



TOWN of
THOMPSON
BOARD OF FINANCE

Minutes: Regular Meeting
Thursday, October 20, 2016
Thompson Library/Community Center
7:00 PM

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Chairman Aaron McGarry called the meeting to order at 7:02 PM.

I. Roll call

- A. Members Present: Jim Bellavance, Ray Faucher, Jr., Larry Groh, Jr., Aaron McGarry, Rhonda Rooney, and Susanne Witkowski.
- B. Members Absent
- C. Staff Present:
 - Tina Fox, Recording Secretary
 - Orla McKiernan-Rafferty, Finance Director
- D. Also Present: Members of the Public

II. Approve Minutes

- A. Ray Faucher, Jr. moved and Susanne Witkowski seconded the motion to approve the minutes of September 15, 2016 with the following corrections:**

- 1. Page 1, Section II(A): "Suzanne Witkowski" should be spelled as "Susanne Witkowski."

Jim Bellavance- Yes	Larry Groh, Jr.- Yes	Ray Faucher, Jr.-Yes
Aaron McGarry- Yes	Rhonda Rooney- Yes	Susanne Witkowski- Yes

The motion carried unanimously.

III. Correspondence

- A. Email from Noel Lafayette.
- B. Detailed costs for gear/equipment from Community Fire.
- C. Email from Tina Fox regarding the Annual Report.
- D. Information regarding a grappling truck from Ken Beausoleil

IV. Citizen's Comments

- A. John Sharpe, Pasay Rd., presented information regarding personal protective gear and equipment that is expiring or can no longer be used, compiled by both Community Fire Department and Thompson Hill Fire Department. Other departments are in the process of gathering similar information. As of the end of this year, Community volunteers will be in jeopardy, as 10 full sets of gear are expiring. He does not want to go up to anyone and tell them a tragic accident has happened. CT Water won't do an updated report on the hydrant system. The hydrants at the school are terrible, at about 500 gallons of water per minute, where as the standard truck can pump 1500 gallons per minute. Thompson is going unprotected. Fire hose last year was tested by a company using the previous years' standards, and there is no guarantee the company will be willing to do that again. Air bottles are expiring. He explained that on the paperwork he presented to the Board, the first figure of approximately \$77,000 is what Community needs by December 31st. He stated that the money allocated to Community by the Town

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annually barely covers fixed expenses. When asked, he stated that approximately \$11,000 of the \$77,000 could wait until next year if necessary.

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1. L. Groh, Jr. stated that a request like this to the BOF would have to come from the Board of Selectmen (BOS). K. Beausoleil stated that the BOS is still waiting for numbers from the other departments before taking action on the request.
 2. J. Bellavance suggested the possibility that the number of fire departments in Thompson be reduced. R. Faucher, Jr. agreed that there is redundancy in the amount of fire departments, adding that other Towns have fewer departments, and suggested the BOS appoint a special committee of some sort to research the idea.
 3. J. Sharpe stated that even if fire departments are consolidated, the volunteers still need to have adequate gear. Insurance premiums would likely go up. The time to get out of a burning house used to be 7-10 minutes, and is now down to about 2-3 minutes.
 4. L. Groh, Jr. reiterated that the BOS should come to the BOF to make a request, as it is the BOS responsibility to look at the situation. S. Witkowski suggested that this should be a part of the Selectmen's Update for the next meeting.
- B. Paul Baer, Thompson Rd., stated that the Fire Service Advisory Committee (FSAC) was set up after a failure to respond to a difficulty breathing call. Pineview is close to Community Fire Department, but is in West Thompson Fire Department's district. Anita Gervais was killed in a fire and the recordings are appalling. He suggested a fire consultant could be hired, as was done in Sturbridge. The fire departments are not held accountable, and are grossly underfunded. He referred to a fire station in a southern state that has a \$1.45 million budget that is required to have an audited financial statement. Consolidating the departments would not mean getting rid of members, but would mean getting rid of buildings and fixed costs. The Town keeps operating under the misconception that Thompson will never have anything go wrong. Sending people into buildings with expired gear is gross negligence. A lot of money was wasted on attorney fees for the Starr Rd. debacle that could have been used for a fire consultant. The FSAC was told they completed their work and a report needed to be drafted, but it has not been yet. There should be one department with one chief. A person with a drunk driving conviction and a reckless driving conviction is now a trainer in one fire department. BOS continues to spend money on legal bills for a FOIA complaint that is not completed. L. Groh, Jr. represented the Town himself at a FOIA complaint, which did not cost the Town anything except time. He asked the BOF to comply with the State statute to review the non-educational items in the Board of Education (BOE) budget. The State is getting notified of all violations, and elected officials should have to abide with State statutes.
- V. Kenneth Beausoleil: Selectmen's Update
- A. K. Beausoleil stated that Quaddick Rd. bridge is open. The Highway Department has been active with chip sealing. The past administration started a project with the Inter-town Capital Equipment purchasing incentive to contribute costs to sharing a grappling truck with Killingly and Woodstock. The cost was not budgeted for this fiscal year because it appeared the purchase would not happen. Thompson's share of the funding would be \$18,500 and the truck would be available for 20 years. The BOS agreed to continue with the project pending approved funding. He stated that there has been discussion regarding moving the annual Town meeting up to the first Monday of May, which would require an ordinance change. The referendum for the Ellen Larned

