



THOMPSON Board of Finance Regular Meeting  
Thursday, October 17, 2019  
Louis P. Faucher Community Center Meeting Room  
MINUTES

RECEIVED  
TOWN OF THOMPSON, CT.

2019 OCT 23 A 8:58  
*Linda Paradise*  
TOWN CLERK, ASST

\*\*\*\*\*

1. The call to order by Chair Aaron McGarry was at 7:04 PM.  
Roll call:  
Members-Aaron McGarry (Chair), Larry Groh (Vice Chair), Susanne Witkowski, Jim Bellavance, Rob Mann  
Absent- Rhonda Rooney  
Others- Orla McKiernan-Raftery (Finance Director), Melinda Smith (Superintendent of Schools), Kim Austin (Chair, Fire Advisory Committee), Ken Beausoleil (First Selectman), Amy St Onge (Selectman), Kevin Ide, (Dayville Fire District Chief), John Sharpe (Community Fire Company Chief), several Thompson Fire Department Representatives  
Members of the public, Recording Secretary Dotti Durst
2. Approve minutes
  - A. **Motion L. Groh seconded by J. Bellavance to approve the September 24, 2019 Special Meeting minutes carried unanimously, with A. McGarry abstaining.**
  - B. September 19, 2019 Regular monthly meeting: Minutes not available, Tabled to November meeting
3. Correspondence: None
4. Citizens' comments: None
5. Selectman's Update-First Selectman K. Beausoleil reviewed the status of road repaving, the previous evening's storm damage and power outages, and the conclusion of the oil spill litigation/mitigation, which has resulted in an additional \$47,500 for a total recovery of over \$600,000 by the town. The Retirement (MERS) issue has been resolved between the Town Attorney and an Attorney for the State; final numbers are being determined, with the costs spread over a period of years. The status of School Security funding was presented, which is an agenda item under New Business.
6. School District update-Superintendent of Schools Melinda Smith provided a handout reviewing current student enrollment, including Out-of-District placements, and demonstrating the increasing enrollment of students who need in-town Special Education services. Beyond the budgeted student count, there are an additional 9 unbudgeted students. Additional out-placed students have resulted in a budget shortfall of \$133,000. The goal is to bring out-placed students back, which requires

building confidence among those families. In addition to all the benefits to the students and families, there is also a savings of tuition and the costs of bussing. A. McGarry asked for clarification of some terminology used in the handouts, as well as of the applicable dates and of the inclusiveness of the numbers.

-M. Smith provided a copy of her 09/26/2019 letter to the Selectman, reviewing the impact of the final approved Education Budget on school activities, including the elimination of TMS field trips and TMS Spring Sports as well as other reductions. Stating that school security is essential, she advocated that all aspects of school security, including all costs, be moved to the auspices of the Town. Should this take place, funds in the Education budget would then be adequate to resume the field trips and sports, which are currently planned for elimination.

7. Financial Report- Finance Director Orla McKiernan-Rafertry provided handouts and reviewed key points. The budget has passed, and a budget book provided. The audit process is underway. The annual Budget Transfer list was presented today to the BOF.
8. Tourtellotte Fund update – Board of Trustees: no report
9. New Business:
  - a. Proposed 2020 BOF meeting schedule- will be discussed/approval considered at the November meeting
  - b. Budget transfers FY 2018-2019 General Fund: Chair A. McGarry asked for confirmation that the BOS met earlier this evening to review the proposal. First Selectman K. Beausoleil confirmed the Special BOS Meeting and that the motion to approve the transfers as presented was affirmative. L. Groh noted that the Meals on Wheels needs to be transferred. **Motion R. Mann seconded by J. Bellavance to adopt the recommendation of the BOS to implement the transfers for FY 2019 of \$350,498, consistent with the schedule as provided.**  
**A. McGarry- yes L. Groh-yes S. Witkowski-yes J. Bellavance-yes**  
**R. Mann- yes Motion carried unanimously.**
  - c. TEEG building HVAC Failure- K. Beausoleil reviewed an evaluation of the failure of the heat exchanger prepared by the contractor who did previous work on the system; the failure is due to constantly running in such an air-tight structure. Should repair be an option, which will only be known once it is disassembled, the cost will be \$1,750 with a one-year warranty. Should replacement be required, the cost will be \$2,846 plus \$250 for a 5-year warranty. He therefore requests funding be allocated up to \$3,100. S. Witkowski asked about equipment failure in an only 6-year old structure. She also stated that ideally, more than one estimate should

have been obtained.

