

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



**BEACON FALLS BOARD OF SELECTMAN
BEACON FALLS BOARD OF FINANCE
Joint Budget Workshop
March 8, 2022, MINUTES (Subject to Revision)**

1. **Call to Order / Pledge of Allegiance:** First Selectman G. Smith called the meeting to order at 7:04 PM and led the assembled in the Pledge of Allegiance. K. Brennan called the Board of Finance to order at 7:04 PM.

Members Present: G. Smith, P. Betkoski, M. Krenesky, W. Hopkinson, K. Brennan, D. Fennell, J. Carroll, S. West, T. Pratt via TEAMS

Members Absent: None

2. **Others Present:** Finance Manager N. Nau, T. Carey, R. Pruzinsky, J. Gracy, Corporal J. Piccirillo, Trooper R. Culbertson, J. Weid (7:07 PM), Chief B. DeGeorge (7:35PM)
3. **Approval of Minutes:** M Krenesky made a motion to approve the 2/22/2022 Budget Workshop minutes. P. Betkoski seconded the motion. All ayes. For the Board of Finance, D. Fennell made a motion to approve the 2/22/2022 Budget Workshop minutes. W. Hopkinson seconded the motion. J. Carroll abstained as he was not in attendance. The remaining members of the Board of Finance voted aye.
4. **Public Input:** No new public input webforms.
5. **Budget Discussion:**
 - a. **Police Department:** K. Brennan asked the Police Department to review their Capital projects:
 - i. J. Piccirillo spoke about the need to replace the current body cameras and add dashboard cameras as part of the Police Accountability bill. Currently, the body cameras footage is currently being hosted by the State of CT under the Resident Trooper program, but the State does not want Resident Trooper towns on their server and have taken steps to remove the towns. There are no cameras in the cruisers currently. The proposed project includes AXON body cameras, dash cameras, and a cloud-based server which will allow Beacon Falls to come off the State's server. The body cams and dash cams would be on a lease program over 5 year and after 2 ½ years AXON will refresh the equipment. At the end of 5 years, we can opt out of the lease or renew. J. Carroll noted it is a necessity that we have this equipment, but asked if the cameras were put out to bid? J. Piccirillo researched several vendors and AXON is the most favorable vendor with the most complete program. Watchdog and Panasonic are other options. Panasonic is the same vendor we have now, and we would be buying the cameras outright with no refresh at 2 ½ years, repair and replacement costs would be on the town, and we would need to

buy our own server. AXON includes the cloud-based software, hosting, redaction software and their evidence.com will integrate with the AXON tasers that we just purchased. If we have an incident, the deployment of taser and cameras will sync. R. Culbertson noted the State was going to remove all the resident towns from their server storage and the State is also switching over to the AXON cameras. G. Smith noted that the State server, as a host is a short-term fix, as they agreed to 2 years, but the State has been trying to get the trooper towns off their servers. This solution makes Beacon Falls autonomous. J. Piccirillo added officers are currently sharing cameras and with this new system we can assign cameras to the officers. There are USDOJ grants available for this equipment, so N. Nau will apply for this grant funding. The proposal is for ten body cameras, which will cover events like the carnival when 6-7 officers are on duty. The vendors are backlogged on the cameras, as computer chips are in short supply, so once the purchase is approved, the Town will move quickly to get a contract in place.

- ii. State Mandated Training – K. Brennan noted that the Police are doubling their budget request for State Mandated Training funds. R. Culbertson stated that as we hire more officers and the State has more training requirements, this budget ensures that all the officers have all the training they need. There are new yearly requirements for body camera and dash camera training. There are new psychological and drug testing requirements in the Police Accountability bill which are also in the Training line. When new Officers come on board, we also use that line to meet all the hiring requirements.
- iii. The Police have added an Interceptor SUV as a \$54,969 project for this year. The quotation is from the State contract. The vehicle would be replaced using Private Duty Fund monies. N. Nau needs to ensure a radio for the new vehicle is included in the price. J. Piccirillo noted that Norcom is currently checking into spare radios that the Police have in their department, which are tuned to State frequencies. R. Culbertson believes that they should be able to swap an old radio into the new Police interceptor. G. Smith and K. Brennan thanked Corporal Piccirillo and Trooper Culbertson for their participation in the workshop this evening.

b. Wastewater Treatment:

- i. T. Carey, Wastewater Superintendent wished to highlight some of the projects taking place at the Plant: The Digester cover project has been going on for years and there have been changes as the project moved from different engineering firms. With SLR heading the project, we now have change orders that have been submitted and we know which direction we are going with the cover companies. When we receive these final changes, we can sign off and they will fabricate what is needed. Kovacs is the contractor hired to do the installation and they are ready to proceed. This should all get underway in the summer, and we are in the final stages. N. Nau noted that the \$238,000 in capital requests noted in the budget, have almost doubled this total project budget. Many items were not considered in the original project, including safety issues which have now been addressed.
- ii. The Electrical Upgrades and Generator Project is moving forward using \$1M in bonded funds. N. Nau noted that we will be going out to bid and begin work on this project in FY2023. T. Carey stated that new power will be coming to the plant, and we received the 50% design plan from SLR on this project. The town needs a larger generator than was previously planned, and we need to discuss how to proceed with the budget. The electrical project will begin to move along quickly. M.

