



**THOMPSON Board of Finance
Regular Meeting - Minutes
Thursday- October 20, 2022
Town Hall- Merrill Seney Room
and via Zoom from remote locations**

1. The call to order by Chair Aaron McGarry was at 7:02 PM with all Board members present.
Roll call- In person: Aaron McGarry, Laurent Guillot, Dave Johnson, Rob Mann. Via Zoom: Steve Herbert and Rob Werge. Finance Director William Steglitz, First Selectman Amy St Onge, Superintendent of Schools Melinda Smith, Human Resources Director Michelle Giammarinaro, BOE Chair Kathleen Herbert. Board/Commission members. Members of the public. Recording Secretary Dotti Durst.
2. Approval of minutes:
Motion D. Johnson seconded by S. Herbert to approve the September 15, 2022 Regular Monthly meeting minutes carried, with R. Werge abstaining.
3. Correspondence:
 - a. Year-over-Year report - Tax Collector Rene Morin
 - b. 10-17-2022 First Selectman A. St Onge email regarding DPW roll-off containers
 - c. 10-04-2022 WasteQuip price quote for DPW Transfer Station Roll-Off containers
 - d. 10-17-2022 Request EMS expenses reimbursement; Thompson Fire Engine Company
 - e. 11-28-2021 Mini-split Statement, \$5,200 from B Thomas Plumbing to the Thompson Fire Engine Company
4. Citizens' comments: none
5. Selectman's Update-First Selectman Amy St Onge: * The sidewalks project is coming to completion with final aspects to be done in the spring. Street paving is targeted for the end of October. * Contracts with Freeman Company for Main Street engineering are in place (\$99k) with the next step to seek LoCIP grant funding. * The bids from Silver Petrucelli & Associates, Hamden, for the Public Safety Complex as well as the 65 Main Street upgrade were accepted. * Graciously, Joe Iamartino donated \$20,000 for the basic design work on 65 Main. * The EMS services report is very positive, with nearly full crews in Thompson and Putnam; peak call hours coverage will be sought. * Salt prices are up 11%. The current contract is for \$95.38/ton at 1,698 tons. The next contract will be \$106.69 per ton. The budget provides \$179,000 for this year, which may be close depending on the storm patterns. * Kathleen Herbert (BOE Chair) and the First Selectman are working together regarding the town's interest in armed security personnel at the schools. Three neighboring towns have implemented such a procedure. A committee made up of parents, residents, school staff and others, including Mike D'Arcy (retired State Police). Other representatives are being sought from Boards and Commissions. Laurent Guillot volunteered to participate in the committee.
Questions for the First Selectman included the status of a possible State Resident Trooper based at the new Public Safety Compound, and the possibility of a school-based Resource Officer. The committee will look into these options.
6. School District Update-Superintendent of Schools Melinda Smith : Thanked Kathleen Herbert for addressing parental concerns regarding school security; the committee will look into all aspects. * The October enrollment of 902 is the number on which state aid is based as well as the March enrollment. The two are averaged and aid is then calculated. Out-of-District Special Education placements are 15 in the local Bradley Program with one Bradley participant moving out of Special Education designation and back into general education. * Tourtellotte Career Day brought 50 alumni to campus; only our graduates participate,

offering guidance to the population in a wide variety of career paths; mock interviews are part of the experience. *The FY 22 budget is over-spent by \$220,000 all for Special Education costs. The Business Manager and the Town Finance Director are looking at ways to minimize the overage. Covid-relief funds are being examined. * The HVAC Equipment on the entire campus, all from the 1950-1960s era, is being assessed to determine overall air quality. The firm will create an in-depth report as well as a phased-in replacement plan. The Governor is putting out \$150M for Schools work, with a quick turn-around for applicants; if a project is approved by the town, there will be a 68.2% reimbursement. * The proof that the roofs replacement projects were successful was noticed during the recent heavy rain period.

