



**THOMPSON Board of Finance
Regular Meeting - Minutes
Thursday, January 20, 2022
Town Hall- Merrill Seney Room
and via Zoom from remote locations**

1. The call to order by Chair A. McGarry was at 7:03 PM.
Roll call: Aaron McGarry, Robert Werge, Steve Herbert, Rob Mann, Laurent Guillot. Absent: Dave Johnson. Others- First Selectman Amy St Onge, Orla McKiernan-Raftery (Finance Director). Melinda Smith (Superintendent of Schools), Michelle Giammarinaro (HR Director), Paul Hopkins (Assessor), Board/Commission members. Members of the public. Recording Secretary Dotti Durst
2. Approval of minutes:
 - a. **Motion R. Werge seconded by S. Herbert to approve the December 16, 2021 Regular Monthly meeting minutes carried unanimously,**
3. Correspondence:
 - a. Finance Director's memo of resignation
 - b. Town sponsored: FOIA training for Boards/Commissions (select via Zoom or in person)
 - c. CCM Webinar: **Municipal Budgeting 101** Saturday, January 22nd from 9:00 - 10:30am. Pre-registration required
*After the agenda was posted:
Finance Director a). 6 months Financial Report as of December, 2021
b). Fixed Assets list at end of 2021 as had been requested by the town auditors
Assessor's Report- update on Grand List as requested by the BOF
4. Citizens' comments: via Zoom- noted the Finance Director's comments to be inaudible
5. Selectman's Update-First Selectman Amy St Onge: * Director of Planning and Development Tyra Penn applied for a \$2M brownfield remediation grant for the former mill at 929 Riverside Dr and it has been awarded; in cooperation with developer John Gumpert, the grant will cover about ½ of the cleanup costs. * An Army Corps of Engineers infrastructure grant under the IJJA legislation of \$800K has been awarded to address the cleanup of Thompson Lake, various aspects there including the boat ramp. * The sidewalk upgrade on RT 200 to Rawson Ave should go out to bid soon, to utilize the 2019 grant funds. * The 2022-2023 budget development workshops with town departments will be held February 7, 9, 14, 16, 22 (fire departments), with extra dates available in case of weather delay. They will begin at 3 PM and carry into the early evenings to facilitate public access. * A positive first joint meeting with the Putnam Ambulance/EMS to co-ordinate Thompson and Putnam Ambulance services took place, with our community volunteer panel in attendance Our Consultant has provided draft pricing projections for the various options, with the final document expected soon. Several details were reviewed.
6. School District Update-Superintendent of Schools Melinda Smith: Happy 2022! School enrollment remains at 930, of which 27 Special Education students are outplaced (an increase of 2). * During the holiday school break, there was a Covid resurgence; the Superintendent praised school staff and bus drivers. * A grant application has been submitted for expansion of the Aquaponics program; a Drug Prevention program is being implemented. * The *Beauty and the Beast* performance involves about 50 students; all school sports are active. * School budget workshops have begun, with the BOF welcome to the virtual presentation on 01-24. At that time, the Special Education Director will present that aspect of the budget, other possible increases will be identified, as well as Capital Projects.

7. Financial Report- Finance Director Orla McKiernan-Rafty: Review of the budget at the 6-month point: property taxes collected as of the end of December, 2021 (\$12.47M) were ahead of 2020 by \$1.2M. Interest and Liens income (\$135K) was higher than the previous year by \$52K. Other data points were noted. A Distressed Community Property Tax exemption of \$23,568 was the work of Assessor Paul Hopkins, this being the first year for which it was applied; Nutmeg Container has been granted a 5-year exemption.

*With budget season ahead, it was clarified that the Finance Director will work with the BOF although she has official terminated town employment. The budget preparation software has been upgraded using Covid Relief funds; will be easier to work with (web-based) and has several columns which are available for BOF use.

* A document has been created showing the town's Fixed Assets as of end of 2021 (active: \$64,835,375) with roads in addition (\$71,919,974). The auditors requested this data.

—R. Werge: the Assets list should be updated at least yearly, with all transactions shown, including acquisitions, so depreciation can be recognized. These assets are big part of the Town's money.

*Following a BOF request: an amortization schedule for the Marianapolis loan is available.

* The Assessor prepared and distributed an update to the Grand List, showing the uptick. *The town audit is nearly complete; a January extension had been applied for. The Finance Director will cease participation in Thompson in that role as of 02-02, but she hopes to have the Audit ready to report out at the February BOF meeting. The contracted amount for the auditing services (the Town's share is \$29,000) seems adequate.

*The Finance Director thanked the BOF for the opportunity to work together since 2014, as she moves on to new challenges.

BOF Chair A. McGarry extended thanks to Orla McKiernan-Rafty for her years of service.

8. Tourtellotte Fund update – Board of Trustees: A public meeting will be on 02-07, details will be known soon

9. New Business:

a. Status of the position of Finance Director and Town Treasurer:

*A. St Onge and the HR Director are looking at the possible combination of the Finance Director positions for the Schools and the Town; the details of similar arrangements in five other Connecticut towns are being reviewed.

* A. St Onge suggested a virtual or hybrid Tri-Board meeting (BOE, BOS and BOF) possibly February 3 at 7 PM, a date on which no other town board meetings are scheduled, at which the HR Director will present her research findings.

* Town Treasurer Orla McKiernan-Rafty reviewed the state statute regarding this position, noting that as she will remain a Thompson resident, she may continue in the role, which has only a limited number of time-sensitive duties. Additionally, the Treasurer may appoint an Assistant Treasurer to assist with oversight; the town attorney has identified by title those eligible. She asked if BOF Chair Aaron McGarry will accept the appointment, to which he agreed, confirming that she is not planning to resign, and stipulating that the appointment document cite the language of the Statute that permits this appointment.



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b. Discussion- 2023 BOF Budget Request: Chair A. McGarry asked the former Finance Director to advise if there are any BOF line items that seem to need adjustment as the budget request is prepared, inquiring if any circumstances have changed. She will so advise.

10. Old Business: Status of 2020-2021 Audit- previously discussed in Finance Director's report.
Question- whether another extension for filing will be needed; it appears not at his time.

11. Board of Finance Member Comments:

-S. Herbert noted the CCM training provided this year to be valuable, encouraging other BOF members to attend the remaining sessions.

-R. Mann: the interactive budget preparation software should be an improvement.

- A. McGarry asked Town Assessor Paul Hopkins, who was in attendance, if he has comments regarding the updated Grand List which he prepared for the BOF. Note was made that the assessment shows \$34M in growth which is an increase of 4.7% The Superior Bakery property may impact that number, as they have not filed and have not been reached.

- Orla McKiernan-Raftery was thanked by the BOF for her years of service to the town.

12. Adjourn: **Motion L. Guillot seconded by R. Mann to adjourn carried unanimously.**

Chair A. McGarry adjourned the meeting at 8:09 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/_TnTVJOyLmodPhFiBCvCjZb3wOBXQy-TF1ccHutPJcudKVaCmb2rlLsA64Y2XDhb.UbVVPanm65fBREb4

Passcode: q4?gjWM4

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.