



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

**BEACON FALLS BOARD OF SELECTMEN AND BOARD OF FINANCE
VIRTUAL Budget Workshop Meeting
March 16, 2021
MINUTES
(Subject to Revision)**

Call to Order / Pledge of Allegiance: G. Smith called the BOS Meeting to order at 7:00 PM. T. Pratt called the BOF meeting to order at 7:00 PM and G. Smith led the assembled in the Pledge of Allegiance.

BOS Members Present: G. Smith, C. Bielik, M. Krenesky

BOF Members Present: T. Pratt, S. Leeper, K. Brennan, J. Carroll, W. Hopkinson

BOF Members Absent: D. Fennell

Public Present: Finance Manager N. Nau, Patrick Dionne, Susan Mis, Lisa Daigle, Kathy Grace, Jessica Krenesky (7:30 PM), Trooper Henriques (7:30 PM)

- 1. Animal Control – Patrick Dionne:** P. Dionne is not requesting any changes to his operating budget. G. Smith asked him if he has been in contact with Naugatuck Animal Control to work out an arrangement for kenneling dogs, rather than working with Watertown. They are closer and willing to work with the Town. He asked P. Dionne to figure out this arrangement. P. Dionne noted that the only capital request that he would propose is a dog pound, which has not been supported in the past. Kenneling expenses are paid by the dog owners. T. Pratt asked if the owners also pay for P. Dionne's mileage and they do not. N. Nau asked P. Dionne to work on performance metrics to track number of complaints, number of dogs impounded for the budget narrative.
- 2. Town Nurse - Susan Mis** – S. Mis thanked the Boards for the closet project for her office. The closet was built and is working out well. She is requesting \$500-\$750 for Department Supplies next budget year. While she has been doing home visits, screenings at the Senior Center have not been taking place. They will resume when the Senior Center opens. The seniors

miss each other, so she hopes they can open soon. N. Nau asked her for her performance metrics, such as the total number of home visits/patients seen. S. Mis files quarterly reports that track her visits. T. Pratt asked about the Veterans Funerals line the Community Welfare Department. C. Bielik explained that this line would be coverage if the American Legion was unavailable to serve at a funeral. He explained that Department 63 has many lines which are not under S. Mis' guidance but has been a catch-all for Community Welfare organizations. We do pay for S. Mis' mileage and education expenses under the Town Hall lines, which N. Nau noted could move to Community Welfare if we adopted a more Program based budget structure.

3. **Minibus and Senior Center** – G. Smith noted that given the lack of activity this year due to COVID shutdowns, these budgets are primarily flat. The WCAAA grant for the minibus riders helps to offset the cost of the bus. T. Pratt noted as the bus ages, do we foresee any expensive repairs which will be needed for the bus. G. Smith suggested routine maintenance on quarterly basis. He added that the CDL operator does a pre-trip review to check all operations, as a cursory inspection every day before the bus moves. All the commercial vehicles in town need to meet DOT annual inspections. For COVID safety, partitions have been installed in the bus.

Regarding the Senior Center operating costs, N. Nau noted that our Heating Oil contract will be renegotiated with CRPC and we are waiting for the price to drop to lock into the best price possible. She anticipates an increase in oil costs for next year. Building Maintenance – S. Leeper suggested that the Town use what we did not spend in Building Maintenance for the Senior Center this year to look at work that can be completed, railings, awnings, locks, etc. T. Pratt noted that the Building Inspector should be brought in to look at the 4 cracks going across the ramp. Mike Krenesky asked about the projection on the Telephone line. The telephone line houses Cable, Internet and Phone and there is a new service contract with CT Communications on the phone lines which increases annual cost.

4. **Inland Wetlands** – L. Daigle represented IWWC and noted that the Board reviewed the Wages for IW Enforcement Officer and Soil Conservation District lines in the budget, and they agreed with the budget. IWWC belongs to the SW Conservation District and CACIWC and they wish to maintain those memberships. CACIWC is paid for from Board & Commission expense line. N. Nau reminded L. Daigle to work with D. Keating on Performance Metrics for his office.
5. **Registrar** – K. Grace began the budget discussion with an explanation of the pay increase they are requesting. In the past, raises were given out to Elected Officials, and the Registrars have been left out and feel they are overlooked. They used to receive a base salary and hourly pay for extra work, but now they only receive their salary. Since 2008 and they have gotten a raise of 1% per year and they are asking for a 10% raise this year. K. Grace noted that the State requirements are expanding, and canvas work is expanding, and Kathy feels they should be compensated for this. J. Krenesky joined the meeting and feels the lack of raises over time do not keep up with standards and it is a matter of not being able to get the work done in 4 hours per week. The current salary does not reflect what it takes to do the job. G. Smith noted that the Town always looks at salary information statewide from CCM. Based on CCM salary survey, \$13,500 for Registrars for a town our size, is right where it should be. Raises were given to the Selectmen, Treasurer positions in the past because the other

positions were underpaid. At present, the 2 Selectmen, Treasurer and Registrars are paid the same salaries. K. Grace noted that the salary numbers on the CCM report would not show if the Registrars were paid extra for elections, referendums, and attending conferences. T. Pratt noted it is worth exploring and comparing the rates paid by similar sized towns.

