



**THOMPSON Board of Finance  
Regular Meeting - Minutes  
Thursday, November 18, 2021  
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, Robert Werge, Steve Herbert, Rob Mann, Laurent Guillot, Dave Johnson. Others- First Selectman Amy St Onge, Selectman Susanne Witkowski. Orla McKiernan-Raftery (Finance Director). Rick Benoit (DPW Director), Melinda Smith (Superintendent of Schools), Board/Commission members. Members of the public.  
Recording Secretary Dotti Durst
2. Election of Chair and Vice Chair:  
**Motion S. Herbert seconded by D. Johnson to elect Aaron McGarry as Chair of the Thompson BOF for a period of two years carried unanimously.**  
**Motion S. Herbert seconded by R. Mann to elect Robert Werge as Vice Chair of the Thompson BOF for a period of two years carried unanimously.**  
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3. Approval of minutes: Discussion- D. Johnson confirmed that the BOS, subsequent to the October BOF meeting, approved the requested Budget Transfers as presented and as conditionally approved by the BOF.  
**Motion R. Werge seconded by S. Herbert to approve the October 21, 2021 meeting minutes carried unanimously.**
4. Correspondence:
  - a. Tax collector's 4-month collection report, 07/01-10/31, 2021 shows a slight increase over 2020
  - b. Emails on 11-15 from the Finance Director related to the school roof funding options.
5. Citizens' comments: none
6. Selectman's Update-First Selectman Amy St Onge: A lot is happening! \* Meeting with T. Penn (Planning and Development) regarding the CT Community Challenges Grants through CDEC which may allow for matching funds within ARPA Guidelines. On 11-29 there will be a Special BOS meeting to consider these \$1M opportunities . \* Public Safety Complex planning is underway, with a site plan created utilizing funds from last year. It was confirmed that with the proposed alterations, the addition of the Salt Shed will fit nicely on the site.\* The DPW is working on the Buckley Hill Road bridge matter: the choices are to repair it or close it. A preliminary design was done, with the final design work next (\$227+K) and the then actual construction (\$3M). Grant funds are being sought; the town share will be about \$1.5M. With this and the Langer Pond Dam project as well as two roofs that need attention, compiling the projects and seeking bonding is being considered. D. Johnson clarified that in previous years some funds have been set aside anticipating major projects. S. Herbert asked if there is another major bridge project pending; R. Benoit clarified that there is possibly an <20' bridge to address. R. Werge asked about limiting the weight load on Buckley Hill Road; R. Benoit pointed out that signs are unenforceable, and that Navigation systems are directing drivers to the road. \* The ambulance status is not yet resolved. The consultant developed a medical situation, which is causing a delay in considering the options regarding a possible combination with Putnam

Ambulance. Community Fire was paid were paid for the 3 ambulances and they have been delivered, along with the associated equipment and supplies. Thompson Hill Station continues to house the active ambulance, staffed by K-B. R-1 status for Community Fire has been delayed. The process of how responses are handled when an emergency call comes in to dispatch was reviewed, as was the function of the R-1 Certification at the other four stations and the relationship to the ambulance call-out. The line item for Ambulance Services in the current budget is about expended to K-B at around \$40k per month. Ideally the matter will soon be decided. R. Werge asked about a possible short-term solution. A. McGarry asked if A. St Onge agrees to contact OEMS again and bring them up to date about the delays. Ambulance service must be provided by statute, and right now the taxpayers are carrying a heavy load. A. St Onge will make another contact at OEMS and work with Ed Higgins at Putnam Ambulance as well as with the current provider, K-B Ambulance.

