

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



**BEACON FALLS BOARD OF FINANCE
VIRTUAL Special Monthly Meeting
December 15, 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. The Pledge was followed by a moment of silence dedicated to late member Lawrence Hutvagner.

Members Present: 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,

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

D. Fennell noted that Larry Hutvagner will be missed and the caring that he brought to the town will be missed. T. Pratt agreed and thanked Larry for the knowledge that he brought to the board and shared with us. His heart and soul were dedicated to town, the board and support of organizations such as the Lions Club and Beacon Hose. He brought his heart and soul to all he did.

T. Pratt added that Larry's memorial service will be on Saturday, 12/19 beginning at 2:45 PM at the Kolga parking lot on Lancaster Drive.

2. Approval of Minutes from Previous Meetings: T. Pratt asked the members for approval on the November 2020 Meeting minutes. **K. Brennan made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. J. Carroll seconded the motion. All ayes.**

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

4. Correspondence: None at this time.

5. Election of Officers: T. Pratt noted that traditionally the office of Chair switches parties every 2 years. He discussed this with S. Leeper, Vice-Chair, who is from opposing party, and S. Leeper asked T. Pratt to stay on as chair. T. Pratt did not see anything in the regulations speaking to this. M. Krenesky commented via chat that the party switch was a courtesy rather than a written rule. T. Pratt turned the proceedings over to Secretary, K. Brennan, for the election of officers.

S. Leeper nominated T. Pratt as Chairman of the Board of Finance for the upcoming 2021 year, with appreciation for the diligence he brings to the position. J. Carroll seconded the motion.

K. Brennan called 3 times for more nominations. Hearing and seeing none, the board cast one collective vote for T. Pratt as Chairman of the Board of Finance.

J. Carroll nominated S. Leeper as Vice Chairman of the Board of Finance for the upcoming 2021 year. T. Pratt seconded the motion. K. Brennan called 3 times for additional nominations and hearing none, the board cast one collective vote for S. Leeper to remain as Vice Chairman of the Board of Finance.

Proceedings returned to T. Pratt. S. Leeper nominated K. Brennan as Secretary. S. Carroll seconded the motion. T. Pratt called 3 times for more nominations and hearing none, the board cast one collective vote for K. Brennan as Secretary.

T. Pratt added thanks to board for working together and to the BOS as well. G. Smith added that he has been involved in many boards over the years and this board has been the best from a working standpoint, offering checks and balances, and he looks forwards to continuing to get things done for the town.

6. Correspondence: None.

7. Reports

- a. Tax Collector Report –The Finance Office presented a report in a new format which compares the Finance collection data with the Tax Collector's QDS reporting. Tax collections are on track and we will see what January/February collections bring. S. Leeper noted that we are ahead of last year's numbers. The Tax Collector is sending out collection letters with more frequency and using a collection agency for a larger number of delinquent accounts.
- b. Treasurers Report - No questions.
- c. Town Clerk Report – No questions. Compliments to how quickly the Town Clerk generates their reporting each month. N. Nau noted that they have improved their deposit process, by scanning checks for remote deposits more frequently.
- d. Region 16 – Report for the months of October and November show some lines which are under trend due to COVID, while there are also large COVID related expenses for the schools. T. Pratt hopes that underspent lines will offset some of COVID costs. N. Nau noted that Region 16's Finance Director communicated there are no FEMA funds available for the Region. J. Carroll asked what types of reimbursements the Region has received from the State. N. Nau noted they have received CARES Act funds and funds from another school related source. N. Nau will follow up with Finance Director Tony DeLeone at Region 16 for more information to determine the latest on the COVID costs and reimbursements.
- e. Ambulance Report – T. Pratt provided the latest EMS report, and he has been working with Quick Med claims to determine how much Beacon Hose has written off in the last 5 years broken down by Residents versus non-Residents. Beacon Falls write offs: \$60,557 Non-residents: \$104,329 and this amount does not include EMR rides. The EMS service will always write off Beacon Falls residents after receipt of 3 invoices. The Fire Chief and EMS will be hiring a collection agency to reduce write offs and they are looking at possible agencies to put in place soon. If an insurance check is sent directly to the patient, checks should be returned and they will use an agency to recover those funds.

8. Finance Manager Report:

- N. Nau noted there are no changes to the Finance Policy Manual this month. There is a summary PowerPoint created by the intern for employees to review the manual.
- We have been working with Titan Energy regarding an energy audit for the town and will look at the solar panel ROI.
- Caleb Shea is interning for the fall and working on projects remotely for the Finance office. One of the projects he is finalizing is a comprehensive fee schedule for all the Town Departments which can be reviewed annually.