Turning to other operating budget lines, T. Pratt asked about Absentee ballot expenses and Primary expenses to confirm they are accurately budgeted for next year. M. Krenesky noted that Region 16 may have a budget referendum this year. K. Grace stated that a school budget referendum would be in May of this fiscal year and would not impact the town's budget, as Region 16 is billed for referendum expenses. T. Pratt asked about Office Hours for the public and K Grace works Tuesday early in the day and Jessica later in the day until 6:30 PM. Most people register to vote online or through Motor Vehicle. K. Grace is certified and J. Krenesky is beginning the certification process. N. Nau asked about Performance metrics for the Registrar, and they keep those records and will supply them.

6. **Police** – Trooper Humberto Henriques presented the proposed Police operating budget and capital projects.

Capital Projects:

- Roof replacement on Main building and Police garage – He obtained quotes from Brown Roofing for complete roof replacements including ice shield barriers, gutters, stripping the roof down to plywood, and replacing 3-tab roof with architectural shingles. The current roofs and gutters are in bad shape and slated for replacement.
- Tasers – Trooper Henriques proposed a revolving expense for 4 new tasers and 14 holsters, which includes training and training cartridges, as well as Taser's legal protection. In the event of a legal liability involving a Taser, the company would get involved. Every officer would be registered with taser. The proposal is for \$19,000 over 5 years and Includes all the training, cartridges, and startup costs. The current tasers are obsolete and due for trade-in and as a tool they replace lethal force in certain circumstances. Tasers are a valuable tool that he encourages all the officers have access to. The Board and Finance Manager asked questions to understand the cost structure and vendor agreement, as Taser is the sole source for this project. The \$19,000 -\$20,000 is like a lease agreement financed over 5 years and at the end of the fifth year, the tasers life expectancy is over and they will need to be replaced. N. Nau discussed making the project an operating expense, as it lends itself to an annual \$4,000 expense. With a five-year life expectancy, the expense will continue to reoccur after the 5-year payment plan expires.
- Service weapons – The next project is for new service weapons. The existing Sig Sauer weapons are getting up in age which can lead to mechanical failures. Local Police are now moving to 9mm weapons, which are more accurate, with less recoil. Rounds are less expensive than 45 mm rounds. The project is for 14 new service weapons and the cost includes trade in value on the existing weapons. Trooper Henriques is proposing a rail system with flashlight on the gun and a red dot site. These new weapons have increased accuracy, the gun is smaller and lighter and more dynamic. The price of the guns themselves comes to \$9,997, less trade ins and then holsters are needed. T. Pratt asked if the flashlight and red dot site is included in the costs and Trooper Henriques will refine the budget number and make sure those accessories are included.

Finance Manager N. Nau also explained that ammunition is currently backordered with a long lead time, so to avoid any issues the Police Department would like to order the ammunition for these guns with this year's operating budget. This is an unusual request but warranted if the officers are to have ammunition available for the guns when they are ordered and arrive. Trooper Henriques was hoping for a preliminary approval to order the ammunition, as the delivery is 8-12 weeks out (or longer) on the ammunition. N. Nau wanted the Boards to be cognizant of this, as the Police Department has put the PO in for the ammunition and is awaiting the okay to place the order. G. Smith asked for a confirmation of a solid number for the total cost of the project including the accessories.

Police Operating Expenses:

- Turning to the operating budget, G. Smith asked with the hiring of extra officers is the PT Patrol line accounting for these PT shifts and will this take care of overages in FT overtime? Trooper Henriques explained that the new officers are making Beacon Falls their priority, working more and filling more shifts which provides better coverage and more value to the town. He was also able to reappropriate equipment, such as holsters, belts, pepper spray, and other costly items, which were issued to new officers to keep uniform costs down. He expects with spring weather there will be short sleeve uniform costs, but these are fabric costs, not major equipment costs. T. Pratt asked about the telephone line which is phones, cell phones and internet. The cell phones will be moved to Town Hall Cell Phone line, so this line will decrease. N. Nau added her performance metrics reminder. Trooper Henriques would like to add some positive Community policing statistics to highlight the good that the Police Department accomplishes.
- In other future potential expenses to note: The Police Accountability bill will impact the budget as officers will need routine psychiatric evaluations on a revolving basis. In Employment Benefits, there is an Employee Assistance program where we have budgeted some extra funds for this purpose. Trooper Henriques estimated sending 4 officers per year at \$250.00 per officer. Some additional criteria which may be costly is the data storage for body worn cameras. The department is in compliance with wearing the cameras. Data is currently stored on the State server, but the State may begin to charge for iCloud storage in the future. One final proposal is the requirement is in dash cameras, which none of the cars including the new 2021 vehicle, have on board. In dash cameras would be a costly project for the vehicles. N. Nau will update the capital plan to include these items if Trooper Henriques can provide costs.

The Board of Selectmen and Finance thanked Officer Henriques for his time and input, and thanks to all the participants in tonight's meeting.

Motion to adjourn the Board of Selectmen Meeting at 8:30 PM: CB/MK All ayes. Motion to adjourn the Board of Finance Meeting at 8:30 PM: SL/JC All ayes.

Respectfully Submitted,

Erin A. Schwarz, Finance Assistant