

TOWN of THOMPSON
Board of Finance - Minutes
Thursday, March 30, 2022
Merrill Seney Room, Town Hall
And via Zoom from remote locations

1. The call to order by Chair A. McGarry was at 7:03 PM.

Roll call: Aaron McGarry, Steve Herbert, Dave Johnson, Robert Werge

Via Zoom: Rob Mann, Absent: Laurent Guillot

First Selectman Amy St Onge, Selectman Susanne Witkowski, Melinda Smith (Superintendent of Schools), Bill Steglitz (Finance Director), Kaylee Beck (Schools Liaison), Michelle Giammarinaro (HR Director), Alison Boutaugh (Library Director), Kathleen Herbert (Chair, BOE), Board/Commission members. Members of the public. Recording Secretary Dotti Durst

2. Approval of Minutes:

Motion R. Werge seconded by S. Herbert to approve the 03-23-2023 Regular Meeting minutes with 2 modifications carried unanimously. * NDDH (line 477): proposed increase of \$3.5 ~~\$1.75~~

*** Gladys Green Complex (Line 456): ~~will need sewer upgrades~~**

3. Correspondence: none

4. Citizens' comments – three minutes per person maximum.

* Chair A. McGarry reminded all present that Citizens' Comments are held to one comment per person of a duration of 3 minutes, in order for the Board of Finance to be able to hear from all members of the public who wish to speak; the Budget Workshop will then be the focus of BOF tonight. There are only 2 April meetings remaining after this one, by which the BOF must have the Budget Proposal to the BOS in time for their April 18 meeting.

– Brian Santos, 77 Hagstrom Road, spoke in favor of the proposed EDC budget which incorporates marketing strategies for a strong future for the town, following the infrastructure improvements

- Susanne Witkowski (Selectman), 12 Clarence Drive, thanked the town department heads and education team as well as the BOF for their diligent work. She supports a Resident State Trooper, increased hours for the Animal Control Officer, and the proposed Education budget.

- Heather Santos, 77 Hagstrom Road, (BOE) noted increased basic education costs, need for excellence

- Kathleen Herbert (Chair, BOE), 122 Wilsonville Road, noted the recent changes in the town's Grand List, as reported by a citizen, but stated that it needs to be increased significantly beyond 1.7%, resulting in the needed increased tax revenue to meet town needs

- Brittany Charboneau, 56 Joliet Avenue, commented on the Town Budget Survey and the several budget proposals supported by the taxpayers, including a Resident State Trooper

- Brandi Renaud, 14 Liberty Highway, Read aloud by from the Zoom Chatbox, supports a Trooper

- Elizabeth Messier, Valley View Drive, agreed

- Dan Bennett, 115 Labbe Road, as the President of the Thompson Business Association, and a member of the EDC, supports the EDC budget as proposed

- Sally White, 305 E Thompson Road, discussion last week of the proposed Resident State Trooper; she confirmed the trooper's days of the week and days off, adding that the proposed budget is unreasonable.

- Nicola Chrzanowski, 49 Mountain Hill Road, thanked the BOF, noting that all Boards put forward the best possible budget.

-Valerie Clark, 105 Alm Road, appreciates the scrutiny by the BOF, recommending that all five Fire Departments' finding, if kept level, be raised to the max requested by any department.

- Devon Brunner, 92 Mountain Hill Road, supports a Resident State Trooper

- Mike Perry, 137 Church St, favors armed security for the town
- Amber Comptois, Sunset Hill Rd, asks the BOF to support the future of school students and staff
- Peter Beck, Fabyan Road, stated the schools to be secure, with no inappropriate entries
- Matt Polsky, 92 Sunset Hill Road, (BOE) using a Dr Seuss analogy, is "Speaking For The Children" in support of the proposed budget, noting that budget increases inevitably follow short-funding
- Francesca Benoit, 16 Liberty Highway, advocates for a Resident State Trooper
- Jackie Heffernan, 11 Quaddick Road, supports a Resident State Trooper, since Troop D is understaffed
- A. St Onge noted another Chat offering school incidents data, but the person has already spoken today

5. Budget Workshop:

Line 349, MS4 stormwater run-off mandates (7:35 pm): After discussion by the DPW Director:

Motion A. McGarry seconded by R. Werge to reduce the proposed amount by \$4,726, to \$40K, carried unanimously, 5-0

S. Herbert- yes D. Johnson – yes R. Werge- yes R. Mann (via Zoom) - yes A. McGarry - yes

**Finance Director Bill Steglitz reviewed the questions posed by the BOF on 03-23-2023 including assurance that the Building Fees projected income increase from \$100K to \$150K is realistic.

