



TOWN of THOMPSON
Board of Finance
815 Riverside Drive
North Grosvenordale, CT 06255

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2019 NOV 26 A 9:45
Linda Paradise
TOWN CLERK, Asst

THOMPSON Board of Finance Regular Meeting
Thursday, November 21, 2019
Louis P. Faucher Community Center Meeting Room
MINUTES

1. The call to order by Chair Aaron McGarry was at 7:02 PM.
Roll call: Members-Aaron McGarry (Chair), Jim Bellavance, Rob Mann, Rhonda Rooney, Robert Werge, Steve Herbert
Others- Melinda Smith (Superintendent of Schools), Kim Austin (Chair, Fire Advisory Committee), Amy St Onge (First Selectman), Bill Witkowski (Chair, BOE), John Rice (Building Committee), Susanne Witkowski (Selectman), Larry Groh, Bill Birch (Schools Facilities Manager), Ben Barbour (Schools Safety Coordinator), Bob Gentes (Schools Finance Director), many parents and students from the Thompson school system, many members of the public, WINY
Recording Secretary Dotti Durst

Chair A. McGarry- asked that all present share a moment of silence in memory of Joseph Lindley, a person very important to the community
2. Election of BOF Chair for November 2019 – November 2012
-Motion R. Rooney seconded by S. Herbert to modify Agenda item #2 to read *Election of BOF Chair and of Vice Chair for November 2019 – November 2012* carried unanimously.
-Motion S. Herbert seconded by J. Bellavance to elect A. McGarry as chair for the next two years carried unanimously.
-Motion S. Herbert seconded by J. Bellavance to elect R. Werge as vice chair for the next two years carried unanimously.
3. Approve minutes
 - a. Motion R. Mann seconded by R. Rooney to approve the September 19, 2019 Regular meeting minutes carried with S. Herbert abstaining.
 - b. Motion A. McGarry seconded by S. Herbert to approve the October 17, 2019 Regular meeting minutes carried with R. Rooney and S. Herbert abstaining.
4. Correspondence:
 - a). notification of school concerts and of a safety program and a Save-the-Date notice of a Susan B. Anthony event which will be part of the school's recognition of the passage 100 years ago of the 19th Amendment to the Constitution, giving women the right to vote.
 - b). the 11/15/2019 funding request from M. Smith, was circulated to the BOF members
5. Citizens' comments:
- Jessica Bolte, 1081 Riverside Dr: asks for an additional "Citizen's Comments" to be added to the monthly BOF agenda near the end, so attendees can offer feedback about a matter that has been discussed at that meeting; she advocates for funds for spring sports

- Shawn Brisette, Whittemore Ave : advocates for "Citizen's Comments" near the end of the BOF agenda, even if restricted to matters which appear on the meeting's agenda, as citizens present may have additional information about a topic of discussion
- Audrey Defilippo, 1139 Thompson Road: as a student, advocates for spring sports, as school is not only about academics
- Mason Hill, 311 Quinebaug Road: spring sports helps students socially, and pushes students academically so as to remain in sports
- Hailey Keefe, 18 Johnson Street: sports is an important part of learning how to build a successful team, which is used throughout life
- Larry Groh, Jr, Wagher Road: 1). Thank you for the honor of working with Chair Aaron for 6 years and congratulations to S. Herbert and R. Werge on their election 2). he advocates for approval of the \$60,000 requested for the continuance of spring sports and other school needs. 3). the school roofing project is far overdue; some sections of the roof 32 years old and leaking. 4). consider moving all school security to under the auspices of the town in the next budget cycle; the School Security Coordinator is essential.

Chair A. McGarry noted that Larry Groh has served the town far longer than his 6 years on the BOF; actually he began in 1999, so this marks 20 years in elected office serving the town, for which he is thanked by the BOF.

-Bill Witkowski: we asked the students to turn out for the BOF meeting to demonstrate their belief in the need for spring sports. It is great to see the students present, but the effort needs to be consistent, year-around, to let the voters know of the excellence at the schools and to come out to vote to support both the town and the schools.

6. Selectman's Update-First Selectman Amy St Onge:
 - on this the first week after election, A. St Onge observed the number of students in attendance and linked the challenges a newly-elected individual faces to the challenge issued to the students to attend and speak at a public meeting. She is meeting with all town departments to build familiarity, and met with M. Smith and B. Barbour to review school security. The BOS this week moved the Roof Replacement project forward to the BOF. She gave an update on Red Bridge Road. Meeting dates were proposed for a Fire Advisory Committee meeting in which the BOF and BOS are asked to participate; a mid-January date is proposed for a Tri-Board meeting (BOE, BOF, BOS)
7. School District update-Superintendent of Schools Melinda Smith: current enrollment data was distributed and reviewed; enrollment has increased by 10, some with extra needs. Bob Gentes will present data regarding the projected expenses, should an undercurrent materialize to close the high school and outsource students to Putnam or Killingly (in addition to the students who already attend other high schools). It demonstrates an increase in total costs as well as community impacts for Thompson should the high school be closed. After the presentation: J. Bellavance- the comparisons do not show bus transportation. Answer: it is in the current situation base cost numbers. Question: current Special Education costs are not separated. Answer: in house costs are not separated, but approximately 6 students would need extra services if out-sourced. Question: The current cost per student is not shown. Answer: the figures presented were based on the total costs to run the building, not on a per-student basis. R. Rooney: broad student opportunities are a major concern, given how difficult it has been to pass a budget. M. Smith: named several school programs being restored, noting that students need to be globally competitive.

