

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



**BEACON FALLS BOARD OF FINANCE
Regular Monthly Meeting
September 15, 2020
MINUTES
(Subject to Revision)**

1. Call to Order / Pledge of Allegiance

Chairman T. Pratt called the meeting to order at 7:01 PM and led the assembled in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Members Present: L. Hutvagner, T. Pratt, S. Leeper, K. Brennan, J. Carroll (7:05 PM), D. Fennell (7:05 PM)

Members Absent: None

Others Present: First Selectman G. Smith, Selectman M. Krenesky, Finance Manager N. Nau (7:05 PM). *Note: No members of the public attending the meeting via Zoom.*

L. Hutvagner began the meeting by asking for clarification on who is allowed to attend the BOF meetings in person. T. Pratt noted that the Board of Finance members and Board of Selectmen members, as the town's governing body, are invited to attend in person, along with the Finance Manager. L. Hutvagner asked when the public will be allowed to attend in person and G. Smith explained that the town will follow the guidance provided by Naugatuck Valley Health District to determine when to resume public in person meetings.

L. Hutvagner noted that with the turnover of the town email, his email is not working. He did not receive sufficient notice of the email change, nor instruction on how to complete the process, which is not acceptable. He did not receive the minutes or reporting by email due to the email changes and should not be expected to print copies at home. He would like to receive hard copies in a complete package of all documentation: minutes, agenda, and all reports for future meetings.

2. Approval of Minutes from Previous Meetings: Tabled pending review.

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

4. Reports

- a. Tax Collector Report – The Tax Collector provided a one-page summary of August tax collections.
- b. Town Clerk Report – No questions. There was a large commercial real estate sale this month.
- c. Treasurers Report - No questions. Current interest rates are very low.
- d. Region 16 – No questions. Report is posted on Region 16 website.

e. Ambulance Report – No questions.

5. T. Pratt asked for a motion to add Correspondence to the agenda. **J. Carroll made a motion to add Correspondence. L. Hutvagner seconded the motion All ayes.** Under Correspondence,
- a. T. Pratt received notice that D. Fennell has been appointed to the Service Award Committee for the Fire Department.
 - b. The attached letter from Attorney Steven Studer of Bercham Moses was read into the meeting records.
 - c. The attached email correspondence between T. Pratt and Attorney Steve Studer was also read for the record.
 - d. T. Pratt distributed copies of State Statute 106 to all members of the BOF and to the Finance Manager. N. Nau will look at incorporating the Statute into the Finance Policy Manual, per Attorney Studer's suggestion.

6. Finance Manager Report:

- N. Nau reviewed items in the August 2020 Finance report. She noted that the BOF will be voting on the change to the Cash Drawer policy from the Tax Collector/Assessor under Finance Policy Manual item on the agenda. The revision language was included at the end of the monthly report.
- N. Nau provided an update on the status of RFPs:
 - 20-9: Milling, Reclamation and Paving RFP: On the initial RFP, one word on the pricing sheet was incorrect and the engineer deemed that it was significant enough to cancel the initial bid and readvertise it. The bid was advertised a second time for a week. Today, the Town agreed to make the award to Cocchiola Paving. The RFPs were graded in Bonfire, reference calls completed, the attorney was consulted and after review of all the submissions, Cocchiola was deemed responsible and responsive low bidder for the project.
 - N. Nau noted that if any members of the BOF would like to take on the role of Observer/Advisor on future RFPs, these roles are available in Bonfire. The RFPs can be viewed in real time and she encouraged the members to take part. G. Smith has served as Advisor on all the RFPs, with subject matter experts reviewing and grading the bids.
 - Finance Accounting Software – There were 4 submissions on this RFP and 2 of those submissions were well beyond the budget. It has been determined that there was no selection in the group of bidders that would provide a good result for the town. The Finance Office will not be launching new software as of January 1st but will be looking at other options to improve upon the current software.
 - 35 Wolfe Ave – 5 submissions were received, 4 were deemed responsive and grading was completed. 4 out of 5 of the submissions were significantly above the budget. No selection has been made and these bids are now expiring as they are close to 90 days old.
 - Revaluation – N. Nau is working with the town attorney and Municipal Valuation Services to finalize the contract language. COVID has caused changes to the expectations for interior inspections, so special conditions are being proposed.
- T. Pratt asked about the benefits of the Bonfire system. N. Nau noted that she supports the software and enjoys using it. The biggest advantage is that it brings all the RFP documentation into one place and takes email out of the process. It provides a portal

for RFP development from cradle to grave and the entire process can be viewed. There have been favorable comments from bidders in the revaluation industry while those bidders in the construction industry are more traditional and resistant to the electronic submissions. Bonfire recently updated their pricing sheet which is another improvement to the process. G. Smith added that having everything housed in one location, with comments and notes visible on all the projects, has been very helpful.