(7:38 pm) - Line 483 (Civic and Cultural) beginning with Library Line 484 - Line 488, new state minimum wage will be phased in over a 3-year period

- Line 507, Books and Periodicals: with the costs of paper increased as well as inflation in other areas, the costs of hardcover books and particularly Large Print books have increased

- Line 514, custodian: one is missing from the current crew, thus making it appear to be an increase when that person is, they hope, hired (19 hour position)

- Utility costs, under contracts, were discussed

- Line 532, Historical Society: increased costs of running the facility

- Line 538, Recreation: The request was made to change the title of the staff person; job descriptions have been changed, much more work is being done with Seniors

-Line 601, Planning and Zoning; the ZEO works 20 hours/week, remaining under the cap for qualification for benefits

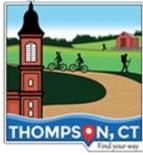
- Line 610, fees will increase as public notices and legal reviews of the proposed updated Regulations

(7:59 pm) - Line 668, Economic Development, will initiate Branding and marketing plans (line 675) to bring attention to the redevelopment of Main Street and the Mill sites, to attract outside investment and new businesses. Grant funds were reviewed by Director of Planning and Development Tyra Penn-Gesek. Cumulatively the grants amount to \$4.5 Million, examined over a 4-year stretch. Other grants are pending or have become available, such one \$2,500 Ag-related (matching). In order for the grant application to be approved, the Matching funds must already be available.

- Other: Pensions (Line 697). The Finance Director reviewed the state-mandated change, which will not result in higher employee benefits, as well as impacts of retirements/severance costs to the town.

- Municipal Insurance (Line 708) covers vehicles, Fire Departments, Workers' Compensation, others

(8:18 pm) - Capital Improvements (proposed) were reviewed: the Library having been built in 1993 is in need of several modernizations, greater energy efficiency and upgrade of equipment which is wearing out including, under-ground 600 gallon storage tanks.



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- R. Werge advocated for an All-Town-Buildings roof fund, rather than the one only for the Library, as all town buildings will cycle through this need.
- A McGarry asked about the process for changing the name of this Reserve Fund. The Building Committee will be asked to plan out the sequence of roof replacements for all town buildings.
- S. Herbert: asked about Revaluation; the Assessor is doing much of the groundwork now, and this will reduce the fee needed for the outside certifying organization. If \$100K will be needed, \$25K should be set aside each of the 4 years leading up to the Revaluation, which takes place each 5 years. Bids will go out soon and the actual total known.
- D. Johnson: Lease-to-own town trucks as compared to outright purchase was reviewed, as was paving of roads and the town hall parking lot (which may be out of ADA compliance). The DPW Director will be asked to be present at the next meeting to further discuss these proposals.
- R. Werge asked about debt service retirement and for the value of the current Loader at the DPW, should a replacement be obtained
- Little League field improvements will require \$12K more, then all 3 fields will be usable. Enrollment is up significantly from the Covid era, with 13 teams signed up, or about 130 children.
- D. Johnson requested Transfer data be itemized, with sub-lines
- S. Herbert: State Police incident reports arrive monthly to the BOS, but an annual compilation going back 5 years is now requested.
- A. McGarry: The Resident State Trooper was discontinued in 2007, so previous data (2005-2006) would be helpful as well, for identifying trending patterns.
- R. Werge: asked for Transfer Station Loader projected upkeep costs for the current year and last.

** Chair A. McGarry: Capital Expense MS4 retrofit will be discussed next week.

6. Adjourn:

Motion D. Johnson seconded by S. Herbert 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/ySiD5lhYqt2xLkv-zWKEdAS-r2Sm6vN1-5zR4X7kmGvrBF64I0siJ8r3HtwBBIXu.ytcYIPHLyBtKUqo1> Passcode: KGAS06\$@

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.