7. School District Update-Superintendent of Schools Melinda Smith: offered “Welcome” to the new BOF members. \*Schools’ enrollment is 936, down by one from last month. Special Education student count is increased, in particular with students placed out-of-district. This is resulting in overspending on that line item, but with all line items considered the schools budget is even. \*Vision-To-Learn ( a Federal Grant program) identified 168 families whose students failed the preliminary screening. They will receive additional services, to allow equal access to learning for all students. Increased “:screen time” for all students has had an impact. Some students lost or broke glasses in the intervening 2 years, and several had lenses that are no longer correct. \* *Beauty and the Beast* is coming soon, after a Covid-related delay. Auditions are beginning soon. \* The Business Office is transitioning to ADT; the new process for the District will be a positive. \* There has been a Covid up-tick seemingly with exposures away from school. A vaccine clinic was conducted. \* Five Fire Stations joined together for “High 5 Friday” with Justin Yong coordinating the event.
8. Financial Report- Finance Director Orla McKiernan-Raftery: “Welcome back” to the 2 newly elected Members! Current property tax collection is higher than last year at this time, as are interest and liens. Keep in mind that part of the increase is proceeds from the sale by the Town of 1395 Riverside Drive. A small Municipal Stabilization grant came in. Cash on hand at this time is higher by \$2.185M compared to last October. M. Smith clarified a line item; the school Security costs are running over-budget, but the BOE transferred funds from an un-used Vocational-Ag line. The BOF members posed questions; for some line items it is a question of the timing of certain expenses, such as those which are largely paid early in the fiscal year and those others which come due late in the year. D. Johnson asked what guidelines are used to determine Transfers. Usually, the BOS will review a situation that may go over-budget, then refer it to the BOF. D. Johnson asked if in the final numbers are in regarding the Marianapolis School matter. A. St Onge: it went to litigation and there was a \$70K settlement. All associated attorney fees are currently paid. D. Johnson asked for a final status report. R. Werge asked for a periodic update on Fixed Assets no longer being used. A decision-making process should be in place regarding disposals. Finance Director: the final details of the audit are being addressed; we hope to have it ready to present at the December BOF meeting. Regarding the Schools roof project: the short-term financing expires December 1. We worked with the Town’s Financial Advisor, Bond Attorneys and Bank and borrowed \$2.5 M, which allows a little for contingencies as the project moves forward.



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9. Tourtellotte Fund update – Board of Trustees: Phase 2 windows are done, with Phase 3 coming soon. The appearance is in keeping with the schools and has been commended. L. Guillot asked about students seen sitting along canopy-type windows and is concerned about their safety. M. Smith will remind those principals of the involved teachers that those windows may not be opened at times when students are outside.
10. New Business:  
Discussion: BOF meetings in hybrid format through April 30, 2022: The BOS consensus is to continue with the hybrid model as long as possible; remote attendance enabled members of the public to broadly participate last year, and it enables a member of the BOF who has a situation preventing attendance in person to log in and be seen and heard. During the budget process, all Department Heads whose budget proposal will be discussed on a certain date are encouraged to attend in person, to best facilitate open dialogue with the Board. If the Board finds the process is not working out favorably, the matter can be revisited.  
**Motion R. Mann seconded by S. Herbert to schedule all BOF meetings through April 30, 2021 in hybrid format ( in person at the Town Hall Seney Room and simultaneously vis Zoom) carried. D. Johnson and L. Guillot abstained.**
11. Board of Finance Member Comments: R. Werge encourages that budget season meetings be kept close to 2 hours, giving Board members the best opportunity to be actively engaged. The BOF consensus was to use 9 PM for adjournment as a guideline. S. Herbert noted that with the 2021-2022 budget process coming up soon, he hopes all parties will look for possible cost reductions and be open to ways to save.
12. Adjourn **Motion D. Johnson seconded by L. Guillot to adjourn at 8:51 PM carried unanimously.**

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<https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/G48KqojUHfdR72fce-0yvrF2f5iWKVmt14jNRQDJLvNPn2mLLMWsG3RsGg1sf5sd.mFt6nAMhzeLPAs4t> Passcode: n\$A3!D0

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.*