library roof has been postponed until January, which would be the appropriate time to also have ordinance changes and possibly costs for the fire equipment, as well.

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- B. S. Witkowski asked about a possible insurance claim for the oil spill at the Town Garage. K. Beausoleil stated that the Town Attorney said that there is no recourse to recover any of the costs. S. Witkowski asked that the BOF be provided with something in writing regarding that.

VI. Dr. Michael Jolin: Education Update

- A. Dr. Jolin distributed paperwork showing enrollment at the school, which decreased from 1,015 in September to 1,002 in October. He offered to provide this report to the BOF every month. A new kindergarten teacher has been hired. Attorneys have filed suit with the company believed to be at fault with the oil spill at the school, as well as the insurance company.

VII. Orla McKiernan-Rafferty: Financial Report

- A. O. McKiernan-Rafferty provided a verbal report on Town finances through the end of August. In regards to a question regarding leap year, the previous two leap years still had exactly 52.2 work weeks, which is what is normally budgeted for. 2016 had 52.4 work weeks, but 52.2 were budgeted for. Everything is prepared for the auditors, but because the State may be late again this year, the audit presentation may not be ready for November.

VIII. Board of Trustees of the Tourtellotte Fund

- A. Joe Lindley stated that an RFP was developed for the window project and will be sent out soon. The project looks to come in at less than the \$300,000 that was allocated. When the railings are finished, the third floor safety issues will be completed, and that floor will be open for the first time since the 1980's. All paintings are back, with nine still need restoring. There is remaining money from what was allocated last year, but some money will be kept to be available the second half of the year.

IX. New Business

A. Annual Report

- 1. Various questions/concerns were discussed regarding the annual report. The Board agreed to use a simple black and white cover again for the report, to print 300 copies, to have the report available online, and to have the report printed as quickly as possible.

B. Presentation of Annual Tax Collector Report

- 1. Rene Morin presented the Annual Tax Collector report for fiscal year ending June 2016 and gave the Board a quick overview. He asked that the Board vote to include the report in the Town's Annual Report.
- 2. **Larry Groh, Jr. moved and Ray Faucher, Jr. seconded the motion to have the entire information package presented by the Tax Collector in the annual report**
Jim Bellavance- Yes Larry Groh, Jr.- Yes Ray Faucher, Jr.-Yes
Aaron McGarry- Yes Rhonda Rooney- Yes Susanne Witkowski- Yes
The motion carried unanimously.
- 3. R. Morin distributed paperwork regarding an expected decrease in personal property assessment for Norampac, Drake Petroleum, and CT Water, and expected stabilization in personal property assessment for Eversource.

X. Old Business: None

XI. Board of Finance Members Comments: None

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XII. Adjourn

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

Jim Bellavance- Yes	Larry Groh, Jr.- Yes	Ray Faucher, Jr.-Yes
Aaron McGarry- Yes	Rhonda Rooney- Yes	Susanne Witkowski- Yes
The motion carried unanimously.		

B. A. McGarry adjourned the meeting at 9:13 PM.

Tina Fox
Recording Secretary