



**TOWN of THOMPSON**  
**Board of Finance – Minutes**  
**Thursday- March 16, 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. Via Zoom: Robert Werge.

First Selectman Amy St Onge, Melinda Smith (Superintendent of Schools), Bill Steglitz (Finance Director), Kaylee Beck (Schools Liaison), Kathleen Herbert (BOE Chair), Board/Commission members, Fire Chiefs, Jamie Seney (Fire Marshal), Many members of the public (in person and via Zoom). Recording Secretary Dotti Durst

2. Approval of Minutes:

a. **Motion S. Herbert seconded by L. Guillot to approve the 02-16-2023 Regular Meeting minutes carried unanimously**

b. **Motion R. Mann seconded by L. Guillot to approve the 03-09-2023 Regular Meeting minutes carried unanimously**

3. Correspondence:

Through the BOF Contact site

03/10 Jacqueline Heffernan, subject: "Town and school budget"

03/10 James W. Heffernan, Jr., subject: "Present Budgets *as is* for referendum"

03/10 Rich Carlson, subject: "Mil increase"

03/10 Heather Santos, subject: "Citizens Comments - request to add one towards the end of your meeting"

03/11 Elizabeth Goldsmith, subject: "voicing my support for 2023 budget"

After the Agenda was posted, through the BOF Contact site:

03/13 Amber Comptois, subject: "parent point of view"

03/16 Randy Fifield, subject "tax decrease"

4. Citizens' comments:

- Bill Warner, Lowell Davis Road, distributed a document to the BOF members detailing comparisons with regional school districts, and made comments about the budget

- Elizabeth Goldsmith, 988 Quaddick Town Farm Road, per her request, the 03/11 BOF Contact site comment was read aloud with the Chair's authorization by Jessica Bolte

- Jessica Bolte, Riverside Drive, made comments about the budget

- Kathleen Herbert (BOE Chair) distributed to the BOF copies of the BOE 23-24 Proposed Budget PowerPoint as presented on March 2, and cited CGS 10-220 and Title 17-106, BOF responsibilities

- Linda Charlton, 9 Paula Lane, made comments about the budget

- Heather Santos, Hagstrom Road, called upon the BOF to re-consider the addition of a second "Citizens' Comments" agenda item later in each meeting; made comments about the budget

- Brian Santos, Hagstrom Road, made comments about the budget

- Shawn Brissette, Lowell Davis Road, noted that a town/schools Administrator should be reconsidered and cited CGS 17, BOF responsibilities, and made comments about the budget

- Brian Loffredo, Lowell Davis Drive, made comments about the budget

- Sally White, E. Thompson Road, advocated for returning to separate ballot questions for the Schools and General Government budgets

- Emily Sousa, Riverside Drive, made comments about the budget

- Danielle Carlson, Rachael Drive, made comments about the budget

- A St Onge, Riverside Drive, advocates for the current combined Town/Schools budget, noting this to be a one community/one budget/one taxpayer base concept, with the entire town moving forward responsibly

5. Optional Updates from BOS, BOE, Finance Director: the third week of the month customarily provides updates to the BOF. In the interest of moving to the Budget Workshop, updates were not presented.

## 6. Budget Workshop: time stamp-35 minutes

- a revised budget package was distributed dated 03/16/ 2023 on which the Finance Director made the following adjustments:

. Lines #34, 36, 150 for salaries and #697 for pension funding state-mandated contribution increase (\$85,706).

The changes result in an increase in the total budget of \$86,439 for a new final total of \$31,894,685 with \$22,547,997 to be raised through taxes. The proposed mil rate is 29.3; the current fiscal year rate is 25.02 (an increase of 4.28 mils).

\* L. Guillot: let the town decide about approval of the proposed budget; if that fails, it will come back to the BOF

\* S. Herbert: concurred, noting how very many voters have asked for this process to take place

\* D. Johnson asked about the technical procedure to add in these budget modifications before the budget could be considered to be presented to the voters "as is."

**Motion S. Herbert seconded by L. Guillot to send to the Town Meeting and then to Referendum the combined municipal Fiscal Year 2023-24 proposed budget, including adjustments presented by the Finance Director at this BOF meeting (03/16/2023), in the amount of \$31,894,685.**

Discussion of the motion:

\*R. Werge proposed going through the proposed budgets to understand each before voting on a motion of such magnitude.

