



TOWN of THOMPSON
815 Riverside Drive
North Grosvenordale, CT 06255

THOMPSON Board of Finance Regular Meeting
Thursday, August 20, 2020 via Zoom from remote locations

MINUTES

1. Call to order by Chair Aaron McGarry was at 7:00 PM, noting all members to be present BOF Members-Aaron McGarry (Chair), Jim Bellavance, Rob Mann, Rhonda Rooney, Robert Werge, Steve Herbert. First Selectman Amy St Onge, Selectman Ken Beausoleil, Finance Director Orla McKiernan-Raftery, Superintendent of School Melinda Smith, Schools Finance Director Bob Gentes, Board of Education Chair Kathleen Herbert, Auditor/BlumShapiro Ron Nossek, Members of Boards/Commissions, Recording Secretary Dotti Durst

2. Auditor's Report for fiscal year 2018-2019 by Ron Nossek, BlumShapiro: the basis of the presentation was an electronic report which had been emailed to the BOF. Mr. Nossek reviewed all aspects of the report, noting two material weaknesses and a non-compliance; relative to the ledgers; and to budgeting compliance. The Single State Audit points out a "significant deficiency" in the Early Care and Education Program. He noted that 18-19 Revenue came in as planned, that there was an unassigned Fund Balance of 9%, and that expenditures were contained during the year. Property tax collection was consistent with Thompson's excellent rate of 97.9%. Many other details were reviewed. S. Herbert- asked the meaning of "significant deficiency in the State Single Audit. Answer: in the Early Child Care Program (schools) they were unable to obtain evidential matter/program monitoring) A. St Onge-the town has posted a RFP for an auditing firm, but to date there has been no response. Is it likely that BlumShapiro will remain with Thompson for one more year? Mr. Nossek felt it unlikely; OPM will assign a firm if no bid is received. Chair A. McGarry thanked Mr. Nossek for his report and for being present via Zoom; the auditor exited the meeting. Continued discussion: A. St Onge-the town over-spent the Capital Fund by \$291,000. Director O. McKiernan-Raftery noted that the funds from the sale of the school busses will be used to balance that part of the budget. B. Gentes- in dis-cussing the Early Childhood State funds, noted that because of the Covid, when questions began to come in, the schools were closed down/access to records was limited, thus taking longer.

3. Review/approve minutes:

Motion R. Rooney seconded by J. Bellavance to approve the 06-18-2020 Regular Meeting minutes carried unanimously. Chair McGarry noted there was no July meeting.

4. Correspondence:

- a. PoCD Update memo from Town Planner T. Penn-Gesek
- b. Branding Implementation Committee- D Durst will resend
- c. Fire Advisory Committee collaborative discussion, August 27
- d. Emailed Budget Process Participation Survey: Asst Professor/Journalism Jody Mazdzer Gil, Southern CT State University- A. McGarry will forward to BOF members

5. Citizens' comments: K. Beausoleil- the BOS has not reviewed the TEEG HVAC matter



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6. Selectman's Update-First Selectman Amy St Onge: *On August 4 the BOS enacted a Resolution, under the Governor's Executive Order which provides for the BOS to do so when a Town Meeting cannot be held, which details tax relief for the development of the mill, defines the Redevelopment District which is exclusively for structures being remodeled for multi-family use. *A town Meeting hybrid plan is being developed, assisted by the School's technology staff, which will include both live aspects and Zoom-based aspects, with a mid-October goal. *The summer concerts organized by the Recreation Director at the ballfield were very successful; new Covid-era thinking and assistance by the DPW allowed families to bring a blanket or a chair and relax together outside. *Janice Smith has been hired as Animal Control Officer, bringing the function back under town control; she is reviewing all the circumstances at the pound, and seeking volunteers. *The DPW submitted a report detailing the major road work, bridges needing attention, surface drainage and other projects. *CT Water is working along Main Street, in collaboration with the DPW; the BOF will be asked to direct the funds which come in from the project to local roadwork. *After the budget signing, the Union asked for a wage increase; previously they had asked for a current rates extension. A memo of Agree-ment with the United Public Service Union was signed today, with increases totaling about \$20,000 (applies to Union staff only). The town is examining the budget looking for any flexibility due to the Covid situation. Future negotiations are to be concluded by November 15 to match the budget cycle timing. R. Werge- thanked A. St Onge for the complete report. He asked about the concept brought forth early in the previous budget cycle to have an assessment done of the condition of bridges. A. St Onge- yes, the topic was discussed but funding was subsequently removed from the proposed budget. DOT itself did an assessment, determining that many aspects of the needed work can be handled locally and others by them.

