



TOWN of
THOMPSON
BOARD OF FINANCE

Minutes: Budget Meeting
Wednesday, June 17, 2015
Thompson Library/Community Center
7:00 PM

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Chairman Ray Faucher, Jr. called the meeting to order at 7:02 PM.

I. Roll call

- A. Members Present: Paul Dery, Ray Faucher, Jr., Larry Groh, Jr., Laurent Guillot, Aaron McGarry, and Susanne Witkowski.
- B. Members Absent: None
- C. Staff Present:
Tina Fox, Recording Secretary
Orla McKiernan-Raftery, Finance Director
- D. Also Present: Neal Breen, Kerstin Forrester, Paul Lenky, Shaina Smith, Bill Witkowski, Members of the Public

III. Correspondence: None

IV. Citizen's Comments

- A. Paul Lenky, 50 Watson Rd., explained that the public again passed the Town side of the budget, and that he felt the Town government's budget cannot have more money taken out.
- B. Bill Witkowski stated that Joe Lindley asked him to speak on his behalf because he was not present. He stated that the Board can't keep cutting the school budget. He explained that there was a big fight when Dr. Ryscavage wanted to consolidate all of the schools, and that it's time to put up another fight to pass this budget. He added that cutting the budget is not fair to the students in Town, not fair to the Board of Finance who has put time and effort into the budget, and not fair to the teachers. He stated that he does not envy the Board's job, but asked that they keep the children in mind.
- C. Kathleen Herbert, 122 Wilsonville Rd., stated that an investment in the school is also an investment in the Town; bringing business into the Town is a high priority and attracting business requires a strong school system. She added that if the school is perceived as less, if the Board keeps cutting back the budget, the Town won't be seen as having a robust school system and won't be able to attract businesses.
- D. Ken Beausoleil, Walker Dr., stated that the Town side of the budget passed overwhelmingly, and it is at bare bones. He explained that the Town budget can't afford to have more money taken from it. He added that money was already taken from the budget for cleaning parks and summer help, which has created a problem because the Town highway now has to mow parks. He restated that there is no room for taking more out of the Town budget.

- E. Mike Krogul, Quinebaug, reminded the Board that he addressed the Board regarding school busses in the past and that he suggested having a handicap bus in the budget. He explained that the only handicap bus is now down. He asked what would happen if that bus is out of service for the next three months. R. Faucher, Jr. answered that the Board of Education (BOE) and Board of Selectmen (BOS) would recommend to the Board of Finance (BOF) if a bus needs to be purchased, and that this year, neither the BOE nor the BOS recommended it. M. Krogul asked if the money would come out of emergency fund if the school had to purchase a new bus. R. Faucher, Jr. answered that the situation had not come up in his tenure on the BOF, but that he thought the funds would come out of contingency because that is the purpose of contingency. M. Krogul added that he appreciates everything that the BOF does.

V. Budget Workshop

- A. R. Faucher, Jr. explained that the Town budget passed by almost two to one, and the BOE budget lost by 9 votes. He also mentioned that there was almost an historic turnout for the Referendum at 26% of the electorate. He stated that the Board has to figure out how to pass the BOE budget, because cash flow will be affected in July and beyond.
- B. O. McKiernan-Rafferty explained that there is currently a payroll item coming out of professional services for Planning and Zoning Commission (PZC) that shouldn't be. She asked the Board if adding an additional \$700 to cover PZC sub-committee hearings to pay for the Recording Secretary. John Rice explained that the sub-committee meets to update the Zoning Regulations, which isn't done at the regular monthly meetings.
There was a consensus amongst Board members to add \$700 (\$100 per sub-committee meeting) to a Recording Secretary Sub-Committee line item.
- C. The Board briefly discussed misinformation posted by WINY radio, the possibility of holding a meeting to explain the budget to the public, the possibility of adding information regarding revaluation, specifically a formula that the public could use to see how the revaluation effected their taxes, on the Town website, and the fact that signs encouraging residents to vote are supposed to have a political action committee listed at the bottom of the sign.
- D. R. Faucher, Jr. suggested cutting \$101,000 from the BOE budget. **There was a consensus amongst Board members, with Susanne Witkowski and Larry Groh, Jr. disagreeing, to remove \$101,000 from the BOE budget.**
- E. **Paul Dery moved and Aaron McGarry seconded the motion to send the total proposed budget of \$24,010,068 to Town Meeting.**
1. L. Groh, Jr. stated that removing \$101,000 from the BOE budget is way too much. He stated that a cut like that will hurt the children. He explained that removing an additional \$101,000 would be cutting a total of \$300,000 from the original proposed budget, which is too much.
 2. L. Guillot stated that people don't care about the revaluation, but only care about the bottom line increase.
 3. Rene Morin, Thompson Tax Collector, stated that in the previous two weeks, the tax office answered at least a hundred phone calls asking what the caller's tax bill would be, and in more than 50% of the cases, tax payers were pleased to find out that their bill would be lower next year because of the revaluation. He stated that in almost every case, a single family home will see a decrease in their real estate bill next year.

Ray Faucher, Jr. – Yes
Laurent Guillot – Yes

Paul Dery – Yes
Aaron McGarry – Yes

Larry Groh, Jr. - No
Susanne Witkowski- No

The motion carried.

VI. Adjourn

A. **Aaron McGarry moved and Sue Witkowski seconded the motion to adjourn. The motion carried unanimously.**

B. Chairman Ray Faucher, Jr. adjourned the meeting at 8:00 PM.

Tina Fox
Recording Secretary