G. Smith noted that changes to the schedule are a hybrid process as many of the fees are tied to ordinances. He supports the schedule and an annual review, but there is a process for fees tied to ordinances, which will be more challenging. A possible solution may be a separate ordinance which holds the entire Fee Schedule, and that schedule can then be updated annually.

K. Brennan added that the fee schedule will be a help to the ordinance committee moving forward. There are more fines listed in ordinances than fees, but the process for changes could be a challenge. N. Nau noted that Planning and Zoning are one of the fees which need to be reviewed.

- IT Services – N. Nau noted that the Office 365 migration is almost complete, and we are trying to get the virtual server project underway. We are moving towards virtual servers, as the older server supporting the QDS software has some failing. The Wi-Fi is being upgraded as part of the Library's State grant for COVID Everybody Learns.
- Accounting Software: N. Nau is moving forward with AssetTrax for capital assets, Accounts Receivable, and Purchasing module additions to the current software package. The building and integration is underway and we anticipate training and on-boarding the new modules for February 1st. Time IPS will also be connected to our Payroll system for automatic upload.
- Cybersecurity Insurance – The Town is looking to expand out cybersecurity coverage, by adding an additional policy as recommended by CIRMA. This is a mid-year change, which will reduce the town's exposure.
- RFP Status: There is an open RFP for town-wide tree service which will most likely be extended to the first week of January. N. Nau is working on 2 additional RFPs for next month. Gas and diesel fuel will be bid through CRPC, during the winter months when prices are lower. D. Fennell recommended Diesel Direct for diesel fuel. N. Nau will note if they are bidding on the consortium.
- Budget Transfer & EE&A – There are 3 budget transfers tonight and only 4 lines to monitor at present, which are flagged.
- \$6M BAN/Bond Issuance- The \$4M from the BAN Issue was deposited this morning, so the BAN and Bond Refinance process is coming to a close.
- Audit – The audit was completed remotely and is being finalized for issuance next week. The auditors are ready to present to the Town in January or February. There were only 6 adjusting journal entries and J. Carroll congratulated the Finance Office.
- Storm Isaias: The FEMA portal is not yet opened but we will apply for reimbursement as soon as it is available.
- Capital Projects: The FY2021 Capital Projects are moving forward and all departments are working on their capital projects at this time. The police vehicle has been ordered. D. Fennell asked about the bulletproof glass for the vehicle. G. Smith added that the

Town expects the vehicle soon, as we were able to obtain a vehicle that on site at MHQ. The radio equipment is being installed and we should see the car next month. The bulletproof glass was not standard on the vehicle.

Fire EMS Fly car: The Fire Department has specified their vehicle on the State contract and the add-ons and equipping are through separate vendors for lighting, lettering, etc. Public Works will have a capital transfer request, moving funds from one capital appropriation to another, for next month's meeting. They are seeing manufacturing delays due to COVID.

- Police Private Duty: Comparison rates from surrounding towns were researched and attached to the Finance Report.
- FY2022 Budget: N. Nau demonstrated the SharePoint portal for the FY2022 Budget process, which will be released to department chairs tomorrow. The budget process will be online and the portal has built in email group, documents, news and updates. It is organized by Department with performance metrics that are output based. There are sheets for Capital project submissions with funding source notes, and requiring quotes and attachments. SharePoint will put all the documents in one place for a streamlined process.
- Grants
 - AFG and FP&S – AFG will open in the next few weeks, so N. Nau will update the Compressor application and resubmit the grant as soon as possible. FP&S grant application will follow for smoke alarms.
 - COVID Grants – The CRF (\$16,000) and FEMA (\$13,000) approvals for the April-June quarter were finalized and the reimbursements were included in FY2020 audit as revenues.
 - K. Matthies Grant – The \$7100 for park benches and tables has been spent, shipped and will be installed in the spring.
 - Bulletproof Vest – We are awaiting the reimbursement this spring.
 - STEAP – The STEAP application for Cook Lane drainage improvements was awarded and the town received the maximum amount, which will move forward next spring.
 - 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. No update.
 - EMPG Grant for Radio – This report is being finalized for submission.
 - Voting Grants – These grants were fully expended in connection with the election and the primary.
 - Library Connectivity Grant – The library's \$23,000 State grant for COVID related expenses is being spent this month and the Wi-fi will be beneficial to the whole Town Hall.
 - N. Nau expressed the Finance Office's tribute to Larry Hutvagner and thanks to him for his time and dedication and we will miss him. T. Pratt added how much value Larry added to the board.
 - Attachments - N. Nau provided a list of Private duty rates for surrounding towns and the towns structure their rates differently: with some towns such as Prospect and Bethany providing a flat rate, while towns such as Naugatuck and Seymour charge a separate rate for vehicles. The structures are not consistent, but Beacon Falls' rate is comparable and possibly on the high side. Something to review for next July 1st.

