon Hill. Finance suggested that

the town use non-Recurring Capital Road funds for 1-inch overlay for approximately \$50,000 and this will band-aid the road for the next 2 years until Rimmon is repaved in Summer, 2022 with LOTCIP funds.

- e. Debt Issuance – The bond rating meeting was positive. L. Hutvagner had sent correspondence to the BOS to consider delaying the BAN issue for 4-5 months, as monies will not be needed until the spring and our bank balance is healthy and can support the work currently being done. G. Smith would like to stay on course with the BAN issuance this month, due to the uncertainties in the financial markets, the work which has been put into issuance to date, and the need to move forward with projects. T. Pratt concurred with the skim coat proposal and moving forward with the \$4M BAN issuance. Engineering costs will continue this winter. L. Hutvagner noted that it was his personal suggestion for the BOS to consider, to save \$40,000 - \$50,000 in interest, based on the paving progress and the financials he sees. He wanted to know how we are spending the \$3.5M in the next 4-5 months. The borrowed monies will be at 1-2% interest rates and will be deposited into an account making 0.10% interest. It is a cost savings suggestion to the BOS. T. Pratt noted that we do not have a crystal ball to determine what rates will be in a few months. L. Hutvagner added this is a BOS decision and he would like to see the plan to spend the \$3.5 in the next year.
  - f. Burton Road – This was addressed by Trooper Henriques.
  - g. Capital Projects – The vehicles are moving forward and hopefully departments are working on their projects.
  - h. Station 2 – No update.
- Thanks, were extended to First Selectman Smith for his update.

- 9. **Finance Policy Manual** – no updates this month. The acknowledgement pages are coming in and there are a few outstanding. Next month T. Pratt would recommend that purchasing be frozen for anyone who has not signed the form.

10. **Old Business** –

- a. Aquarion Hydrants – L. Hutvagner acquired a report from Aquarion Water which was shared with the Board and notes an issue on Fairfield Place. Aquarion will correct the issue in 2021. The report states that Aquarion will provide a \$55,000 credit for repaving the road. L. Hutvagner noted that the Town should have this in writing from Aquarion. He would like Finance to pursue a credit for the hydrants there which do not have sufficient pressure, and T. Pratt will pursue this further. The Fire Chief will also review the hydrants. G. Smith suggested that the town reach out to DeCarlo & Doll to navigate through Aquarion to close this issue, as the designer for Aquarion.

11. **New Business** –

- a. **December 2020 Meeting – Motion to move the December 2020 meeting from December 8<sup>th</sup> to a Special Meeting on December 15<sup>th</sup>. SL/KB. All ayes.**
- b. **FY2021 Board of Finance Meeting Calendar – Motion to approve the 2021 Meeting Calendar. JC/SL All ayes.**

- c. **FY2022 Budget Schedule – Motion to follow the FY2022 Budget Schedule as presented by the Finance Manager. SL/DF All ayes.** T. Pratt noted that the BOF should also look at the Budget Schedule.
- 12. **Executive Session (if needed)** None needed.
- 13. **Adjournment:** S. Leeper for motion to adjourn at 9:30 PM. J. Carroll seconded the motion. **All ayes.**

Respectfully submitted,

*Erin Schwarz*  
*Finance Office*