

THOMPSON BOARD OF FINANCE
TOWN OF THOMPSON
Library Community Center
March 20, 2014 7:00 p.m.

MINUTES

I. ROLL CALL

Chairman Raymond Faucher, Jr. called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Members present: Paul Dery, Aaron McGarry, Larry Groh, Jr., Laurent Guillot, Susanne Witkowski, Raymond Faucher, Jr.

Members absent: None.

Also present: Paul Lenky, Kirsten Forrester, Shaina Smith, Michael Martin, Michael Jolin, members of the public, employees of the Town, members of the press.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion made by Laurent Guillot, seconded by Paul Dery to approve the minutes from the February 20, 2014 Board of Finance meeting. **Motion—Passed. Unanimous.**

Motion made by Paul Dery, seconded by Susanne Witkowski, to approve the minutes from the March 6, 2014 Special Board of Finance meeting. **Motion—Passed. Aaron McGarry abstained.**

III. CORRESPONDENCE

A timeline of events from Mary Ann Chinatti, Director of Planning and Development regarding the West Thompson roof project was received.

A letter from Mary Ann Chinatti to the Attorney General regarding the West Thompson roof project was received.

A printout of mileage on the bus fleet was received from Dr. Jolin. Mr. Dery asked if a printout of the previous year's mileage could also be provided. Dr. Jolin will provide that information.

Mr. Dery stated he received correspondence from Dr. Jolin regarding last year's budget subcommittee meetings. Mr. Dery will forward this correspondence to Board members.

IV. CITIZENS COMMENTS

Kathy Finn, Secretary of Quaddick Lake Association discussed the invasive weeds at Quaddick Lake and noted at the last meeting the Board of Finance was asked to consider helping financially with the cost of weed control. Mr. Guillot stated he has questions regarding this and will reserve his questions to when this issue comes up during the budget workshop.

John Sharpe stated he brought information regarding the prices of personal protective equipment for firefighters for the Board's information.

Christine Campbell suggested looking into using an outside bus service for the schools to save money. Mrs. Campbell also asked if the District has considered purchasing smaller buses instead of large buses which would be more cost effective. Mr. Faucher stated he will have Dr. Jolin address these questions during the budget workshop.

Mr. Baer stated he feels the cost of the \$150,000.00 roof project at West Thompson Fire Department should not become a burden on the tax payers. Mr. Baer read Section 25 of the contract. Mr. Baer stated checks were drawn in violation of State Statute and in violation of Town ordinance. The State Statute requires all orders on the treasury be signed by a majority of the selectmen and there is one signature made on the check for \$99,000.00, and one signature not on the check but on the order for \$46,000.00 to the contract in violation of State Statute, there is a mandatory fine that is involved in that Statute, it should have never been paid, the funds should not have been advanced as it states in the contract that everyone signed, the First Selectmen at the time and the president of the West Thompson Fire house or independent fire association, so if we don't get the money from the state then the taxpayers should not be on the hook.

Mr. Baer stated he feels there is a lot of waste in town. Some examples of waste are brand new filters being stored in a bus that is out of service and they probably go out and purchase more; tires that are usable are left on out of service buses yet new tires are purchased; the student population is down yet the District wants to hire more people. Mr. Baer noted that the current contract with the bus drivers states that the District cannot use outside vendors. Mr. Baer stated the District recently entered into a 5 year contract for waste hauling with escalation clauses calling for increases in fees. Mr. Baer provided the Board with a State of Connecticut list of inspections required by the Town's fire marshal. Mr. Baer stated not one inspection report is on file in the Town Hall. Mr. Baer stated that the Fire Advisory Committee tried last year to get funds for an outside consultant

to review the needs of the Town. Mr. Baer urged the Board to invest the money into a consultant to find out the needs of the Town with respect to the fire departments. Mr. Baer stated he already provide the Board with documents showing the waste at the library.

V. PAUL LENKY—SELECTMEN’S UPDATE

Mr. Lenky stated the Building Department issued 16 permits last month.

Mr. Lenky stated a bill has been received from Premier Laboratories to conduct water testing at the landfill totaling \$9,215.00.

Mr. Lenky reported the State DOT has requested the Town’s intentions regarding fixing the Quaddick Lake Bridge. Mr. Lenky explained he is looking into different options to fix the bridge so that the public is minimally impacted.

Mary Ann Chinatti explained the status of the reimbursement for the West Thompson Roof project. She has not heard from the Attorney General in response to her letter. She has contacted the Governor’s office to make an appointment with the Governor to discuss this issue and has not heard back as of yet. She has been discussing this issue with Senator Williams and Representative Rovero and has not been able to get a resolution from either of them. Paul Dery expressed concern that at the end of the current fiscal year that the money will no longer be available. Mr. Faucher asked Ms. Chinatti to come to the next meeting to provide the Board with further updates and suggested the Board of Selectman contact the Town Attorney to discuss options available to the Town regarding this issue.