9. First Selectman's Report

- a. Budget Transfers – There are 3 transfers for consideration which were approved by the Board of Selectmen last night. The first 2 are from the Police Department related to the hiring of the new Part Time Officers. The transfers are utilizing the Police Lt. Line and transferring \$10,000 to Uniforms and \$10,044 to Part Time Overtime Wages. The final transfer is for Meals on Wheels which is a service which has been utilized more than predicted throughout COVID. Meals on Wheels has increased the per meal rate and their budget numbers were lower than actuals. The budget transfer is from Senior Activities to Meals on Wheels. N. Nau pointed out other lines to monitor such as Hazardous Household Waste which will most likely require a transfer later in the year.



TOWN OF BEACON FALLS

FY21

TRANSFERS FOR 12/14/20 BOS & 12/15/20 BOS MEETINGS

#	Transfer From	Transfer To	Amount	Description
Line	Description	Line	Description	
1 10-90-33.1019	Police Lieutenant	10-90-33.1053	PT Overtime	\$10,086.00 Moving funds from the annual Police LT line to cover uniform expense for 5 new officers plus current averages in PTOT expenses.
2 10-90-33.1019	Police Lieutenant	10-90-33.1395	Uniforms	\$10,000.00 New Opportunities' distribution of their annual budget request has considerably not lined up with our fiscal year budget cycle. We increased it this year from \$990 to \$1234 but their FY21 request, which arrived in Nov. was for \$1352.50 (per annual rate increase) increased usage. Last year we shortchanged them when this happened.
3 10-90-79.1001	Senior Activities	10-90-63.1723	Meals on Wheels	\$96.50
Total				\$20,186.50

*A total of 40 transfer request between 2 public works capital projects will be forthcoming at the December meetings in January.

S. Leeper made a motion to approve the transfers as presented. D. Fennell seconded the motion. All ayes.

- b. Capital Projects – The vehicle purchases are moving forward and departments are working on their projects. G. Smith remains in support of the Dump Trailer project which he is reviewing with the Public Works Foreman. He is looking at the Public Works process for removing the debris and favors proceeding with this project. It would provide us with a mobile dumpster that could be used for other purposes. The Town wide Building & Security project needs a project manager. N. Nau noted that all the capital projects funded by grants are progressing.
- c. Beacon Valley Road – G. Smith noted the MOU with Naugatuck has been signed for the Beacon Valley Bridge. LOTCIP and STEAP grant monies will be used for the east and west portions of the road and LOCIB money will also be used for the Bridge. Final design and bid construction will take place in the next couple of months and then work will begin in the spring. The LOTCIP application is in the NVCOG's hands and moving to DOT for the eastern portion of the road.
- d. Station 2 – No update at this time. N. Nau will follow up.
- e. Road Projects – Cocchiola paved Hillside, Randall, Wilson, and Snyder this month and the decision was made to stop opening the roads across the street before the weather worsened. Ladyslipper, Columbine, Jane and Stoddard reconstruction will resume in the spring, as will Cook from Burton to Rte. 42, while Beacon Valley Road is also being completed. All projects will be advertised over the winter months. G.

Smith complimented Milone & MacBroom and noted that he approved some test borings for the roads, which will provide more information on what we are facing. The 1-inch overlay skim coat on 1000 feet of Rimmon Hill was completed as well. Rimmon Hill and West Road will be the next LOTCIP application for the Summer, 2022 and Decarlo & Doll will engineer that application, as they have already engineered a portion of West Road when we originally received STEAP funds. We have an on-call engineering contract for DeCarlo & Doll when conflicts arise with Milone & Macbroom. T. Pratt complimented both engineering firms on their professionalism.

