

THOMPSON Board of Finance Regular Meeting - Minutes Thursday, September 16, 2021 Town Hall and via Zoom from remote locations

 The call to order by Chair Aaron McGarry was at 7:03 PM, with all 6 Members present Roll call: Aaron McGarry (Chair), Rob Mann, Rhonda Rooney, Robert Werge, Jim Bellavance, Steve Herbert (remotely). Others- First Selectman Amy St Onge, Selectman Susanne Witkowski. Melinda Smith (Superintendent of Schools), Many Board/Commission members, Fire Department leaders/members, and members of the public. WINY. Recording Secretary Dotti Durst

## 2. Approval of minutes: Motion S. Herbert seconded R. Werge by to approve the 07-15-2021 BOF meeting minutes, with the request that a detail be re-checked, carried 5-0 with R. Mann abstaining.

3. Correspondence:

a).Petition requesting funding for Community Fire Station b). Notification from FOIA: hybrid and/or electronic meetings allowed through April 30, 2022 c). after the agenda was posted: Engineers Tighe and Bond report re: nature of the work at Community Fire

- 4. Citizens' comments: S. Witkowski, Clarence Dr: \*praised the EMS staff for doing an amazing job during a less-than-ideal situation. \* She, for many reasons, does not favor the \$130K funding request by Community Fire, suggesting that it may be time to consider other options. She would support changes to the charter that could result in surrender of an ambulance to the town rather than the cash being distributed to the members if the ambulances were sold.
- 5. Selectman's Update-First Selectman Amy St Onge: \* in August, the BOS voted for usage for the ARPA funds, setting \$500K aside for contingency. She detailed the other uses. \* Using the current year budget allocation, preliminary work at the DPW site has begun. CT Water is very pleased to see this being addressed. \* The <20' Bridge inspections are complete with Buckley Hill preliminary design ready to begin. \*On Thursday and Friday, EMTs (Emergency Medical Technicians) sent in resignations from Community Ambulance, causing the town to rely upon Mutual Aid all weekend. Community Chief John Sharpe is applying for a R1 License, which permits First Responder service. Chief Grauer (Thompson Hill) made a major accommodation to create space for an ambulance, moving valuable equipment out and into storage. It is imperative that the town has ambulance service available; she notes that she believes the town owns the ambulances. Until the matter is resolved, KB Ambulance will provide 24/7 service at \$1,440 per day or \$42K per month. Putnam Ambulance will consider a regional approach. This matter will be on the agenda for the 09-21-2021 BOS meeting. \* The audit has been changed to mid-August, as the Finance Director is out of the country on a family emergency. \* The BOS is considering the purchase of a parcel of land in the center of town. \* The Centerville Bank has been proactive regarding the N. Grosvenordale Pond; three solutions have been posed with a final determination expected soon. Questions/comments from BOF members:

J. Bellavance- Quaddick Rd repaving is excellent but heavy truck traffic will soon degrade it A. McGarry- to deter, suggested weight limit signage on the road, permitted because of the bridge R. Werge- noted that ARPA funds required tough decisions by the BOS, thanking them. How many Community ambulances are there? A. St Onge: 3. One is parked at the Speedway, and 2 nearby. He clarified that the First Selectman was informed that the Community Fire petition was being withdrawn, and only verbally; be requested it in writing and consultation with the town attorney. R. Rooney- offered a concise review of the ambulance situation. She confirmed the current budget provides for monthly funding to Community Ambulance, and that it is paid through September (the bulk of their funding comes from compensation from users). They are holding the ambulances. R. Mann- commends ARPA funds going to Bull Hill/ the track (required for school accreditation) J. Bellavance- the public uses the track, as do the students. The salt shed is important as well. S. Herbert- asked for clarification by what date all of the ARPA funds must be assigned R. Werge- the salt shed upgrades include cameras and equipment, paving; asked about a committee. R. Mann- commends the ARPA decision about the DPW. Water pollution is very complex now

6. School District Update-Superintendent of Schools Melinda Smith: During the summer months-Using the School's ARPA funds, Special Ed students were given a 2-week a jump-start for school resumption. Construction projects: \*the new roof and new high school floors, thanks to the town budget. \* a Transition Room for students 18-21 to provide life and job skill training, (Thanks to a Lowe's Grant for this project). \*the security gate project is underway (Safety Grant), with the electronics completed and the gates themselves on order. \*the Phone System upgrade is done, as is the Outside Speakers project and Dust Collection in the shops (all Alliance District Grants). -School resumed 08-25 with 940 students; the number fluctuates daily until October when it usually stabilizes. The new administrative team is in place (2 Principals and 1 Assistant Principal).

On Monday, 13 school bus drivers were out, necessitating some quick shifting, eliminating busses to Ellis and Killingly Vo-Ag as well as Special Education. Elementary school became remote learning. Questions from BOF Members: S. Herbert-praised M. Smith for her handling of the bus driver shortage. He asked Special Education enrollment. M. Smith- the overall count is up and there are two students whose needs put them into a higher-cost category. These increases could not be anticipated when the budget was passed and therefore are at additional cost.

- 7. Financial Report- none as the Finance Director is away on family matter
- 8. Tourtellotte Fund update Board of Trustees: none
- 9. New Business:

Petition requesting an appropriation of up to \$107,000 for the stabilization of the floors at Community Fire Station and up to \$23,000 for the engineering of the building / site for the purpose renovating or addition: BOF discussion - BOF Chair A. McGarry read the Petition title aloud, exactly as it had been submitted. R. Werge- the BOF needs additional people to be present in order to gather all the applicable facts. A. McGarry asked if either Community Fire Chief John Sharpe or Roger Durand was present in person or via Zoom, but no one spoke. The First Selectman received notice by telephone that the Petition has been withdrawn; it is not in writing nor has the BOF Chair been contacted. How to best handle the matter was discussed, including the provision for the opportunity for the Petition to be brought back to the BOF.

Motion A. McGarry seconded by R. Werge to table this issue until such time as the BOF chooses to bring the Community Fire Station Petition back carried unanimously, 6-0.

- 10. Old Business-American Rescue Plan funds: the topic was earlier reviewed
- 11. Board of Finance Member Comments: S. Herbert-thanks to Melinda Smith and Amy St Onge for their efforts on behalf of the town during the recent challenges.
- 12. Adjourn: Motion J. Bellavance seconded by R. Mann to adjourn at 8:13 PM. carried unanimously.

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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.