Krenesky asked what powers the generator, and T. Carey noted it will be a diesel engine with a day tank underneath it. G. Smith added it will be convertible to natural gas. The project will exceed the \$1M bonded funds, and as the budget is finalized, we will look at options for funding the balance.

- iii. T. Carey wanted to call the Boards attention to his Sludge processing line which he has almost exceeded for this year, with only 7 months accounted for. The plant is producing a lot more sludge than ever before. There is no way to dewater the sludge and they are hauling more sludge than in past years. The positive side is there is less Nitrogen output from the plant. T. Carey will need to transfer substantial amounts of to cover the balance of the year: 5 months of sludge processing at \$15,000-\$20,000 per month. D. Fennell asked about dewatering the sludge and T. Carey noted that dewatering would be in the next phase of automating the plant, after the electrical upgrades and digester project. T. Carey asked to increase the Sludge Processing budget to \$180,000 for the FY2023 budget. Fuel costs will also impact the cost of hauling the sludge. The transfers from the FY2022 budget will be from Wastewater lines and from the SWWT fund.
- iv. N. Nau asked about the Blower control panel which was a project that T. Carey had put forth last year. The control panel was a bid alternative for the electrical project, and he prefers to wait on this project until the other projects are completed.
- v. N. Nau asked about vehicles for the WWTP: The plow truck is all rotted out. The utility body was replaced a few years ago. There are 70,000 miles on the truck, there is the possibility of buying a new chassis. T. Carey will be looking to do something with this vehicle soon.
- vi. N. Nau also asked about a prior year project for a Retaining Wall: T. Carey noted that it is lower priority, but still a concern and he has considered plantings to keep the soil from eroding.
- vii. T. Carey also noted that for next year, there are some issues with chemical pumps. They have been adding soda ash to the system, which does cause some build up and pipes to clog. He noted that he may move to a caustic liquid instead of the soda ash, which would then be piped with a metering pump, to drain more readily through the system. Thanks to Tom Carey for participation this evening.

c. Public Works:

- i. The Public Works discussion began with Capital Projects and the question of when we need to replace the 2001 Plow truck. J. Gracy provided the Boards with information on the total miles and total amount spent on the repairs to the vehicle. There may be an issue with the injectors on the truck which would cost several thousand dollars to replace. The proposal is to install those injectors using FY2022 budget funds. Public Works just put a high-pressure oil pump in the truck and J. Gracy is hoping that it is a line that is bad, not the injectors. K. Brennan asked if we are putting good money after bad. Will we get another year of life on this truck? J. Gracy added that it is difficult to tell, the truck is well-maintained and does a heavy plow route. However, something could break at any point.
- ii. N. Nau asked based on the needs from the department, what truck would you want to pursue as a replacement. R. Pruzinsky noted that Freightliner is on the State bid, and this is what the State is buying. The most recent vehicle purchased by Public Works is a Freightliner and it works well for the department. R. Pruzinsky noted the older trucks are mechanical, while the newer vehicles have more electronics. N.

Nau would like to see statistics on the emissions of the older truck versus the Freightliner for potential grant data.

