



TOWN of
THOMPSON
BOARD OF FINANCE

Minutes: Budget Meeting
Thursday, March 10, 2016
Thompson Library/Community Center
7:00 PM

p. 1 of 3

Chairman Aaron McGarry called the meeting to order at 7:05 PM.

I. Roll call

- A. Members Present: Jim Bellavance, Ray Faucher, Jr., Larry Groh, Jr., Aaron McGarry, Rhonda Rooney, Susanne Witkowski.
- B. Members Absent: None.
- C. Staff Present:
Tina Fox, Recording Secretary
Orla McKiernan-Rafferty, Finance Director
- D. Also Present: Members of the Public.

II. Correspondence

- A. There was no correspondence to present.
- B. A. McGarry stated that there was a Special BOF Meeting at 6:00 PM that day, which consisted of a tour of the Thompson Public Schools, lead by the Director of Facilities. An agenda was posted for the meeting, however there were no formal motions and no actions taken.
- C. A. McGarry stated that it is his goal to conclude Budget Workshop meetings by 9:00 PM.

III. Citizen's Comments

- A. Margaret Sellers, 61 Red Bridge Rd., stated that she is on Social Security Income and received no cost of living increase. She stated that a 10% increase in the tax rate is too much.
- B. Paul Baer, Thompson Rd., distributed documents to the Board. He stated that the documents included the Town's ordinance on Conflict of Interests, which he expects the Board to abide by. State Statute 10-22 was also included, which requires the BOF to make spending recommendations to the Board of Education (BOE), which the BOE is required to then accept or reject in writing with an explanation. The Town's Plan of Conservation and Development was included with the documents, which states that the focus for the Library is supposed to be on finding more volunteer opportunities. The Town ordinance that created the Library was included, which states the Library will be funded when funds are available. A document that was sent to the State showing decreased attendance at the Library was included, which also showed the budget at the Library was \$368,000. P. Baer stated that the Library's budget is separated from the Community Center's budget, and the Community Center includes all heat, custodians, etc. He stated that the Town does spend more money on the Library than what was reported to the State. He stated that there is an issue at the Fire Departments in Town with theft, and that an article in the Bulletin included a quote from a department official stating that the theft was suspected at the time. P. Baer stated that the Fire Departments are severely underfunded, but that they should be held accountable for their money.

P. Baer stated that the expenditures for the school are excessive, and asked how many more raises the Business Manager would receive. He stated that Economic Development Commission (EDC) spends 52% of their budget on a Recording Secretary. He stated that EDC spent \$0 in one column last year, but the Town is proposing to include \$1,000 in that column again, and the Recording Secretary percentage would be 49%. P. Baer stated that the BOE continues to compare money spent to what Putnam is spending, and he wished they would also compare performance to Putnam, because the BOE seems to think more dollars means better results. He stated that it is not fair to the Town or the students, and money should be going to the kids, and not to raises.

- C. Rob Mann, 15 Meadow Dr., stated that he is on a limited budget, and usually gets around a 1% raise. He stated that 'things' are tight, and he hopes everyone takes that into consideration. He stated that the school budget is high, and that he appreciates the BOF's time.

IV. Budget Workshop

- A. The Board discussed what the potential mill rate increase should be.
- B. O. McKiernan-Rafferty presented a summary of necessary changes to the proposed budget, making the proposed mill rate 27.42.
- C. The Board discussed specific revenue lines, such as Other Sources, Special Education, and Recycling. No changes were made to any revenue line.
- D. BOF: R. Faucher, Jr. explained that legal fees were misallocated and the current year-to-date for legal fees is approximately \$200.
- E. BOS: L. Groh, Jr. stated that when the Council of Small Governments was taken out of the budget previously, the Town received a few years of free membership. He also stated that there is no proposed increase to any of the three Selectmen's wages.
- F. First Selectman: K. Beausoleil explained that the increase to the Executive Assistant line is for the hourly pay because the position should be paid comparable to the responsibilities that are included. S. Herbert explained that the Advertising line is a considerable increase over last year's budget, but is comparable to what was actually spent last year. K. Beausoleil explained that the Secretary/Clerk increase is because more hours are needed to cover work in the Selectmen's Office.
- G. Data Processing: O. McKiernan-Rafferty explained that the increase was due to a lot of systems needing updated, such as new printers, etc.
- H. Tax Office: O. McKiernan-Rafferty suggested that the reason for year-to-date spent on office supplies being low is a timing issue, but that she will get more information for the next meeting.
- I. Assessor: K. Beausoleil explained that another clerk was budgeted for to make up for the lost hours in the office for having a part-time Assessor, and stated that there were no applications received when the Board attempted to hire for a full-time Assessor. R. Faucher, Jr. suggested attempting to hire a full-time Assessor by increasing the salary, and A. McGarry suggested the BOS look into whether or not there is a firm that can offer Assessor services.
- J. Board of Assessment Appeals: No discussion.
- K. Election and Registration: K. Beausoleil explained that the increase in the training line is due to mandatory training that is required for the Registrars. R. Faucher, Jr. questioned why there were salary increases for the Registrars if they are elected positions.
- L. Town Clerk: R. Waldron explained that the Professional Services line is to pay a consulting fee when the office needs to consult with the former Town Clerk, and that \$600 was left in that line item because there will be a few occasions when the office will need the former Town Clerk's consultation.

- M. Town Counsel: There was discussion on what is driving the Zoning legal fees. O. McKiernan-Rafferty was to provide further information at the next meeting.
- N. Probate Court: R. Faucher, Jr. stated that the amounts are nonnegotiable, and the Board has no control over the numbers.
- O. No changes were made to any line item.

V. Adjourn

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

Jim Bellavance- Yes

Ray Faucher, Jr. – Yes

Larry Groh, Jr.- Yes

Aaron McGarry- Yes

Rhonda Rooney- Yes

Susanne Witkowski- Yes

The motion carried unanimously.

- B. A. McGarry adjourned the meeting at 8:57 PM.

Tina Fox
Recording Secretary