



**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 28, 2023, MINUTES (Subject to Revision)**

1. **Call to Order / Pledge of Allegiance:** BOF Chair J. Carroll and First Selectman G. Smith called the meeting to order at 7:05 PM and led the assembled in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Members Present: G. Smith, M. Krenesky, J. Carroll, K. Brennan, S. Leeper, T. Pratt

Members Absent: W. Hopkinson, D. Fennell, P Betkoski

Others Present: N. Nau, T. Carey, B. DeGeorge, C. Brennan, one member of the public

2. **Approval of Minutes:** T. Pratt made a motion to approve the 3/21/23 Budget Workshop minutes. S. Leeper seconded the motion. All ayes. M. Krenesky made a motion to approve the 3/21/23 Budget Workshop minutes. G. Smith seconded the motion. All ayes.
3. **Comments from Public:** There were no public comments in person or via webform.
4. **Department Budgets:**

Wastewater Treatment Plant - Operating Budget:

- a. T. Carey appeared before the Boards to discuss the requests for the Wastewater Plant. Starting with the operating budget, he requests an increase to the Plant Operations budget, which was cut last year. He has already needed to transfer into the line this fiscal year. The new expenses in that line are for crane inspections, which is an improvement as they were not inspected annually in the past. T. Carey asked that the board replenish that line this year.
- b. N. Nau noted that the sludge processing hauling is now paying a Highway tax to the State, which will be passed along to the Town, which will result in additional sludge hauling costs – \$2.39 per load resulting in \$1,000 annually. The boards asked that T. Carey and Finance review the sludge costs to date to see if there is any way to reduce the \$180,000 amount currently in the budget. This year's sludge costs look to be averaging \$155,000. Some of the sludge processing is weather dependent and heavier in the spring. T. Carey would like to use this line in FY2023 for digester cleaning – McVac would come in and clean out the digester tank and he would use the balance of the sludge processing money to clean the tank. N. Nau noted there are only a couple of sludge processing vendors, and there is one year extension available on the existing provider's contract.
- c. T. Carey also noted that he received an increase in pricing for (PAC) Poly Aluminum Chloride. He buys this product from Holland Company and their costs are going up \$1.00/gallon @ approximately 1500 gallons annually, this would mean a \$4,500-\$5,000 increase to Plant Operations. N. Nau will research CPRC or other contracts for PAC, so ensure we are getting the best pricing.
- d. **Capital Project** – The WWTP has put in a request for a new vehicle, a Ford F350 and is using an MSRP of \$53,390. The same vehicle on the State Contract is \$47,000, however under the State Contract there is a longer lead time. T. Carey noted that given the long lead time it would be good to get this started and the process going. N. Nau noted that we could pursue a letter of intent with the dealer. Tom does not have a problem with waiting, if they can get the

truck that they want. T. Carey also increased the Vehicle Maintenance to keep the existing truck going for another year.

- e. **Boiler** – T. Carey noted that the current boiler was installed in 1994 and it has had its issues. It is a cast iron furnace which is no longer made. T. Carey understands that Fire Dept boiler installation was emergent, and he would like to avoid that type of situation, but he believes the boiler can wait another year. The BTUs for the WWTP boiler are lower than the Firehouse. N. Nau presented the spec on the WWTP boiler and noted this project would need to be bid on. The full scope is difficult to assess as the fan coils and unit heaters are more than 30 years old. There were some funds from SWWT funds, for a retaining wall at the plant, which are unexpended, and they can go towards the project. N. Nau suggested taking our time and putting out an RFP midway through the FY2024 fiscal year for a month, evaluating the submissions for a month and planning an award for the next budget season FY2025.

The Boards thanked T. Carey for his appearance at the Workshop.

Fire Dept/Fire Marshal/EMD:

- a. B. DeGeorge began with the Fire Department operating budget increases. T. Pratt asked about how much software the Town has purchased for the Firehouse. The Firehouse has ESO software and Spotted Dog which total \$12,500. The software runs EMS – run sheets and tracks every emergency call. Fire Marshal software is running through ESO as well.
- b. B. DeGeorge noted that their projections from their vendors were price increases of 10-15%, so the budget requests reflect this. T. Pratt asked about Fire Training which is a line currently trending below budget. B. DeGeorge noted there is a lot of training in the spring. FF1 class is \$1500. They have put 6 people through school recently and BHC is usually on point for the last few years with the Training budget. BHS is looking to bring in more specialized training from outside vendors next year. Live Fire Training has not taken place this year.
- c. G. Smith asked if it is common for a volunteer fire department to pick up all the training costs and once we train members, do we retain them. B. DeGeorge stated there is no doubt we are training people to move on. G. Smith asked: Do we ask for a commitment? With EMS, the participant pays for the EMS class and then they are paid back by BHC in thirds when they stay in service for over 2 years. BHS is trying to incorporate a commitment for Fire training. The reality is that we are constantly training new recruits, and BHC hopes to get 5 years of service, for the amount of money we spend on training.
- d. T. Pratt asked about air bottles and air packs and B. DeGeorge noted we are not on track with a replacement cycle. NFPA is continuously changing requirements, and the new style of air packs has new fitting for buddy breather. The vendor for these items is stating there will be a 10% increase next year. BHC owns 75 bottles, and they are aware of their life cycles, and with the NFPA changing standards they are careful with new purchases. N. Nau noted that NFPA is also potentially shortening the PPE lifespan. B. DeGeorge noted that BHC takes good care of the PPE. T. Pratt asked with all the changing standards, at what point do we stabilize the investment. B. DeGeorge noted that BHC has calculated a continuous cycle for replacement of hose and air pack/air bottles, which is now in their budget. Fire Dept supplies and EMS supplies are also seeing increases. Narcan can now be purchased using monies from the Opioid Settlement litigation. Heating and Vehicle Fuel lines have increased to reflect costs around \$3.00/gallon for heating oil, gas and diesel.
- e. **Capital Improvements: Energy Improvements/Apparatus Floor.** B DeGeorge put in this request for additional insulating the gable ends with spray foam and completing electrical upgrades for this part of the building.
- f. **SCBA Mask & Fit Testing Machine** – N. Nau proposed budgeting 5% from the Town as a match to an AFG Grant application, as this is a high priority item for AFG. She would need to remove the 5 years of maintenance and service which are on the quote, as AFG will not support costs greater than 1 year. B. DeGeorge noted that to complete the fit testing in-house with the machine would be easier and more efficient.