- f. Debt Issuance – Process is completed with monies received today.
- g. G. Smith has a staffing proposal for the BOF to consider. The Land Use Department needs administrative help, with systems not in place and all part time staff in that office. There is liability to the town due to lack of organization in this department. His solution, in working with HR, is to bring Lisa Daigle, from the Assessor's Office, currently a 25 hour/week position to a full-time position of 35 hours/week with 10 hours per week in the Land Use Office. Lisa has the skill set to improve this department, along with having the Assessor and Tax side skills. She is also a clerk to the Land Use boards, so she has knowledge there. HR is working on the job description of Assessor/Land Use Coordinator. The position would then qualify for medical and other benefits. The impact to this year's budget would be between \$12-\$13,000. For the full year the anticipated FY2022 budget impact is approximately \$24,500.
- h. The second position which needs to be improved is the Police Office Coordinator. Now that the Police Lt. position is unfilled, someone needs to coordinate equipment and take on some of the administrative tasks at the Police Department. The Resident Trooper has stepped up, and requested that this position, held by Joan Rubbo, be moved from 30 hours to 35 hours per week, as well as receive a pay increase. In the past, the job pay rate has not been adjusted for the increase in responsibilities that the job has taken on. This was already a full-time position, so benefits will not change, but the proposal is for more hours and a higher rate. The impact to this year's budget would be \$7500 with an impact of \$16,000 for FY2022.
- i. While this is a \$40,000 impact to FY2022 budget, the changes to the positions would make a world of difference to the Land Use Department and Police Department operations and G. Smith fully support the changes. Discussion continued on this issue.
- j. T. Pratt added that changes are needed to the Land Use process and documentation, and we have a valuable employee with Lisa Daigle, who would do an excellent job. He also supports having someone at the Police station 5 days a week in the office and tracking equipment, training, vehicle maintenance are all important functions for her to take on. Mid-year changes are tough, but if the positions are managed properly the increases would be worthwhile.
- k. D. Fennell asked if HR can research the pay rates government-wide for these positions, to ensure that the changes are in line with the norm. He would like to see a job inquiry completed and the data available, which would make the increase palatable. McInnis, our HR firm, has made inquiries and the Town can also research using CCM data from their municipal salary survey.
- l. T. Pratt reiterated that Lisa Daigle has significant qualifications for the position we are discussing for her. G. Smith noted the new position will create a process where there

- is none. D. Fennell stated it sounds like there would be significant improvement in the way the town is run, so there is value in spending the money.
- m. K. Brennan is concerned about the changes being made mid-year and the optics of these changes taking place prior to budget discussions for FY2022. He is concerned about the precedent it sets, although he agrees the end result is worthwhile. He would be 100% in favor for next budget year and wants to ensure the boards go about this for the correct way. G. Smith has not made any hiring changes, and he is discussing these proposals with the BOF before any personnel decisions are made.
 - n. J. Carroll understands D. Fennell's position concerning a mid-year increase, but in running a business, if deficiencies exist then they need to be addresses sooner than later. He is well aware of deficiencies in the Land Use Department. Rather than kick the can down the road, he is in favor of making the changes and fixing the problems. D. Fennell is not opposed to the changes, but he would like more information. K. Brennan agreed that if it is framed in that context of fixing a problem, he can support it.
 - o. S. Leeper would like to know where monies would come from this fiscal year. Suggestions were put forward from the Finance Office. G. Smith would like to see funds come from Contingency. Wage Salary Adjustments is another possibility for this changes, but this line is typically expended at year-end with vacation and sick payouts. J. Carroll stated that Contingency is the correct place, as these are contingent expenses which have come up mid-year. They are taking care of something that we did not plan on, that are a problem, which is what contingency is used for.
 - p. N. Nau added there are saving in other wage lines such as the Parks & Recreation Coordinator line and the Mini Bus driver which has been dormant. These wage lines would cover the position changes.
 - q. Next month, BOS and BOF will revisit for a February 1st roll out. G. Smith will have time to obtain more data from CCM and McInnis, and the BOS will discuss and address the changes in January. In honor of Larry, G. Smith noted he came to the BOF first for discussion on these hiring decisions.

10. **Finance Policy Manual** – no updates this month.

11. **Old Business** –

- a. Aquarion Hydrants – T. Pratt met with several representatives from Aquarion, including George Logan, Jack Betkoski, Fire Chief and Assistant Fire Chief. T. Pratt asked about regulations governing hydrants and there are no state regulations. The Fire Chief asked about good hydrants versus "bad" hydrants. A hydrant that flows water at any rate is a good hydrant. Every hydrant on the Aquarion system has an overlay which works with Spotted Dog software, so this was offered to the Fire Department, showing the flow capabilities of each hydrant. T. Pratt also addressed issues of replacement of water mains in town and worked to improve the relationship between Aquarion and the town. Better planning is needed with paving projects coming up and with hydrant installations.
- b. T. Pratt noted the budget projection letters from Aquarion did not include additional fees and charges, which have undetermined percentages with rates

that increase mid-year. T Pratt encouraged Aquarion to present projected total costs with their budget letters. The dialogue between the town and Aquarion has improved and moving forward we will have better numbers. Larry began this process, so T. Pratt will work towards finishing this up.

12. **New Business** –

- a. **FY2022 Budget Schedule-** The BOS suggested Tuesday night meetings for budget workshops. The BOF is also available on Tuesday nights for budget workshops.
- b. In response to J. Carroll's position on Region 16, N. Nau confirmed that they received \$75,000 from the CARES Act ESSER Fund and expected \$260,000 from CRF.

13. **Executive Session (if needed)** None needed.

14. **Adjournment:** S. Leeper made a motion to adjourn at 9:23 PM. K. Brennan seconded the motion. All ayes.

Respectfully submitted,

Erin Schwarz
Finance Office