* Transition students have been working with Planner Tyra Penn-Gesek to create what is called Thompson's 11th village (a moveable structure). This features a bookstore, along with other media. Called "Reading by the River" the students are learning how to handle money and interact with customers. This partnership benefits both the schools and the town.

Questions for the Superintendent of Schools: S. Herbert asked about a possible internal audit of the Special Education overage. Bill Steglitz: yes, that had been done. 30 expenses for each of 3 areas of expenses were scrutinized (90 expenses) and the findings were excellent. One expense had been posted to the wrong account, but was a correct amount, therefore not impacting the total. Internal examinations of the processes have proven that all expenses have been appropriately approved and classified.

7. Financial Report- Finance Director William Steglitz: * As of the June 30 report, revenues are \$400K ahead of budget and expenses were over budget by \$104; this week the overage has been reduced to \$36K. The September report: \$11.0M has been collected (56% of budget). Tax collections are proceeding on target, but collection of prior year taxes is \$103K (23% of budget). Investment earning are strong due to higher interest rates.

*There has been a review of the Finance Clerk's position in the Town Hall. The individual, hired 20 years ago, has assumed responsibilities beyond what a Clerk usually handles. In doing the review, the HR Director and Finance Department created a Job Description (none existed previously). The work currently being done, and the significant responsibilities will be re-titled to that of Senior Accountant. The department would promote the incumbent, Paula LeBlanc, and provide a \$5 per hour increase. Analysis indicates that pay rate to be below market rate in Connecticut for a Senior Accountant. Because only one member of the department takes benefits, but the budget was set up for two persons, there is funding available. * Guy Lapointe continues to work on account reconciliation in the Finance Department but has cut back on hours. Once this project is completed, he will fade out.

* The schools roof project needs about \$30K more due to a shortage in the amount of Bonding that was taken out. The State reimbursement for the project of 68% cannot take place until the town has paid the contract in full. The town did at referendum approve the full amount needed. Discussion among the BOF members took place about procedural steps to move ahead to address the situation. Given that the specifics of the shortfall were not spelled out on the agenda for this meeting and given that the BOF stands by full disclosure of any possible votes to appropriate funds, the consensus of the BOF was to schedule a Special Hybrid Meeting for Monday, October 24 at 6 PM in the Merrill Seney Room of the Town Hall, with the agenda item to be the Finance Department request to appropriate up to \$35k to complete payment of the school roof project.

* Audit update: November 15-17 the year-end portion of work will be done; the final steps are underway.

* The donation of \$20K toward the basic planning work for 65 Main Street was received and put into a dedicated account.

Questions for the Finance Director: what is the balance in the Unreserved Surplus? Answer: \$1.3 M as of June 30. . The Board requested this amount monthly as well as the per centage it represents.



