



TOWN of
THOMPSON
BOARD OF FINANCE

Minutes: Regular Meeting
Thursday, July 16, 2015
Thompson Library/Community Center
7:00 PM

p. 1 of 4

Ray Faucher, Jr. called the meeting to order at 7:01 PM.

I. Roll call

- A. Members Present: Paul Dery, Ray Faucher, Jr., Larry Groh, Jr., Laurent Guillot, and Susanne Witkowski.
- B. Members Absent: Aaron McGarry
- C. Staff Present:
Tina Fox, Recording Secretary
Orla McKiernan-Raftery, Finance Director
- D. Also Present: Dr. Michael Jolin, Paul Lenky, Kerstin Forrester, Members of the Public

II. Approve Minutes

- A. **Larry Groh, Jr. moved and Laurent Guillot seconded the motion to accept the minutes of the June 16, 2015 as written.**

Paul Dery – Yes Ray Faucher, Jr.- Yes Larry Groh, Jr. - Yes
Laurent Guillot – Yes Susanne Witkowski- Yes

The motion carried unanimously.

- B. **Larry Groh, Jr. moved and Susanne Witkowski seconded the motion to accept the minutes of the June 17, 2015 meeting with the following corrections:**

- 1. Page 2, Section V: Add "P. Dery suggested lowering the .64 relative mill rate to .47, since voters will probably accept an increase less than half of a mill" as Section V(D), and re-numbering Section V(D) and (E) to Section V(E) and (F).
- 2. Page 3, Section VI(A): Change 'Sue' to 'Susanne' in the motion to adjourn.

Paul Dery – Yes Ray Faucher, Jr.- Yes Larry Groh, Jr. - Yes
Laurent Guillot – Yes Susanne Witkowski- Yes

The motion carried unanimously.

- C. **Larry Groh, Jr. moved and Susanne Witkowski seconded the motion to accept the minutes of the June 18, 2015 meeting with the following correction:**

- 1. Page 2, Section III(A): Add that Francis McGarry is the author of the correspondence received from Aaron McGarry.

Paul Dery – Yes Ray Faucher, Jr.- Yes Larry Groh, Jr. - Yes
Laurent Guillot – Yes Susanne Witkowski- Yes

The motion carried unanimously.

D. **Paul Dery moved and Susanne Witkowski seconded the motion to accept the minutes of the July 1, 2015 meeting with the following correction:**

1. Page 1, Section I(B): Correct the spelling of the first name of 'Laurent Guillot.'

Paul Dery – Yes

Ray Faucher, Jr.- Yes

Larry Groh, Jr. - Yes

Laurent Guillot – Yes

Susanne Witkowski- Yes

The motion carried unanimously.

III. Correspondence

- A. Handout from Paul Lenky regarding the Assessor/Assessor Clerk position, to be discussed during the Selectman's Update.

IV. Citizen's Comments

- A. Ken Beausoleil, Quinebaug, stated that the Board of Selectmen (BOS) have solicited for applications for an Assessor Clerk in the Assessor's Office, which is a position that is not currently in the budget; the BOS advertised for a 15 hour position separate from the current Assessor Clerk position. He explained that the BOS has gone out twice to fill the Assessor position, and that each time the position has been turned down for reasons unknown. He stated that the Town is looking for a permanent Assessor, and that if there's a problem with wages or hours, the problem should be brought to the BOF. He asked what the Town will do when a permanent Assessor is needed in the future if the BOS hires for a position that has not been approved by the BOF. He stated that the situation is snowballing, the BOF is totally unaware of the BOS creating a new position, and that the BOS should have talked to the BOF. He added that if a permanent Assessor is hired in the future, there would be a person (15 hour Assessor Clerk position) who would have to be put out on unemployment. Regarding the Eversource contract, he stated that he agrees with the contract, but that the lease should have been brought before the BOF to okay the lease because the money for the lease has to come from somewhere.

V. Dr. Michael Jolin: Education Update

- A. Dr. Jolin stated that the Board of Education (BOE) would be meeting on July 20, 2015 to finalize the \$300,000 in budget cuts, and added that the BOE has been diligently deliberating the cuts. He explained that the attorney for the school and Town Attorney William St. Onge have discussed the lawsuit with the oil spill and will be filing suit soon. He stated that the oil tank replacement is on schedule and the replacement may be completed before the start of school, but that is not a guarantee. He stated that Orla McKiernan-Rafferty and Neal Breen have been working closely together to get final numbers for the fiscal year 2015, and that the deficit that was projected previously is looking better.
- B. P. Dery asked if Dr. Jolin had the numbers regarding pre-school tuition that Neal Breen was asked to report on at the previous meeting. Dr. Jolin stated that he will make a note to ask Mr. Breen to get those numbers for the next meeting.