- No update on Station #2 for Fire Dept.
- Solar Panel ROI – N. Nau had a conference call with CCM consultant Titan Energy about energy conservation services for the town. They are willing to look at the ROI on the solar panel project. D. Fennell had a negative experience with Titan Energy which he noted for the group. There is more to come on this review.
- The August report has close out figures for FY2020 which show an increase to our Undesignated Fund Balance.
- The Finance Office is currently working on the Official Statement data for the BAN Issuance. The Town's 2014 Bond is eligible for refinancing on December 15th. At this point, it makes sense to combine the BAN Issuance with the refinancing for December 15th. Paving which will take place this fall can be paid for from the General Fund and reimbursed when the BAN is issued. L. Hutvagner noted that this is perfectly legal, as the Bond Resolution has approved the borrowing, work can proceed, and the town can pay itself back. He noted that catch basin work which Public Works is currently completing, including the excavator rental, should all be charged to the BAN as road work. This will prevent Highway Materials line from running short at the end of the fiscal year.
- Budget items: For the FY21 fiscal year, the report has line items which are trending overbudget highlighted in yellow. L. Hutvagner asked about the line item for the EMD cell phone. The Resident Trooper received a town cell phone from the former EMD, so a new cell phone has been ordered for the new EMD. Several new town cell phones are in place which came out of COVID needs and have proven beneficial to keep, so transfers will be needed on the phones.
- L. Hutvagner referred to Statutes Page 5 of Chapter 106 Section 7-348, if any occasion arises where additional monies are needed for a department of the town, the Board of Selectman shall notify the Board of Finance to consider the appropriation for the department. He cautioned that the BOS should follow the Statute and the Finance Policy manual and seek approval from the BOF before exceeding department budgets. In the example above, the BOF should be notified before the extra phone is ordered.
- FY2020 Audit – The Finance Office met with Mahoney Sabol in August for audit pre-planning. L. Hutvagner asked if the verbal recommendations from FY2019 audit all have been addressed and the steps taken/actions put in writing. N. Nau will review and address. She is currently working with WPCA on one of the items regarding the Sewer Connection Permit.
- Storm Isaias – The town has approximately \$27,000 in damage because of the storm. FEMA is in the preliminary stages of allocating funds to the project and we are applying them with all the documentation that we have. The expenses include overtime, equipment hours for debris removal, tree work and fence repairs. An appropriation for Storm Isaias will be needed and should be addressed next month either via Town Meeting or with the BOS/BOF appropriating \$19,999, the maximum that is allowable.

- T. Pratt asked about the Purchase Order process in an emergency and how departments should be handling procurement in an emergency. G. Smith noted that in times like this, we may be relying on a local vendor who is available. T. Pratt noted that this should not prevent the department from getting the proper PO in place shortly following the event.
- The Breault Road site has been officially approved by DEEP as debris site for the town.
- Grants
 - FEMA application for COVID-FEMA has provided a preliminary determination approving approximately \$10,000 of the \$33,000 project. The approved items are directly related to emergency personnel and safety – masks, PPE, etc. They will not approve technology, building modifications, reopening costs, etc. The next step is to apply to CRF for the items FEMA did not approve. AFG-S is another source for Fire PPE expenses only.
 - K. Matthies Grant – We received approval for \$7100 in park benches and tables, including ADA tables at Pent Road.
 - Bulletproof vest deadline – We met the deadline for application on the BVP grant and expect \$1600 reimbursement.
 - STEAP – The town has applied for \$128,205 for Cook Lane drainage improvements, which is the maximum allowable.
 - Safe Polls Grant – The Town received \$1100 Safe Polls grant for the primary, \$2500 for the November election and \$2200 for Absentee Ballot support for the Town Clerk. G. Smith noted that the Town Clerk will need more manpower for processing the Absentee ballots that he expects, and more funds may be needed to cover these costs.
 - C-DOT is another grant dealing approaching which will be discussed.

7. First Selectman's Report

- a. Budget Transfers FY2020-2021: There are no transfers currently.
- b. Beacon Valley Road: G. Smith noted that the project is moving full steam ahead with LOTCIP application being processed and we hope to put the project out to bid later this fall.
- c. Aquarion Hydrants: T. Pratt provided an update that several hydrants in town have been tested and found to have sufficient pressure. The term "bad" hydrants will no longer be used in the Fire Chief's reporting to indicate low pressure, as these hydrants meet Aquarion standards.
- d. Station 2 – As mentioned earlier, no update on this project.
- e. Road Projects – G. Smith has been pushing the engineers on the road projects. Catch basins are being completed on the Hillside, West Road area of town with Public Works completing this work inhouse. We have rented an excavator for a month to complete the work. When paving begins in this part of town this fall, he hopes to skim coat 400 feet of Rimmon Hill Road as a temporary help for this winter. L. Hutvagner noted that the town should publicize the catch basin work and the upcoming BAN Issuance.
- f. BH7 – G. Smith provided an update on the older ambulance with the suspension issues. The suspension has been fixed, so that it currently rides smoothly and should last 2 more years, so that we are on a better replacement cycle.
- g. Police Department – G. Smith noted that the Police Department is currently interviewing 5 prospects as potential new Part Time hires. They have put together a Task Force to

increase patrols at night to curb some of the thefts that have been occurring. G. Smith noted that the BOF should anticipate increased expenses for outfitting new officers and a potential increase in PT Patrol budget for these extra night patrols.

h. D. Fennell asked the board to consider the costs of bulletproof glass for police vehicles, which will serve to protect those who protect us.

8. **Finance Policy Manual** – With regard to amendments proposed concerning the Tax Department Cash Drawer policy, L. Hutvagner made a motion to approve the revisions as noted. J. Carroll seconded the motion. All ayes. Further revisions including the additional of Chapter 106 are forthcoming.

9. **Old Business** – T. Pratt noted that his proposal is for the BOF to adopt a 5 Year Capital Improvement Plan and submit it to the BOS, so that it becomes a formal document which flows from year to year and changes annually. N. Nau asked about the expectation on timeline. T. Pratt asked N. Nau to refine the existing 10-year plan, include funding sources and have a version ready for the October meeting.

10. **New Business** – None at this time.

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

12. **Adjournment:** S. Leeper for motion to adjourn at 8:52 PM. K. Brennan seconded the motion. All ayes.

Respectfully submitted,

Erin Schwarz
Finance