- g. Battery Operating Fans for Truck 6 and Engine 3 – BHC is currently using corded fans right now. Everything is moving to battery powered and this would add this to the arsenal of battery-operated items with more current equipment.
- h. Replacement of BH6 – Ambulance – N. Nau noted that we have funded \$50,000 to the Vehicle Replacement fund last year. She has a call into financier, looking at a 5-year, 7 year, and 10-year arrangement. She asked B. DeGeorge what contract was used for the pricing and noted that this purchase must be on a contract. We do not intend to bid on this. The last ambulance was on the HGAC contract. The dealers are authorized distributors for the contract, AEV is on the HGAC contract, but Eastford is not listed. The Finance office will be looking into financing. BHC will need to confirm with the dealer and lock into pricing on HGAC contract. The dealer needs to honor that HGAC price without escalations.

Fire Marshal: The Operating change for the Fire Marshal relates to their Vehicle request. They have put in a truer figure for a pick-up truck with a bed to keep gear away from operating gear. The vehicle would be used for the Fire Dept and Fire Marshal office, but the main function is for investigation and inspection. B. DeGeorge noted the F350 was less money than smaller F150 and radio costs for the vehicle and portable radio would be \$6k.

There was discussion about the status of communications, as the State is switching over to fiber and upgrades to switch to fiber would be very expensive. BHC's base system is getting to life expectancy. They are also talking about adding a radio tower on the Beacon Hill side and improving portable coverage. Region 16 is making some changes to their equipment and the shared radio tower on their property.

K. Brennan asked if they are against the idea of repurposing a retired Police car as a Fire Marshal vehicle. B. DeGeorge asked how far along the police car is and are there issues with using a hand me down item now. They would need to retrofit the back to keep gear separated from the occupant, which is the advantage of the truck.

5. Revenue/Expenditures/Non-Recurring Capital:

J. Carroll asked the boards how they wanted to address the Early voting question for the Registrar. The First Selectman proposed \$5,000 for Early voting and he removed the Registrars requests for Town Meeting/Referendum funds and a clerk. We do not have that many Town meetings and the Registrars are paid a set salary and they are elected to be there for Town Meetings/referendums. There is so much unknown with early voting that \$5,000 is a good number to start with, and we might also get some money from the State to implement the new process. J. Carroll noted that we can change this number if we get more information from the State before the Town budget vote. G. Smith added that he wants to keep the budget as lean as we can, and we can look to contingency to fund additional costs if needed.

The BOS will be holding a Special meeting in Executive session to discuss the non-union salary increases which were requested. Union position rates will be negotiated with the contract.

N. Nau noted that she is working on the RFP for refuse and recycling hauling. J. Carroll noted that trash disposal costs are going up statewide. N. Nau increased Refuse and Recycling by 20% in anticipation of the results.

N. Nau noted that Region 16 provided a revised budget and their budget projection for Beacon Falls is \$30,000 higher, which has been included in the draft.

N. Nau ran through the Capital requests and the First Selectman's proposal for each of them. There will be some movement/changes on the funding sources of these projects. Finance originally thought we could use LOCIP monies for the POCD project, but the timing of LOCIP funds will not allow this. Finance will review the list to propose other projects which are LOCIP eligible, such as the Town Garage Walls.

Rimmon Hill Schoolhouse – S. Leeper asked about the status of this project. MK noted there is real movement on the project and expects the Town to own the property soon. There were some monies designated by Parks & Recreation (\$4200 remaining) for the building. J. Carroll asked what they would use the building for and M. Krenesky explained the idea of a museum with 3-4 car parking spaces, as the schoolhouse is on its original site. The board is determined to keep the \$25,000 grant application in the budget and the grant can be increased as needed to fund the project as plans develop.

6. Adjournment: MK made a motion to adjourn the BOS workshop at 9:17 PM. GS seconded the motion. All ayes.

KB made a motion to adjourn the BOF portion of the workshop at 9:17 PM. TP seconded the motion. All ayes.

Respectfully Submitted,

Erin Schwarz
Finance Administrative Assistant