- iii. Town Garage: This project is for \$61,500 to replace rotting panels on Town Garage. R. Pruzinsky noted the rotting panels are starting to impact the framework of the building and the project includes both panels and insulation for the garage. The question is how much money do we want to put into the Town Garage and what is the future of the garage? This is a band aid to keep the building contained and safe, but Public Works has outgrown the space. G. Smith is considering prospects for moving the entire town garage operations.
- iv. Bobcat: This is a repeating project for the replacement of 2002 Tractor for \$47,605. G. Smith thinks we can hold on to the tractor for another year and asked if there are issues with it? R. Pruzinsky noted the front axle is making noises, but it is not a primary piece of equipment. It is made in Japan and 20 years old, so parts are more difficult to get. J. Gracy added that it is used a lot more now for mowing in parks.
- v. UTV: This is also a repeating project which includes a plow and heated cab to plow the walking pathways at Pent Road during the winter for \$19,000.
- vi. Volvo Loader: Repaint and repair this 2012 equipment for \$11,000. There are not enough funds remaining in FY2022 Vehicle budget for this repair.
- vii. Transfer Station Permit Renewal: G. Smith noted that SLR is going out to the Public Works Garage to see what we can do for bare minimum with the Transfer Station Permit Renewal. SLR noted that the State has lost a lot of staffing and the full permit process may not take place. The State's requirements will drive the project and SLR will lead us through the project. N. Nau added in past years the Town appropriated \$10,000 for the application fee for transfer station permit renewal.
- viii. N. Nau asked about the Main Street Traffic Light which was a consideration last year. The light is not part of the Burton Road LOTCIP project. R. Pruzinsky spoke with SLR who recommended that the light be part of a grant application for Main Street.
- ix. Vehicle Replacement Fund: N. Nau asked about an annual allotment going into the Vehicle Replacement Fund to accommodate replacement of Public Works trucks? J. Gracy noted that the crew takes very good care of their equipment. R. Pruzinsky agreed \$50,000 would be a good start to the vehicle replacement.
- x. M. Krenesky asked about ownership of the field north of Toby's Pond. R. Pruzinsky added that DEEP owns the property, not DOT and the State assigns rights to the Town. M. Krenesky added what should the town be paying to maintain that piece of property?
- xi. K. Brennan brought up the personnel question in the operating budget: Public Works put in a request for a Highway Maintainer at \$64,000 per year. G. Smith has proposed an Assistant Director of Public Works for \$90,000 per year. SLR completed an evaluation of the Public Works department, and the conclusion was that the Town has a great crew, great equipment and they need administrative assistance. G. Smith is proposing a management position outside of the bargaining unit. This would change the dynamic of the leadership of the department and the \$90,000 budget is what HR has proposed. The Assistant Director would bring more management to the department. D. Fennell would like to see a job description and job costing for the position and how Human Resources arrived at the salary for the position. He asked if it had been adjusted for inflation. G. Smith will distribute the

Public Works evaluation from SLR to the Board of Finance. J. Gracy and R. Pruzinsky left the meeting with thanks from the Boards.

d. Fire & EMS/Fire Marshal:

- i. Beginning with the Fire Marshal budget: B. DeGeorge proposed adding a second deputy Fire Marshal to add the hours to get more inspections done. The Fire Marshal office was a split position when it was under the Police Lt., and we are building the department back up. We are underfunded in getting done what we need to get done. We are in the third year of running this department under this new structure and we are just getting to renewal inspections. Initial inspections were lengthy because it was the first time around for many locations. The Bronson building is an example of a troubled property for the Fire Marshal. B. DeGeorge is interested in adding to the budget to add hours for the Deputy inspector or to add another person to the department, so that businesses can be inspected regularly. W. Hopkinson asked about revenue from these additional hours and B. DeGeorge assured her that revenue will not keep up with expenses. The Fire Marshal department pays for itself in other ways, by providing safety to the town. The Office is trying to get on an annual schedule and some of the properties have been inspected twice. 3-family and above properties are just getting inspected. Every apartment in Beacon Mill Village should be inspected every single year because there are sprinklers throughout the building. The Deputy currently works 10 hours per week and the Fire Marshal 15-20 hours with his focus on plan reviews, blasting permits and underground tanks. He would offer the Deputy more hours first.
- ii. N. Nau noted that the Fire Marshal also focuses on CRR – Community Risk Reduction. The Fire Extinguisher simulator education, smoke detector, CO detector program are all outreach to residents. EMS helps to get some of these programs out to the public and B. DeGeorge would like to do more with the school systems.
- iii. G. Smith put in 2.5% percent increase for the Fire Marshal to go with the rest of the town staff. He agreed that B. DeGeorge is taking a department that was non-existent and making it a true department but would prefer baby steps rather than large leaps. G. Smith noted the Town has done the same with other departments that were lacking, such as Land Use and Police. G. Smith added that the goal is to get somewhere – we need to fall somewhere between what the department is asking for and the 2.5% wage increase that everyone is receiving. B. DeGeorge is not looking for a total fix in a year, but they are trying to do more, and there are more inspections to get done.
- iv. D. Fennell and J. Carroll weighed in that if the main issue is a pile of work, there should a compromise to expand hours for an existing employee and/or a new one, to get these inspections done. The Boards need help to determine what is the right dollar amount to add to the Deputy line to accomplish this. The Fire Marshal can determine how they will divide up the work.
- v. Fire Marshal Vehicle: The Fire Marshal is requesting an increase to the \$28,000 budget that they were approved for last year, due to inflation and the high costs of vehicles. B. DeGeorge noted that can get a year out of the older vehicle that they are currently using, the old 2007 EMS fly car, until an opportunity arises for a new vehicle closer to the approved budget.

