



TOWN of THOMPSON
Board of Finance – Minutes
Thursday- March 9, 2023
Merrill Seney Room, Town Hall
And via Zoom from remote locations

1. The call to order by Chair A. McGarry was at 7:00 PM.

Roll call: Aaron McGarry, Steve Herbert, Rob Mann, Laurent Guillot, Dave Johnson, Robert Werge.

First Selectman Amy St Onge, Melinda Smith (Superintendent of Schools), Bill Steglitz (Finance Director),

Kaylee Beck (Schools Liaison), Board/Commission members and of the public. Recording Secretary Dotti Durst

2. Approval of Minutes:

a. Regular Monthly Meeting 02-16-2023: Tabled

b. **Motion S. Herbert seconded by L. Guillot to approve the 03-02-2023 Minutes (Budget Presentation) carried unanimously,**

3. Correspondence:

-Tax Collector's year-to-date report

- A correspondence came into through the BOF Contact portal but as the topic was applicable to the Planner, it was forwarded.

4. Citizens' comments:

-Francis McGarry, Chase Road, (Registrar of Voters) reviewed the statutorily mandated number of poll workers at each voting station; Thompson was remiss in staffing with 4 individuals whereas 6 are required. Thus, the Budget Line item for the Registrars of Voters shows a 50% increase.

5. Budget Workshop: Chair A. McGarry opened discussion with an overview of the customary process for Budget Proposals review. Each member of the BOF weighed in.

*It was noted that the BOF does not examine the line items in the BOE proposed budget, as they have full authority over how the total allocated dollars are utilized and the BOF has no role in those decisions.

* The categories of expenditures (Town, Education and Capital Improvements) are complex and interwoven.

*The consensus of the BOF was that they represent all of the townspeople and need to listen to all points of view.

*Debt Service will likely begin in 2024 and into 2025 for the HVAC project, projecting a .8mil impact for this and the other major projects

* Student performance and per pupil spending were discussed as well as a comparison of tax rates in Thompson to other towns, as well as the percentage of Special Education students

* The Schools/Town collaborations (IT Department, HR, Finance Director) had a positive fiscal result.

Using the proposed FY 2023-2024 Budget, beginning on Line #1, General Government, the BOF together with the Finance Director, B. Steglitz and First Selectman A. St Onge, reviewed each item, especially asking for clarification when there was a deviation from the current year's budget. Specific items:

*Line 18: discontinue membership in CCM (100% reduction).

*Staff salaries: proposed 3% increase: A. St Onge noted a recent 0% increase; the contractual increase is 2.25%. R. Werge asked for a total dollar impact of salaries on the fy 24 budget, as well as at 2.5%

*For the shared Town/Schools personnel – the splits in funding proposed were reviewed

- * Cyberattack risk triggered a major Wi-Fi upgrade plan to protect data including private personnel matters but also to manage insurance costs against cyberattacks.
- * Software for many town and schools offices such as the Tax, HR, Assessor, IT need upgrades
- * Finance Department staff (the Finance Director is shared with the Schools) was reviewed
- * Some significant-looking proposed % increases are actually small (Tax Collector-Legal, for ex: from \$5 to \$50 shows a 900% increase; Security contract +\$590 = a 59% increase)
- * Fewer polling places would reduce newly required staffing numbers (\$11,500 increase proposed)
- * All utilities will experience a significant increase
- * (Line 238) Total General Government requests will result a 11.2 % increase
- * Resident State Trooper (line 241) - the concept was reviewed including the impact on security at the Schools; anticipated \$240K cost including the vehicle, firearms, all other requirements
- * Budget examination was discontinued at this line in order to move to the next agenda item.

6. New Business: Electrical work at Riverside Park, not to exceed \$9,700.

A. St Onge: The Recreation Director and Director of the DPW noted something to be amiss at the Riverside Drive ballfield light fixtures and called for a professional evaluation, out of concern for public safety, and possible eminent danger. A local contractor responded and removed the dangling light fixtures, as the cross beams had rotted, and the fixtures were not secure. Photos were provided. The work entailed bringing in long-reach equipment which was part of the removal total cost of \$9,699. The BOF members confirmed details of what transpired.

Motion R. Mann seconded by R. Werge to approve \$9,699 for the electrical emergency (removal of light fixtures for Riverside Park), funds to come from Contingency, carried unanimously.

7. Adjourn:

Motion R. Werge seconded by D. Johnson to adjourn carried unanimously.

Chair A. McGarry adjourned the meeting at 9:08 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/2J14VC8wXvZtXpGfzhAxyTkVvTVNtmkl5vwsSe4e7BoB_KrqwkLZtc-5bB_pht7.0f3gGaOtNFFZW5Y5 Passcode: *s57bbrc

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.