**Motion L. Groh seconded by J. Bellavance to approve up to \$3,100 from the Contingency Fund for the repair of the HVAC system at the TEEG building.**

**A. McGarry- yes    L. Groh-yes    S. Witkowski-yes    J. Bellavance-yes**

**R. Mann- yes    Motion carried unanimously.**

- d. School Security- a 10-15-2019 memo from Ben Barbour, Thompson Public Schools Security Officer, reviewed the budget for school security for the remainder of the school year. K. Beausoleil- The Town budget provides for evening security coverage; about \$42,000 of the \$62,649 will be utilized, leaving about \$21,000 available. The BOS is unanimous in supporting the need for daytime school security, not only for in the evenings. The daytime Coordinator, at 10 hours a day, is an important asset for the town and the school. If all aspects of school security, including the Safety Coordinator and daytime funding, were moved to under the auspices of the Town, these funds could be allocated for daytime coverage. It would be an insufficient amount, however. Finance Director O. McKiernan-Rafferty noted the budget line item specifies School Security without specifying the time slot.

**Motion S. Witkowski seconded by J. Bellavance to transfer responsibility for school security from the school to the town.** After discussion, S. Witkowski withdrew the motion and J. Bellavance withdrew the second to the motion. **No action was taken.** The consensus of the BOF is to ask the BOS to work with the BOE to develop a formal request for an action and a proposed dollar amount to be brought to the BOF in November. K. Beausoleil – it makes sense to put oversight of all aspects of school security under the BOS. A. St Onge- although the BOS are agreed that school security is essential, it felt like undermining the will of the voters.

#### 10. Old Business

- a. FY17-18 Special Education Audit Excess Cost Reimbursement of \$41,000 - **Motion L. Groh seconded by R. Mann to follow the normal procedure for the refund of \$41,000 for FY 17-18 Special Education reimbursement to the BOE when it comes in carried unanimously.** O. McKiernan-Rafferty noted that a standardized procedure was established last year. It is agreed that it need not come back to the BOF agenda.

- b. Thompson Fire Advisory Committee discussion about alternative financing models- Fire Advisory Committee Chair K. Austin introduced the subject of a Fire Tax District system, with each District establishing a tax rate for service, as one of several possible ways to better provide funding. Dayville Fire District Chief Kevin Ide gave the overview of Fire Districts. As provided by Statute, a board is elected, staff are hired to collect the taxes and provide services, and the District residents establish the tax rate based on a variety of factors including the tax base in that

District. All insurances and other costs are then assumed by the District, as are care of the structures, equipment and staffing. Chief Ide gave several helpful pointers - ways to implement the process, to plan for major expenses and to keep the residents of the Districts fully informed, including with an informational insert when town mailings go out. L. Groh thanked Chief Ide and Kim Austin for the information. K. Austin asked for space on the BOF December agenda, in order to continue the dialogue.

- c. Discussion of The Community Fire Department building- Chief J. Sharpe reviewed the history of the structure, its role in town, and restrictions on stabilizing and expanding, due to lot size and slope, stressing the importance of the expansion to their service area. The adjacent lot is being considered for a possible addition. The question, which has been in the review process for 4 years, is how the Community Station can best plan for the future, in order to handle all emergency services. As the possibilities and plans develop, he asks that the BOF keep an open dialogue, holding a place on the monthly agenda. K. Austin- The Town Planner has found that grant funds are available only for new construction, none for refurbishing. A. McGarry asks the Chief to seek a definition of "new construction." K. Austin will ask the BOS to clarify how the TEEG building arrangements were structured, (built and owned by the town, leased to TEEG).

- 11. Board of Finance Member Comments: J. Bellavance regrets any loss of field trips or spring sports at the Middle School, recalling the meaning that they have to students, and encourages finding a way to fund these this year. S. Witkowski thanked the Board for the opportunity to serve for these 6 years, as she is not seeking re-election. A. McGarry thanked her from all of the Board for her years of service.

- 12. **Motion to adjourn by L. Groh seconded by S. Witkowski carried unanimously.**  
Chair A. Mc Garry adjourned at 9:12 PM.

Respectfully submitted by Dorothy Durst, Recording Secretary    *Dorothy Durst*

*These minutes have not yet been approved by the Board of Finance. Please refer to next month's meeting minutes for approval of and/or amendments to these minutes.*