– **Motion D. Johnson to amend the main motion: 1). Remove the loader (\$217,400) and remove the truck (\$240,809) and change them to a 5-year lease-purchase 2). Remove from Capital Expense: repaving the town hall lot (\$72,856), and 3) remove \$235,495 from the paving account, leaving \$1.4M which includes the current funds (\$979K) and anticipated revenue (\$154K) and the 23-24 budgeted amount(\$339,562). The total budget reduction would be \$1,725,562. Motion failed for lack of a second.**

– **Motion R. Werge seconded by D. Johnson to Lay on the Table the original Motion, thus allowing a review of the proposed budgets and time to work on it until the BOF members are satisfied, failed, 2-4**

L. Guillot - no Rob Mann- no D. Johnson- no R. Werge- yes S. Herbert- no A. McGarry- yes

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- The chair called for consideration of the Main Motion:

Discussion: R. Werge: it is important to understand the budget proposal before moving ahead, to hear from the people who prepared the budgets and their reasoning The main motion was re-read, and the vote taken.

\* **Motion S. Herbert seconded by L. Guillot to send to the Town Meeting and then to Referendum the combined municipal Fiscal Year 2023-24 proposed budget, including modifications presented by the Finance Director at this BOF meeting (03/16/2023), in the amount of \$31,894,685, failed 2-4.**

L. Guillot - yes Rob Mann- no D. Johnson- no R. Werge- no S. Herbert- yes A. McGarry- no

The Budget workshop resumed, Line 241, Resident State Trooper, Time stamp - 1 hour 3 minutes

Modification: the budget line item #243 can be reduced to \$200K as all benefits, equipment, vehicles, ammo, other necessary equipment is included in the base fee; this calls for a two-year contract. If the Town requests overtime, such as for an event or particular extra weekend time, there would be additional cost. There are two options for the work schedule for each Resident State Trooper (most frequently 6:30 am – 2:30 pm or 2:30 pm – 10:30 pm); they work on a 5-days-on and 3-days-off rotation, thus each week the coverage differs. If approved, the process will take some time after July 1 to identify the trooper and get everything set up.

**Motion D. Johnson seconded by S. Herbert to reduce Resident State Trooper Line 243 by \$40K to \$200K carried unanimously, 6-0.**

L. Guillot - yes Rob Mann- yes D. Johnson- yes R. Werge- yes S. Herbert- yes A. McGarry- yes

**Motion S. Herbert seconded by R. Mann to reduce Line 254 (Fire Marshall), Travel, from \$2,014 to \$1,400 based on current usage. After review, motion withdrawn by S. Herbert and second withdrawn by R. Mann.**

**Motion S. Herbert seconded by R. Mann to reduce Line 254 (Fire Marshal travel) down to \$1,800, based on current year usage, carried unanimously, 6-0.**

L. Guillot - yes Rob Mann- yes D. Johnson- yes R. Werge- yes S. Herbert- yes A. McGarry- yes

\*\* The BOF and Fire Marshal discussed the fee schedule/income for services from that department

\*\* BOF discussed with Finance Director the usefulness of the various budget columns; format modifications will remain readable

\*\*At 8:47 PM, BOF member R. Werge (via Zoom) had to leave the meeting.

Line 266, Fire Departments, Time Stamp - 1 hour 30 minutes

Five Fire Department Chiefs and other Fire Department leaders (Chief Grauer via Zoom), each commented on the proposed budget, identifying the specific line items which need additional funding in the next fiscal year: Equipment, including communication with dispatch, with mutual aid responders and among their crews; turnout and protective equipment; responders' training costs including obtaining the R1 Certifications; rescue boat motor replacement; and physical exams, among others. No capital expenses are included in this Operating budget. Ambulance/EMT (Line 273) costs remain constant; Thompson has another ambulance to contribute in lieu of a fee increase.

**Motion S. Herbert seconded by D. Johnson to equally fund the five Fire Departments (Line 272, Grants) at \$81,360, leaving the total of the line item unchanged, carried unanimously, 5-0.**

**L. Guillot - yes Rob Mann- yes D. Johnson- yes S. Herbert- yes A. McGarry- yes**

7. Board of Finance member comments:

- A. McGarry

\*the budget sections already reviewed may be re-visited by the BOF at any time during the Budget Workshops process

\*next Budget Workshop: Thursday, March 23, Town Hall Merrill Seney Room and via Zoom

8 Adjourn:

**Motion R. Mann seconded by S. Herbert to adjourn carried unanimously.**

Chair A. McGarry adjourned the meeting at 9:19 PM.

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

To hear the recording of this meeting, click on this link or copy/paste it to your Search bar:

[https://thompsonpublicschools-my.sharepoint.com/:u:/g/personal/wsteglitz\\_thompsonpublicschools\\_org/EUR7uxwniNJFto-jcpa\\_7JsBjcxIFT02EqGV-b1\\_TWEjlg?e=zrzhHR](https://thompsonpublicschools-my.sharepoint.com/:u:/g/personal/wsteglitz_thompsonpublicschools_org/EUR7uxwniNJFto-jcpa_7JsBjcxIFT02EqGV-b1_TWEjlg?e=zrzhHR)

*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.*