Mr. Baer asked the Board of Finance to find out how that amount of money was appropriated without the proper signatures in violation of Town ordinance. Mr. Groh explained this expenditure was brought to Town Meeting for approval and once that approval occurred then checks could be issued.

Mr. Lenky stated the Trinity Foundation sewer contract was passed by the Board of Selectmen in February. Mr. Faucher read the resolution into the record:

RESOLVED, That the Board of Finance hereby recommends that the Town of Thompson appropriate \$1,900,000 and authorize borrowing in the same amount for costs related to the construction and installation of approximately 6,000 feet of gravity sewer from the existing town collection system on Route 12 to the Marianapolis property located on 26 Chase Road, Thompson, Connecticut, and other work related to the project including the acquisition of construction and permanent easements; and costs related to the financing thereof. The appropriation may be spent for construction costs, land and easement acquisition, equipment, materials, related work, appurtenances and improvements, project administration, engineering, consultant and legal fees, net interest on borrowings

and other financing costs, and other expenses related to the project or it's financing. The Water Pollution Control Authority shall determine the particulars and scope of the project and may reduce or modify the project, and the entire appropriation may be expended on the project as so reduced or modified.

Motion made by Larry Groh, Jr., seconded by Suanne Witkowski to approve the resolution as read. Discussion was held. Mr. Martin explained the language in the motion has been drafted by bond counsel. Mr. Lenky explained the process has gone through all other departments necessary before coming to the Board of Finance. Mr. Dery stated he has issues with the language in Paragraph 9. Mr. Lenky stated Attorney St. Onge approved the contract as presented. Mr. Dery stated he is still concerned about Paragraph 9 and would like some clarification on the language. Mr. Baer stated past work product of the Town Attorney is questionable as well as the fire department contract contained many typographical errors. Mr. Groh stated the language was reviewed by two attorneys and if something happens as a result then the Town Attorney would have to defend the Town. Mr. McGarry expressed concern that this contract is for \$1.9 million dollars and if there is language contained in the document that could open the Town up for liability similar to the West Thompson roof project then the Board of Finance needs to do everything it can to prevent that from happening. Mr. McGarry read the default clause from the contract. Mr. Groh stated this contract is between the Trinity Foundation and the Town of Thompson and there is a clause included that a lien would be placed on the property if the Town has expended any money and does not get reimbursed.

A roll call vote was taken: Paul Dery—no, Aaron McGarry—no, Susanne Witkowski—no; Larry Groh—yes; Laurent Guillot—yes; Raymond Faucher—yes. Motion Failed.

It was suggested that a special meeting be held to have Attorney St. Onge present to answer any questions and concerns the Board members may have. Mr. Groh stated this process has been going on for years and now the process is being held up to question the language approved by the Town Attorney which will further hold up the project. Paul Dery stated his intention is not to hold up the project but to seek clarification. Mr. Faucher asked that any Board member who has a question or concern regarding this contract to email him by Monday and he will discuss the issues with Paul Lenky and Attorney St. Onge. Mr. Dery stated this is one of the reasons he suggested money be put into the Board of Finance's budget for attorney's fees.

VI. DR. MICHAEL JOLIN—SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Dr. Jolin stated he received word today that the school lunch program was reaccredited by the State and Federal governments.

Dr. Jolin explained Mr. Birch checked on state reimbursement for removal of oil tanks at the Town garage and found that the removal of those tanks are not eligible for reimbursement. Dr. Jolin stated there are three oil tanks due for replacement in the next two years and those tanks are eligible for a 74% reimbursement. There is a possibility if the Town would like to join in a bid to remove all five tanks at the same time it may save the Town some money even if there is no reimbursement available to the Town.

VII. FINANCIAL REPORT—MICHAEL MARTIN

Mr. Martin explained the snow removal budget is \$38,923.00 over budget at this time and there is no salt left in the bins. If more salt is purchased then \$10,000.00 could be expended which would mean the line item would be \$49,000.00 over budget. Mr. Martin stated he feels this overage can be absorbed between contingency and other expense accounts. Mr. Martin stated surplus is currently a little over 9%.

VIII. BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE TOURTELLOTTE FUND

Chairman Joseph Lindley reported a meeting was recently held with the fund's advisors. The financial status of the fund was reviewed. \$100,000.00 will be transferred to the Town on June 30, 2014. The Board of Trustees voted not to expend any further funds in 2015.

IX. NEW BUSINESS

None.

X. OLD BUSINESS

The annual report cover was discussed. Alison Boutaugh suggested the Library Community Center as a cover as it is the 20th anniversary of the building this year in May. Kerstin Forrester suggested a collage of events from the Recreation Department be used. Shainia Smith suggested art students at the High School be given a chance to submit artwork for the cover on an annual basis. Mr. Faucher stated this is a good idea and could possibly be considered for next year as there is not enough time this year. Dr. Jolin will discuss this possibility with the art department. Mr. Faucher asked Renee Waldron if she could put something together for the next meeting. After discussion, it was decided that a special meeting will be held on March 27, 2014 at 6:30 p.m. to discuss the annual report cover and the Marianapolis sewer project.