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8. Tourtellotte Fund update – Board of Trustees: B. Steglitz- the new investment advisors, Weiss, Hale & Zahansky, are creating a new 12-month rolling investment model which will keep the Board informed about the availability of funds. Currently, none can be utilized as the balance is below the threshold. R. Werge- there is \$138k in a separate fund under separate management; the goal is to unlock this and combine it with the other assets. The account currently earns about \$10k in interest annually. The original value was in an out-of-state building.
9. Old Business:
- a. Consider request from Selectmen to allocate up to \$26,400 for the purchase of DPW Roll-Off trucks (an open top 50 yd container and 45 yd compaction container) for the Transfer Station. A. St Onge- the sale of DPW equipment brought in \$23,000 which was placed in Undesignated Surplus. The request is to utilize these assets to upgrade other DPW equipment. **Motion S. Herbert to allocate up to \$26,400 for DPW Roll-off containers from Undesignated Surplus.** Motion failed for lack of a second. Discussion- the current year budget is adequate to cover the expense of the equipment from \$23,000 to the actual bid of \$26,400. R. Mann clarified the request to be for \$23,000, which was the equipment auction proceeds. **Motion A. McGarry seconded by D. Johnson to authorize an appropriation not to exceed \$23,000 from Undesignated Surplus for the purchase of a compaction unit and an open-top unit for the DPW Transfer Station carried unanimously, 6-0.**
Laurent Guillot- yes Dave Johnson- yes Rob Mann – yes Steve Herbert- yes
Rob Werge- yes Aaron McGarry- yes
- b. Consider request from the Thompson Fire Engine Company for reimbursement of previous year facility expenses (from 09/01/2021 through 08/30/2022) of up to \$6,000 at \$500 per month. After discussion which clarified that fy 22-23 reimbursement is underway, the reimbursement being considered would be for 09/01/2021 through 06/30/2022 at \$500 per month.
Motion A. McGarry seconded by R. Mann to appropriate \$5,000 for the Thompson Fire Engine Company for expenses incurred to accommodate and house the EMS for 10 months @ \$500 per month in fy 21-22, to be taken from Undesignated Surplus, carried unanimously, 6-0.
Laurent Guillot- yes Dave Johnson- yes Rob Mann – yes Steve Herbert- yes
Aaron McGarry- yes Rob Werge- yes
- c. Consider request that a \$500 per month reimbursement be in place going forward for each month the ambulance is housed at Thompson Fire Engine Company- the current year's budget has provided for this reimbursement. The reimbursements for July, August and September have been processed. No action is required.
- d. Consider request from the Thompson Fire Engine Company for reimbursement of up to \$5,200 for the installation of a heating/cooling mini-split unit to accommodate EMS staff. R. Werge noted the piece of equipment is installed at the Station but should move to the Public Safety Complex when it becomes operational and the EMS staff are located there. R. Mann recommended that in the future, the BOF participate in the decision to make purchases such as this.
Motion D. Johnson seconded by L. Guillot to allocate \$5,200 in reimbursement for the installation of equipment at the Thompson Fire Engine Company so as to accommodate EMS staff, the funds to come from Undesignated Surplus, carried unanimously, 6-0.

Laurent Guillot- yes Dave Johnson- yes Rob Mann – yes Steve Herbert- yes
Aaron McGarry- yes Rob Werge- yes

10. New Business:

a. 2023 Board of Finance proposed meeting schedule: it was determined that meetings the first two weeks of May are no longer necessary to meet the timelines for the annual budget. Some text changes were noted.

Motion A. McGarry seconded by S. Herbert to adopt the proposed 2023 Board of Finance meeting schedule, with the discussed modifications, carried unanimously.

11. Board of Finance Member Comments: A. St Onge requested to speak, noting a \$496 STEAP grant for the Library Roof Project. * A conference table and 16 matching chairs have been donated by MAPFRE Insurance to the town for use in the Merrill Seney Room; the person who initiated this generous gift is Rob L'Heureux. The wooden conference table has gone to the schools. * UCONN engineering design students have been approved to study two matters: 1) the safety and working conditions of the DPW staff and 2). the Belding site (22 acres, 7 of them buildable), to determine the types of uses which are most appropriate in order to enable an effective marketing plan to be designed * The town assessor was almost lost to an adjoining town. When word got out, members of the public and town staff encouraged the assessor to reconsider. He stated that he likes Thompson and is staying. It was noted that 29 Connecticut towns are currently without an assessor. * The new DPW Director will move up on October 30, creating an opening for a mechanic. This is very competitive job market; the Thompson salary rate will be a challenge.

12. Adjourn:

Motion R. Mann seconded by L. Guillot to adjourn carried unanimously.

Chair A. McGarry adjourned the meeting at 8:35 PM.

To access ZOOM to see and hear this meeting, click on this link or copy/paste it to your Search bar:

https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/6oklaSpK8mOgc8JYd_sHrgDK3DUAwF2OURW8Vkqovsu_VCd3Jf1aTAnXENWMSccY.InC4M5z-UA0nLCUq Passcode: A%n%z8Ws

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.