



THOMPSON Board of Finance
Regular Meeting/Budget Workshop - Minutes
Thursday, March 24, 2022
Town Hall-Merrill Seney Room
and via Zoom from remote locations

1. The 7:00 PM call to order was by Vice Chair Rob Werge with 5 members present; all are present at 7:23 PM Roll call: Robert Werge, Steve Herbert, Rob Mann, Laurent Guillot, Dave Johnson. Aaron McGarry (joined via Zoom at 7:23 PM). First Selectman Amy St Onge, Michelle Giammarinaro (HR Director), Melinda Smith (Superintendent of Schools), Guy Lapointe (Interim Finance Director), Board/Commission members. Members of the public. Recording Secretary Dotti Durst
2. Auditor's Report/King, King & Associates by Christopher King and Marshall Deane via Zoom:
In reviewing their report for fiscal year 2020-2021, it was noted that:
 - the overview, pages 3-11, provides high-level discussion in conversational language
 - The General Fund (\$1,969,733 is 7.5% of the budgeted revenue) is a little lower than expected
 - the BOE Pension Fund for non-certified staff is consistently fully funded, for which the town received praise; additionally, large gains were realized in investments during the period.
 - the over a 3-year period, the Fund Balance trend shows that "unassigned" has been fluctuating
 - the outstanding taxes receivable as of 06-30-2021 are within the acceptable range of between 2-8%. Thompson is at 6.6% of the levy; the previous year was 6.4% but even lower is desirable.
 - the prior year's BOE budgetary finding has been corrected
 - in review of the Management Letter, no issues are found to be at the level of a Material Weakness or a Serious Deficiency; comments in that section are intended to strengthen the budgetary process.
 - in Verbal Comments, the goal of backup approvals for Certificates of Correction was reviewed.BOF Member Comments/Questions:
 - Chair R. Werge thanked both representatives of King, King & Associates, present via Zoom.
 - S. Herbert inquired if there are lessons the auditors could share from other towns of a similar budgetary structure. M. Deane-the combined Directors of Finance for the town and schools will be helpful, given the complexity that has arisen in recent years regarding compliance.
 - R. Mann verified that cross-checking systems will be in place with the combined functions.
 - R. Werge: each Department should be asked to make corrections to the Assets list during the year as needed, keeping it current both for new equipment and for those pieces now gone
 - S. Herbert asked for final comments. C. King: It is a positive to have the new Finance Director in place, as gaps in maintaining continuity are detrimental. The timeline for completion of the audit could have been shorter if inquiries back to the town could have had quicker responses (he noted that the Finance Director, at that time, had a family situation which necessitated her being away). Throughout the process, the First Selectman was an asset and was kept up to date.
 - Former Finance Director Orla McKiernan-Raftery praised Paula LeBlanc in the Finance Office for updating the Fixed Assets list; Department heads will now keep the database current.
3. Approval of minutes:
Motion D. Johnson seconded by L. Guillot to approve the March 17, 2022 BOF Meeting minutes carried unanimously, with a note about Item # 5.
4. Correspondence: nothing since posting the agenda
5. Citizens' comments:
 - John Rice, 39 E Thompson Rd, asked that BOF members attend the BOE budget-preparation meetings to best be able to understand the Schools' needs. **Beauty and the Beast:** he encourages everyone to enjoy the experience while seeing how some of their tax dollars are being used.

6. Selectman's Update-First Selectman Amy St Onge: * the town has found and hired the new Finance Director, Bill Steglitz, who is present at this meeting, and has also just found and hired the new Director of Public Works Troy Sposato who will begin on April 18. He has roots in Thompson but brings years of DPW experience, from his position in Willington. * She encourages everyone to attend **Beauty and the Beast**. * Advertising will begin for the upgrade of the sidewalk along Rt 12 (7400 feet, with granite curbs) * Grant funds are available to re-engineer the intersection of Lane Rd and Rt 12. * Bluebird boxes are available at the Conservation office. * Recreation has several events scheduled, including the 20-year annual Roadside Cleanup; the event list is on the town website. * The Tourtellotte Trust Board challenged Planner T. Penn-Gesek to identify grant funds to update 65 Main Street, and she came through with the only Federal Infrastructure Grant being awarded in Eastern CT. The Planner has been very diligent in finding other grants, such as the Brownfield remediation grant which is in place.
7. School District Update-Superintendent of Schools Melinda Smith: * the students are experiencing the joy that a play such as **Beauty and the Beast** brings with it. This will be truly a Community event. * She thanked John Rice for the plug for the Play but thanked him right back for the important work the Building Committee has performed regarding the Roofs project and assessing the quality of the HVAC systems.
8. Finance Department Report: Interim Director Guy Lapointe noted that revenues are strong, reviewing Tax Collections ytd, as well as Building Permits. This line may have been slightly over-budgeted. A Special Education Grant (\$300k) will be transferred to the BOE via journal entry.
9. Tourtellotte Fund update – Board of Trustees: President Tom Angelo- the Windows project is in the final phase, with sufficient funds for masonry repair, as required for safety. The trim will be re-painted (remaining historically accurate). Options are being reviewed for the ADA accessibility ramp while maintaining the historic facades. Sound engineers are being consulted to address reverberation. A Financial Management RFP will go out, after 7 or 8 years the current firm.
10. Budget Workshop: began at 8:18 PM with the Schools budget as presented by the BOE. Superintendent Smith reviewed a Slide in the BOE budget proposal, demonstrating over a period of several years the challenges in managing the budget, even while increases did not cover expenses, nor shortages due to inflation. Slide# 16, which demonstrates the 4 primary drivers of proposed budget increases, was reviewed: Special Education tuition (+24.4%), Busses (+3%), Health Insurance (+8%) and Fuel costs (+\$124,486). The Board members examined several lines in the proposal, discussing and asking questions. The total BOE budget request is \$19,873,192 a 3.94% increase.
11. Board of Finance Member Comments: a meeting must be rescheduled to April 6, to assure a quorum.
Motion D. Johnson seconded by S. Herbert to re-schedule the April 7 meeting to Wednesday, April 6, Merrill Seney Room, Town Hall and via Zoom, carried unanimously.
12. Adjourn: **Motion S. Herbert seconded by R. Mann to adjourn at 9:07 PM carried unanimously.**

NEXT MEETING—THURSDAY, MARCH 31@ 7 PM –Hybrid format

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/KO99fujmaq4Wv2RAUepgQOqWzy0Lenxp89ufaAA7TKuz_aYGOzvD_kVozyCW_cCSA.ptemVTAJINS78vdU Passcode: 8#*fafH.

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