- vi. Fire Department Budget: New Engine and Tanker: There are \$162,000 in lease payments that the Town is bound to pay for the two new trucks that were recently purchased.
- vii. Rope Replacement: K. Brennan asked if there was a grant opportunity on the Rope Replacement project? N. Nau noted that we will hear from FEMA on the extrication equipment in August. December/January would be next FEMA application and we would not hear back until August 2023. The project is to replace all the rope at this time and then it would be added to the operating budget, so that the rope replacement would then we worked into the regular budget on a rotation.
- viii. Station 2: B. DeGeorge agreed that the project can hold off another year until we have established a decision on the ownership of the building. There are some roof complications at Station 2 at present.
- ix. Ambulance Payoff: G. Smith is proposing payoff of the existing Ambulance lease this fiscal year. The payoff would come from Undesignated Fund Balance and N. Nau noted the leasing company would invoice us at approximately \$171,000, with the final number determined by the payoff date. Early payoff this year would save \$4,000 in interest. G. Smith is interested in reducing the Town's outstanding overall debt.
- x. New Ambulance: B. DeGeorge noted on replacement of the 2012 Ambulance, if you ordered it today, it would arrive in the middle of FY2023. The First Selectman is proposing \$50,000 for the Vehicle Replacement fund to put towards the purchase. The question is do we have 2 ½ years of life remaining on the 2012 Ambulance? B. DeGeorge noted that we expect to put a lot of repair monies into that vehicle. The Town has elevated call volume and responds to regional calls. The two vehicles are rotated and BHC expects 700 calls this year. Using the life of an ambulance at 10 years and 70,000-mile mark, with a rotation every 5 years - this year would be when the 2012 should be replaced. The worst part on the vehicles is the inflation and the delay in build time. K. Brennan asked if the proposal is to put \$50,000 in the Vehicle Replacement fund, what is the difference between that and spending the \$50,000 on a down payment now. N. Nau noted it is committing to more debt in FY2023. G. Smith has concerns about taking on additional lease debt for Fire vehicles, after the recent purchases. He prefers to watch the spending.
- xi. B. DeGeorge stated that the apparatus have been aging for many years and he understands the new vehicles are pricey and heavily impacted by inflation. Parts are tougher to come by for the older vehicles. The replacement plan for the Fire Department gives them five major apparatus – the new Engine and tanker, the aerial, a second engine, and new truck combines a rescue truck and an engine. N. Nau noted that an important point is that we are not doing nothing. We are putting aside funds for future purchases and moving forward. G. Smith noted we are balancing competing needs from different departments. The challenge per W. Hopkinson is getting the bottom line to be palatable.
- xii. Replacement of Engine 5 & Brush Tanker – The proposal is to hold off on the replacement of the truck and purchase the UTVs and the trailers this year. G. Smith is supporting the other pieces of the project. B. DeGeorge noted the project is not because the truck is unusable, it is to have equipment that better suits their needs. By purchasing the UTVs and trailers, this is a doable project. N. Nau asked if the Fire department would want to change this Engine 5 package, to put more funds

towards prioritizing the ambulance? B. DeGeorge will consider this option, as the UTVs are a priority. Debt service continues to be a concern of G. Smith.

- xiii. The Firehouse Mezzanine and Fire Police Transit van budgets are at \$0 for now. B. DeGeorge agrees they are good goals to have, but not urgent priorities. N. Nau would like to see a cancer prevention piece to be part of any proposal to renovate the Firehouse. A renovation should ensure that gear is not stored on the apparatus floor and hot and cold zones are established. BHC also put \$5,000 for architectural plans for future renovations in the engineering budget.
- xiv. Via text, T. Pratt asked about the completion of the lighting for the NHC BHC Apparatus Ceiling Project: B. DeGeorge is working on finishing the project from this year's budget. The Emergency lighting for the Firehouse is under a Safety committee project.
- xv. Fire Dept IT: There is a 100% increase in the IT Computer line, which includes \$9600 for Novus Insights to support the Firehouse for the year. BHC has determined it is not the right fit to have volunteers running IT and would like to join the Town's IT service. The computers and equipment at BHC are up to date. IT Service is the only thing in this number. N. Nau will look at the cyberinsurance implication for adding the Fire Department to our policy, as their software ESO Solutions is cloud based.
- xvi. Fire Police Vehicle: B. DeGeorge has ideas on how to fund raise portions of this purchase and is working with the Fire Police Captain.
- xvii. N. Nau asked the Board of Finance to review projected Revenue for the Board of Finance Meeting and upcoming Workshops.

6. Next Budget Workshop will be March 22, 2022, in-person at the Town Hall Assembly Room.

7. Adjournment: J. Carroll made a motion to adjourn the Board of Finance at 9:08 PM. S. West seconded the motion. All ayes. P. Betkoski made a motion to adjourn the Board of Selectmen at 9:08 PM. M. Krenesky seconded the motion. All ayes.

Respectfully Submitted,

Erin A. Schwarz

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Finance Office