7. School District Update-Superintendent of Schools Melinda Smith: enrollment for fall has reached 1,000; 18 students transferred in due to the closing of St Joseph's; last year was 975. Home schooling will be 8. The "full school model" is being utilized; all students will attend daily beginning August 31. Should the Covid-19 situation become worse, the students will have met their teachers and become acclimated to expectations. Information was provided regarding the adjustments made for the Virus, as well as those being made for fall school re-opening; a PowerPoint presentation provided many details, including the mandates from the State and the three areas in which expenditures are expected to be significant due to the situation. The Recreation Department was thanked for providing child care and the First Selectman for arranging for food delivery through the summer. Members of the BOF as well as the Finance Director thanked the Superintendent for the detailed presentation and offered praise for the hard work she and the staff have put in over the summer.

8. Financial Report- Finance Director Orla McKiernan-Rafty: the Budget Book and the fiscal year 18-19 Audit Reports are being distributed as is the 18-19 Annual Report. The Department is expecting to complete all budgetary matters for fiscal year 19-20 by September. She went through the Financial Report for the 12-month period ending June 30, noting property taxes collected to have been \$17.128 M, an increase and grants received in June. She noted that the Town Attorney line item is over-budget, that Union negotiations are underway and that the Transfer Station has less income than budgeted and simultaneously higher tipping fees. She expects the budget for the current year to be very tight and encourages close monitoring. Several points of clarification regarding the fy 18-19 audit, presented this evening, were re-viewed. S. Herbert- asked



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that the postings cut-off date for one fiscal year and the beginning of the next be closely watched. R. Werge-recalling a comment about the allowance for uncollectable taxes, asks that the Director verify any impacts. S. Herbert- it would have been ideal if the Auditor had been able to hear the Finance Director's comments about the fy 18-19 audit process. B. Gentes-expressed similar frustrations with the 18-19 audit process.

9. Tourtellotte Fund update: In the current situation, no meetings were held since February.

10. New Business:

a. Sewer line extension: A. St Onge noted that early in the year, the BOF agreed that funding could be requested to cover litigation regarding the sewer costs, but it would be formalized at a Town Meeting. With the Covid situation preventing the Meeting, the request is to take the funds from Contingency now, before the 19-20 fiscal year closes, and then to return it from Fund Balance when a Town Meeting is again permitted.

Motion A. McGarry seconded by J. Bellavance to appropriate up to \$25,000 from the fy19-20 budget Contingency Fund to pay legal fees regarding the sewer line extension carried unanimously.

S. Herbert-yes J. Bellavance – yes R. Werge-yes R. Mann- yes, R. Rooney – yes A. Mc Garry-yes 6-0

b. Appropriate up to \$1,500 for HVAC repairs at the Thompson Ecumenical Empowerment Group (TEEG) building: A. St Onge provided a quote for repairs to the unit from a firm which as previously worked on the equipment (the was work done the third week of July under an emergency situation due to the heat wave).

TEEG, as contracted, covered the first \$500. **Motion S. Hebert seconded by A. McGarry to allocate up to \$1,500 from the fiscal year 20-21 Contingency for HVAC repairs at the TEEG Building, subject to approval by the BOS, carried unanimously.**

S. Herbert-yes J. Bellavance – yes R. Werge-yes R. Mann- yes, R. Rooney – yes A. Mc Garry-yes 6-0

11. Board of Finance Member Comments: none

12. **Motion J. Bellavance seconded by R. Mann to adjourn carried unanimously.** Chair A. McGarry adjourned the meeting at 8:56 PM.

Click on the link, or copy/paste to your Search bar to hear the entire meeting on ZOOM

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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.