Question: does the Tourtellotte Trust have any restrictions on closing the high school? This is yet to be determined. S. Herbert: the magnitude of the problem is reflected in the data presented. Closing the high school would be detrimental.

8. Financial Report- Finance Director Orla McKiernan-Raftery: is away but sent in the FY to-date, 4-month report. Chair A. McGarry read the pertinent pages into the record.
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9. Tourtellotte Fund update – Board of Trustees: Bill Witkowski, acting chair of the Trustee Board asks that a delegate be identified from the BOF as well as from the BOE; a new chair will be selected. The Board meets 3 or 4 times annually. Chair A, McGarry: each BOF member should consider stepping forward to assume this position. It will be a subject resolved at the next monthly meeting.
10. New Business:
 - a. BOE request for FY 2019-2020 Supplemental Appropriation not to exceed \$60,000: M. Smith reviewed the tight timeline for being able to register the middle school students in CIAC spring sports. Her 11/15/2019 updated memo itemizes what categories of funding are needed at this time, with a late bus run having been added to the 09/26/2019 memo. Chair A. McGarry read the memo into the record. After discussion: **Motion S. Herbert seconded by R. Mann to appropriate \$55,931 from the Fund Balance/Surplus for the specific purposes named in the 11/15/2019 BOE memo. A. McGarry- yes J. Bellavance-yes R. Mann- yes S. Herbert-yes R. Werge-yes R. Rooney –yes Vote: 6-0 affirmative; carried Unanimously.**
 - b. Discussion: Resolution re Grant- Roof Repair/Replacement at the Thompson Public Schools Complex, the work not to exceed \$4,700,000- B. Birch noted that about 100,000 square feet of roof, over age 20, is eligible for a grant. The town fronts the cost and is reimbursed 70.2%, which will result in a final cost to the town of \$1.4 million. He reviewed details about the proposed roof and the history of several areas of the current roof. The area under consideration actually 32 years old and expensive to the town to maintain due to frequent leaking. The BOS approved moving the matter to the BOF; if approved here, it will be scheduled for referendum. Question R. Rooney: can the total amount of the reimbursement be stated in the call to the referendum? S. Witkowski: we previously were informed that it cannot. B. Birch: if the approval is not in place by January or February, there will not be enough time for the bidding process to take place and the project to be done in summer, 2020. It would have to wait another year. Solar panels are being discussed but will not be roof-mounted, if approved. J. Rice: the Building Committee is confident that the estimate will cover the costs; as is customary, there is contingency included. Chair A. McGarry read the 11/19/2019 Resolution regarding Roof Repair/Replacement, forwarded to the BOF by the BOS. **Motion R. Mann seconded by S. Herbert that the BOF authorizes the BOS and the BOE to move forward to allocate \$4.7 million for the repair and replacement of a portion of the schools roof, the source of which will include but not necessarily be limited to Bond Anticipation Notes. A. McGarry- yes R. Werge-yes J. Bellavance-yes R. Mann- yes S. Herbert-yes R. Rooney –yes Motion carried unanimously, 6-0.**

11. Old Business

- a. Discussion: possible joint meeting Fire Advisory Committee with the BOS and BOF – K. Austin: members of the community are being sought for participation in the Fire Advisory Committee, as a broad prospective will serve the town best. The BOS put three dates forward for a joint meeting: **Funding of Emergency Services in the Town of Thompson**. After consideration of the fire chiefs' availability and discussion with BOF members' schedules, Wednesday, December 11 at 7 PM, was selected. The Louis P. Faucher Community Center Meeting Room room will be asked about availability and the BOS, BOF and Fire Advisory Committee will all be informed. The structure will be: the meeting will be hosted by the Fire Advisory Committee. Two BOF members will be delegates (R. Werge and J. Bellavance) and two BOS members will be asked to participate. The FOIA Commission will be asked to confirm the structure of the meeting to be appropriate. Members of the public are welcome and encouraged to attend, as transparency about the opportunities to develop funding sources is important for public confidence.
- b. Community Fire Department update- Kim Austin: Tyra Penn-Gesek, Town Planner, has worked diligently to find viable sources of grant funding for refurbishing and/or upgrading existing fire houses. Most grant finding is for new construction. She has found a possible source and will work with Chief John Sharpe to gather the precise data required for a grant that is specifically for a lower-income community. Chair A. McGarry encouraged the committee to involve all legislators, on the federal level if that is the source of a possible grant, or on the state level, as well as the governor.

12. Board of Finance Member Comments:

- R. Rooney: welcomes newly elected members, and looks forward to working together
- S. Herbert: endorses the suggestion to add "Citizen's Comments" in a second place toward the end of the monthly BOF agenda

Motion S. Herbert seconded by R. Mann to add an Agenda item # 13, BOF 2020 meeting schedule, carried unanimously.

13. Proposed 2020 meeting schedule- proposed modifications to the draft schedule: the term Special Meetings was eliminated and Budget Workshops inserted instead, and on the list of Budget Workshops, the regular monthly meeting dates were dropped (3/19 and 4/16). **Motion R. Werge seconded by R. Rooney to approve the 2020 BOF meeting schedule as modified carried unanimously.**

14. **Motion R. Rooney seconded by R. Werge to adjourn carried unanimously.**
BOF Chair A. McGarry adjourned at 9:14 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.