Motion by Larry Groh, Jr., seconded by Laurent Guillot to recess. **Motion—Passed. Unanimous.**

The Board took a recess at 8:15 p.m.

The meeting was reconvened at 8:25 p.m.

XI. BUDGET WORKSHOP

Discussion was held regarding Meals on Wheels which will be increased from three days to four days.

The Building Official position was discussed. Mr. Groh read from the minutes of the Board of Finance from the April 11, 2013 meeting regarding this position and the hours that were adjusted last year. Lee Post explained how the hours were shared with Putnam and Thompson up until November of 2013. It was noted this position is subject to collective bargaining.

The telephone expense at the Library Community Center was discussed. The number of calls made from the public pay phone will be provided to the Board by Alison Boutaugh. The pay phone costs about \$75.00 per month. Mr. Martin suggested a change in the electricity expense from \$45,000.00 to \$42,000.00. The consensus was to change this figure as suggested.

Mr. Faucher asked for the status of Recreation summer camp. Mrs. Waldron responded the Town has received a reprieve for one more year while options are being considered. Mrs. Waldron noted the WPTP did not request any money from Thompson this year.

The GIS maintenance in the Community Development account was discussed. This fee is for the annual maintenance on this system and that expense has been covered by a grant which has run out. Mr. Lenky will check on why supplies have increased in this department and provide a report for next meeting.

Professional Services expense under Wetlands was questioned. Mr. Martin stated this money is in the budget in the event it is needed for complicated problems that may arise.

Mr. Martin explained there is a meeting scheduled with the health care consultant next week. Currently an 18% increase is anticipated. The different options are being reviewed to make sure they are comparable with what is currently offered. Mr. Martin hopes to have more information for the next meeting.

Mr. Baer safety noted the Safety Committee has not met since 2012 and that is contributing to the increase in Workers Compensation claims. Mr. Baer stated there are safety issues at the Town garage and distributed pictures he took of working conditions at the Town garage. Mr. Lenky reported he is aware of this situation and has discussed it with Dr. Jolin and this issue has been resolved. Dr.

Jolin stated the transportation coordinator will monitor this situation. Mr. Guillot asked about the money needed for tools. Mr. Adams stated tools need to be replaced as they are broken. Suggestion was made to consider using a tool crib to control tools and keep an inventory of Town owned tools and to discourage use of personally owned tools. Mr. Groh asked how Mr. Baer was able to access the Town Garage to take photos. It was noted anyone who is not an employee must be accompanied by Leo Adams or the First Selectmen.

Mr. Faucher asked about the status of the security system and phone system at the Town Hall. Mr. Lenky indicated no failures are currently being experienced but there are some issues from time to time and system is old and parts are not available.

Mr. Faucher expressed concern about the request for money for an ambulance. Mr. Faucher stated he will ask Mr. Seney to attend the next meeting to answer questions regarding the additional \$30,000.00 requested. Kerstin Forrester will email copies of the budget provided by Community when it presented to the Board of Selectmen.

The paving account was reviewed. Mr. Bessette stated he feels that private sand and gravel companies in town should be responsible for repairing roads that are damaged due to their trucks. It was noted that those companies usually are required to pay the town for each load of gravel. Mr. Martin will check on this. Kerstin Forrester suggested the Town consider outside contractors for paving and paying those contractors with State money received for paving. Paul Dery suggested doing a cost analysis of chip sealing versus paving with cost per mile for each.

The repairs needed to the Quaddick Bridge was discussed. There has been no date given by the State by which the repairs must be made however the State is conducting inspections every 6 months.

The repairs needed at the Library Community Center were discussed. Mrs. Boutaugh stated the repairs include curbing, repiping of the sprinkler system and replacing heat pump exchange units. In addition, at some point the roof will need to be replaced and one of the boilers is original and will need replacement in the near future.

Laurent Guillot asked if the money requested for weed control at Quaddick will be requested every year. Kathy Finn responded efforts are being made to establish an Association but until that Association is established then the \$25,000.00 will be needed every year. Paul Dery asked if a portion of user fees for the park can be obtained by the Town to be used for weed control. Mr. Lenky will check into this possibility.

The reimbursement rate for the large buses will be provided to the Board by Dr. Jolin. Christine Campbell suggested purchasing smaller buses to save gas. Donna Lynch stated there are requirements for the length of time students can be on the bus and also requirements that the District must provide a seat for every student who may need to take the bus regardless of if they utilize the buses or not. Mr. Dery asked for the Statutes regarding these requirements.

XII. ADJOURN

Motion made by Larry Groh, seconded by Aaron McGarry, to adjourn. **Motion —Passed. Unanimous**

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 10:24 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Roberta Baublitz
Recording Secretary

B:4/10