VI. Orla McKiernan-Rafferty: Financial Report

- A. O. McKiernan-Rafferty provided an update on financial reports. She stated that the majority, if not all, of the contingency will be used. She explained that the audit will start before the next BOF meeting.

VII. Paul Lenky: Selectman's Update

- A. P. Lenky stated that the BOS recently hired Interim Assessor Diana Couture as the permanent part-time Assessor to work 15 hours per week, and approved the addition of an Assessor Clerk position at 15 hours per week. He stated that the total savings to the Town because of this change is about \$39,000.
1. K. Forrester explained that Attorney St. Onge was contacted about the situation and had no problems, and that Diana Couture considers this a permanent position. She also explained that the BOS advertised for the Assessor position twice, and only received two responses each time; two applicants wanted far too much money, one person was not qualified at all, and another wanted to have her own office and to have the Town continue to pay for her to be an appraiser, which would have been a conflict of interest.
 2. R. Faucher, Jr. asked what would happen to the newly created Assessor Clerk position if in the future the Town needs to hire a full-time Assessor.
 3. L. Groh, Jr. stated that this discussion should have been listed on the agenda, and that there was plenty of time for the BOS to ask the BOF to add this discussion to the agenda. He stated that he is not in favor of adding the discussion to the agenda because it should have been notified to the public properly. He stated that he is concerned with the added position, stating that because the Town does not purchase unemployment insurance, 100% of unemployment comes out of the budget. He suggested making an adjustment to the Assessor salary to make it more attractive to applicants.
 4. R. Faucher, Jr. stated that he does not feel comfortable voting on the issue tonight, to which L. Groh, Jr. agreed. R. Faucher, Jr. suggested that the BOS make one more attempt at hiring a full-time Assessor.
 5. P. Dery and L. Guillot both stated they were in favor of having this discussion on the next agenda. S. Witkowski stated that she is concerned with the Grand List being ready on time. L. Groh, Jr. explained that even though the Grand List is dated October 1st, the Assessor's job of getting it done is not due until February.
 6. The Board agreed to have the Assessor/Assessor Clerk positions as a discussion at the next meeting.
- B. P. Dery expressed concern that there was a Special Town Meeting scheduled the same date and time as the current BOF meeting that the BOF was never made aware of, and stated that he would have liked to attend that meeting. He asked about a stated \$600 maintenance fee in the Town Meeting notice. P. Lenky explained that the maintenance fee is paid to the Town of Thompson by both Killingly and Brooklyn.
1. L. Groh, Jr. asked why the lease did not come before the BOF before going to Town Meeting, to which P. Lenky answered that Attorney St. Onge advised it was not necessary because Eversource would be paying for the lease.
 2. L. Groh, Jr. stated that usually a situation like this would involve a reimbursement from Eversource and that Thompson is responsible for the lease, which means the BOF should have been notified and given its approval prior to Town Meeting.
 3. P. Lenky explained that the Town makes the initial purchase, submits an invoice to Eversource each year, and Eversource gives Thompson the amount of the invoice.
 4. P. Dery asked about item number 4 from the notice of Town Meeting, which stated that Thompson has six months to replace any non-complying town. P. Lenky answered that if Killingly or Brooklyn (the supporting towns) back out, Thompson must replace them, but added that Canterbury, Hampton, and Scotland have already expressed their interest.

5. L. Groh, Jr. suggested adding the Eversource contract/mower purchase to the next BOF agenda.

VIII. Board of Trustees of the Tourtellotte Fund

- A. Dr. Jolin stated that one of the main priorities of the Trust is to get the windows replaced at the historic building, and an architect was recently looking into that project.

IX. New Business: None

X. Old Business

- A. L. Guillot asked for information regarding the old TEEG building. P. Lenky answered that Attorney St. Onge is in contact with the Attorney General's Office regarding the situation, and is reviewing deeds to see if the building is part of the Tourtellotte Trust; if it is Attorney St. Onge's determination that the building is not part of the Trust, then it belongs to the Town, and the Attorney General must sign off on that determination. P. Lenky added that some people say it is condemned/not fit to be in, while others disagree. R. Faucher, Jr. asked for clarification for the next meeting.

XI. Adjourn

- A. **Larry Groh, Jr. moved and Susanne Witkowski seconded the motion to adjourn.**

Paul Dery – Yes

Ray Faucher, Jr.- Yes

Larry Groh, Jr. - Yes

Laurent Guillot – Yes

Susanne Witkowski- Yes

The motion carried unanimously.

- B. R. Faucher, Jr. adjourned the meeting at 7:55 PM.

Tina Fox

Recording Secretary